

## **Misery Loves Company**

In Defense of the Faith

Tuesday, June 28, 2011

Pete Garcia

"Part of every misery is, so to speak, the misery's shadow or reflection: the fact that you don't merely suffer but have to keep on thinking about the fact that you suffer. I not only live each endless day in grief, but live each day thinking about living each day in grief." -CS Lewis

We see it every day; suffering is common amongst every country, and every people. Suffering varies from people and place; to some it's internal, and they struggle daily or even hourly for sanity or clarity. To some it is external, and it is an environment placed upon them by either too much or too little of something. None of us choose to be born who we are...we are born and then learn as we grow up what hand God has dealt us.

I grew up on the bottom side of the middle class. We weren't stuck eating mayonnaise and cracker sandwiches breakfast, lunch, and dinner...but we definitely didn't have the best of everything either. Growing up I felt a tinge of envy at those who had more than I did, because I believed on some level that happiness was found in things. I didn't appreciate the things I did have and therefore felt cheated somehow. It wasn't until I went on a church youth trip to a border town in Mexico did, I truly appreciate everything I had.

We went to the Matamoros city dump, a sprawling 20 acres of trash, filth, and sewage. To my surprise, people lived there. One lady we met lived literally in a house comprised of various forms of cardboard. The running water was the open sewer stream next to her hut. The worst part was, she had young children living with her. I don't know if she is still alive or what became of her kids, but that was one of those definable moments in my life where I became a little more appreciative of all the blessing's God has given me.

I don't pretend to know all why God allows certain things in the lives of believers', but I know that hardships, whatever flavor they come in, produce resolve in the believer. A certain hardness that doesn't make us inflexible but makes us unbreakable. I don't remember where I heard the analogy, but I think it fits along the same lines of thought:

"The same sun which hardens the clay melts the wax."

The sun doesn't change, it's the material that it lights upon who react in different ways. Do we take our problems and lather ourselves with misery and pity? Or do we find strength in our situations, whether internal or external, and hand them over to God? I know, I know...easy to say, and hard to do. Doing it, and being consistent in doing it, is a moment-by-moment slow-moving picture reel. It's taking each problem, circumstance, event, and giving it to the Father, and then moving on and letting go.

Peter, moved by the Holy Spirit, shows us how we are to live as Christians

"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ". [2 Peter 1:5-8](#)

Now I don't think that my woes of a lower middle-class upbringing compare to something like cancer, or abuse, but we all at some point or another lie awake at night praying "Why me God?". Our trials are not unknown to God, nor were they before He created the world. On some level I have begun to understand that we are chosen for our trials. If God thought we could never rise above them, than I don't think we would have received it. Paul chronicles his troubles:

"Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers." [2 Corinthians 11:24-26](#)

So, if our troubles, sufferings, calamities, persecutions, afflictions, or whatever befalls us in this life, seem to overwhelm us, let us take solace in a verse that places our problems in some sort of perspective, from the same guy who penned the previous verse.

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." [2 Corinthians 4:17](#)

Rejoice in the Lord. We may not know what God has in store for us, but He knows, and as we move through this life, let's take account of the things God has blessed you with.

*"Some people feel guilty about their anxieties and regard them as a defect of faith but they are afflictions, not sins. Like all afflictions, they are, if we can so take them, our share in the passion of Christ." - CS Lewis*

## **This Was Your Life**

Witnessing Tools

Tuesday, July 05, 2011

Pete Garcia

*Therefore, since we are **surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses**, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1-3 NIV)*

As I was driving over to the service station to get my oil changed, I began listening to a great bible teacher who happens to post a lot of his bible studies online via MP3. As he was beginning [Revelation 4](#), he began expounding on 4:1 and the qualities of time. He explained that God, as the Creator of time, is not bound by time like we are. As humans, we can look back into the past, but we can't see into the future. God does not have that constraint.

Considering a verse like 1 John 3:2, means that at some point in the future, we too, should not be constrained by time. And that got me thinking of something that not only explains oodles of scriptures, but also had a slightly jarring effect on me.

He (the teacher) remarked that once we are in heaven, and have the opportunity, should be able to travel back through time and witness the events that have baffled mankind, and in particular, things like creation and the various ways God have interacted with man over the ages.

Immediately, Hebrews 12:1 popped into my head. I know, that in context, Hebrews 12:1 is referring to the 'Hall of Faith' found in Hebrews 11. But the concept is similar to what I was thinking.

Now, if we are allowed that opportunity, and I think that it is a very reasonable one, might mean that every believer will have the opportunity to travel back to any point in time, or just watch it all unfold. I would like to introduce a verse by Paul that falls along the same lines of what I'm attempting to convey.

*"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."* **Ephesians 2:4-7**

Are we as the Church to be examples of God's grace? Taking at face value, that might sound pleasant. But I believe that to be a very humbling statement, on the part of the reader.

Considering, I know all the bad, rotten things I've done in my life. Will my life be reviewed for believers of all ages, or for some future peoples that God can point back at and say... "Here is Pete, this is an example of my grace". I can almost hear the crowds now saying in unison, "That is A LOT of grace!"

And I don't know if this to be fact, something more akin to "holy speculation", but, what if our lives were opened for anyone and everyone to review? To show how them, how 'ran the race'? Maybe only our works that survived the Bema Judgment (1 Cor 3, 2 Cor 5:10) would be put on display.

If most of what you did for the Lord was burnt to a crisp, some wouldn't have much to show, while others had a vast life to review. Would that not explain why Paul pleaded with believers to live a life worthy of the calling? How different would we live from that moment forward when we became aware of the fact that our very lives are going to be used as examples of God's grace?

We have story after story of those in the Bible whose lives are laid open for us to study and learn from. Some lives serve as a warning (Korah), and some serve as an example to follow (Joshua). Most of them however, we are shown the good and the bad. I'm sure if they had their druthers, Noah would have left out the drunken tent incident. Lot would have made sure that incident with his daughters wasn't mentioned. Parts of David's life would have been edited out. The three denials would have been scratched from the record, if Peter had any say. But God's inspired men to write EXACTLY what He wanted us to see and know about these men and women.

What I do earnestly believe, is that God will honor the humble, and cast down the proud. Those untold millions of nameless Christians who for all intents and purposes, go through this life unnoticed, are known to God. History may have forgotten them, but God has not. They struggled day in and day out with no fame or glory in this life, spending countless hours in prayer for friends and loved ones, helping the helpless, protecting the innocent, living the gospel by kindness and charity, suffering persecution, ridicule, and martyrdom for His name's sake; will have their lives showcased for all eternity.

None of us know with 100% certainty how this will all play out on the other side of the curtain. I can only ponder on the things we do know. We have a Bible full of examples of people who may or may not have known their lives would be put on display for the whole world, should be yet another reason to prompt us to dedicate the days, months, and years we have remaining, to giving God our very best.

## **Center Mass**

### **Where History Meets Prophecy Part I**

Israel - Middle East

Tuesday, July 19, 2011

Pete Garcia

Last week's SMP dealt with all the regions of the world outside the Middle East. With all the shifting winds, we'll see how God's prophetic word is slowly coming into focus exactly like God said it would. It is kind of like a shell game, and the cups are moving around so quickly, it's hard to see where the ball is still hidden.

But, according to scriptures, Jerusalem is the center point in this strategic game, and if you want to stay on top of where things are shifting, just keep your eye on Israel, the rest of it will come into view.

*"Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it." Zechariah 12:2-3*

Caroline Glick is a Journalist for the *Jerusalem Post*, and her article, '[Caution, Storm Approaching](#)' is a must read for those who want to know what's coming our way. I'll paraphrase here as not to steal any of her thunder, but due to all the violence in the 'Arab Spring', money is fleeing at an unsustainable rate out of Egypt and Syria that will have repercussions that will be felt around the world.

Let's take a brief country by country look at what is going on there now, and what the scriptures state will be coming in the not-too-distant future.

### **Psalm 83 & Isaiah 17: Arab Coalition**

*"They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." Psalm 83:3-4*

### ***Palestinians & Jordan***

The term Palestinian, is a misnomer. Palestina, was the name the Roman Emperor Hadrian named Israel in part as retribution for the *Bar Kokhba Revolt* from 132-135AD.

Those that lived in Israel over the last two thousand years were simply known as 'Palestinian Jews or Palestinian Arabs. The term was used first by Yasser Arafat after the *6 Day War*, and it has been used as a political weapon to create an imaginary cause de célèbre.

After open war failed to dislodge the Jews from Israel, they began to use terrorism and political subterfuge as a strategy to win over political and media circles. The bad news is that it has been very effective. The 'Palestinians have split into two distinct factions, Hamas (Gaza) and Fatah (West Bank). FATAH is an acronym in reverse, 'The Palestinian Liberation Movement'. Hamas

is just the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood for all intents and purposes. Although they have some ideological differences, they both share a unified passion to drive the Jews from Israel.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was an artificial creation by the British in 1921. They held control of Jerusalem from the 1948 battle until the 1967 'Six Day War' in which they lost control of east Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

Yasser Arafat terrorist activities within the borders of Jordan and attempted coup, forced King Hussein to wage open war with the Palestinian Liberation Army (the militant force of the PLO) and Syria in 1970.

Arafat fled to Syria, and then on to Lebanon where he began to plot his nefarious activities. Meanwhile, Jordan remains the last of the Arab nations to hold a formal peace agreement with Israel.

With Egypt gone, and Turkey turning a cold shoulder, King Abdullah (Hussein's son) remains the only tepid Arab leader the 'Arab Spring' hadn't swept under the rug. The Jews will take refuge in Petra when the Antichrist commits the Abomination of Desolation (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15-20)

### **Lebanon**

As of January 2011, Lebanon's government fell under parliamentary control of the *March 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance*, whose majority group is the Iranian terrorists group, Hezbollah. Hezbollah is led by their Secretary General, Hasan Nasrallah who is currently hiding after several failed assassination attempts, purportedly by Israeli Mossad.

Hezbollah is like a military extension of Iran. Currently, they have more missiles than most small nations, most of which are pointed directly at Israel and embedded within neighborhoods. If Israel is to take them out, Hezbollah wants to ensure that they can capitalize on the maximum amount of they answer to Iran, receive their guidance from the Ayatollah's, and work hand and hand with Syria.

Two factors that will drive action on behalf of Hezbollah against Israel, is the Rafic Hariri investigation and if Syria collapses due to all the civil unrest.

### **Syria**

*"The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap." Isaiah 17:1*

The capital and major city of note in Syria is Damascus. Damascus is the oldest continually inhabited city in the world. Although home to several ancient civilizations like the Umayyad Caliphate and Mamelukes, modern Syria came about by a French mandate in 1946. In the 1960's, the Alawites are a Shiite ruling minority in a country that is primarily Muslim.

Bashar al Assad is the son of Hafez al Assad, a Baathist who ruled the country from 1971-2000. Aside from being involved in the Lebanese civil war and a 30-year military presence in Lebanon, Syria been one of the main antagonists of Israel in its 63 year history.

### **Egypt**

With former president Hosni Mubarak possibly in a coma, and the Muslim Brotherhood on the war path, Egypt's destiny is on a collision course with Israel. With Caroline Glick's astute assessment of the coming financial tsunami coming in just a few short months, Egypt's inability to feed its own citizens' is going to present an almost insurmountable challenge.

Like all good dictators and banana republics, when you want to shift the blame away from your authoritative rule, you focus your efforts outside your borders. Terrorists are blowing up the gas

lines that feed natural gas into Israel. This will be a factor until Israel can harness the massive natural gas deposits off their coast. As Egypt's economic downturn continues to worsen, look for it to spill over its borders toward Israel.

Ezekiel 29 talks about a 'Tower of Syene' that is destroyed, bringing about a 40-year desolation that blankets Egypt. Although there was no tower in Ezekiel's day and no 'Tower of Syene' have ever been recorded as being destroyed there since then, this may be a reference to the Aswan High Dam that sits in southern Egypt that dams the Nile River.

Israel has considered this a strategic military target if Egypt ever attacks again. A tactical strike on this dam would flood all of lower Egypt, were most of Egypt's 80 million citizens currently reside.

### ***Saudi Arabia (Dedan & Sheba)***

Saudi Arabia is currently militarily engaged in the tiny nation state of Bahrain, where the Shiite majority is currently toying with the idea of following Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria in protesting against their Sunni overlords. Iran is feeding the flames by providing support to the protesters, and Saudi's are inserting troops and equipment there to prop up the monarchy against following in Mubarak's footsteps.

King Abdullah is 87 years old, and took the throne in 2005, after the death of his half-brother, King Fahd. His health has not been the best and has undergone recent surgeries here in the US.

The question remains, is who will succeed him upon his not-too distant step off into eternity. There are a lot of young princes, who will be itching to step in, and they are a little more trigger happy against Iran than the current king has positioned himself to be.

Any instability on the Saudi Arabian Peninsula and there will be marked, definite price increases in the oil markets which will mean higher prices at the pump for consumers around the world. Can anyone say "10\$ a gallon?"

Sheba is listed in Genesis' 10, Table of Nations as a descendant of Shem, son of Noah. According to historians, Dedan is found within the nation of current day Saudi Arabia, and Sheba found further south were Yemen and the United Arab Emirates is found.

Although not specifically listed amongst those that attack in Psalm 83, it's hard to imagine an Arab alliance not including Saudi Arabia in some form or fashion. In the Gog-Magog war, they do not join in, but do not help either. Saudi Arabia has found a partner in its long-standing feud against Iran, with Israel. It's not sure how this will play out, but if Israel does strike Iran's nuclear facilities, it will be over Saudi airspace.

So, although the Kingdom of Saud is not pro-Israel, they are anti-Iran and the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

Next week, we'll go over Ezekiel 38-39 nations to see how they fit into the end-time scenario.

## **Center Mass**

### **Where History Meets Prophecy Part II**

Prophecy - Signs

Tuesday, July 26, 2011

Pete Garcia

Last week's article dealt with the Arab-Sunni dominant coalition that currently neighbor Israel's borders and their ideologically obsessive plans to assail Israel in the not-too-distant future.

Since 1948, they have been driven into a satanic frenzy over the very existence of a Jewish nation in their midst. Although the leadership in Iran shares this unholy hatred of Israel, the other players in this coalition are motivated by other factors rather than just wholesale genocide. This alignment of nations, for the first time in history, has begun to ready themselves with their rendezvous with destiny.

Those who do not hold to a Pre-Millennial end-times view do not recognize Ezekiel 38-39 as future, but to some past conflict during the time of the Persians. Many attempts have been made by scholars to discredit the unfamiliarity of the names given in Ezekiel as unknowable. But that is not true, considering that for thousands of years, historians have associated certain peoples by their ancestral customs and homelands.

### **Russia** (Magog)

Jerome (translator of the Latin Vulgate), an Illyrian Christian apologist of the late 4th and early 5th centuries, affirms:

"the Jews of this age understood by Magog the vast and innumerable nations of Scythia, about Mount Caucasus, and the Palus Maeotis (Latin for Maeotis Sea), stretching along the Caspian Sea to India." 1

The name "Scythian" has been used to refer to various peoples seen as similar to the Scythians, or who lived anywhere in a vast area covering present-day Ukraine, Russia, and Central Asia, known until medieval times as Scythia. The name was also used among early scholars studying the Proto Indo-Europeans. The tribes of Magogians and Scythians would become many of the great confederations of steppe warriors, often mingling with others not of the same race, developing ethnic mixtures of Eurasian clans.

These peoples would later form tribes and ethnic groups we would come to know as familiar names in history: **Huns, Turks, Tartars, Mongols** and others. Evidence shows that clans of Scythians were forced to move to more favorable conditions, mostly east and south due to a changing climate in the steppe. Wherever they went, they often attacked, intermingled with, or simply forced out indigenous peoples."

The Huns, Turks, Tartar's, Mongols, Scythians, all made up what we know to be the areas of Russia, north central Asia, northern China and Mongolia. They ruled the steppes for thousands of years and have undergone numerous name changes over the centuries as a nomadic people. Although the names may have changed, the people didn't. What I find fascinating, is the type of warfare that Ezekiel is told would come to Israel, specifically speaking about these types of people:

*"And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:*

*Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:  
Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands:  
and many people with thee." Ezekiel 38:4-6*

Modern Dispensational scholars pride themselves on keeping to a literal understanding of prophetic passages, but they sometimes struggle when explaining passages like this especially in light of our advancements in modern warfare.

How does one remain true to the text, yet also remain true to the reality of our modern age?

It is not too much of a stretch to see what Ezekiel was told here. It is a narrowing process, showing WHO would be the main antagonists coming against Israel. Those nations listed as 'steppes' people were horse warriors.

Genghis Khan conquered more landmass than ANY empire in the last 6,000 years of human history. They were able to conquer so much territory, because they were lethal on horseback and could quickly traverse large distances in short periods of time.

We live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and horse and sword warfare went out of fashion back at the beginning of WWI. Having gone by different names throughout their history, they have the tell-tale sign of being the same people of those nomadic horsemen from the northern steppes so long ago.

Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan ALL have Turkic majorities. When looking at the Gog/Magog coalition, it's not hard to understand how a coalition between Russia and Turkey could come against Israel in the last days. These predominantly Muslim nations remain in poor shape after the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, and likely will be promised wealth or monetary compensation for contributing fighters to come against Israel. Russia is continuing to rebuild her fallen empire, and these former satellite states are the glue that joins their potential economic gain and Islam's hatred, to hold together their conglomeration.

### ***Turkey*** (Tubal/Beth Togarmah/Gomer)

Turkey, a founding member of the UN and current NATO member, is currently headed by Tayyip Erdogan, who is probably the most radicalized Islamist to hold the office of the Prime Minister in Turkey's recent history (since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire). His AK party took parliamentary control in 2001 by uniting two parties, who won the election with a landslide. Since then, he has slowly and systematically been coalescing power through the gradual appointments in the judicial systems and the secular military hierarchies.

Currently, Turkey's relationship with Israel has been growing colder since 2004 and reached the absolute bottom during the Flotilla debacle last year. The US has an airbase in Turkey, but since President Obama gave his first overseas speech there, our relationship has grown chilly with the Turks.

Erdogan has allowed the military to receive refugees in over the Syrian border and has threatened military force if Syria doesn't stop the whole sale slaughter of those protesting.

Since Syria is propped up by Iran, they are currently at odds on how to move forward. Erdogan has somewhat slowed his initial love affair with Iran over the current unrest in Syria, although they share another common enemy in the Kurd's<sup>2</sup>.

It is unlikely that Turkey will be accepted into the EU at this present time, and the thought of them doubling their military (currently at 500,000) raises serious questions about their intent. Their rough handling of the ethnic minority Kurd's in their countries southwest border region (with Iraq) has virtually gone unnoticed. All the while, they continually chastise Israel for their treatment of the Palestinians, who historically speaking; have had it much better then the Kurds do under Turkish rule.

Genesis 10 lists Gomer, Magog, Tubal, and Meschech as the sons of Japheth, son of Noah. Gomer's sons are listed as Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. Turkey in Paul's day was called Asia Minor, and long before the Roman Empire, Turkish lands were known as Cimmeria and Cimbri (whom the Celt's descended from). If we understand and believe that Noah's ark came to rest on Mount Ararat (Genesis 8:4), then it is not hard to see how the nation's first branched out from modern day Turkey in all directions.

