Prophecy On Fast-Forward

By Dr. Thomas Ice

I recall a conservative political commentator saying that the Democratic Party was the "A" team, while the Republicans were the "B" team on the road to socialism. Boy, oh boy was that a truism. Things are moving so fast in the last six months that stage-setting events are happening so fast that no one person can keep up with events. Prophecy is on fast-forward!

Stage Setting

Virtually all future prophecy will start to be fulfilled when the rapture occurs ending the church age. Then the world will enter the time when the birth pangs that Jesus spoke of begin to be fulfilled (Matt. 24:8). This post-rapture period known in the Old Testament as the "latter days" (Deut. 4:30; Jer. 30:24; 48:47; Dan. 2:28; 10:14), the "last days" (Jer. 23:20; 49:39; Ezek. 38:16), and the "latter years" (Ezek. 38:8) will last for seven years (Dan. 9:24–27; compare with Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:6; 13:5). None of what is happening today indicates that the rapture is near since that event is a signless event that could happen at any moment. Are you ready for the rapture?

The signs of the times that are occurring today relate to Israel as God is preparing the world for the time when He will resume His plan for Israel and that will then involve the fulfillment of times and seasons. One major indicator that we are likely near the beginning of the tribulation is the clear fact that national Israel has been reconstituted after almost 2,000 years. The signs also relate to what is happening in the Gentile world as we move toward a global government centered in the Revived Roman Empire, which is mainly Europe. Dr. John Walvoord explains the significance of signs occurring in our own day as follows:

> But if there are no signs for the Rapture itself, what are the legitimate grounds for believing that the Rapture could be especially near of this generation?
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> The answer is not found in any prophetic events predicted before the Rapture but in understanding the events that will follow the Rapture. Just as history was prepared for Christ's first coming, in a similar way history is preparing for the events leading up to His Second Coming. . . . If this is the case, it leads to the inevitable conclusion that the Rapture may be excitingly near.[1]

Signs For Our Day

In every generation since Christ's ascension there have been Christians who thought that there was reason for His return in their lifetime. However, almost all of these past expectations were derived from the belief that they were experiencing events of the tribulation in their own day. Only in the last 200 years have some interpreters begun to return to a literal, futurist understanding of the impending events of the tribulation, as generally held by most in the early Church. Thus, while so many have believed that Christ's return was near, the basis for such an understanding has not always been the same down through the history of the church—that the church was in the tribulation. The fact that Israel became a nation in 1948 is an undeniable fact of history that indicates that God is up to something in history in our day that could not be said in previous times.

God's plan for history always moves forward in relation to what He is doing with Israel. Thus, the fact that Israel has been and continues to be reconstituted as a nation is prophetically significant, so significant that it makes Israel God's "super-sign" of the end times. Were Israel not a nation again it would be impossible for events of the end time to occur since so many of them take place in

that tiny country or in reference to her. But she has returned and so it is that all other aspects of Bible prophecy are also being prepared for the grand finale of history.

Recently we have seen that the European Union threatened and warned Israel about not being open to the so-called "two-state solution" of the Arab-Israeli conflict in their effort to impose a human solution to the conflict.

The prospect of a new hawkish government, with Israel Beiteinu chairman Avigdor Lieberman as a possible foreign minister, will be seen in Europe as a setback to the Middle East peace process.

> "Let me say very clearly that the way the European Union will relate to an [Israeli] government that is not committed to a two-state solution will be very, very different," said Javier Solana, the EU's foreign and security affairs chief.[2]

New Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, is opposed to the two-state solution, which is the EU's framework for dealing with the problem. Whatever the supposed human solution affixed to this crisis will bring, the situation will not be genuinely solved until our Lord returns and imposes His will as the ultimate solution to the situation.

Since the election of Obama to the White House, we also see the United States changing from a sympathetic supporter of Israel to one who will be pressing for an imposed solution. New Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton is said by observers of the Mid-East Conflict to have shifted her pro Israel position she displayed as a U. S. Senator from New York.

