

Crazy Days!

And then will come to pass the days spoken of by Jesus and the prophets of old – the days of Jacob's Trouble (Jer 30:7). After the church has been safely ensconced in heaven, after the Spirit of God 'steps aside' in this world, all hell will be unleashed -- quite literally.

This, I believe, will be the time when our dear country tumbles into calamity. Though liberal economists and historical revisionists may differ with me, when I study carefully the history of this land, I cannot help but see the hand of God at work in making it great. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient king of Babylon who walked its walls and felt such pride in what he thought to be his own accomplishment, we should recognize America's national power at this critical time in history as most definitely a work of God's grace.

Amid the hypocritical animosity of the other 187 nations of the UN, no other country stands with Israel. To be sure, the US has an overflowing cup of sin to account for as well, but as long as the true church is present and our national posture is supportive of Israel, we can hope for the blessings of God.

But the time is nearly upon us when all of that will change. You see, although America is NOT mentioned directly in scripture as playing a role during the Tribulation, that is, during the last seven years of this age of history also known as the 70th prophetic week of Daniel 9:24-27. I suggest that it's involvement very well MAY be shown through the Bible's prophetic imagery. See our essays entitled, "Daniel 7, the Quartet?" and "Little Horn and the Ten". America COULD be greatly involved.

However, I'm convinced that if and when America fails to support Israel as seems to be the case when you study Ezekiel 38 and 39 speaking of the

massive invasion of Israel by a coalition of countries lead by Russia, judgment will come. The worldwide influence of the US will greatly diminish.

Some Bible scholars have suggested that a nuclear conflict will be the reason for this seeming abdication of the US from the world 'stage' of the "last days". Certainly, there are enough enemies and available weaponry in many countries to make this a credible possibility, but based in part upon the story of Genesis 19, upon what the apostle Peter says in 2 Peter 2:6-9 and many other scriptural indicators, even if this is so, I'm inclined to believe that like Lot in Sodom, we'll be gone, physically taken out of the way, before that occurs.

Others have asserted that a devastating economic failure will leave us in such a strong isolationist mindset that we'll back away from the events of the Middle East that are of prophetic consequence. Surely, that's possible as well.

However, there are enough sincere Christians in this land that I'm convinced our 'disappearance' in the rapture will devastate every functional aspect of the nation. As a consequence, I believe that for a period of time, the country will, in effect, cease to function. Unchecked sin and ubiquitous turmoil will consume her.

If our government is perceived to have no teeth, no meaningful alliance with the Israel, the Jews will be seemingly defenseless. But scripture says that they will also be experiencing a sense of security - perhaps as a result of winning a regional war against her neighbors and the PA - perhaps as a result of a masterful peace negotiation. We may be here to see it or not, but something will happen to make the Jews in Israel feel relatively safe. (See Ez 38:10-12)

"Given the current situation in the Middle East, some kind of confirmation of a seven year agreement [like Oslo] is an absolute necessity, either to prevent all out war or at the conclusion of any such war."

"Bible prophecy says it will happen. The Bible also says it begins a time of judgment against Israel and the Gentile world. The Church was already judged at the Cross."

"Here's what it all means, boiled down into a single sentence. At some point before that treaty is signed, Jesus Christ will descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of an archangel, and all those living who placed their faith in Christ will be snatched away, to be forever with Christ."

"That treaty could happen at almost any moment. And that means the Rapture of the Church is even closer." – Jack Kinsella, The Omega Letter 2/28/02

Then, during this period of seeming security, the Russian-led invasion mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39 will take place. I, along with many others, am expecting that this invasion and the Antichrist's rise to power will occur near the beginning of the Tribulation period for several reasons:

1. Ezekiel 39:9 says that the victorious Jews will burn the weapons of the invading armies for seven years – the length of the Tribulation.
2. The Antichrist will be known for a significant seven year covenant that probably enables the Jews to build their temple and begin sacrificial worship. See Daniel 9:27.
3. The Antichrist seems to become famous as a military genius, for the people will refer to him saying, "Who can make war with the Beast?" (See Revelation 13:4). So to the people, he appears to be invincible militarily (even against overwhelming odds as are described in the Ezekiel 38 invasion?).
4. Although it is clearly the Lord who miraculously delivers Israel out of this terrible conflict, it is observably Satan's style to deceive – to unworthily take

credit for what God has done and to blame God for what he has done. His proxy is justly called Antichrist which means "in place of Christ".

5. In Revelation chapter six, right after the church is seen in heaven (chapter five), we see the immediate release of the Antichrist who, looking quite 'regal' and like a good guy riding the white horse, goes forth specifically to conquer. Right behind him are the personifications of War, Famine (or economic repression) and Death. So it is clear that once the church is gone, evil events transpire quite quickly.

In any event, with America's power seriously abated and sinful behavior rampant and unchecked, it is reasonable to expect that the Jewish people will be in danger of immediate world-wide attack. What Satan wanted to do through Hitler, the Inquisition, Haman (see the book of Ester) and others, he will try to do again – eliminate the Jewish people – all in a vain attempt to thwart God's plan.

But this time, it would seem that even Satan may have learned something -- that direct assaults on all the Jews have never resulted in their annihilation. (It's the same thing he attempted to do to the early church.) So instead, he's going to join them.

That is, it's quite possible that he'll pretend to be their long awaited Messiah, fulfilling their perspectives of some of the Messianic scriptures, and for a while, they'll receive him. Jesus said to the Jews, "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive." (John 5:43)

Now, his 'act' will be very convincing – he'll be awesome in battle, bring a temporary peace, provide a means of constructing a new temple in

Jerusalem, do signs and wonders, even overcome a deadly wound. But then, sometime near the middle of this seven year period, he'll demand to be worshipped and will seek to kill the 'remnant' or minority of Jews (and Gentiles) who don't tow that line.

Yet although the scripture calls him the 'son of perdition', he won't act like some Lex Luthor (remember Superman?) or carry a pitchfork and no, no red tights either. On the contrary, he will appear very 'messianic' – a charismatic leader and an apparent 'good guy', an angel of light so to speak. He'll come on the scene quite suddenly and subdue three significant leaders. It's interesting to note that the UK has just begun to push the creation of an EU 'super council' kind of like the UN's security council, consisting of three countries – the UK, Germany and France. Anyway, rising rapidly to global prominence, he'll speak boastfully against all gods as well as our Lord, the one true God.

Sounds crazy, huh? It will be! Crazy days indeed! But the good news is that we who are saved by sincere faith in the death and resurrection of the true Messiah, Jesus Christ, don't need to be looking for the Antichrist. Jesus told us to watch for His own coming, not Satan's front man. In fact, He was emphatic about it. Speaking of His return for the church, He said, "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming – in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning – lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping (spiritually). And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mark 13:35,36)