### ***Iran*** (Persia)

Persia changed their name to Iran in 1935, supposedly due to the influence of Adolph Hitler. (Iran means Aryan in Farsi) In 1979, the Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the Shah in Iran and ushered in the dawn of Islamic Jihad against the West.

Currently, the Ayatollah Khamenei is at odds with the “elected” President Ahmadinejad over his tyrannical shenanigans and his extreme belief in the 12<sup>th</sup> Mahdi’s soon arrival. Iran’s nuclear ambitions will most likely be their undoing, as a tactical strike may soon be on the horizon<sup>3</sup>.

The President’s halfhearted support for the Iranian’s Green Revolution only strengthened Ahmadinejad’s control over the nation. They actively recruited Syrian and Hezbollah thugs to come in and crack down on their citizens, where even the Revolutionary Guard would not. Likewise, Syria uses Iranian thugs to crack down on their citizens.

Having Iranian friendly forces taking over in Egypt, the Suez Canal will no longer be a barrier for traversing through, although Israel might have the final say in that matter.

When reading through the book of Esther, you get the picture that the current Iran is simply trying to carry out what ancient Haman could not.

*"And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai." **Esther 3:5-6***

### **Libya** (Phut)

Moammar Kaddafi’s regime will likely fall under the weight of the civil war pressed upon him. What Libya will look like after the regime falls, is not certain. But with their economy in shambles, and no centralized leadership at the helms, groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Qaeda will likely take the lead and coagulate with the groups from Tunisia to Egypt in an attempt to bring about a Sunni Caliphate in North Africa.

The US and France have already recognized the resistance fighters as the legitimate leadership in Misrata, so as soon as a deal can be reached, I believe Kaddafi will flee with family in tow. He’s already lost too much face with his own people (and neighbors) to maintain any sensible kind of power anymore.

What makes Libya (and Cush) unique, is that they are neither Turkic nor Persian Shiite. They may make up the next remnant of Sunni’s left behind after the failed Psalm 83 war, who side with Gog to either seek revenge or may join in as a ‘target of opportunity’.

### **Sudan** (Cush)

With the newest member nation to join the United Nations, mostly Christian South Sudan declared their independence from the Islamic North Sudan just two weeks ago on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

North Sudan is headed by Omar Al Bashir (1989-present) who took power in a bloodless coup de tat. Although Sudan is mostly identified with the conflict in Darfur, Sudan is RICH in minerals, precious metals, and oil and has a rapidly growing economy, mostly centered either in Khartoum or the Port Sudan.

The oil is in landlocked South Sudan, but the pipeline is run through the north to the Port Sudan, who will likely see large profits as they charge fees to transmit and utilize the pipelines that run through their country. Omar Al Bashir has economic ties to Turkey, Iran, and Venezuela, all of which are not friendly to either Israel or the US.

Cush (or Kush) is a son of Ham, and grandson to Noah. Cush was the father of Nimrod, who Moses noted in Genesis 10:8 as “a mighty one in the earth”.

Nimrod founded Babel in the land of Shinar (modern day Iraq). The Kingdom of Kush used to include the lands of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan. Cush is listed amongst the nations here in Ezekiel 38-39 who come against Israel in the last days, and their current project

(Merowe Dam) is upstream from the Aswan Dam, it too may be a target that God destroys, which would subsequently flood everything to the north of it.

## **Conclusion**

What is interesting is not who is on the list, but who is NOT on the list.

Namely, Iraq, the ancient land of Shinar where Babylon once stood (and whom Nimrod founded) is neither in the Psalm 83 war, nor the Ezekiel 38-39 coalitions.

With the US still embedded in a support role in Iraq, and will for the foreseeable future, it is likely that the United Nations will relocate there once the United States collapses. We already have spent millions upon millions building up the massive Green Zone complex complete with the most fortified embassy in the world.

It is amazing to see all the pieces coming together. What was a mystery even ten years ago has quickly come into focus.

Turkey and Egypt used to be allies to the US and Israel. Saddam Hussein and the Ayatollah were punch line to jokes. Russia was broken and introverted. Sudan was just a late-night infomercial to get you to send money to the suffering in Darfur. The Palestinians were just stone throwing youths.

Now, the Middle East is on fire, Europe is clinching euro pennies, Russia is on the rise and America is in a graveyard spiral because we are retreating from the one nation we were created to help. Although Israel will stand alone in this world, God comes to her rescue to providentially show that He has a plan for her, and will do so because of His name's sake:

*"Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD." Ezekiel 38:23*

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## **The Fig Tree**

Prophecy - Signs

Tuesday, August 02, 2011

Pete Garcia

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." Matthew 24:32

For millennia, scholars have pondered about the statements Jesus made during His Olivet Discourse.

The great debate over this singular passage has always been about whether the fig tree symbolizes national Israel, or whether Jesus was just using this imagery as something to indicate the nearness of His return.

Great scholars have made persuasive arguments to both points of view. My attempt here is as a simple layman is to put two similarly related events together.

To fully appreciate this verse though, you need to go back three chapters (and a day) to an event that Jesus experienced. In the Gospel of Matthew, you come to chapter 21, and, verse 19 where Jesus is returning back to Jerusalem from Bethany, He hungers:

"And when He saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it; Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away." Matthew 21:19

So coming to the tree, Jesus ONLY found leaves, and no fruit and he cursed it. In His fig tree parable given during His Olivet Discourse, Jesus said that when you see the leaves being put forth, not mentioning fruit, you know that summer is nigh.

"And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And his disciples heard it." (Mark 11:13)

Again, Mark records the event, and the mention of 'nothing but leaves' is emphasized by the following "for the time of figs was not yet". Of note, this event precedes the Olivet Discourse by a day, and is something His disciples were privy to eyewitness, so it should not be any stretch of the imagination to conclude that His 'fig tree' parable would not be lost on them. They marveled at how quickly the cursed fig tree withered up. (Matthew 21:20 Mark 11:20-21).

So, in context, the 'parable of the fig tree' is about recognizing the signs of the events at the end of the age and knowing the proximity of His Second Coming. How? Because the 'generation' that sees these events will also be eyewitnesses.

His cursing of the fig tree came after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This was at the very end of 3 1/2 year ministry on earth, in fact the last week of His life prior to His death, burial, and resurrection.

Do you see it yet?

- 1.) Matthew 21 - Fulfilling Daniel's 69th week to the very day, (Daniel 9:24-27) Jesus arrives in Jerusalem on the only day He publicly allows Himself to be worshipped as King. The very next morning, upon returning to Jerusalem, Jesus curses the fig tree for not having fruit. In Mark's account, Peter brings to remembrance the curse from the day prior and when seeing the withered fig tree.
- 2.) Matthew 22 - Parable of the Feast, and scrutiny by the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees.
- 3.) Matthew 23 - He curses 'this generation' (vs. 36) because they rejected Him. Not only does He curse them, but states that all the blood from Abel to Zacharias, would be charged to them for rejecting Him as Messiah. He foretells the 'desolation' that would soon come to Jerusalem.
- 4.) Matthew 24 - they are departing Jerusalem and when shown the temple, Jesus tells them about its upcoming destruction, and launches into the Olivet Discourse.
- 5.) Matthew 24 - He sums up all the signs and events that they (the generation it applied too) would need to recognize the end, with the 'parable of the fig tree'. This time, it would be His Second Coming and return as The King of Kings.

The fig tree leaves symbolize Jerusalem under the rule of the Jews. The fig tree with leaves AND fruit would symbolize the leadership of Jerusalem in control of by the Jews and in covenant with the Lord.

In the Old Testament, this would have been them faithfully in obedience to the Law. But after the Cross, this will be fulfilled when the Jews recognize Jesus as Messiah, beginning in Revelation 12:17.

When Jesus came the first time into the city, He was hailed as a King. As he returned, He went to face scrutiny, and ultimately, rejection.

The cursing of the fig tree prophetically acted out what He was about to tell them. He told them in Matthew 21:43 that Kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to 'a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof'. They had 'not recognized the time of their visitation' as Jesus had told them earlier.

In Luke's account of the Olivet Discourse, the fig tree adds another element to the parable.

"And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your ownselves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is at hand." (Luke 21:29-31)

In Judges 9, the trees' are representative of leadership or government. In Jeremiah 24, there were 'good and bad' figs representing Jews that would either be taken to Babylon or left in Jerusalem.

So the fact that Matthew and Mark use the fig tree, along with the curse of the barren fig tree preceding it, and Luke uses the fig tree and 'all the trees' but does not mention the barren fig tree that Jesus curses, leads to two important factors: Jews and government.

If the Fig is representative of the Jews, and the Trees of leadership, the fact that the barren fig tree that was cursed was right outside of Jerusalem, and began to wither away immediately, leads us to this last tell-tale sign captured by Luke 21:24.

And they (Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

### **Conclusion**

It would appear that I'm saying that 1967 is the starting date for all the end times signs, but I'm not. Truth be told, the Church does not go through any of the seven-year Tribulation and the Rapture is not dependent on them anyway and could happen at any time.

The miracle of Israel being back in her homeland again is what made 1967 possible. But as we are going on 63 years of Israel back in her land, and 44 years where Israel has controlled Jerusalem, certainly we are coming to crescendo of escalating events leading us to the very gates of the 70th Week.

But let's work logically here for a moment. If we attribute the start to the end time signs as Israel being back in her land, then certainly that had to happen prior to Jerusalem being back under the control of the Jews. The recapturing of Jerusalem had to happen prior to a third Jewish Temple being rebuilt on the Temple Mount, which means that the Arab world will either need to lose interest in the Dome of the Rock, or not be able to do anything about its destruction.

For this to take place, a war is going to be waged by the neighboring Muslim states (primarily Sunni) and will lose to Israel, this not only a military defeat, but demoralizes them to the point they no longer seek any armed struggle against Israel.

But for this to happen, the "Arab Spring" would need to take place. The "dictators for life", who were comfortable with the current political status quo, must be replaced with leaders who WOULD RISK taking a war to Israel.

Rafic Hariri wouldn't have risked it. Tunisia's Ben Ali wouldn't have risked it. Hosni Mubarak wouldn't have risked it. Kaddafi wouldn't have risked it. King Abdullah II won't in his current circumstances. But guess who will? Hezbollah, Hamas, Fatah, Syria (although is being forced toward that option), and a unified Muslim Brotherhood.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28

## **Dazed and Confused**

In Defense of the Faith

Tuesday, August 09, 2011

Pete Garcia

Many in the churches today, see no need in teaching or preaching the imminent return of Jesus Christ. It's neither in their preaching and teaching curriculum, nor any Sunday school or Bible study literature. If it is, it's a brief mentioning as if it's some afar off, nominal event that will only affect only about a dozen or so of the saintliest among us.

There is much confusion amongst even born-again Christians on which view of the last days is even correct. There are so many **'versions'** out there, (Christian and secular) that the sheer number is plainly evident of a tactic in battle most commonly referred to as "Divide and Conquer" that it cannot be by coincidence. In other words, I do not think that mankind, particularly Christendom, arrived to so many conclusions on accident.

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

1 Corinthians 14:33

Have you noticed the increasing number of global catastrophic movies and television shows that have been churned out over the last 20 years?

Science fiction is particularly guilty of this, as their whole premise is built around what could happen in the future. But as a genre, it has been planting and embedding seeds of ideas into mankind for the better part of 60 years. It's not ironic that real science is catching up to 'Sci-Fi' in the world's desperate attempts to avoid the reality of either God or global destruction. As far as secular apocalyptic earth ending theories go, the main ones are:

- Global warming
- Asteroids
- Mayan Calendar 2012
- EMP/Nuclear/Biological attacks
- Worldwide economic collapse
- Super Volcanoes
- Alien invasion
- New Ice Age

As to the world of believers, both Christian and otherwise, we are expectant of something big on the horizon. As to whom we are expecting to return, depends on who your allegiance is too I suppose, but at the top of the charts, we are waiting for:

- Jesus Christ

- Maitreya
- Antichrist
- 12<sup>th</sup> Imam
- Dominionism
- New World Order that pushes man into his next ‘Leap Forward’
- Singularity
- Planet X

Within Christianity alone, the main Eschatological views are as follows:

- Pre-Millennialism
- Post-Millennialism
- Amillennialism
- Preterism (Partial/Full/Hyper)
- Pan-Millennialism (It will all pan out in the end)

On the teaching of the Rapture (or catching up) of the Church (born again believers), the views are:

- Pre-Tribulation
- Pre-Wrath
- Mid-Tribulation
- Post-Tribulation
- Partial Rapture

Honestly, it is no wonder that people are confused about the things that are coming on the earth in these last days. On one hand, you have National Geographic and other channels constantly churning out ‘what if’ scenarios that involve anything and everything that ‘might’ happen on earth. On the other, you have churches either ignoring the subject altogether, or blatantly refusing to teach the truth about what the Bible says.

Then you have the Harold Camping’s of the world, who, over the last 200 years from the Great Disappointment<sup>1</sup> until this very day, issue out false proclamations of the very day of our Lord’s return. Date-setting has left believers disillusioned and weary of ANY teachings that proclaim the true nature of our Lord’s return. It has also created fringe groups within (and without) Christianity that has led millions of people astray in the simple message of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. Don Koenig had a great statement about prophecy that I would like to paraphrase here.

“If the Church is unwilling to teach prophecy, lost people will look to the cults and false religions for answers”<sup>2</sup>

As I hold to a pre-tribulation view of when the Rapture of the Church happens, my view HAS to align itself with the rest of Scriptures or it all falls apart. In fact, you can look at in reverse and say, that as a believer in a pre-tribulation rapture, I arrive at this view as a destination BECAUSE of a literal interpretation of the Bible.

I understand the different types of speech and grammar contained within the Bible, but as a rule, I take the text literally, unless by doing so, I violate the grammatical and contextual intent of the surrounding passages.

I apply this rule because it is the most reasonable, and logical. It is the way the Bible was intended to be taken, not as some unknowable, mythological fairy tale.

Nor should one take it with 'wooden literalism' that makes everything (no matter how absurd) to be taken as it is written. God gave us brains (some more than others) and most importantly, gave us the Holy Spirit to 'rightly divide' God's word.

Honestly, I believe the Bible is very plain spoken about most subjects, and is slightly ambiguous on others, because it takes the Holy Spirit to guide a person through the passages to arrive at a proper conclusion.

Like Martin Luther and his understanding of Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Solus Christus, and Soli Deo Gloria, prophecy is arrayed in scripture to such an extent that it touches upon almost every other major doctrine. It is woven into the Bible to the point, that one HAS to be a born-again believer in order to understand it. It takes the Holy Spirit to guide you into the conclusion that as a Christian:

- We belong to the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27, Eph 5:23)
- We are not Israel (1 Cor 10:32)
- We do not go through the 7 year tribulation (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9, Rev 3:10)
- We are a unique group of believers with a different destination (1 Peter 2:9)
- We are PROMISED to be delivered from what's coming (John 14:1-3, 2 Peter 2:9)

The intent of this letter was not meant to be a defense of the Pre-Millennial view of Eschatology, but to derive a single point from it. Only the Pre-Millennial, Pre-Tribulation view properly warns a lost and dying world of what is to come. When the antichrist comes on the scene at the outset of the seven-year Tribulation, most people will not recognize him for who he is. This will be for the following reasons:

- The Holy Spirit sealed Church will be gone
- The religious left behind, don't believe in a literal antichrist
- The religious left behind, don't believe in a future time of tribulation
- The religious left behind, do not see Israel as God's chosen people
- The world (secular) doesn't know what to look for, if they even cared
- The Beast (the government of the antichrist) will promote 'the lie' that people will be given over to believe, instead of believing the truth

The Apostle Paul said that when that day (the Rapture) happens, it will be like...

"For yourselves **know perfectly** that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then **sudden** destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." 1 Thess 5:2-3

Interestingly, Paul says you 'know perfectly' about the day of the Lord. There was no confusion or question as to Paul's teaching to this Church. It wasn't until imposters came after Paul, sending a letter supposing to be from Paul, teaching otherwise.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and **by our gathering together unto him**, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;" 2 Thess 2:1-3

The tactic of deceit, by which Satan, the father of lies, attacks the Church, has been most effective over the last 2,000 years. He wasted no time in going after this brand new church in Thessalonica, it is absolutely by Divine decree, that 1800 years later, men came back to a Dispensational view, which led to the Pre-Millennial-Pre-Tribulation view of our Lord's return for His Church.

This view was the staple in most evangelical churches, but in recent years, has greatly been under assault by those that propose Dual Covenant and Replacement Theology, Dominionism, and Preterism within the church, and by atheism, paganism, humanist secularism, and pantheism from without.

I think ranking amongst the confusion on the day the Rapture happens, aside from the number of people who go missing, and the chaos, will be those who were taken up and those who were left behind. Many, who were taken, for all intents and purposes, didn't appear to be born again.

WE Christians in the western world have done a great job of blending in. Many who are left behind will be the pious, moral, religious folk that believed if there was such a thing as a "Rapture", they would have been worthy to go. And since they weren't taken up, there HAS to be some other explanation. Jesus told His followers that they were to be the salt and light of this fallen world:

"Ye are the **salt** of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the **light** of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt 5:13-14

We are to live such lives, that we stand out, not by lofty words and pompous morality, but by being Christ-like. Doing this, we are going against the grain of this dark, evil world. If we were to be faithful to the point of living selfless, God honoring lives, the Rapture would not only be irrefutably proven, but profoundly felt by our absence.

Out of the ensuing chaos, would come a great cry of revival of those who realized what just happened. That "lie" (2 Thess 2:9-11) that people are given over too, would be harder to swallow. Revelation 7 tells us that 144,000 of the Twelve Tribes of Israel are sealed by God. They must be sealed to take up the job that the Laodicean church failed to do in these waning days.

Imagine how effective the Body of Christ 'could' have been if we just took the Bible in the manner it was meant to be?

#### **Sources:**

1. [What was the Great Disappointment? | GotQuestions.org](#)
2. [The Prophetic Years | Christian Worldviews and Bible prophecy](#)

## **Hurry Up and Wait**

In Defense of the Faith

Tuesday, August 16, 2011

Pete Garcia

For anyone that has served in the military, that title is not just a saying, it's a way of life. It is ingrained into you at boot camp and is prevalent throughout the rest of your career. They tell you to be in formation at 0545, for a 0630 ceremony (that's o' dark thirty in the AM for you civilian types).

Military have it bred into them to wait. Not only wait, but wait and be flexible, because the plans may change a half dozen times.

Waiting is not fun, but sometimes that doesn't mean it's not necessary. Waiting can be based on the time it takes for the preparation of something. I bring all this up, because I come across certain scriptures that strike me as odd, and being the curious person that I am, have to investigate it further.

Jesus, at the age of 12, lingered behind during the annual Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem, while His parents departed back with the convoy of friends and relatives. When they had realized He was not among the company, they returned, and after 3 days, they found Him in the temple, listening and asking questions to the scholars there. His parents, obviously distraught, questioned His motives in staying behind...

"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them."

Luke 2:49-50

And then Jesus returns with His family and other than a general statement in verses 51-52 about growing up, nothing else is mentioned until He is about 30 years of age (Luke 3:23) So why the delay of 18 years?

I understand that Jesus was fully God, and fully man, and I also understand that as a man, Jesus had to have some restrictions (self-imposed) so that He could function as a man. Could Jesus raise the dead? Yes. Did Jesus know when His Second Coming is? No. He said...

"But of that day and hour **knoweth no man**, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Matthew 24:36

And Jesus was a man, so if He knew, He would have been contradicting Himself by His very words. Which brings me full circle back to the original question; why the delay if He must be about His Father's work?