Morton A. Klein, President of the Zionist Organization of America, is just one of

many supporters of Israel who say that Hillary Clinton, an outspoken supporter of a Palestinian state, has made an anti-Israel switch of late. Klein writes that the U.S. Secretary of State, once a "reliable and vocal supporter of Israel," has now taken many positions that are not in Israel's interest.[3]

Globalism

When George W. Bush was president he was ostracized and viciously attacked for acting upon the national interests of the United States within the now dominate global environment. As a pronounced citizen of the world, Obama instead insists that we must all shoulder "the burdens of global citizenship."[4] Thus, the United States of America, the last major holdout against global governance, has under President Obama joined efforts to deal with most matters within the framework of globalism. Whatever reluctance was shown in the past, America has now officially under the Obama administration joined the global community lock, stock, and barrel.

Scripture teaches that the Antichrist will rise to power out of a federation of nations that correlate in some way with the Roman Empire of two thousand years ago. Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost explains:

> Now, when we turn to the prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7 and to Revelation 13 and 17 and other parallel passages, we find that at the end time, during the Tribulation period, the final form of Gentile world power is a federation of ten separate nations, the ten toes or ten horns. It seems as though Europe's leaders are advocating that which Daniel prophesied hundreds of years before Christ, when he said that the final form of Roman world power would be a federation of independent states who elect one man to take authority over them while maintaining their own sovereign

> authority. The more movement we see in Europe for a common market and a federation of nations, the closer the coming of our Lord must be.[5]

One would have to be totally ignorant of developments within the world of our day to not admit that through the efforts of the European Union, Humpty Dumpty is finally being put back together again. This is occurring, like all of the other needed developments of prophecy, at just the right time to be in place for the coming tribulation period. Prophecy popularizer, Hal Lindsey tells us:

> "A generation ago, no one could have dreamed that an empire formed of the nations that were part of old Rome could possibly be revived. But today, as Europe is on the advent of real unity, we see the potential fulfillment of another vital prophecy leading to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ."[6]

Conclusion

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has recently said concerning the global economic downturn that we all should seek global solutions. He further said that the world has never been more willing to see globalism as the answer to our problems, to which he also promised a bright future if we join arms and march in this direction. Henry Kissinger has recently said on multiple occasions that President Obama has a tremendous opportunity to steer America toward globalism in an effort to deal with our problems. Kissinger has further opined that only globalists can solve these problems in the area of economics, environment, agriculture, religion, political, and so on.

It may be true that mankind without God and His word cannot figure out how to solve the pressing problems of humanity without some kind of global governance. However, the realities concerning these matters are always and only found in the

Bible and in our Lord's plan for the future as outlined through biblical prophecy. Some critics say that we become fatalists because we trust the veracity of Bible prophecy and thereby contribute to the decline of culture and society. Yet, how can we expect people to find biblical solutions to their problems when they are clearly and vocally in rebellion against God? What Bible-believing Christian would want the unbelieving world to succeed in solving the world's problems apart from God and His word? The Bible predicts this kind of direction and outcome because man is sinful and God is righteous. However, for any individual who will listen to God's word, He has provided a way of salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to Him. Maranatha!

Endnotes

[1] John F. Walvoord, Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis, revised (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), p. 217.
[2] Associated Press, "EU warns Netanyahu on hawkish government," Jerusalem Post, online edition (March 16, 2009), www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1237114835164&pagename=JPArticle%2FShowFull.
[3] Hillel Fendel, "Signs of Obama-Clinton Pressure on Israel," Arutz Sheva (March 9, 2009), www.israelnationalnews.com/SendMail.aspx?print=print&type=0&item=130429.
[4] Barack Obama in a speech given in Berlin, Germany on July 24, 2008.
[5]J. Dwight Pentecost, Prophecy For Today: The Middle East Crisis and the Future of the World (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), p. 226.
[6]Hal Lindsey, Planet Earth–2000 a.d. Will Mankind Survive? (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, 1994), p. 221.