I believe, and this is holy speculation again, that Jesus didn't know.

And at 12, He earnestly wanted to begin and would have begun His ministry if given the chance, but that wasn't what the Father had planned, as the conditions were not right.

For one, John the Baptist had not began his ministry yet, as one who would 'prepare the way of the Lord'. John was only 6 months the senior of Jesus and nothing much is said about his childhood either, except:

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." Luke 1:80

As evidenced by Jesus' literal fulfilling of the Feast's and the prophecies through His birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection, precision timing is God's fingerprint of authenticity of the word given throughout the Old Testament.

Although the 12-year-old Jesus may not have fully understood the plan the Father had held for Him, He was obedient to the will of the Father. I do believe that Jesus knew before He came down as a man, that He would have to die for the sins of mankind, but I also believe the timing of everything was not 100% revealed to Him.

If Jesus was a man (He was), and men are subjected to the rules of time (we can look back, but can't see forward), then Jesus couldn't have known the timing of certain events. I believe He chose that limitation on purpose for this purpose:

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15

Fear of the unknown is a temptation. It is something uniquely human, as we ponder what life will bring us, or what tomorrow may hold. It is something that either brings curiosity, or much anxiety. And I believe that Jesus subjected Himself in every way to what we mortals have to struggle with. How else could Jesus be truly human if He knew everything about tomorrow? And it bears repeating, that Jesus was also fully God, and knew WHO He was prior to coming, and WHY He had to come. Which is where the Revelation of Jesus Christ (the book) comes into play, and why it was revealed to John to record for our benefit.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.." Revelation 1:1-2

In our attempt to become more Christ-like, let's take on the patience of the Lord, and rest fully assured that tomorrow belongs to our Father. He knows the number of the hairs of your head, and He cared enough to send His only Son to pay the price you couldn't pay.

Just knowing those two things, should remove any fear and anxiety on what the world may throw at us tomorrow, because we are in God's good hands.

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." John 10:28-30

## **The Days of Noah and Lot**

Witnessing Tools

Tuesday, August 23, 2011

Pete Garcia

Jesus accounts of two periods of time in human history, which will mirror the days when His coming would be imminent. We know by way of scripture, that Genesis 6 records that the earth was full of violence and men's hearts were only wicked continually. So it was the same, with the days of Lot, in that the people of those cities (Sodom and Gomorrah) lived in great wickedness.

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise, also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Luke 17:26-29

## **Noah's Day**

"And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;" 2 Peter 2:5

We know according to scriptures that 120 years was given to mankind as the ultimatum (Gen 6:3) before God destroyed the ancient world. The Lord did not consult man for this decision, and it's not really known if Noah knew he had 120 years specifically. God told him what would come, and what Noah had to do, and Noah was obedient in doing what he was instructed.

The 120 years was a countdown if you will. Between the time the countdown was given, and the time Noah would have the ark built and loaded, didn't mean Noah took 120 years to build it.

Noah had his first son Japeth at the age of 500 (Gen 5:32, 10:21), and the other's within 6 years or so of Japeth's birth (Gen 11:10, 9:24, 7:13), and Noah entered the Ark when he was 600 (Gen 7:6).

So the countdown began before the Lord told Noah to start building. But regardless, Noah was given enough time for his sons to be born and married and to have the ark built and loaded prior to the event. A lot can happen in 120 years.

### **Lot's Day**

To Lot's day, the LORD consulted with Abraham in Genesis 18 prior to destroying Sodom. In verses 16-33, Abraham is notified of the decision, and Abraham pleads for the righteous that 'might' be there in those plain cities. (Personally, I think he stops asking at 10 righteous persons because he might find out that Lot is not as righteous as he thought) But the LORD goes with two angels and investigated it for themselves, and the decision was made.

So, two events, one is global, the other local.

In the former, 120 years was given. In the latter, only a night was given. In the former a specific time was given: 120 years. The latter, time is not specified, but emphasized. The emphasis is on the urgency of the situation.

Holy speculation here: we don't know the time delay between Genesis 18 and 19, but we can deduce that it wasn't that long (days to weeks) the angels arrive at evening to Sodom, and by morning, they are hoofing it out, and told not to look back.

On the one hand, an event is foreordained and has a set time for it to occur. If Noah represents a 'type' of Israel that must be saved through the coming Tribulation, then Lot would appear to be the 'type' of modern Christian who is removed from the Tribulation.

God has after all moved kings and kingdoms over the last two millennia to arrive at exactly the date of May 14, 1948 allowing for Israel to become a nation again. [I liken this scene (the angels arriving at Sodom) as one of being very awkward for Lot. It's like, some unexpected visit by your boss to your home and it's a disaster, the kids are running around like crazy, and you'd really like to physically take the conversation somewhere else. Lot KNEW who the angels were, and KNEW the city was not a place he really wanted them to see after dark.]

So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city." But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking. Genesis 19:14

The Church (or Body of Christ) has over time gone through the seven various stages of the Church (Revelation 2-3) but comes to an end point with the backslidden and lukewarm church.

I think comparatively speaking; the Laodicean church has a lot in common with Lot. He was righteous, but he tolerated evil. He didn't make a stand, although his righteous soul was 'vexed daily'.

It wasn't politically correct to 'rock the boat', so he didn't make waves. When it mattered the most, he finally did and it was too late; no one would listen to him. Lot pleads with his son-in-laws who appeared to them as one 'mocking' or 'joking'. They didn't believe him. Considering the times we live in and the state of the Church today, it's not hard to grasp that the world has stopped believing Christ would actually return.

One last level of application I would like to make here. If Noah was a type of righteous believer, he was very aware of the times he was living in. Lot on the other hand, if a type of worldly believer, was not.

When the time came for Lot to be rescued, he was rescued just prior to the event without notice. Remember, the LORD did not consult with Lot before deciding to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, HE consulted with Abraham. Lot knew nothing of this decision until the angels arrived and told him it was time to leave.

## **Even the Elect**

### **Part I: Deception**

Witnessing Tools

Tuesday, August 30, 2011

Pete Garcia

If you've ever watched a Glenn Beck show, you've probably more often than not seen him at his ever-present blackboard, connecting the dots between players and agencies interwoven in an insidious socialist-progressive agenda to bring the US down from within.

That's kind of how the next three articles will attempt to do, in a less grandiose fashion of course as we apply his methodology of untangling the web of deceit that has been over-laid on humanity to the material at hand.

If I may add one additional allusion, in the movie The Matrix, the main character 'Neo', played by Keanu Reeves wakes up, or is woken up from reality, only to realize that what he thought was reality is the façade and the real is much, much worse.

Most people go through this life thinking that this is all there is, or that if it can't be put into a test tube and scrutinized six ways to Sunday by a team of scientists, it doesn't exist.

But we (bible believing Christians) know that there is more to this life than what we see around us. We know that there is a God, and there are echelons of angelic and demonic beings that move in and out of this world unseen by the human eye. We know and trust that belief because the bible has not only validated itself, over and over through validation by history, archeology, and prophecy, but because no man (or men) could have come up with a bible on their own. If they could have, they would have.

In the bible, the God-Man we know as Jesus Christ spoke concerning the end times that above all, deception would be great. So great in fact, that 'even the elect' would be deceived if it was possible. That is God saying that, not me.

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you."

Matthew 24:4

So, in light of the fact that none of us can peek into the future, we have to trust God's word and take heed to the various warnings issued by Jesus, Peter, Paul, James, and John as given them

by the Holy Spirit. So, we go with what we know and make the best reasonable explanations that we can.

One thing to consider though, is that prior to the age of global communications and instant newsfeeds, is that the whole world couldn't be deceived. Too many people were disconnected from other parts of the world, so the majority of people would not know what deception was going on regardless of where it happened, unless it specifically happened to them.

We know (to the best of our ability) that the Beast is the governmental/political system headed by the Antichrist that takes control during the Tribulation. We currently live in the 'age of information' and believe this to be the same age in which our Lord will return for a whole host of reasons.

The information age (and the rapidity in which knowledge doubles), is almost entirely reliant on the ability to process information through the use of computers and the internet. Adding to that, think about the current administration and their over-arching agenda too:

**A.** Blanket the entire US with free WI-FI

**B.** Cement governmental control over who uses it, what they've seen, and what they can see

Globalists seek to place the entire planet on the electronic grid. With the use of low orbiting satellites and taking advantage of the newly freed up 'white space' from television's frequency waves (since we've gone digital), this is a very achievable agenda. The initial plan was called 'WIMAX'<sup>1</sup> but that fell through to 'LightSquared'. Regardless of what plan actually succeeds, the plans are in the works to get everyone on board and 'on the grid'.

Remember a simple idea here, in that no matter what freebies are offered, or what promised legislation will fix, increased control is the outcome of whatever plan is put forward. Wi-Fi may be offered as free, but it will come at the cost of your anonymity.

### **Artificial Intelligence**

Now, think for a moment about the gigantic Google Corporation. They have been working on an Artificial Intelligence (AI) system for years now based off the studies that track all the trends, typed searches, information, street-views, maps, etc for the entire world. Google has more information at its disposal than all the libraries in the world combined.

The owners of Google preempted public panic by declaring the AI known as 'CADIE'<sup>2</sup> as an April fool's joke, but just imagine, if this thing "became" (maybe with a little supernatural help) self-aware and began taking over the global grid. Most of our public utilities and energy sources are controlled electronically already, but maybe "Sky Net" (i.e., The Terminator movie series) wasn't that far off the mark after all?

It seems silly, even fantastical for the most hardened skeptics out there, but it is not impossible. Considering that 20 years ago, the idea of holding a computer/phone /GPS/gaming device in the palm of your hand seemed ludicrous, yet here we are today. Most accredited universities have within their Computer Science departments active programs for the creation of Artificial Intelligence. At some point, in the not-too-distant future, man is going to cross that technological threshold between fantasy and reality and launch a system that is 'self-aware'. Scary thought!

### **Nephilim**

Many bible scholars attribute the statements Jesus made to end times of being similar to Noah's day (Matt 24:37-38, Luke 17:26-27) as veiled references to the return of the Nephilim (Hebrew for "Fallen Ones").

The supernatural has largely been hidden from man since biblical times, but here in the last 60 years or so, mankind has been eyewitness to increasingly strange goings-on in the sky and on the ground. Activity appears to be ramping up, and although widely accepted as plausible, no 100% verifiable proof has ever been substantiated. It is through movies and television that mankind has been desensitized to the mysterious. Just like with horror movies, man has been given an increasingly larger, violent, and realistic version of the same monsters over and over. What scared audiences 30 years ago, makes today's audience chuckle.

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matthew 24:23-24

Common themes amongst both horror and science fiction shows are alien invasions and global destruction events. They have to keep topping the previous shows and movies, so they are portrayed in more graphic and over the top sensationalistic ways to keep audiences coming back. This will have either one of two effects when fantasy does become reality:

- Either man will be mesmerized at what they see (awestruck)
- The deception will be subtle (acceptance of new normal)

I think the latter of the two is Satan's preferred method but considering the fact that Satan will realize he has but a short time, he will pull out all the stops. And this time, God will allow him too. Although we can only speculate as to what type of events will happen that aren't mentioned specifically in the Bible, we know what Satan has done in the past.

God destroyed the world once because of the great wickedness and violence upon the face of the earth. Out of that (or maybe because of it), an unholy union between fallen angels and mankind created a hybrid race of creatures that were neither men nor angels. Only Noah was found 'perfect in his generations'.

Many believe this to be a reference not to Noah's moral righteousness, but to his genetic purity. So, it is interesting that Jesus said that **no flesh** would survive if He did not cut short those days (Matthew 24:22). If God destroyed the world leaving only eight persons at the Flood, are we to not only consider weapons of mass destruction, but also technology, like before the Flood, which seeks to annihilate what it is to be human?

## **Weird Science**

Mankind is currently involved in cross breeding animal-human hybrids<sup>3</sup>. Man is constantly trying to push the boundaries between the biological and the technological. There is coming a point when man will cross that line of no-return, and this may in fact be the avenue in which man does it.

Whenever modern man broke through other 'impossible' barriers that people said couldn't be done... it was done. And between man's desire to live forever through artificial means (trans-humanism and singularity) and AI's ability to solve seemingly insolvable problems, it will be a Babel-like moment when God will have to step in and intervene, yet again.

"And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." Genesis 11:6

If man was capable of doing this many thousands of years ago, why does it seem unlikely that we couldn't achieve this again today in the Age of Information?

God dispersed man and changed languages to avoid them coming together in unison outside of His will and His time schedule. Yet, we are at that same point today through the use of the internet and rapid technological breakthroughs. Knowledge builds upon previously discovered

knowledge, so at the rate in which it is doubling and tripling, the time it takes to get there quickly diminishes.

Replace 'magic' with technology and add in some demonic influence and what you have is a recipe for evil incarnate perpetuated by mass mediums to large swaths of people. Man's propensity for evil will have the modern capability to quickly incorporate and disseminate large sums of information and application to a much larger audience today than ever before.

Remove God's hand of restraint from the world and the potential for wickedness will explode onto the world as not been seen since those doomed Antediluvian peoples of old.

*Initial attempt at writing this put this article at over 7 pages, so after speaking with Kari, we've decided to break this up into a trilogy. Part I is Deception, part II is Mystery Babylon Inc., and part III is 'The Mark'. I would like to send out a hat tip to Lou, Alf, and Kim for help with the ideas, and Kari for patiently helping with the formatting.*

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## **Mystery-Babylon Inc.**

### **Part II**

Prophecy - Signs

Tuesday, September 06, 2011

Pete Garcia

A couple of weeks ago, I had a very vivid dream about this very subject. In fact, I woke up from it (3AM-ish) to scribble down some notes. Normally, I don't remember my dreams, so it's a rare thing indeed for me to have one that vivid and also have the self-discipline to get up and actually write it down while simultaneously wiping the crusties from my eyes. I hope you'll join me on this excursion, and as always, a caveat to this interpretation: as the Apostle Paul succinctly put it, 'for now we see through a glass darkly'. (1 Corinthians 13:9-12)

Most scholars assumed that Mystery Babylon was simply the accompanying religious system that the Beast uses to promulgate his/their madness upon the peoples of the world. Yet, neither government nor religion cause people to be astonished, since they have been ever-present with mankind down through the ages. It has to be something that either the world has never seen before, or it is something that has not been seen for a LONG time and is present again in today's day and age. Two verses jump out at me that I think although they are of different topics, they're very much connected.

**"Here is wisdom.** Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number [is] Six hundred threescore [and] six." Revelation 13:18

**"And here [is] the mind which hath wisdom.** The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Revelation 17:9

Both instances call the reader to reckon a special understanding of what John was speaking of. One must deal with a specific number that will be utilized by the entire world in all manners of

financial transactions and as a matter of loyalty and worship. The other, is describing Mystery Babylon, and in this, John marveled at it:

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great **admiration**." Revelation 17:6

Greek Lexicon for the Textus Receptus version: *mezas thauma* = great admiration

~~1) a wonderful thing, a marvel~~

2) wonder

a) to wonder [with great wonder i.e.] exceedingly

The NIV states that John was 'astonished'. The ESV records it as 'marveled greatly'. The NASB states it as 'wondered greatly', so based on the context and the other translations; we can dismiss number one from the Greek Lexicon here as a possible alternative.

Apparently, this is something that really blew John away, which is saying a lot, considering all he had already been witness too. The angel goes on to tell him about what the Mystery is:

"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder..." Revelation 17:7-8

### **So what is Mystery Babylon?**

Unlike the beast, she is not a government. She rides the beast:

- She sits on many waters; meaning she is global. Verse 15 confirms this. (vs. 1)
- Kings have committed fornication with her, and the people of the world have been made drunk by the wine of her fornication; meaning mankind has not only gotten drunk, but has received "the bite", by her addictive lies. (vs. 2) ("the bite" = alcoholic term for hopelessly addicted)
- She sits upon the 'scarlet covered beast' full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns, meaning, she fully embraces a plurality of gods and beliefs, and implemented by the antichrist's governmental system. (vs. 3)
- She herself, is wrapped in purple and scarlet, holding a golden cup full of abominations, meaning she will be greatly lavished (this system) with great wealth and holds to this diabolical lie that tolerates everything, except Jesus Christ. (vs. 4)

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Revelation 17:5

- She is called 'Mystery', which means she is not the literal Babylon, but a symbolic picture of representing the 'Babylonian' system of control in which has enslaved the world from the beginning.
- She is called "Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the earth", meaning she is the originator of all false doctrines. Every evil and insidious religion, doctrine, belief system has their roots in her, regardless of where they are, or who started them. We know this because, Satan is the "Father of Lies" and if it is not of God, it's from Satan.

And what was the first lie? Genesis 3:4-5 says:

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Every religion and belief system, not based around the Gospel of Jesus Christ, inherently promotes this notion that we can be as gods. It is bathed in pride and sprinkled gratuitously with the idea that man can achieve salvation without God's help. It was the lie that led to God destroying the world by a global flood. It led God to separate mankind at Babel. It led to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It led to God having to come down here in person, and sacrifice Himself so those who believed, could be saved. Mystery Babylon is the lie that man can be as a god. She rides the revived Roman Empire while shrouding herself with the Babel globalist's mantra of, one race.

"And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Revelation 17:18

It's not until Revelation 17:18 that the woman finally described as 'that great city' who controls all the kings of the world.

Only two cities are called 'that great city' in the Bible: Nineveh and Babylon. She is a system of control over the rulers of the earth. At the Tower of Babel, mankind united under the world's first dictator, Nimrod. Mankind, united outside of the will of God, is a disastrous thing to behold indeed. God knew back at the Tower of Babel, that mankind under the leadership of a single man, would have reaped apocalyptic judgment back then.

It was God's mercy, not cruelty that separated mankind to prevent us from destroying ourselves many thousands of years ago.

### **Conclusion**

It is likely, that since the global infrastructure for global worship is already in place via the Roman Catholic Church network (more so than any other single religion) that this could easily and readily be put in place through the church as the mechanism of implementation.

Granted, any church still remaining beyond the rapture will likely be incorporated into this system, but the Roman Catholic Church already has a global reach and doctrinally doesn't have any qualms about re-writing their doctrine to stay relevant during this time.

*\*Not saying that all Roman Catholics are a part of this system, rather, the system itself is what I am referencing.*

The papacy has already shown a great willingness to compromise doctrinal beliefs to accommodate Islam and Protestants alike in a misguided effort to promote ecumenism.

As the EU waffles, the US sinks, and the 'Arab Spring' disintegrates, the Union for the Mediterranean (UofM) will take on a more significant responsibility in stabilizing the region, ultimately fulfilling the role of the revived Roman Empire. When the US collapses, what's left of our government may cede control of our military assets to NATO and the European Union, of which to prevent them (military weapons) from falling into the hands of rogue 'terrorists'.

Within the UofM, contains the previous ancient dynasties of Egypt, Greece, Rome, Persia and Assyria (Syria). The "Arab Spring" will shake up the current power holders in the Middle East and fill the vacuum with leaders who are willing to take war to Israel.

In lieu of their biblically prophetic defeats, most likely the UofM will be there to reorganize the pieces, just like they did after the Ottoman Empire's defeat at the end of World War I.

And since Rome is the geo-graphical hub there, it seems logical that it would also serve as its headquarters for both the religious and economic center that can control and direct this resurrected empire.

Maybe this was why John was astonished. At the time he recorded this (95AD), the Church in Rome was still Christian. He could also be astonished at the fact that the Roman Empire still exists at the time of the end.

Either way, as the old saying goes, 'All roads lead to Rome'.

## **The Mark**

### **Part III**

Prophecy - Signs

Monday, September 12, 2011

Pete Garcia

Imagine your next trip to the supermarket. You spend a couple of hours loading your cart up with goodies, you go to check out and your card is declined. How do you feel? Embarrassed, and then angry? Especially when you KNOW you have money in the bank.

So next, you excuse yourself really quick and you run over to an ATM to draw some cash out, but the same thing happens, no money and no service. Now what? Maybe you'll call the bank and give them a good 'whatfor' or you'll just tell the teller that something has come up and you will not be needing the groceries, either way, you walk out empty handed.

Now imagine that you can't do ANYTHING from filling up your car with gas to paying your bills because your currency is no longer valid.

Oh, and by the way, you're no longer receiving a paycheck from your employer.

You have to have this thing put on your hand or forehead to buy, sell, pay bills, buy groceries, hold a job, pay your mortgage, or anything else that requires a financial transaction for goods or services rendered. That's what it will be like when this kicks off inside the Tribulation.

Men, women, families once of good standing (with excellent credit scores to boot) suddenly find themselves the people they once looked down on with pity. But all you have to do is put this new mark on your forehead or hand (it really is painless) and all of your former luxuries will be restored. Oh, and by the way, once you do this, you'll be making the WORST decision in the history of mankind. At best, you'll be trading in 7 years of comfort, for an eternity in torment and darkness. At worst, you probably won't even live out the full 7 years. Sounds like a bargain huh.

Well, there is coming a day and age when this will become reality. Oh, it may not happen lickety split over night, but changes are coming. Kind of like how the music industry quit making cassette tapes and moved over to Compact Discs.

At some point, all the cassette tapes are relegated to the dustbin, and no one is making them anymore. You have NO choice but to buy a new radio that plays CD's. Or like when television left analog and went strictly digital. Did you have any say in it? No.

When the time comes for this 'new and improved' way of living/shopping/security/freedom comes about, either you get on board, or you get left behind. And by behind, I mean, utterly left to either starve or be killed by a tyrannical government.

My intent here is not to reveal some deep hidden mystery that only I am privy to (cause I'm not), but to share some thoughts peripheral to this event.

With the body of Christ removed at the Rapture, what semblance of organized "Christianity" that remains, will be both Christ-less and incapable of offering a path to salvation that hold to its ecumenical swaying. I offer up Roman Catholicism, simply because they're the most global "Christian" organization in the world. They've not shown any qualms or regret in the past in either killing true believers (Crusades, Inquisitions) or from embracing non-Christian beliefs in order to stay relevant (Paganism/Islam).

Chrislam anyone?

Mormonism may play a prominent role in this time as well, since they share such a striking similarity to Islam, embracing both universalism and to an extent, pantheism and will probably be the most organized and intact American religious system left standing, post-Rapture. Either way, what is left is an empty shell of pure religiosity that will be used as a tool to prepare the world to worship the satanically indwelt Antichrist himself.

That leaves only the practical matter of enforcement of said worship. The mark is not just a system of worship; it is a system of control.

Satan is not God, and at best, can only try to mimic God which is what he attempts to do with the mark. God has and does mark those that belong to Himself. (Deut 6:8; Ez 9:4; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13; Rev 7:3)

Satan counters with a system that is emplaced by the Antichrist as a logical, pragmatic choice to many of the world's problems. The world's economic systems are currently being shaken down so that it only leaves the mark as the only practical solution.

How does the world get out of the current financial quagmire that it is in? It is completely unrealistic to think the US could pay off 16 trillion dollars (let alone 65 trillion in unfunded liabilities). Our citizens have become dependent on many of the entitlement programs that have put much of the country on life-support.

If the government threatened to-

- a) impose huge cuts to MEDICAID, MEDICARE, Welfare, and Social Security in order to pay down the debt, or
- b) move off the dollar to a new system where no cuts were needed, I believe the US population would overwhelmingly elect the latter.

Greece, Paris, and London are just tiny microcosms of what we could expect in every major city, if strict austerity measures were put in place.

But it's not only the US, but the entire world that finds itself in the same debt-laden boat. The problem with the US though, is that we are supposed to be the big pole in the tent that holds up the whole show. If we go down, (as we witnessed in the 2008 financial collapse) we'll drag the world down with us.

Nations like Brazil, Russia, China, and France have only recently expressed openly, a desire to move away from the dollar into a basket of currencies. Whether it is digital credit, special drawing rights, or a new currency altogether such as the Phoenix, they will all fail. That is not my opinion on the matter that comes straight out of the Bible. The world ends up in a one global system, ran by one man, using one currency.

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." Revelation 13:16-18

### **The Man**

Many theories are out there as to who this man (Antichrist) is. Speculation aside, there is only one man named in scriptures whose number adds up to 666, and that is through the number of family members he has.

"The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six." Ezra 2:13

This man's descendants were among those Jews that had been taken captive by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar, and these were the remnant who was returning to Jerusalem at the

end of their captivity. I do not know if one of this man's descendants turns out to be the Antichrist or the False Prophet, but I do know that the Jews would never accept a man as Messiah who was not Jewish.

All we really know is that the Apostle Paul stated that he (the Antichrist) would not be revealed until the Restrainer (the Holy Spirit) is removed (2 Thess 2:7-8).

But to point out one last thing, Paul called the Antichrist the 'Son of Perdition'. The only other person called that in scriptures was Judas Iscariot (John 17:12). It's not any stretch of the imagination to assume that Paul was familiar with who Judas was, and what he did.

If we are to remain true to the symbolism used in Revelation, we then understand that in Chapter 13, the Beast that rises up out of the sea (sea=gentile nations) is a Gentile. The Beast that rises up out of the land (land=Israel) is a Jew (the False Prophet).

Maybe the False Prophet is hailed as the Messiah, but he in turn directs worship to the Antichrist who the Jews reject (for not being Jewish) which is why he commits the Abomination of Desolation spoken of in Matthew 24:15 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4 like his much earlier predecessor Antiochus Epiphanes IV (Daniel 11:30-32).

But those refusing to worship him, will have to suffer death or starvation for not receiving the mark since they will not be able to buy or sell.

For that to be a threat, technology first needs to exist to make that possible. We've spent the last 40 years being primed for this kind of system. From the gold standard to the fiat system at a national level, to the personal desensitization through the use of credit and debit cards, online banking, and moving society off cash to plastic. We've also had the conditioning in place by getting us used to instant (food, service, and solutions) and by marketing and advertisements that continually sell us the notion that we deserve the best, and nothing less will do.

The mark of the beast will obviously not be labeled as such, nor its consequences, but will be presented as the most logical, reasonable way forward in troubled times. We know that the mark is not used prior to the Tribulation, so whatever technologies are currently out there today (and there are many now that could fit the bill) are just being staged for the right 'crisis' to implement them when the time is right. Assuming that the Rapture of the Church is the trigger that causes worldwide chaos, I foresee a couple of possible avenues.

- If the Rapture is a standalone event, aside from the immediate effects of wrecks, looting, fires, etc. it will trigger an economic avalanche of panic in the US due to the sudden removal of millions of consumers, employers, employees, tax/mortgage/bill payers that will put the already fragile economy into panic mode. The government will bypass the constitution and move to join an economic union.
- If the Rapture is accompanied by some other cataclysmic event (EMP/Solar storm, nuclear or dirty bomb, or [mega-thrust](#) earthquake), the US may cede control of the government to the EU "temporarily" until the US can get back on its feet.

For those who are not taken in the Rapture, they can expect to be subjugated from the Wrath of the Lamb and an onslaught of satanic terror here on earth. For those who fall in line and take the mark, they can expect the following:

- Eternal damnation (Rev 14:11)
- Drink from the cup of indignation (unmixed) the wine of the wrath of God (Rev 14:10)
- Grievous Sores (Rev 16:2)
- Torment on earth (painful darkness, heat, 100 lb hailstones) (Rev 16:8, 10-11, 21)

Is it worth it? Is even the worst 7 years of your life worth an eternity in hell, let alone the hell on earth you will face if you 'opt out' for a few years of momentary comfort here on earth? Would you spend a million dollars on a car that you could only drive for a day? Probably not, so why would you take something infinitely worse? The technology exists today, the hour is late, and our Lord and Savior is returning just like He said He would.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12

## **Tempest in a Teacup**

Perspective on the News

Monday, September 19, 2011

Pete Garcia

In this down economy, if you want to pursue a lucrative, in-demand job in the coming months to years, I recommend being a Meteorologist. If what the Bible says is true about what is coming (and it is), the sky's the limit.

The phrase "tempest in a teacup" is an idiom, used as an expression of a small event that is blown out of proportion.

I don't remember where I heard it, or if I just had a wild hair moment when that phrase just popped into my head, but it's been there for more than a week, around the same time that Hurricane Irene was just a baby storm stirring out in the Atlantic. Now, I don't think the one has anything to do with the other but thought it fitting considering the current situation.

As I'm writing this ahead of time, I don't know what Irene will do, or how much damage she will wrench out on the east coast, but I'm hopeful that those that live in the way will heed the warnings and move to safety ahead of time.

It is becoming increasingly common to hear the phrase "Once in a \_\_\_\_\_ event" (insert appropriate time: decade, fifty-years, century, lifetime). It's becoming common place because those events, whether they are earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, blizzards, dead animals, solar storms are beginning to happen with an increased regularity. The fact that they are also happening with increased intensity should be a flashing neon sign warning us that the bridge up ahead is out.

It's odd that we've become so accustomed to natural catastrophes, no matter how bizarre or epic. Because these events seem to be occurring with greater frequency, it is chalked up to the way things have always been. In a way, we've become desensitized to them. So instead of recognizing them as harbingers of judgment, we attribute them to the god of randomness, which by the way, scientists today have come by via the 'Big Bang Theory'.

Ever since God was taken out of the classroom, and by extension, out of the textbooks as the rightful Creator God that He is, we (society) purposely attribute "Acts of God" to things other than God. We blame: El Nino, La Nina, global warming, SUV's, George Bush, the Tea Party, and America rather than accepting the truth that God is in control and has already told us what would come to pass. He said that these things would happen, and that conditions on this planet would continue to get worse as we approached the end of this age of man.

Jesus said, when asked, what would be the signs of the end of the age, and the things that would precede His Second Coming, He said this:

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be **famines**, and **pestilences**, and **earthquakes**, in divers' places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Matthew 24:7-8

"And **great earthquakes** shall be in divers places, and **famines**, and **pestilences**; and **fearful sights** and **great signs** shall there be from heaven." Luke 21:11

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, **until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled**. And there shall be **signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;**"

Luke 21:24-25

So, according to Jesus Christ, Creator of the Universe, and all therein, (John 1), when you see all these signs, they are not the end, but the beginning of the end.

They were likened unto 'birth-pangs' that would increase with rapidity and intensity. Here we are roughly 2,000 years later, experiencing for half a century, an increase in war, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and fearful sights not just in the Middle East, but all around the world.

We also happen to be that generation that watched Luke 21:24 be fulfilled literally in 1967, when the Jews recaptured east Jerusalem once and for all, reclaiming Jewish sovereignty over the entire city for the first time in roughly 2,000 years.

We can see all these things happening, yet the secular media, educational circles, and politicians are refusing to heed the warning that these natural calamities continue to increase around the world. Is it peculiar that America seems to be increasingly on the receiving end of said events?

Governor Perry was lambasted for calling for prayer because of the extreme heat and drought that plagued the Southwest for the better part of four months. Misguided somewhat, in teaming up with [Kingdom Now](#) and Dominionist folks, and I can't say whether what he did was scriptural, but at the very least, he attributed knowledge that it is God's rightful place as Creator in whom appeals should be requested too.

I often wondered how the people left on earth after the Rapture would not recognize the catastrophic Seals, Trumpets, Thunders, and Bowl judgments as anything other than that, judgments. But as is proven in our current dilemma (last 15 years or so) has not caused any massive revival and repentance to date. So with the removal of the Church from the earth, could one expect anything else then hatred and blasphemy from a Christ rejecting world? Certainly, many will come to Christ during the Tribulation, but for the majority of the 7 billion people on this planet, they will instead of repent, curse God and those in heaven for the series of destructive events that will increasingly plague the planet.

The truth is, is that the Bible was finished being written around 95AD. Yet, despite man's best efforts, it has neither diminished nor been duplicated. The things it states will happen, has and will continue to, because God is not bound by time like we are and has already seen how it all ends (Isaiah 46:9-10). He moved the Prophets and Apostles by the Holy Spirit to speak on what is to come.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21

Men, moved by God to write what would come. They weren't guessing, nor were they making up things to make a name for themselves. Jesus, spoke concerning what is to come at the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21). We see the birth-pangs coming more quickly and more intensely. We KNOW that things are not getting better, but worse because:

"... the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Romans 8:22-23

On one hand, the world ‘whistles past the graveyard’ while nervously asking the question: “it it really the end?”

On the other, when it (catastrophe) happens, they quickly try and explain away what clearly is judgment, as some kind of natural anomaly. As if things would settle back down and go back to normal.

While the world waits in trepidation for the next major catastrophe, we (Christians) should see this as our coming redemption as the Bride of Christ. Certainly, we feel for those who suffer in the tragedy, and should always be ones to help physically, financially, and spiritually to those who suffer loss, but we can’t stop these events any more than an ant can stop you from walking down a sidewalk.

It has put us in a bittersweet position, rejoicing in what these signs mean, but remorseful for those that suffer through them.

As we extend the hand of fellowship and charity to fellow believers, and become the salt and light to the lost during these troubling times, let us remember the words from the Apostle Peter:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"

2 Peter 1:19

## **Currahee**

Witnessing Tools

Monday, September 26, 2011

Pete Garcia

Does it seem like it is increasingly harder and harder to find a good church? I’m not talking about the mega-church with its own zip code and parking attendants, but the kind that when you worship, you feel the presence of God in your midst. Where the Gospel is not abandoned for flowery upbeat, self-help sermons on how to be a better you, but the kind that puts the old rugged cross at the crossroads of every man and woman’s life.

Increasingly, as we see the end approaching, we see the apostasy and heresy that have always been present to varying extents within Christendom, start to take over and what was once a nuisance, is now a serious threat to the very Gospel we cling too. More and more born-again believers are departing their churches for worship in homes or with friends, rather than part-taking in the emergent or ecumenical movements that are sweeping across the land. For this, the born-again believer has become increasingly isolated.

“The truly spiritual man is indeed something of an oddity. He lives not for himself but to promote the interests of another. He seeks to persuade people to give all to his Lord and asks no portion or share for himself. He delights not to be honored but to see his Saviour glorified in the eyes of men. His joy is to see his Lord promoted and himself neglected. He finds few who care to talk about that which is the supreme object of his interest, so he is often silent and preoccupied in the midst of noisy religious shoptalk. For this he earns the reputation of being dull and over serious, so he is avoided and the gulf between him and society widens. He searches for friends upon whose garments he can detect the smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces, and finding few or none he, like Mary of old, keeps these things in his heart. It is this very loneliness that throws him back upon God.”

-AW Tozer: The Saint Must Walk Alone

It's hard not to feel some sense of isolation here in this day and age when so many churches run luke-warm. My intent here is not to expose some new shocking detail about the cults or the pseudo-quasi religions masquerading as Christianity, but to encourage those of you who find it increasingly difficult to find commonality amongst other people, especially Christians, in these waning days as we wait upon the Lord to return. It seems the longer we wait, the less people we find that simply hold to the simplicity of the Gospel. Paul stated THIS was the gospel he preached, and the ONLY one that saved:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

(1 Corinthians 15:1-6)

Because the Gospel we hold to runs so counter-intuitive to anything the world offers, it continually separates us from the expanding theological persuasion that there are many paths to God or that God is in everything. It (the world) is forcing us either to assimilate or face destitution. Surely, our growing cultural isolationism is a testament to the lateness of the hour in which we find ourselves. Not only are those who oppose the Gospel message more numerous, but they do so now with increased vitriol and hostility.

This not just in the Muslim world, where there was always a certain level of intolerance, but in the "Christian" westernized nations that have church histories dating back many centuries have they all but shunned the evangelical Christian. But this is no surprise to the biblically literate, as it is stated in numerous places that we would increasingly find ourselves at odds with the world (1 Timothy 4, 2 Timothy 3, 2 Peter 2-3) Jesus said:

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:18-19)

We find it harder and harder to find pleasure these days, so dedicated to the god of this world. Nothing is sacred anymore; nothing is so pure or innocent that it can't be tainted by some scandal or depravity.

Our longing to be with Christ, goes on day after day as seemingly unanswered, many lose the faith and wander off seeking enlightenment from some other group or medium. Then there are those who remain so fixed on our deliverance, that they move from event to event, hoping that it means some more conclusive sign that our enthusiasm is not misplaced. Quite often they are disappointed that the Lord did not come at some appointed time.

But our hope isn't in the Rapture itself, although we look forward to that day with much anticipation, it is in the person who is doing the 'catching up'.

If we have faith in who Jesus is, then we know that His promise (Jn 14:1-3) is not delayed for the sake of delaying. We know that His delay is so that all the men and women that could be saved, would be (2 Peter 3:9). But even though the knowledge of that delay is justified still does not fully satisfy our desire to leave this fallen world and be with our Redeemer. It just makes the understanding a little more tolerable to bear.

I believe that the reason the Bible spends so much time emphasizing that we love one another, is that Jesus knew how difficult this world would be for the believer. We are sojourners in this world, pilgrims passing through (1 Peter 2:11). Many who have gone before us did not see the

promise of the Messiah within their lifetimes, and they often struggled with profound difficulties we here in modern America could barely fathom.

And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. (Hebrews 11:36-40)

We are the arms for the Body of Christ here on this earth now. Having received our salvation by the redemptive blood of Jesus Christ and being sealed unto the day of promise by the Holy Spirit, we are to reach out to our brothers and sisters showing them a true, genuine concern and caring, that the world is incapable of offering. In lifting each other up, we strengthen and encourage the remaining body of Christ as whole here. This shows the world something that is so strange and obscure that they can't wrap their mind around it. That our hope is not based on money, government handouts, entitlement programs, or anything else on this earth. Our hope doesn't even lie in this realm of life. We realize that our life, even if to 120 years of age, is a blemish on a grain of sand compared to eternity (Ps 103:15). Our reward is forever in the company of the Creator of this universe.

Don't lose hope, even though our world is growing darker. It only means your light will shine that much brighter. It will draw some, but it also makes us an easier target to spot out by those who hate Christianity in the world. As time continues, it will seem like the darkness is threatening to engulf us all and swallow us up in an ocean of violence and depravity, it is at times like these that we must stand together. We must build each other up and pray for brothers and sisters in Christ, to stand strong and not lose hope. It is always darkest before dawn, and when our day of redemption does come, all these troubles will be over for us as we rule and reign with our Lord and Savior forever. Hold fast to this promise:

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."  
(Revelation 3:10)

By the way, in case you were wondering, Currahee is a Cherokee word which means "we stand alone together". Hold fast to the faith and keep running for that crown. Our family may dwindle in size, but God always has His remnant.

## **Already, Not Yet**

In Defense of the Faith

Monday, October 03, 2011

Pete Garcia

As I was leaving work today, I stopped by the small base Post Exchange (PX) on the way home in hopes of finding some flowers to take to my wife.

I was pulling into the parking lot of the PX, and a thought occurred to me for a new title. Generally, 'Already, Not Yet' is generally associated with Kingdom Now [theology](#) which I outright reject for a whole host of [reasons](#). But the title intrigued me and decided to see where it led. As I got out of my car and began walking across the parking lot, I heard the trumpet blast.

And for the briefest of moments, I thought, this is it, the Rapture, but reality quickly set in and I recognized the sound of that particular tune. It was not the Trump of God, but only the loud lonely sound of the [Retreat](#).

According to the Army Field Manual (FM) 22-5, if you're outside and you hear this, you must stop, turn toward to the flag pole and render a salute during the second portion of Retreat. (Subsequently, according to Private Murphy's Law, if you're in a hurry to get somewhere, you'll always catch either Retreat or Revelry).

I did, and I was, but as I stood there in the hot desert sun, I thought to myself I had somehow misjudged my timing. After it was over, I looked at my watch and realized mine was several minutes behind as it had still not reached 5pm. According to my watch, I had several minutes to make it from my car into the store. But unfortunately, Retreat isn't set to my clock, it's set to the one at the Division headquarters.

Seeing that this year's Rosh Hashanah would have been an optimal Rapture window, with the significance of it being 2011, pushing seven years out for the Tribulation would make it exactly 70 years since Israel had been reborn as a nation. Needless to say, I was disappointed, but I think God uses these little moments to remind us, that we are on His clock, not the other way around.

I'm sure there were many people, throughout the last 2,000 years who had wished for the Lord to return during their lifetimes, and yet, we are still here today. Had Jesus returned back then (pick a date) many of us probably wouldn't be here today to talk about it. But we do know two immutable facts:

- 1) That the world as we know it now, isn't just going to keep going on forever
- 2) Jesus Christ will return for His Church

## **Relevance**

I think we can empathize with the dilemma the Apostle Paul found himself in Philippians 1:21-26...

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again."

As Paul had gotten a sneak peek at the other side (2 Corinthians 12:1-4) and KNEW what he was missing out on, I don't think he asked the question lightly.

For many of us, the desire to be with Christ exceeds any promise of wealth or popularity this world could ever afford us. Yet, I'm sure there is much work left to be done here for the Kingdom.

So far as we know, we only have this one life to serve after we called, to earn that exceedingly great reward for our faithful service to Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:24). We don't work FOR our salvation, but because OF our salvation. We strive to be the salt and light to a lost and dying world that is around us.

Increasingly, that job seems to get harder and harder. But as my wife is fond of saying, we might be the only Gospel some people ever read.

As to the timing of our eventual departure, there are two verses that need to be reconciled in order for us to come to any sensibility about the Rapture of the Church. In the Gospel according

to Matthew, we are told by Jesus that of that, 'no man knows the day or hour' (24:36). Many years later, we are told by the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:4 that...

"But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief."

On the one hand, Jesus chastised the Pharisees and Sadducees of His day for not recognizing the time of their visitation (Matthew 16:1-3). Not only had they disregarded a literal interpretation of the Old Testament's prophecies, but they refused to acknowledge Jesus as Messiah even after all the miracles they had been witness too and His legitimate offer of the Kingdom.

The 400 "Silent Years" had been fulfilled perfectly in all that had been given to Daniel for the rise and fall of Gentile kingdoms, as well as the Seventy Week's prophecies (Daniel 9:24-27). Had they (the Pharisees) been as attentive as those Magi who came bringing gifts to the King at Jesus's childhood, they would have realized who He was (Matthew 2:1-3).

On the other hand, we are currently inhabiting a Dispensation with no specific end point in sight, nor any signs or events that we could recognize to signal our imminent departure. What we do see are the signs that the coming Tribulation is headed our way, and those signs are aplenty. As the Rapture precedes the Tribulation, our departure is all that much sooner.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout the scriptures, we are given enough prophetic evidence to know where we are on the timeline, but not enough to nail down anything concrete for the removal of the Church. The Second Coming can be pinpointed almost to the day once it begins, but the Rapture could happen at any time. But could it really? I mean, could the Rapture really have happened 628 years ago? 1000? 10?

If you hold to Revelation 2-3 being the timeline of the entire Church age, then the answer would probably be no. There needs to be time for the Church age to run its course. That couldn't have happened before the Laodicean age of the church, which didn't start in earnest until the middle of the 19th century with the introduction of German Higher Criticism and philosophical Existentialism which emphasized a subjective interpretation, rather than taking the text as it is.

Those lines of thought sufficiently watered the gospel down enough through the seminaries to effectively weaken a whole generation's worth of pastors that would infiltrate almost every denomination in the US and Europe.

What Satan didn't count on, was the resurgence of a literal interpretation of the Bible sparking Premillennial Dispensationalism. Those handful of men (Darby, Larkin, Scofield, Ironside, Chafer) would shake up the theological world in whom the ramifications thereof, we are just now seeing a decline in. As the Lord tarries, so that men and women could/would be saved, more and more Christians are looking for alternate explanations for why the Lord has not returned yet.

Don't lose heart, the Lord our God keeps His promises, and we currently have the nation of Israel as a testimony to that. Although we can't see the big picture yet, He can. He will return at a moment in time that will surprise the world, but not those of us who are watching and waiting.

In the Army, when a unit is called to attention, they are given a preparatory command as in: "Company, Attention!" At the word 'Company', the unit will come to expect a follow-on order of either "Attention, Parade Rest, or Rest" as one of the commands that could be given.

I think collectively we can sense the nearness of our Lords' return because of all the signs we do see, and we are anticipating the command (Army speak here: means jumping the gun) where you act on the preparatory command rather than the command itself. So, I think there is the balance between Jesus saying we can know the season, but not the particular day or hour of the season.

I think we are ALREADY in that season of our Lord's imminent return, but we have NOT YET received our deliverance from this fallen world and the wrath that is to come. Take solace in John's advice given below.

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." 1 John 3:2-3

## **Escape From the Fallen Planet**

Prophecy - Signs

Monday, October 10, 2011

Pete Garcia

Growing up, I used to listen to a Christian pop-rock band called 'Crumbacher', who released an album in the mid-80's called 'Escape from the Fallen Planet'. It was full of keyboard riffs and very 1980s, but looking back on it, I've grown quite fond of the concept of it as in regards to the Rapture.

So, it's not that I'm a fan of escapism, but of one day being reconciled to my Creator and becoming what I was intended to become. Not a tent of flesh, prone to sin and the fallenness of this planet, but a building from God in whom we long to be clothed with. (2 Cor 5:1-5)

As Christians, our hope, our reason for drudging on day after day lies in the reality, that Jesus is God, and He promised that one day He would return for us so that we could be where He is.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3

So where are we?

I've often wondered how long exactly the Lord would tarry. We know His return is imminent in the sense that it could happen at any moment, but would He stay His hand another few decades or come before the end of the month? Has 2000 years been enough? Or does the increasing population on planet earth necessitate a longer time needed to fulfill the final harvest of men and women's souls? No one currently alive can peak into the future, and we are explicitly told by Jesus Himself that 'no one will know the day or hour' of His coming.

So how do we gauge where exactly we are in history?

Aside from scriptures, that leaves only looking around at our current state, and looking into the past to see where we've come from. We also know that certain prophetic events that are currently in motion, have if you will, a shelf life. They just can't continue to go on and on without some sort of finality to them.

I have a personal theory that men like Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Sir Isaac Newton, Johannes Kepler, Ludwig van Beethoven, Benjamin Franklin, and Albert Einstein weren't really gifted with supernatural intelligence. God just allowed them to use ALL of their brains, unlike most of us who only use a small percentage at any given moment.

These men were sprinkled throughout history to allow mankind to progress at a set pace, but not too quickly. As we have progressed through time, more and more of these men (and women) appear on the scene to quicken the pace in which we progress.

But those times have changed, in large part due to the invention of the computer and the internet (thanks Al Gore!). The amount of information available to anyone with access to it is

mind boggling. Today's average person has more information at their fingertips than the smartest men of ages past had their whole lives, which is why we keep leap frogging (technology wise) at an incredible pace. So based on that, we have a long, long, long period of time when man was limited as far as ability goes, and only just recently (last 100 years or so) have we exponentially exploded with a technological race unmatched in all our short 6,000 year history.

The questions are these; if we are physically and biologically the same people we were 500, 1000, 2,000 years ago, why did it take so long for us to get to where we are today? Why was man limited to the speed of horse up until the early 20th century? How could we go from building the Great Pyramid before the Noachic Flood to living in mud huts for the better part of 4,000 years following? What do these have to do with the Rapture of the Church?

### Dispensations and Creation

Looking at the big picture, God has allowed mankind a set amount of time. From Adam until the 2nd Coming, there is a predetermined number of years that mankind will be able to remain in a fallen state and populate this world, conducting what he/she thinks is their affairs in this realm of reality. Based solely on the history we have written for us in scriptures, we can know generally how much time has gone by. So let's do some simple calculations and see how much time man roughly has:

If the Age of Man is divided up into Seven parts, matching the order of Creation, and the Seven Letters to the Seven Churches in Revelation marking the age of the Church, it would appear like this:

- Day 1: Age of Innocence: Adam's creation to Fall (unknown time)
- Day 2: Age of Conscience: Fall to Flood (1656 years roughly)
- Day 3: Age of Human Government: Flood-Abraham (427 years???)
- Day 4: Age of Promise: Abraham till the Law (430 years)
- Day 5: Age of Law: Moses until the Cross (1500 years)
- Day 6: Age of Grace (Church): From Pentecost till today (1979 years)
  - Ephesus (30-100 AD)
  - Smyrna (100-300 AD)
  - Pergamos (300-606 AD)
  - Thyatira (606 AD- Tribulation)
  - Sardis (15th Century-Tribulation)
  - Philadelphia (19th Century-Rapture)
  - Laodicea (20th Century-Tribulation)
- Day 7: Kingdom Age: From 2nd Coming until Great White Throne Judgment (1000 years)

The total brings you to about 5,592 years, give or take a few.

\*I'm not dogmatically holding to these numbers, just throwing these out there to give the general idea

So based on the numbers, IF Creation were represented by one thousand years for each day, mankind would have 7000 years. But we know that the times do not line themselves up all nice and neat, and some periods are longer than others, but in the end, they would total 7,000 years.

Seven, scripturally signifies perfection and completion. Since man was created on the 6th day of Creation, it signifies man's imperfection (compared to God) but also may show something else.

Man, created in the image of God, was the pinnacle of Creation. He was the highest order created within the 6 days of Creation, and the world was given unto him to have dominion over (Genesis 1:28).

We currently inhabit (somewhere near) the 6,000th year of mankind's existence here on earth that we know of, by recorded history.

At the present moment, mankind is at the pinnacle of his existence, having mastered space flight, instantaneous information, and supersonic travel. We have explored the known and unknown world, mapped the oceans, discovered the complex DNA double helix, and sent our cameras deep into space to explore the rest of the universe. We have within the past century created weapons so devastating that we could destroy our world many times over.

We have created a level of luxury attainable by the average person that only the wealthiest royalties of ages past, could only dream of. (Think ice cubes, instant meals, automobile travel, television, etc.). It would seem, that man has finally reached again that time when he has dominion over the earth. Granted, man has coexisted with nature throughout our short time here, but it's only been in the last 100 years that we've harnessed electricity, divided the atom, pulled oil from the depths of the earth, etc. Man has not conquered natural catastrophes, but we have learned how to forewarn ourselves of everything from hurricanes and tornados to earthquakes and solar storms.

If for nothing else, based on our level of achievement alone, we should realize that we are the well toward the end of the timeline, on the very trailing edge of our time left in this day and age we live in. With prophetic scriptures pinpointing exact events that would transpire coming to the forefront of the news daily showing without a doubt, both the validity and accuracy of the Bible telling us where we are.

But the earth itself is in revolt, groaning with birth pangs, awaiting its liberation, as are we Christians.

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Romans 8:22-23

Maybe not the best analogy, but the only thing that comes close is in the same lines that animals can sense an earthquake before an earthquake strikes, we (Christians) can sense that our deliverance from this fallen planet is very close at hand. We can feel it in our bones that our time here is about done, and it makes us all the more excited. Unlike our unbelieving friends and neighbors who trudge along thinking that this life is all there is, we have something glorious and grand that we look forward to with great anticipation:

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:13-14

There is an escape off this fallen planet, and it is only attainable by the forgiveness of sins, through the shed blood of God Himself on Calvary's cross, some 2,000 years ago. Jesus died so that man could inhabit eternity with Himself in perfect harmony.

He endured allowing His creation to beat Him, spit on Him, pull His beard out of His face, and curse Him so that you and I could become the 'righteousness of God' through His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

It is only natural that we 'groan' within ourselves, longing for the redemption of our fallen bodies we inhabit, to finally attain that perfect body, which does not sin (nor wants too) to match that 'new creation' we became when we first believed (2 Corinthians 5:17, Eph 1:13-14) because of our sealing by the Holy Spirit.

If only God the Father knows, and we have received salvation through God the Son, and are currently being indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, and they all belong to the same Tripartite Godhead, it is no wonder so many of us believers' sense that are redemption draws nigh.

From the beginning, Satan has been seeking to undo the Promise God made in Genesis 3:15, beginning with the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. Six thousand years is about the end of the line for man on this earth, and if for nothing else, written history can only trace back about that long, it would seem that the shelf life for fallen man is about to expire.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:2-3

## **Best Laid Plans**

Globalism - Ecumenism

Sunday, October 16, 2011

Pete Garcia

With the release of the explosive new book by Pat Buchanan, "Suicide of a Super Power", some hard truths are laid to bare that almost everyone acknowledges, but few dare to speak out loud.

His accompanying [article](#) discusses the failure of (and/or unraveling) of multiculturalism and trans-national globalism, back to a creeping nationalism that puts one's own nation ahead of the global good. From purely a American political conservative perspective, he is dead right on all charges.

But from a prophetic perspective, he is missing the forest for the trees. The Bible predicts a coming system that locks the world under the control of just one man, the Antichrist.

"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." (Revelation 6:2)

Here is where Mr. Buchanan both hits and misses the point. Yes, these problems are real, but they are also being orchestrated to illicit a predetermined outcome. He nails the problems we face today, not just as a nation, but as a westernized people. He accurately pinpoints the root of the problems that plague the Western world in an honest, refreshing, yet blunt manner.

Where he misses though, is that this is somehow lost by the powerful [elites](#) and we are spiraling wildly out of control. As if this end-state isn't where they intended to take us from the very beginning.

Truth be told, they are never going to let nationalism come back in, not at least in the 20th century model we have grown accustomed to. But the minute anyone begins to start talking about a 'One World Order' or 'global elites', you are quickly marginalized as a 'conspiracy theorist' and shut down as anyone with anything credible to say. But let me let you read a handful of their own disturbing [words](#) for yourself.

These aren't anonymous left-wing bloggers hiding behind their IP addresses, these are men of state, with power, influence, and resources. Except for Congressman McFadden, (a precursor to

Ron Paul if you will), the rest have spoken of and actively worked for this one world system to come about for the better part of a century.

According to the Bible, there are various power players at the end; King of the North, South (Daniel 11:40-45), Kings of the East (Revelation 16:12), and the Ten nation Revived Roman Empire (Daniel 7:20-25).

Now, there are two variations at play here: one is an economic mechanism that absolutely forces all to participate and punishes by death those that refuse. This comes about by the mark of the Beast system, which not only infers swearing loyalty and worship to the Antichrist in whom the False Prophet orchestrates, but apparently is the only system anyone can use in order to do anything. (Revelation 13)

The other is of power and control that begins to build outside of the economic aspect. These rulers can accumulate power under this new system and eventually attempt to revolt against the Antichrist. But they still fall under the economic system that Antichrist creates...or enforces. To make this whole thing plausible, means that our current structure HAS to change. If everything were going along swimmingly, it would make this new system not only unattractive, but irrelevant.

Issues such as; famine, terrorism, failed economies and currencies, insurmountable personal and national debt, dwindling natural resources, lawlessness, and low birth rates prompt panicked elected leaders to return their State back toward nationalism and isolationism as a natural reaction. In panic mode, the mob thinks irrationally, and willingly give up rights and liberties in favor of security and a return to the status quo. But, the real power brokers behind the scenes are neither elected nor worried about this, because after all, they are the ones orchestrating it.

But these daunting issues are for the most part artificial and have been manufactured to canalize the masses to trade liberty for security. Globalists, whether their modus operandi is to save the planet or to enslave it, only use the appearance of failure to secure more control. Failing global policies never point back to a retreat towards nationalism for them but becomes the impetus to hasten the necessity for even greater speed at which control is cemented so they don't fail. (think 'more stimulus').

So, although on its face, it appears that the west is going down the tubes fast and furiously, it is a facade generated to dismantle the current structure we are locked into. But this too has a downside. The men and women who dream of one day falling in under the banner of a One World Government utopia, don't live forever either. This is along the same lines I mentioned in a previous brief that these people and their nefarious plans have a shelf life.

World wars, impossible debts, terrorism, and the myriad of other problems were created to push the world under one system, much the same way the US has generated artificial financial (and completely avoidable) catastrophes that in the end, only end up consolidating more centralized power and control (think TARP 1,2, & 3, IRS, Mortgage Collapse, the Federal Reserve, etc.).

Let me put this to you as an example: You sit on the board of directors for the most powerful company on earth, and your company's founding charter forbids the dissolution of company sovereignty. Would you elect your most junior and inexperienced employee to be Chairman and CEO? Probably not. You would want your company to succeed, so you put in your best and brightest.

But if the answer is yes, then why? The only reason I can see for deliberate sabotaging of your own company would be if you were working toward a merger or takeover with or by another powerful company. You would want ignorance and incompetence to rule the day so you can artificially create the dire dilemma that would necessitate the need for merging or being allowed

to be bought out. If you had a competent and experienced CEO, he or she could potentially lead the organization out of the dilemma and fix said problems without the threat of going bankrupt.

If you have your lightweight in there, that neither knows how to fix or even who to consult on fixing the problems, you are speeding up the process so you can bankrupt the company and force a change. It is like betting against a stock you know will tank because you have insider information. Mergers and/or takeovers tend to create huge dividends that await those in-the-know on the other side.

Why else do you think a virtual unknown (and still is) was thrust to the front runner of the Democratic party nomination in 2008 to run the most powerful nation the world had ever seen. That's why the leftist elites spent the last four years of the Bush presidency bashing him so relentlessly, that by the time the 2008 elections rolled around, the general uniformed public would vote for anyone, other than a Republican. The uniformed masses then voted for a man who ran on the vaguest of all political platforms in the history of US (Hope and Change), and won.

The powers that be, are tired of waiting for this system to come, and know that with a little nudge, they can get the ball rolling a whole lot faster. They spent all their long academic lives studying globalists like Adolphus Huxley, David Rockefeller, Woodrow Wilson, Henry Kissinger, and others who have come and gone (or are about too). These men were, in their heyday, the movers and the shakers. But that 'utopian' world still hasn't happened yet, and this lawless generation's patience has long grown thin.

So, what appears as a cornucopia of unpredictable calamities, are really being orchestrated to get a knee-jerk reaction out of uniformed people, to cede more of their freedoms over faster.

In all honesty, Globalists wear both Republican and Democrat suits, but the Democrats of late have just been more overt about it.

We are as a nation, currently in such a state of moral and cultural relativism, that it doesn't matter anyway. This whole process was a century in the making and can generally be looked at as a three-pronged approach, with many forks and branches that would take too long to list here. But here are the nuts and bolts of the progressive agenda:

- Remove God from Society: from schools, government, and public places
- Bend the Constitution incrementally and continually until it breaks or is irrelevant
- Dumb down the masses through the arts (tv, music, movies) and by relaxing the learning standards through the education system

You therefore end up with a Godless society that doesn't even know what right looks like anymore, much less have the moral backbone to stand up for what right is when they do see it with a Constitution, that has been tinkered with so much and so often, that legalists can interpret it to mean anything, while the general population doesn't even know what it says, nor do they care.

But to the careful student of prophecy, and particularly those who hold a Pre-Tribulational view of Eschatology, you need not worry. We have already read the end of the book and know how this is all going to end.

We know that we are on God's timeline, and He is not going to let things progress faster than He will allow them too.

Which is why we have a nation in debt up to its eyeballs, yet still functioning economically. Its why Israel is surrounded by enemies armed to the teeth just waiting to destroy her...yet are holding back. It is why the US Constitution is still the biggest barrier to a one world political

system, and why it hasn't been discarded yet. It is why technological breakthroughs have only progressed as far as they have, and no farther.

The Holy Spirit's restraining force is the dam, holding back the floodgates of hell, currently waiting to burst. But King David, moved by the Holy Spirit 3,000 years ago has already answered this for us. (Psalm 2:1-12)

## **Crushed**

Prophecy - Signs

Monday, October 31, 2011

Pete Garcia

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); (Revelation 2:8-9)

The Church of Smyrna is alive and well in the world today. Oh, you won't see their Sunday sermons on the church channels with a fancy jacketed, smooth talking televangelist promising spiritual gifts for financial donations. They don't have rent-a-cops directing traffic in and out of their parking lots on Sunday mornings. They don't have the full ensemble band with accompanying choirs that belt out the newest gospel hits on stage. No, you've probably never heard of the cities these churches are in, and you may have not even heard of the countries they're in either. But every day, men, women, and children are killed, tortured, and thrown into prison, for their faith in Jesus Christ.

There are different kinds of persecution ongoing in the world today. In the parts of the world where there is dictatorial rule or Islamic theocracies, a [physical](#) tyrannical persecution exists, that actively engages in barbarous acts against Christians. It is a tearing down or crushing of the saints. An attempt to stamp it out through force, and pain of death. Although Christ said that the gates of Hell would not prevail over the Church (Matt 16:18), He did promise that we would have tribulation in this life (Jn 16:33).

I like this definition of Smyrna that the MacArthur New Testament Commentary provides:

"The Greek word translated 'Smyrna' was used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) to translate the Hebrew word for myrrh, a resinous substance used as a perfume for the living (Matthew 2:11) and the dead (John 19:39). Its association with death perfectly pictures the suffering church at Smyrna. Like myrrh, produced by crushing a fragrant plant, the church at Smyrna, crushed by persecution, gave off a fragrant aroma of faithfulness to God."

## **Sticks and Stones**

Here in the West, it is not so much a crushing of the saints, as it is a wearing down. Increasingly frivolous lawsuits and hostile [legal](#), [political](#) and [economic](#) policies are intended at making Christianity as popular as the Bubonic Plague. Mainstream media and cultural arts [belittle](#) and make light of our salvation and our Savior by mean spirited sarcasm and [blasphemy](#) to the point that those under this intense kind of scrutiny may prefer death rather than the mental and emotional anguish that accompanies those it targets.

This type of persecution is purposeful, insidious, and is to be expected. Although it doesn't cost believers in a life-or-death sense of the word, it overwhelms one with the feeling of compromising for the sake of getting along, which is really the goal. In this sense, power is attributed to a name or label that conjures up such vile repugnancy, that a person would do or say anything to avoid being labeled as such. Instead of standing up for your beliefs, you remain

either silent or ambiguous, or retract your afore statements to appease those who are “offended”.

Stand your ground, and your name, reputation, and livelihood are likely to be ground into the mud. This is increasingly reaching it’s tentacles into the pulpits of America.

Remember the old saying, ‘sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me’? Well, if you’re in Pakistan, and some Imam labels you as a blasphemer of the Koran, well, those words are enough to stir an angry mob your way that will probably do more than just break your bones.

It’s becoming that way here as well. If you dared to preach the Gospel amid a group of young angry liberal folks these days, you’d most likely have to have the police intervene to save your skin. Same angry mob.

### **Compromise**

Since the 19th century, an intense battle has been waged for the hearts and minds of seminary students here in the US and in Europe. So much compromise has been introduced into the church, that whole generations of pastors have had a deadening effect on spiritual growth in the west.

Augmenting the liberalization of the church, was the 80-year marginalization process of the church and believers here in the US by way of education, television, movies, and popular music, Christianity (or at least Judeo-Christian ethics) is going the way of the Dodo bird.

Year after year, well-meaning and good intentioned families, pastors, and parishioners stood by and did not stand up for the family, or for marriage, and both today are up for grabs as to what they mean. Christians stood back and let the courts allow abortion on demand to become the law of the land, and now, 50 million abortions later...we could easily stand in condemnation by the ancients Phoenicians who made their children pass through the fire as they worshipped Moloch. (Lev 18:21, Jer 32:35). It was only a matter of time before the tide turned against Christianity again. This time, it’s happening in the last bastion of free earth.

Reminds me of what [Martin Niemöller](#) once said:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out -- Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out -- Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out -- Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me -- and there was no one left to speak for me.

Although not persecution in the classical sense of the word, false and heretical doctrines poison the churches wherever they are allowed in. There is an intense effort afoot to force the evangelical Christians to recognize the [Mormons](#) and others that do not hold to orthodox Christian views as, Christian. This comes by having to join forces on social issues (California’s Proposition 8, DOMA, Pro-Life movements, Immigration) that cause the Church to set aside their orthodox differences and stand up against the rising tide of the secularist or national agendas.

Either way, Satan uses a double-edged sword on this. On the one hand, he stirs up the masses to cast off Christianity (salvation/ethics/morals) and on the other, he forces Christians to compromise on the Gospel message to combat rising secularism thereby weakening the message by watering it down.

"and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."

What do you gain if you join forces against rising secularism with morally righteous, but equally as evil, cult and heretical movements? What business does light have with darkness? (2 Cor 6:14) At least with paganism, or secularism, you know where they stand on issues. The pseudo-Christian religions are much more deceptive and therefore more dangerous than those who wear their damnation proudly.

The Gospel isn't about promoting conservatism, nor to win back the government for the Republicans, but is about saving the lost. When you compromise with the pseudo-christian cults, you lend credence to their legitimacy, thereby opening a foothold into what is true Christianity.

### **On the Way**

I do not see widespread physical persecution here in the United States or Europe before the time of the Tribulation. But the groundwork is most assuredly being laid. Once the Holy Spirit's Restraining influence is removed, the gloves come off so to speak against those who are left here after the Rapture of the Church.

There is much debate about whether those Gentiles remaining can be saved after the Rapture of the Church, or if there still remains time. Needless to say, salvation should not be put off either way. Paul emphatically states that today is the day of Salvation (2 Cor 6:2)

Persecution is coming, more so than any other time period in the history of mankind. It will make the Holocaust seem minuscule in comparison. How do I know? Because Jesus said so, in fact, it will be so terrible, that if He didn't cut it short, 'no flesh would survive'. (Matt 24:22). Those Tribulation saints will be cut down in so much that Satan's man, the Antichrist, will be allowed to overcome the saints. (Rev 13:7). During the Fifth Seal, we have the cry of the martyrs (Rev 6:9-11) as a testimony to the intense outpouring of Satan's wrath on believers then.

The Holy Spirit is who draws men and women to Christ for Salvation. The Holy Spirit is omniscient, and is everywhere at once, but took on a singularly particular role in indwelling and sealing the saints of this age (Eph 1:11-14, 2 Cor 1:21-22).

My opinion is that we are unique in this sense, unlike those believers who lived prior to the age of the church. Similarly, those who come after will have to maintain their righteousness and will be judged by God on accepting the message of the Gospel, refusal of the Mark of the Beast, and their treatment of the Jews. It will be exceedingly tough indeed.

The persecution that we see today in places like North Korea, Iran, Pakistan, and Indonesia is just a microcosm of what believers after the Rapture can expect. But take heart, because God is a God of not only perfect righteousness and justice, but of love. He doesn't wish that any should perish, and if God never changes, then the Tribulation will be no exception. Those that will come, will. (Rev 8:1-5)

### **The Question**

If you could know ahead of time, what your life would hold as far as persecution went, whether physical or societal (or both), would you have chosen your life? If you knew what lied ahead, beyond the realms of this life, (2 Cor 4:17) I don't think you would.

And although it doesn't seem fair, that others suffer more then we here in the west, or that we shouldn't suffer as much as we do, God works ALL things out according to His will and His plan for our lives.

Continue to pray for those who are currently suffering for their faith around the world. Support those [groups](#) who keep their finger on the pulse of these issues, because the secular media has all but forgot (intentionally)...and be faithful until death, and He will give you the crown of life.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” Revelation 2:11

## Snapshot of a Moving Picture 2.0

Israel - Middle East

Monday, November 07, 2011

Pete Garcia

Since the last Snapshot was back in July, thought I would update some interesting new trends and add a little speculation on my part. And while the world is pre-occupied with *Dancing with the Stars*, Republican debates, and Obama's divine job's bill, I thought I would showcase some happenings that seem to be slipping in under the radar.

I'd like to focus on the Middle East this time, since the “Arab Spring” has truly changed the geopolitical game. It seemed remote even a couple of years ago, that a literal Babylon could be the center of world power. We knew that a Psalm 83 and/or Isaiah 17 event could happen, not just in the manner it has appeared to transpire. A Gog-Magog invasion is not only on the horizon, but now makes more sense considering the way the nations have arrayed themselves. Yet here we are, at the end of 2011, which looks a whole lot different than did at the end of 2010. My standard caveat applies, as this could all change tomorrow.

**Israel:** Suffering slightly with its own tampered down version of an ‘Israeli Spring’, the Netanyahu coalition promised reforms and has begun rebuilding with a vengeance in Jerusalem and is even mulling over the notion of making Israel sovereign over Judea and Samaria, which will make more than a few liberals and Muslims upset. In case you've been off the grid for the last few months, long-held Hamas prisoner, IDF Sgt. Gilad Shalit was released back to Israel after five long years in exchange for 1,027 [‘Palestinian’](#) Terrorists. The exchange is broken up into two phases.

Phase one releases 477 ‘Palestinians’, with the rest of the 550 being released two months later. I could be wrong, but my money is on the other 550 terrorists (which are probably the worst of the lot) will never see the light of day as all bets are off once a war starts. Nobody puts Bibi in a corner.

Israel just recently successfully test-fired their Jericho III, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with the ability to carry a 1650 lb. nuclear payload over 4,000 miles away. It is not only a show of strength to the would-be attackers in the Middle East, but a declaration to the world that Israel is not only a nuclear power, but a nuclear SUPER power.

**Egypt:** Military leaders there are feeling a little less inclined to relinquish the total power to a democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood coalition. I mean, after all, it was the military that did all the heavy lifting with their successful coup d'état of President Mubarak. What is that old saying? Absolute power corrupts absolutely? News clip sums it up quite nicely:

Reporting from Cairo— [Egypt's](#) ruling military council is silencing critics while polishing its image amid increasing signs that it is plotting to stay in power behind the scenes even after a new parliament is in place early next year.

There has been talk in political circles that Egypt's new government might model itself on [Turkey's](#) blend of Islamic principles and Western-style democracy. Like Egypt, the Turkish state was founded by military leaders. But Turkish Prime Minister [Recep Tayyip Erdogan](#) has curtailed the role of the military in recent years — a prospect Egypt's generals don't appear to relish.

"They might want to follow the Turkish model," said Darrag, who is running for parliament with the Freedom and Justice Party, "but it's the Turkish model from 40 years ago, not today's."  
(Source: LA Times 03NOV11)

**Syria:** Bashar Al Assad, like the Egyptian Generals, has learned a lot of lesson's this last year. Currently, he has thrown the gauntlet down to NATO (and anyone else for that matter) that if you invade his country to topple him, he's going to rain down missiles on Tel Aviv, Israel. He [KNOWS](#) Israel will retaliate utterly demolishing Damascus, so why would he do that? I think (speculation here) is that by watching Tunisia's ex-president Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, and Libya's Moammar Qaddafi go down in flames; Assad has created his own '[Sampson Option](#)'. If he's going down, he's going to take everyone else with him. Interestingly, the Kurds play in a unique role in all this. While the Turkish troops are mounting on his border, the British and American's are now saying: Assad has to go! Sound [familiar](#)?

**Iraq:** I had heard an interesting theory that is currently being floated by some geo-political thinkers that goes like this. As the US pulls out of Iraq this year, ethnic and religious bickering will turn back into fighting as a power grab ensues. Saudi Arabia will put together a Sunni-Arab coalition that basically establishes another Hashemite monarch as king in Iraq (much like they did in Jordan back in the early 20th century).

This is interesting in light of what we know will be result of the Psalm 83/Isaiah 17 prophecy concerning much of the surrounding nations of Israel. Israel's immediate enemies will be significantly weakened. A monarchy could bring in the much sought-after stability that has alluded the Iraqis since the 2003 US led invasion. The oil reserves could then be used to renovate a new capital just 50 miles south of war-torn Baghdad. This will be too enticing an opportunity for the United Nations to pass up, especially in light of a sputtering US economy and with both American's disdain for the UN and our plummeting world opinion.

A new Green Zone could be built in a short period of time (as we've seen in Baghdad) that could be fortified to the hilt, with the latest and greatest technologies, flush with a nation sitting on the world's fifth largest oil reserves (currently the US sits at spot 13). UNESCO has already been working on making this a world class resort.

If a strike does occur in Iran by the likes of NATO and/or Israel, the Shiite movement within Iraq will undoubtedly lose its steam as much of the funding and weapons will be diverted elsewhere. Again, with Turkey's frequent air and land military incursions into northern Iraq, there is a Kurdish connection here, but you'll just have to wait!

**Iran:** As the current head of OPEC's rotating leadership, Iran has come out to say they would be willing to sell oil without using the American dollar, which has been the stipulation since the days when President Nixon took America off the Gold Standard.

It is my belief, that this is the cause of an impending attack on Iran, rather than their nuclear ambitions. Saddam switched to the euro back in 2000, and Iran followed suit in 2003, creating a surplus of dollars worldwide. Of course, this has created a economic ripple effect that we began to feel as early as 2007. You can find these studies [here](#) and [here](#). But as Iran's last nerve frazzles to the core waiting on an impending attack, a much-muted ousting almost occurred of Ahmadinejad by the Ayatollah Khamenei. News finally broke that the relationship between the supreme religious leader and the supreme political leader was not fairing so well. It appears that even Ahmadinejad was too extreme for the Ayatollah. That, and he hung around with some less then [reputable](#) people.

In a speech, Ayatollah Khamenei made passing mention of the presidential system, which was his own route to power;

"Presently, the country's ruling political system is a presidential one in which the president is directly elected by the people, making this a good and effective method,

However, if one day, probably in the distant future, it is deemed that the parliamentary system is more appropriate for the election of officials with executive power, there would be no problem in altering the current structure." (Source: UK Telegraph 04NOV11)

If Iran does get hit by NATO and/or Israel, little Ahmadinejad's ouster will come swiftly! An attack on Iran will have to accomplish three things:

1. Neutralize Iran's nuclear program permanently
2. Remove the Iranian influence from their surrounding neighbors
3. Regime change and/or downgrade the power of the theocracy

Of course, an attack on Iran will infuriate the Russian's, who have spent a lot of time, rubles, and effort getting Iran to the nuclear status they want to be. Again, the Kurds are the scourge of Islamic theocracies and dictatorships!

**Turkey:** Turkey went from friends to foes with Israel in under a decade. Attempting to re-create the Ottoman Empire (2.0) under Tayyip Erdogan's AK Party, military leaders who aren't falling in line are quickly being replaced. The 2010 Flotilla debacle neither got Turkey the prized apology they sought after from Israel, nor won them any accolades from the EU, US, nor NATO. Currently, they are seeking to pre-empt a Cypriot-Israeli joint deep-water natural gas drilling initiative by harassing Israeli and Greek vessels. They really want to push the envelope with Israel, but every time they do, more pressing issues seem to come to the fore front.

**Kurds:** If you have 5 minutes and you really want to grasp the PKK circle and how it ties in Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, [read this](#).

### **Lessons Learned**

In the Middle East, there is an old saying (and if it isn't, it should be): if you want to keep your dictatorial power, it's better to be America's enemy than friend. Hosni Mubarak learned that lesson a little too late. What Mubarak should have done, in watching [Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali](#) flee for his life, was to do likewise. Turkey's Erdogan learned what to do by watching Egypt's military assume control. Bashar Al Assad learned what NOT to do by watching Mubarak's military and "allies" throw him under the bus. Qaddafi learned that it would have been better if he had just kept his mouth shut. The Egyptian Generals learned what not to do by watching an Islamic Radical like Tayyip Erdogan throw the Turkish Generals under the bus. Israel is learning that it can't depend on the Obama administration, and will either have to go it alone, or find new friends. The rest of the world will learn that by cursing Israel, it will prove to be their undoing.

### **Closing Thoughts**

With that said, let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Let's pray for our Arab, Kurdish, Persian, and Jewish brothers, and sisters in Christ, that are caught there in the middle, that God will protect them and shield them from the imminent war that is threatening to explode all over the Middle East.

Although it's easy to pick apart current events and showcase how Bible prophecy is solidifying in front of our very eyes daily, we have to remember that there are real lives and real suffering amongst those trapped in the Islam. I fear, as do a lot of you, that as America turns her back on Israel, we too, will begin to feel the repercussions of our leaders' decisions. The "Land for Peace" initiative begun by Jimmy Carter has only hastened our natural catastrophes and irreparable sinking in abyss of debt and economic woes. This verse should be a very sobering reminder to all, that what God has spoken, will come to pass.

"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) NKJV

## **The Ouroboros Conundrum**

Perspective on the News

Monday, November 14, 2011

Pete Garcia

Having recently had the opportunity to sit through a town-hall briefing from the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, I was asked to provide some firsthand observations about the occasion.

Given the rather ambiguous nature of the Federal Reserve, and the common apathy modern American's share about the role of the Federal Reserve, it is by no stretch of the imagination why Ben Bernanke chose a military installation to hold a town hall meeting.

Although unspoken, I left there with two unshakeable takeaways from the event. First off, politicians and government officials can say a lot, without really saying a lot. Secondly, even though our world is crumbling down around us, Ben's message was, the short term doesn't really look as bad as the long term.

Politicians like Ben Bernanke are skilled at what is politely called, '[double-speak](#)'. They are able to answer questions without really answering them with any real substance. Part of me realizes that if Ben sneezes on camera during a CSPAN conference, the Dow tanks a few dozen points, so maybe he has to keep things at the surface level to keep the markets stable. But listening to him, there was something there that belied the words coming out of his mouth. When pinged about the troubles in Europe, and how that would affect the United States, I didn't see calm and steady resolve in his eyes (with which his words were saying), but that of fear.

I'm no expert on people watching, but I've been around the block once or twice, and when you ask someone a question, you can usually get the honest to goodness response in that first millisecond the question you ask is posed. The answer is in their eyes. Politicians and those who spend their life in the public sector have become fairly accustomed at controlling this and masking what they really think. But to the astute observer, there is a flash in the eyes, whether it is a look of shock, fear, or happiness, it is usually reserved to the basest of emotions.

For instance, I'm terrible at this. My wife constantly chastises me for rolling my eyes at things I think are either ridiculous or annoying. Heck, I don't even have to roll my eyes, it's that first moment of response before your body has a chance at either reacting or concealing what it really thinks. But I can't help it, which means I'd make a terrible politician. I have a difficult time not telling people what's really on my mind whether vocally or by my body language.

The question we all had going into the conference was, why El Paso?

This was the first visit by any Federal Reserve Chairman of the Board to any military base, much less one that was 8 hours from anywhere. The official response was that it was because of a financial education program that was put in place back in 2003 that supposedly had good results. The real reason may lie in one version of the speculations floating around out there.

My personal theory is that poor Ben is tired of getting beaten up by the likes of Ron Paul (and the like) who would love nothing better than to audit the Fed. A safe, controlled environment such as a military installation, secured by hundreds of miles of desert, and an audience that would limit its questions due to the ramifications it might have on his or her career seems like a safe bet.

For all intents and purposes, the Federal Reserve is a Central bank (like those in Europe) with the power and authority to mint and print currency, set rates (the rules) and enforce financial regulation by manipulating the conditions that set the precedence to do so. The purpose of the Federal Reserve in a [nutshell](#), was to provide an elastic currency that could provide stability and security in the markets within the United States. The creation of the Federal Reserve was very much akin to Obamacare. Highly unpopular and had already been rejected in previous years. It was done at the last minute and was crammed down the people's throats whether they liked it or not, and on December 23rd no less!

Here we are, almost a 100 years later and it's still here, more powerful than ever. You don't have to be a financial wiz to be able to look back over the last 100 years and see that every time there is a financial panic, depression, and recession, that the smaller independent banks must close. When they close, their accounts and monies are absorbed by the bigger banks. Thus far in 2011, there have been about 100 banks closed and absorbed by larger banks. You can find a more extensive list here at the FDIC [website](#). Survival of the fittest if you will.

Back to Dr. Bernanke, my specific questions dealt with the recent release of the Vatican's Financial Manifesto, Debt Jubilee, and what the collapse of the current EU structure would mean to the Fed. My questions were asked very clearly and succinct (at minute 22 in the video) and his response was neither. In fact, I could have asked him about whether mortgages were good or bad, and probably gotten the same response. So why the charade?

"Of course, the Federal Reserve was never [intended](#) to shoulder the [entire burden of promoting economic prosperity](#). Fostering healthy growth and job creation is a shared responsibility of all economic policymakers, in close cooperation with the private sector. Spending and tax policy is of critical importance, but a wide range of other policies--pertaining to labor markets, housing, trade, taxation, and regulation, for example--also have important roles to play." (Ben Bernanke, Ft. Bliss, 10 NOV 11)

If I'm not mistaken, that doesn't sound like a 'mea culpa' but a 'tua culpa'. And like the Ouroboros, that proverbial snake that starts to eat its own tail, at some point, it runs out of lunch. We are at that point in history where the bills are coming due, and to either pay or not pay is going to crash the system. And with the 'global' economy we are in, it doesn't even have to be our problem to be our problem, which is why the problems in Europe scare those financially in-the-know here in the US. So if this whole thing goes up in flames, it wasn't the Fed's sole responsibility to make this charade work, it's on all our heads for the failure. I think he just wanted to be on the record saying that, in a somewhat friendly environment.

From a biblical perspective, we know that in the end, one man ([the antichrist](#)) is going to control the whole show. My thoughts are that the US will eventually be like that small bank that through either economic, man-caused, or natural catastrophes is absorbed by the revived Roman Empire.

But for now, I would like to leave you with some sobering words;

"It is well that the people of the nation do not understand our banking and monetary system, for if they did, I believe there would be a revolution before tomorrow morning." — Henry Ford

"The Federal Reserve banks are one of the most corrupt institutions the world has ever seen. There is not a man within the sound of my voice who does not know that this nation is run by the International bankers."

— Congressman Louis T. McFadden (Rep. Pa)

"While boasting of our noble deeds were careful to conceal the ugly fact that by an iniquitous money system we have nationalized a system of oppression which, though more refined, is not less cruel than the old system of chattel slavery." — Horace Greeley

"Banking was conceived in iniquity and was born in sin. The Bankers own the earth. Take it away from them, but leave them the power to create deposits, and with the flick of the pen they will create enough deposits to buy it back again. However, take it away from them, and all the great fortunes like mine will disappear and they ought to disappear, for this would be a happier and better world to live in. But, if you wish to remain the slaves of Bankers and pay the cost of your own slavery, let them continue to create deposits." — SIR Josiah Stamp, (President of the Bank of England in the 1920's, the second richest man in Britain):

"History records that the money changers have used every form of abuse, intrigue, deceit, and violent means possible to maintain their control over governments by controlling money and it's issuance." — James Madison

"...I am convinced that the agreement [Bretton Woods] will enthrone a world dictatorship of private finance more complete and terrible than and Hitlerite dream. It offers no solution of world problems, but quite blatantly sets up controls which will reduce the smaller nations to vassal states and make every government the mouthpiece and tool of International Finance. It will undermine and destroy the democratic institutions of this country - in fact as effectively as ever the Fascist forces could have done - pervert and paganise our Christian ideals; and will undoubtedly present a new menace, endangering world peace. World collaboration of private financial interests can only mean mass unemployment, slavery, misery, degradation and financial destruction. Therefore, as freedom loving Australians we should reject this infamous proposal." — Labor Minister of Australia, Eddie Ward, during the inception of the World Bank and Bretton Woods, he gave this warning.

## **The Mob Rules**

Commentary on the News

Monday, November 21, 2011

Pete Garcia

I blame the success of the Tea Party. Before 2008's financial meltdown, the American animal was quite content to stay at home plopped on the couch watching baseball and ordering out for pizza.

Before Glenn Beck, the average American voted once every four years, thinking they had done their civic duty. Before the alternate internet and cable news sources, American's were quite content to listen to Peter Jennings or Tom Brokaw bring them the nightly news. Before all this, the average American was ok with living and let live.

Certainly, 9/11 holds some responsibility for waking the American public up. It let this generation know that it can be touched by those who hate us. The 'rally around the flagpole' lasted until about 2003, when President Bush kicked off the war in Iraq. But, after the bailouts in 2008/2009, and the year-long Obama-care socialist debacle 2010 that threatens to affect every single American significantly, the American public woke up. They realized just how fragile our precious society really is with its Divinely inspired Constitution as its backbone. People began to hearken back to the days of President Reagan, and somehow those cautionary quotes about us being the 'last beacon of hope' don't seem so silly now.

What the Tea Party was able to do, was to rally the people around an idea, peacefully, and in larger than reported numbers. The message was powerful. To my knowledge, of all the thousands of protests and millions of attendees, not one resulted in an arrest. Their success centered on the idea of holding politicians accountable for their actions and their votes. Whoa, whoa, whoa...that isn't supposed to happen!!! No, the politicians did not like this at all.

So, after a stunning mid-term loss for the Democrats in 2010, the seeds of retribution were planted in the minds of those democrats, and their super-secret funders like George Soros, to counter the Tea Party with their own rallies. But since their man was in office, they couldn't really run against the establishment, hence the confusion presently run amok in the various "Occupy" movements around the nation. At present, their only agenda seems to disrupt life for everyone within shouting distance.

Some have said that the 'Arab Spring' also had something to do with it. I think there is some truth to this for those movers and shakers behind the scenes promoting and funding Occupy. But to the average schmo on the street, their motives are so varied that it would be hard to pin any specific thing down, other than 'give me, give me, give me'.

I'd wager to bet, that as time progresses, these folks will resort to violence. Heck, it doesn't take a rocket surgeon to figure that out. But as we move into next year, these folks will start to organize into factions and will begin to do more damage than stink up a city block and [spread lice](#). Their attacks will become more malicious and more intent on causing serious damage, mayhem, and harm.

No longer will the Middle Eastern male, age 18-40 be the prime suspect as they board the plane at JFK or Dulles airport. Now, the terrorist could be anyone. Ironically, it's almost as if the Department of Homeland Security [saw](#) this coming several years ago.

Yet, I have the sneaking suspicion, as the President and most of the Democrats have thrown their support behind this Occupy movement, these folks will not bear the brunt of the new police state measures. I think this administration will let this go on for as long as they can, and will use this for justification for martial law or some other extreme police state measure somewhere around next year's election.

Having been to Iraq and Afghanistan, I've seen what an IED can do to a vehicle many times. I've said to my peers, just wait until these (IED's) hit the States. Imagine the panic and the chaos this will send not only to the commuters of our highways and byways, but to the shipping and transportation industry. And since men and women over there in the Middle East with little to no education can put them together, imagine what highly educated, student-loan laden youngsters over here can come up with. Truly, there are some dark days coming to our country.

### **External Factors**

As Europe disintegrates and aligns itself up prophetically into the 10-kingdom confederacy that the Bible says it will, those structural changes will have painful financial ramifications here in the states. [Luke 21:25](#) comes to mind...at least the last half of it: "and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring."

As the money dries up, austerity measures are either in-placed (or threatened too), look for these protests to turn into full-blown riots here.

Secondarily, if Israel (or the US/NATO) launches an attack on Iran, the price of gasoline will skyrocket. That of course will drive up not just the price of gas, but the price of everything else that must be transported. This will be like pouring 8\$ a gallon gasoline on an already parched house of cards.

If these two events continue their current trajectory, then it won't be just these young anarchists out raising Cain, but it will be the normal American's who out of desperation, will begin to do things they normally wouldn't do. Desperate times call for desperate measures.

Of course, the mainstream media will continue to shill for the Administration and will gloss over the gross tragedies that are occurring around the country at these Occupy events. It's almost as if they know that if they play ball (keep shilling) then they will survive whatever state-run shut down of the internet and alternate news sites that will come about.

Senators Rockefeller and Lieberman are just two of a growing number of politicians already pushing through legislation to be able to shut it [down](#) in case of some kind of cyber-attack. Of course, they condemned Egyptian President Mubarak for shutting it down, and of course, this will only shut down the 'key critical infrastructure networks. Of course, those networks are linked to all the other networks, so you'd pretty much have to shut it all down to guarantee effective protection.

Of course, I too have full faith and confidence in our Administrations ability to handle things. Just look at how well we've curbed the violence in Mexico with "[Fast and Furious](#)". Look how much energy and money we've saved with "[Solyndra](#)". And of course, I'm being completely facetious now, as we've seen the absolute incompetence run amok with both fiascos.

The chaos is not only ongoing in the city streets, but in the halls of Congress and the White House is by no means slowing down. It is on fast forward. Every which way the government turns to solve its problems; new more damaging ones pop up. It reminds me of that scene in Mel Brook's 1987 classic movie "[Spaceballs](#)" where light speed was too slow; they had to go to "ludicrous speed".

### **Biblical Forewarnings:**

Jesus said that in the last days, these [events](#) would not only happen but would be like birth-pangs. They would increase in frequency and in severity. Deception, wars, rumors of war, earthquake, pestilences, iniquity, and famines would rock the planet until they reach a crescendo of violence and fear. This is the point, in which the world will clamor for a man, any man, to come in and fix things.

Jesus told his disciples in the Upper Room Discourse that if the world hated Him, the world would hate them as well. Specifically, He says:

"But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you." John 16:4

It would be easy to remain sarcastic about things. It would be easy to let fear overtake you, considering all the craziness out in the world today. But as Christians, we were foretold these things, so that when they happened, it wouldn't take us by surprise. In other words, God is in control and all this has been seen before the world was even created.

So take heart, and as our world begins to tear itself apart, know that we are that much closer to the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." John 14:1-3

## **The Prophetic Whirlwind**

Prophecy - Signs

Monday, November 28, 2011

Pete Garcia

The study of Bible Prophecy has taken me through every single book of the Bible, and from cover to cover, I see the unfolding of God's plan for the human race.

The Old Testament prophetically points forward to a coming Redeemer, and this being only one of MANY places in the Old Testament. How do I know this? On the road to Emmaus, the risen Jesus chastised the disciples for not understanding the scriptures:

Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24:25-27

Today, the disturbing trend amongst Christian churches is to ignore and discredit the study of prophecy and those that teach it. Thirty percent of the Bible is prophetic in nature. So when a teacher or denomination collectively ignores that much scripture, or treat it as if it were unimportant, then they are sorely going to be missing things that tie the past and the present together with events to come.

Two of the harshest condemnations by Christ on anyone in Scriptures, were to the Pharisees (or religious leaders), and to the Laodicean Church (Revelation 3:14-22). One, was for their overt and utter disregard for who the Bible said the Messiah would be (and when), and the other is to a religious group who were lukewarm in their beliefs, neither committing too, nor rejecting Jesus. These two groups are dominating Christendom today both with rejecting prophecy and with the promotion of ecumenicalism.

The study of prophecy is not meant to make one fatalistic about the concerns of this world, but rather, to bring hope and encouragement. It shouldn't replace evangelism but deepen it.

CS Lewis once said; "If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this."

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15 NASB

Rightly dividing the Word will lead you straight to the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church. It focuses the believer on the world to come, not the trivial things in this life that will pass away as a vapor.

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." Romans 8:28-30

The proper study of prophecy has the potential to light a fire in the believer that can never be extinguished. It is a powerful tool that God equips the believer with the knowledge and assurance to battle the false, heretical, and damnable doctrines of demons currently spreading around the globe.

Historically, you can go back and see where amillennialism, preterism, replacement theology, and open theism have been inserted into the church. They claim they don't teach the Rapture for instance, because of the so-called divisiveness that man has come to see in it.

Battle Tactics 101 says to 'divide and conquer'! So, like that dead Sardis church, the modern church has quit watching and come to abandon watching altogether. Jesus tells them:

"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

Think about all those who have currently fallen under the sway of cults and heretical belief systems.

They have to openly discard proven history, so how much easier is it for false prophets and teachers to come and speak of things yet to happen?

Currently, we live in the 'age of information', so much so that it should be renamed, the 'age of confusion'. So many competing doctrines, philosophies, religions, political persuasions have bombarded mankind with every sort of belief system you can imagine. They are all intent on telling you that they have cornered the market on ideas and truth, and if you only buy into what they are selling, your life will be all the better. That is why it is so important for a believer to know the whole bible, not just parts of it.

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ " Titus 2:11-13

## **The Walking Dead**

Witnessing Tools

Monday, December 05, 2011

Pete Garcia

The world we live in is full of the walking dead. Oh, you know them, because you work with them. They sit next to you in your classrooms, walk the halls where you work or frequent, and live in the houses surrounding yours. You hang out with them at lunch breaks, get-togethers, or you might even be dating one.

Although these zombies aren't staggering around, half-rotted, searching for the next warm brain sandwich to munch on, these undead are after the same goal as the ones on the movie screen...satisfying the flesh.

Every few years, a new zombie movie will come out and more or less succeed in scaring the wits out of their audiences. And every one of them since the 1960's has become more realistic and more graphic. There is even a popular TV show based on a world overrun with the undead, and how the survivors must band together to find some elusive place of tranquility, free from the ever-present cannibalistic hordes. For some strange reason, it's always some kind of radiation spill, pandemic disease, or passing comet that cause the dead to walk again. They rise from their graves and limp slowly toward the nearest town. The townspeople are always quite oblivious of the danger until they get cornered and come face to face with one (or more) and see the horror staring back at them.

Ironically, if Hollywood could only see the spiritual reality behind their fiendish movie plots, they probably wouldn't make anymore zombie movies. For all the seemingly logical reasons why it 'could' happen, they neglect the biblical reality that it has already been happening now for the better part of 6,000 years. Instead of radiation or some astronomical event, the cause of death and decay is sin, and it has infected every living person on this planet, save one.

*"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Colossians 2:13)*

Before one is a born-again Christian, he/she is already dead spiritually. You were cut off spiritually from your Creator when you reached that age of understanding and did nothing about it.

To rephrase that another way, you were dead in your sins before you turned to Jesus Christ. The Bible says that a person is made in three parts: body, soul, and spirit (Hebrews 4:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:23). When God made you in your mother's womb, He made you in His image. By that I mean, He made you to be eternal. And inside of every man, woman, and child, is a God-shaped hole that only He can fill.

Mankind has tried all sorts of workarounds to revive that inner person. Man turns to sex, power, money, sports, drugs, pleasure, moral righteousness, and every other conceivable act within imagination, to go back to that place where he has that inner peace. Not only is it unattainable by our own efforts, but it's also unsustainable.

The happiness in said event, thing, or belief only brings a temporary reprise from insatiable hunger that drives man to search for that elusive peace. It is like a mirage in the desert that you see off in the distance and crawl too, hoping to get a cool drink of water, only to find out that there is only more sand. There is only one way to re-connect with God and get back to that place where you can have peace and tranquility, and that is through Jesus Christ:

*"Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)*

See, there is no act, thought, or belief that any person can perform or trust in, aside from placing their faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection that can bring everlasting life. You can't party enough, be rich enough, tithe enough, go to church enough, or own the most things to qualify on your own good merits to appease a holy and righteous God.

The Apostle Paul, who had been a 'pharisee of the pharisees' (ie...an extremely religious dude), would have been in his day, a man above reproach. He spoke about being alive as a child but dying (spiritually) when he came to understand the ramifications of violating the law.

*"But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me." Romans 7:8-11*

So, sin causes death. But what is sin you might ask? Imagine you're an archer, and you can hit the bullseye on the target every time. You can even split your own arrow which is smack dab in the middle of the bullseye of your target, you're that good...

The only problem is you keep shooting at the wrong target.

Sin is missing the mark. And you only have to miss it once, to be unacceptable by God's standard. Truth be told, we miss the mark a lot more than just once. Which is why Jesus came down from heaven to be a man among mankind, living a perfect and sinless life to be that perfect sacrifice that God's law demanded. Once He did that, He rose from the dead on the third

day, and currently sits at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for those who place their faith and trust in Him.

So, when a holy and righteous God looks down at me, He doesn't see Pete, with all my faults and flaws, He sees' the Pete covered in the righteous, atoning, sanctifying, blood of His only Son (Jesus).

I'm covered, not because I'm a good man, but because Jesus was a perfect man. When you become born again, you don't automatically become Mr. Perfect in the flesh either. You still carry around that 'old man' which is your flesh. So, becoming a born-again believer, you in effect have two natures. You have your newly revived (once dead) spiritual person, and you have that second part of your tri-partite nature, the soul. Your soul is your "psyche" which is fed by the flesh: imagination, conscience, memory, reason, and affections is fed by what you see, hear, taste, touch, and smell. So, when Paul said he died when he came to understand the law, this isn't what died. His spiritual man died.

When your born again, that spiritual man (or woman) is revived through the power in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

When a person comes to the knowledge of this understanding, yet rejects the free offer of salvation, they in effect default to zombie mode. They're walking, talking, living and breathing, but they're dead on the inside spiritually. Jesus didn't mince words when He called the 'religious leaders' of His day "whitewashed tombs". Pretty on the outside, but full of death and decay on the inside.

Worse yet, the unsaved can sense their dead spiritually, and they try and fill that gaping hole with anything and everything that can to take their **mind** off it. I'm not sure of the connection, but for those of you who have never watched a zombie movie, they have quite the insatiable affinity for human **brains**. Kind of ironic if you ask me. But the good news is, that terminal case of zombification is only terminal until you are born again.

*"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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:16-17*

If one rejects the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, and they die that way, they in affect commit spiritual suicide. By rejecting Jesus, they've condemned their eternal self (the spirit) to eternal death in hell, separated from God forever. The more they reject that Holy Spirit's drawing them to Christ, the more calloused they become toward the Gospel message and the Spirit's drawing. That's not to say, you get one chance and if you've rejected it, that's it. God has brought many a lost case back from heading the wrong direction and done a miracle in their life.

You see, Jesus didn't come down to earth and live a perfect life to make bad people good. He came down and sacrificed Himself to give dead people life. You and I were dead in our sins before we accepted Christ into our lives. Zombie movies shouldn't scare you.

Spending an eternity in hell separated from your Creator should.

*"Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"  
(John 11:25-26)*

What do you believe?

## 2012: The Year of The Dragon

Prophecy - Signs

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Pete Garcia

Having lived in South Korea for a year and a half, I caught an article about the coming year in the Chinese zodiac. Usually, most Americans do not pay much attention to this unless, they're seated at a Chinese restaurant and are trying to figure out which animal they are before they order their meals. But 2012 is the 'year of the dragon' and in particular, the water dragon as the elemental sign that accompanies it.

The dragon is regarded as legendary and is a symbol of power, good luck, and strength. The motto of the dragon, according to the Chinese zodiac is "I Reign".

To the student of Bible prophecy, the 'dragon' represents Satan, and we understand that in the last days, the revived Roman Empire will be raised up, and will receive its power from the dragon.

Stepping back, you can see political and financial turmoil on the northern borders of the Mediterranean. The Euro nations in the direct of straits, are what is known as the PIGS: Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain. As we've been witness too these last few months, these nations are facing either insolvency or strict austerity measures and are trading their national souls (sovereignty) for economic stability (security).

On the southern and eastern Mediterranean borders, you have violent, political protests, civil wars, and revolutions. Autocratic secular dictators are being overthrown for Islamic dictators all the while as the West cheerleads from the sidelines thinking somehow something good is going to blossom out of the Arab spring.

So as we are about to enter the **Year of the Dragon**, I couldn't help but draw the comparison to all the turmoil that seems to be centered around the Mediterranean Sea with the vision the Apostle John had of this final empire.

*"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. Now the beast which I saw was like a **leopard**, his feet were like the feet of a **bear**, and his mouth like the mouth of a **lion**. The **dragon** gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" Revelation 13:1-4 WEB*

### What Was

We know from the book of Daniel (which history has validated), that each animal represents a historical empire that rose to prominence, and then was subsequently conquered by the next rising empire.

The main difference between the visions in the book of Daniel, and the book of Revelation, is that Daniel was shown these kingdoms as they would come and yet were still future to him. John is shown these visions and so he is looking back on them in reverse order. Yet, this beast rising out of the sea had not yet come. God also gives Daniel the interpretation for King Nebuchadnezzar's puzzling dream of the multi-metallic statue. This is the kingdom from man's perspective, but from God's, these are brute beasts; but the nations remain the same.

**Leopard** (thighs of brass): represents the Grecian Empire (Daniel 2:32, 39; 7:6)  
**Bear** (chest and arms of silver): represents the Persian Empire (Daniel 2:32; 7:5)  
**Lion** (head of Gold): represents Babylonian Empire (Daniel 2:38; 7:3-4)

So here we have a beast, that is made up of European and Middle Eastern nations, and its power is given to it by Satan himself, who is 'the dragon'. Historically, we know that the Roman Empire extended as far north as modern-day Great Britain, as far west as Spain, as far south as Egypt, and as far east as Persia (Iran). Germany (or Germania as it was known then), and the Nordic nations weren't included in this Roman Empire until much later under the Holy Roman Empire, headed by the Roman Catholic Church. Rome is represented in the book of Daniel as the legs of iron:

*"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise". Daniel 2:40*

and

*"...behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. Daniel 7:7*

The Roman Empire is unique, in that it is not given a proper animal's name. Whereas you had a lion, bear, and leopard given to the previous kingdoms, the Romans are simply called a 'beast'. The Romans were never conquered but collapsed from the overbearing weight of its size and corruption of its institutions. Its northern borders were attacked by the barbarian tribes, and the empire itself split between east and west with the west collapsing in 476AD. The Roman Catholic church was left standing, assuming its ecclesiastical papal form by the 6th century. The eastern leg of the Roman Empire became the Byzantine Empire and lasted until 1453, when it was conquered by Mehmed II of the Ottoman Empire.

But that was not the end, by the time the Byzantine Empire had been finished, the Holy Roman Empire was still in charge of much of Europe (962-1806AD) and didn't lose its officiating power until Great Britain came into its super-nation status. British king Henry the VIII broke away from the Roman Catholic papal control in 1534 by creating the Church of England (Anglicans) and left the Roman Catholic powers to the mainland. So, the Roman Empire never really went away, it has just been morphing and transforming itself into different forms of government somewhere within the original boundaries of its former glory.

### **What Is**

In 1948, the same year that Israel came back to life in the global scene, the Brussels Treaty beefed up the national defense plan amongst the Benelux nations, France and the United Kingdom. In 1951, the Treaty of Paris officially created the European Coal and Steel Community. From then until now, with an ensuing nine more treaties, we have a 27 member Union which is currently collapsing under its own weight today. It seems that 27 is too large, and a new number has been floated.

In 1995, the Barcelona Process was first created to promote a "Euro-Mediterranean Partnership". France's ambitious president, Nicolas Sarkozy has revived this issue, and been actively promoting the Mediterranean Union since 2008, and heads the now 43 member nations (including Israel). It will have a co-presidency (north and south) and has four goals that form the pillar of its basis: Politics and Security, Economics and Trade, Socio-cultural, and Justice and Interior Affairs. It is not a powerful force at the moment, but considering it will have ties to NATO, EU currency (old world monies), waterway control of the Suez Canal and Strait of Gibraltar, and massive oil and natural gas fields, it has great potential.

It has received critical backlash from other members of the EU as having the potential to split the EU, and by the European Commission which stated the UFM should build on already pre-existing treaties and organizations, rather than creating a new one. The stage is being set by the globalist players, and at present, are just rearranging the props to get to what they think the best way forward is. But despite man's best effort, events (manmade and supernatural) will channelize them into what the Bible says they will look like, and that is a revived Roman empire.

It seems that as the financial problems drag on, the EU will risk cutting loose the PIGS in order to prevent a further deteriorating financial collapse of the Euro. On the southern borders, those Islamic nations that have or are about to exchange their secular dictators for Islamic dictators, also will have the wind knocked out of their sails by militaristic defeats at the hands of Israel in what we see just over the horizon in Psalm 83, Isaiah 17, and Ezekiel 38-39. The UFM will be able to bring these nations back into the fold as key allies utilizing their oil and creating a cradle of wealth unseen in the world up until that time.

The seemingly insolvable problem in the world today is our debt-based fiat currency. Everyone owes everyone something, and it is a never-ending spiral of ups and downs. The only way out of this is for the current system to collapse and come back like that proverbial phoenix.

Out of the ashes will arise a system that has both liquidity and hard assets to back it. Citizenship into this system will be based much like in the old days. It must both be perceived as fair, while enriching the those that enforce the system. It must have a central power base tied into three continents, easy access to both massive natural gas and oil reserves and being the central location for the world's three major religions. For what it was worth, being a citizen of Rome had its privileges.

The EU should be seen as a forerunner to this newly revived Roman Empire, in much the same way that the European Economic Community (EEC) was the forerunner to the EU. And like that Phoenician woman named Europa, who was carried off by Zeus (disguised as a white bull), I see these Mediterranean nations be carried off into UFM to fulfill their biblical destinies as the last days empire. As the feet and toes (partly iron/partly clay), this last empire will merge together both the Western and Middle Eastern cultures, blending Christianity and Islam, with just enough Judaism in there to lull Israel into a false sense of peace. But these things remain yet to be seen.

## **Conclusion**

It's not that as a Christian, we need to pay any special attention to the Chinese zodiac, or any zodiac for that matter. Whether it's coincidental or purposefully created that so many things climax in 2012 is unknown either. Satan is implementing his plans for total global domination with such rapidity now, that we know the return of Christ will be all the sooner.

But 2012 could come and go and as a Church, we are still here having to deal with whatever 2013 brings. It may be that the world enters 2013 (the year of the snake) with a sigh of relief.

The Apostle Paul stated that when the world (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4) would enter a time of self-proclaimed peace and security, then, and only then, sudden destruction would come.

But the Christian is not to be taken unawares by this. We should see this coming. Whether Christ comes tomorrow or ten years from now, we rest in the knowledge that God has told us of all this ahead of time, so we would not be shaken in our faith despite what comes our way.

*"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 Thessalonians 5:9-10*

## Somewhere In Time

Prophecy - Signs

Sunday, December 18, 2011

Pete Garcia

For much of the last 2,000 years, most of the Bible's prophetic passages remained hidden to believers. The reason they remained hidden was because there was nothing to measure them against. Like a road with no known destination, mile markers and way points, they don't mean much unless you know where you're going.

Prophetic passages concerning the land, the Kingdom, and the Promises had all been directed towards Israel, and since the nation of Israel's demise to the Romans in 70AD and 135AD, those Old Testament promises lost their intended target. They were seemingly up for grabs for several centuries, that is, until they were absorbed by the dominant rising force in Christendom of that time, the Roman Catholic church. With the rise of the Holy Roman Empire, the world would enter into the Dark Ages.

When Martin Luther posted his [95 Theses](#) in 1517 against the Roman Catholic church, he began what is known as the Protestant Reformation. Certainly, there were men of earlier times (like Wycliffe) who had already been protesting, but Luther's was the one that really took off.

The Protestant movement rallied around five main points:

- Sola scriptura (only scriptures)
- Sola fide (by faith alone)
- Sola gratia (by grace alone)
- Solus Christus (Christ alone)
- Soli Deo gloria (glory to God alone).

This movement wanted to unfetter the shackles of bureaucracy, legalism, and ritualism that had been weighing down believers for a thousand years. Protestantism was successful in this, but what they did carry forward from the Roman Catholic system, was Augustinian eschatology (Amillennialism). They held on to this, because the prophetic passages contained within Daniel and Revelation remained hidden to them.

It remained hidden because Israel was still not back in her land, and all those prophetic promises couldn't find fulfillment within the Christian church. Therefore, the Church quit watching, and pretty soon, was wrapped up in the doctrines and dogmas of men, which inevitably led to the splitting of the Protestant denominations six ways from Sunday. It wouldn't be until the 1800's before men's eyes would be opened by the Holy Spirit to the prophetic significance of the coming end of the age.

The return to a literal understanding of the Bible, led men to begin interpreting the Bible in having different [Dispensations](#), to accommodate the seemingly contradictory and conflicting passages.

If we were saved by grace through faith, then maintaining the Sabbath was not necessary for salvation (either to get it or to lose it). Baptism was a ritual done for disciples, not a requirement to get saved. We didn't need to sacrifice animals, circumcise infants, or maintain dietary restrictions for salvation, because those things did not apply to us now in the age of the Church.

For the first time since the Apostles penned the epistles, the complete picture started to come into view. Men like Scofield, Sir Robert Anderson, and Clarence Larkin applied the practice of

'rightly dividing the word' ([2 Timothy 2:15](#)) as the key to not only understanding prophecy, but the Bible in its entirety.

Scofield, [recognized](#) in 1909, that in order for the prophetic promises to be fulfilled, Israel would have to become a nation again, which at the time, seemed as unlikely as ancient Atlantis rising up from the ocean.

C.I. Scofield was one of the first who saw the Seven Letters to the Seven Churches as not only to those local congregations but also symbolizing seven specific periods of the age of the church. One would have to have hindsight to be able to look back over 1900 years and see the big picture, which no one had until just the right time. It was like a puzzle piece that was missing, and without it, makes the whole picture incomplete and unknowable.

It wasn't until time caught up with the Bible, that the prophecies would begin to make any sense. Even the most brilliant men of ages past (Isaac Newton) were seemingly dumfounded by the shroud of mystery that surrounded eschatological passages within the Bible.

Men like Darby, Scofield and Clarence Larkin recognized a single significant point: the Church was not Israel, and Israel was not the Church. Therefore, the promises given in the Old Testament COULDN'T be applied to the Church. Similarly, the Church had undergone six stages thus far (as represented in the 7 Letters), so it was at this appointed time, that God allowed men's understanding to be enlightened.

So where are we now?

*"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](#)*

I've often wondered about several statements about the end times, and how we, who are seeing these things transpire, should make sense of them all. Jesus says that no man will know the day or hour (Matt 24:36). Yet, we have the Olivet Discourse, chocked full of signs that point to the end (Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21). Jesus also compares the end to the times of Noah and Lot (Luke 17:26-30).

If you are looking at the two points of reference Jesus uses ([Noah and Lot's Day](#)) these would be as examples of the time just before His return. This would be the nonchalant, laissez-faire attitude of the world as to its place in time. But here we are at a point in time, when the unsaved world is beginning to wonder..." what is going on?"

The weather has been going [crazy](#) these last ten years. Earthquakes, tsunamis, comet fly-bys, volcanoes, and hurricanes are pummeling the planet. So how can the world be caught off guard when it's expecting it to end in 2012, even if it is doing so with a nervous sort of laugh? Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5, is reaffirming the Lord's command to be watching, and in so doing, you would recognize the season you were in, even though you won't know exactly when (i.e... day or hour).

Here we are today, and we see so many things lining up: politically, religiously, militarily, and economically that are fitting exactly into what the Bible says the end times will look like. The world doesn't know exactly what is occurring, but it knows something is askew.

Also, in the days of Noah, only eight were saved (out of the possible billions alive), and only Lot and his immediate family were rescued out of thousands in those cities. What does that mean in our day, when millions are still coming to Christ around the world every year? Does the Church have to wait until we reach a time when the lost are no longer responding to the Gospel anymore?

That doesn't seem likely to me. As long as the Holy Spirit is in the business of drawing men and women to Christ, people will still respond. At some appointed time, there will be a Gentile fullness to the Body of Christ (Rom 11:25), when the Father will draw the Holy Spirit back (2 Thess 2:7) . When that day comes, the Holy Spirits' role of restraining evil in this world will

come to an end. In Genesis 6, the Lord makes the following statement, which I believe has a veiled (dual application to the future Rapture) by saying:

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.”* Genesis 6:3

If God is omnipotent (He is), and He knew that Jesus would come to die on the cross to take a people for Himself (He knew), and that one day, Jesus would come to claim those who were sealed by the Holy Spirit (He will), than what is said here in Genesis 6:3 is as valid in Noah’s day as it was in ours.

From Darby and Scofield’s day, until ours, we too have had to let time catch up with the Bible. I think about the brilliance of those men who lived in a day and age, which had no signs, yet could take the Bible literally, and see where the world was heading a hundred years before it ever came.

Today, we are inundated with so many signs that it’s desensitized most of the Church. At exactly the point in time when the Church should be the most excited and anticipating our Lord’s return, it is asleep at the wheel. Not that this surprised the Lord, because He saw this 2,000 years ago and said...

*“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

## **Breathing Under Water**

In Defense of the Faith

Monday, December 26, 2011

Pete Garcia

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." (Romans 4:16-18)

Last week I listened to a really great sermon titled, ‘[Grace Works](#)’ by Pastor J.D. Farag, out of the Calvary Chapel, Kaneohe, Hawaii.

The sermon was all about Romans chapter 4, and the concept that the Apostle Paul is laying out here is so fundamental for every Christian, I knew that this was something that I couldn’t let pass me by. The bottom line was Abraham is who we call the father of faith. He is heralded by both Jew and Gentile as a great man of faith who both Jew, Christian, and even Muslims adhere as the father of us all.

Yet, to the Christian, he is the father of our faith, not just the first Hebrew mentioned in the Torah (Gen 14:13). Paul is using him here as an example of how our salvation is not obtained by keeping the Law or by the do this-do that religiosity.

It is by faith we are saved by grace, not of works (Eph 2:8-9). We Christians don’t look to Moses as our spiritual earthly role model if you will, although we admire him as a great prophet and a man of God. He is the father of the Law just as Abraham is what we consider the father of our faith. Romans chapter 4 is all about Abraham’s righteousness being credited to him BEFORE he

was circumcised, not after (Rom 4:9-12) just as we are given the righteousness of God in Christ before we've done anything to 'deserve' it. (2 Cor 5:21)

So, what, you're asking? Here's what. That same great faith that Abraham had; we can have too. It is the same faith. It is the same God.

Why Christians today aren't tapping into this, is beyond me, but its' not like some spiritual gift that was only around during the time of the Apostles and is now gone since we have a complete Bible. We have the SAME faith that Abraham had. Let that sink in for a moment, because I had to let it sink in as well.

What mighty, miraculous acts did Abraham do? Did he part the Red Sea? Did he call down fire from heaven? Did he spend three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish? No, he trusted God and look at what God did for him. He wasn't perfect (Gen 12:10-20) and neither was King David (2 Sam 11:2), yet by all standards, these were ordinary men who lived extraordinary lives because of their faith.

Also, something I had not considered, was that in the Old Testament, which lays out these men and women's lives, wars, and all...is not done so in the New Testament.

So, what changed?

### **The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. John 11:25*

It is the power of the Resurrection that transformed the testimony of these men, just like it does for us once we become born again. We have our lives before we are saved, and maybe we did mighty things and even were good, moral men and women. Yet, it is the power of Christ's resurrection, that cleanses us from ALL unrighteousness, and allows us to tap into that same power source that both Abraham and David did, to do mighty things.

Pastor J.D. used an excellent example that I would like to paraphrase here. In it, he said that at certain points in his life, he would be struggling with one issue or another, that he felt was overwhelming him. He'd cry out to God to just let him keep his head above water and help him through the situation without drowning. But then, God would let him go under. But as he was there under water thrashing about, he realized he wasn't drowning, but in fact could breathe under water.

That is the power of God to make the impossible, possible. To make the inconceivable, achievable. It's not a 'name it-claim it' kind of faith that so many have perverted for their own personal wealth. It is simply trusting in God that His will be done in your life. And even those hardships that were very uncomfortable to endure while you're living it, will be used by God to accomplish His will. If God can speak the universe into existence and form the most complex properties and beings by His sheer will, then our financial, health, and personal problems are not too big for God.

Much ado has been made about Tim Tebow and his miraculous fourth quarter comebacks this season. You can see the world just turn on someone who had the audacity to openly share their faith about Jesus Christ. If Tim was a Hindu or Muslim, would he have endured the same type of scrutiny? Hardly. But the scrutiny he is enduring is partially about his faith and winning. Losing this week to New England, and his ability to lose gracefully, to me is more of a testimony of a Christian's ability to have faith in any situation, whether good or bad. But the secret to Tim is that he has tapped into the same kind of faith that Abraham and David have. It's that same kind of faith that is available to ANYONE who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Does that mean that success is around the corner for every believer? No. It means that whatever station God has put you in, he will empower you to do the best job you can do, in

whatever situation that may be. You might be a student in school, or the janitor cleaning the halls in that school. But we each have the ability to transform people's perceptions about who we are, by how we handle situations that life throws at us. This life is a test, and how we respond to the things God allows us to endure, is something we will carry with us for an eternity.

*"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:37-39*