

1 THE PROPHECY SERIES COUNTDOWN
2 **THE RAPTURE / THE NEXT EVENT IN THE PROPHETIC**
3 **PLAN OF GOD**

4 Session One / Wednesday, January 10, 2007

5
6 **WHY ARE WE HAVING THIS STUDY OF PROPHECY?**

7
8 1. No generation of people has ever lived in a more precarious time than we do.

9
10 A. We have been at actual war with Islam for 17 years. Note the times we have
11 been attacked:

- 12 • Iran Embassy Hostages 1979
- 13 • Beirut, Lebanon Embassy 1983
- 14 • Beirut, Lebanon Marine Barracks 1983
- 15 • Lockerbie, Scotland Pan-Am flight to New York 1988
- 16 • First New York World Trade Center Attack 1993
- 17 • Dhahran, Saudi Arabia Khobar Towers Military complex 1996
- 18 • Nairobi, Kenya US Embassy 1998
- 19 • Dares Salaam, Tanzania US Embassy 1998
- 20 • Aden, Yemen USS Cole 2000
- 21 • New York World Trade Center and Pentagon 2001

22
23 B. The current Muslim population of the world is 25%. It can be said perhaps
24 that the majority of Muslims are peaceful. Historians remember that Germany was
25 predominantly (though nominally) Christian and peaceful; however, one man, Adolf
26 Hitler changed that. Sixty million people died in World War II.

27
28 C. This is a war that we could very possibly lose. Islam already holds Spain
29 hostage. The next country to fall will probably be France, which is already 1/5th
30 Muslim.

31
32 D. Muslims know what is riding in this conflict and are completely committed to
33 winning at any cost. The Muslim terrorists' stated goal is to kill all infidels - that
34 means all non-Muslims, not just in the United States but all over the world.

A recent poll taken by the American Family Association reveals:

- * Do you consider Islam to be a peaceful religion? **Yes 2,633 No 34,398**
- * Do you consider Islam to be a tolerant religion? **Yes 1,491 No 35,473**
- * Should America place equal emphasis on the Koran and Bible? **Yes 873 No 35,996**
- * Is America too dependent on Muslim countries for oil? **Yes 35,266 No 1,512**

1
2 2. Scripture makes it clear that far from “evolving,” we are “devolving.” And the
3 disintegration of society has only just begun:

4
5 **2 Tim. 3:13-14**

6 **But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being**
7 **deceived. [14] But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been**
8 **assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them...**

9
10 3. Nothing should take us by surprise for the Bible has forewarned us of all of these
11 events - and their outcome. You will see this more clearly as we continue with these
12 Wednesday evening sessions.

13
14 **WHY STUDY PROPHECY**

15 (Resource: Prophecy for Today by Dr. Dwight D. Pentecost/Zondervan Publishing, p. 15
16

17 **1. The first result of the study of prophecy is that the prophetic Scriptures prove**
18 **to us the authority of the entire Word of God. There is no other book upon which**
19 **a religion has been founded which includes prophecy within it.** Other “religious
20 books” are entirely silent upon the future.

- 21
22 • The test of the truth of prophecy is always its fulfillment. There is no greater test
23 or proof of the inspiration, validity, authority, and trustworthiness of the Bible
24 than the proof of fulfilled prophecy.
25
26 • One mathematician has figured out, considering only the prophecies concerning
27 the first coming of Christ, that there is only one chance in 87, plus 93 zeroes, that
28 the Bible could be right on the basis of guess alone.

29
30 That's 1 in

31 87,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,
32 000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000!

33 Hundreds of years before He was born, the Old Testament told us the time of Jesus birth in
34 Daniel 9; the fact of the virgin birth in Isaiah 7; the place of His birth in Micah 5; the intimate
35 details of His life and death in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53; the fact of His resurrection in Psalm 16.
36 There are several hundred of such prophecies concerning Jesus' earthly life in the Old
37 Testament.

38 **2. Prophecy was given to us to reveal the power and wisdom of God.**

- 1 • A case in point can be found in the story of wicked King Ahaz of Judah, 700 years
2 before the birth of Christ. God promised through Isaiah that divine judgment
3 would come. Ahaz wanted no part of God, so Isaiah prophesied, “The Lord
4 himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and
5 shall call His name Immanuel.” Jesus was born seven centuries later and
6 shortly after His resurrection, Rome wiped Israel off the face of the map for the
7 next few hundreds of years.
8

9 **3. Prophecy reveals the purposes of God.**

- 10
11 • Genesis 18: God appeared to Abraham and told him the wicked cities of Sodom
12 and Gomorrah were going to be destroyed.
13
14 • Throughout Scripture, particularly Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelation, we are given
15 details of the coming world dictator, Armageddon, and other major events that will
16 follow the Rapture of the Church.
17

18 **4. Prophecy was designed by God to bring peace and assurance to the believer.**

- 19
20 • John 14: Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled,” and then foretold His return
21 to bring His Bride to Himself in the clouds of glory.
22

23 **5. God’s great purpose in revealing prophecy to His children is to produce a holy**
24 **life.**

- 25
26 • Almost without exception, when the coming of Christ is mentioned in the New
27 Testament, it is followed by an exhortation to godliness and holy living. While
28 the study of prophecy will give us proof of the authority of the Word of God, will
29 reveal the purpose of God and the power of God, and will give us the peace and
30 assurance of God, we have missed the whole purpose of the study of prophecy if it
31 does not conform us to the Lord Jesus Christ in our daily lives.
32

33 **6. There is yet a sixth purpose, I believe, not mentioned in Pentecost’s book,**
34 **concerning the purpose of prophecy: IT GIVES TO THE BELIEVER A SENSE**
35 **OF URGENCY IN THE GREAT COMMISSION.**

- 36 • God has taken us into His confidence and has revealed Himself in the prophetic
37 Scriptures. The study of those portions of the Word will give us proof of the
38 authority of the Bible, will reveal the power of God, will cause us to understand
39 the purposes of God, will give the child of God the peace of God in his daily
40
41

1 experience, but above all will produce a new kind of life in the light of His
2 imminent return. He has told us He will appear. Only the time is uncertain. It
3 was Paul's desire to be found faithful if Christ should come in his day. Yet Christ
4 has tarried that multitudes might come to salvation through His grace. We still
5 have the promise that He could come at any moment. May the joy of looking for
6 Him produce in us that holiness of life so that we will not be ashamed when we
7 see Him. (Pentecost, Prophecy for Today, p. 21)

9 **A BASIC OUTLINE OF THOSE EVENTS YET TO HAPPEN**

- 10
- 11 1. The Rapture of the Church
- 12
- 13 2. The believers, the Bride of Christ, will be summoned into Christ's presence where
14 we will appear at these events:
 - 15 ● The Judgment Seat of Christ See I. Cor. 3
 - 16 ● The Marriage Supper of the Lamb See Revelation 19:7-16
 - 17
- 18 3. On earth, following the Rapture, the TRIBULATION period will begin.
 - 19 ● The rise to power of ANTICHRIST See Rev. 13:1-10
 - 20 ● The advent of the False Prophet See Rev. 13:11-18
 - 21 ● The Seal Judgments See Rev. 6, 7, 8
 - 22 ● The Trumpet Judgments See Rev. 8, 9
 - 23 ● The appearance on earth of THE TWO WITNESSES See. Rev. 11
 - 24 ● The Vial Judgments See Rev. 15, 16
 - 25 ● The Fall of Babylon See Rev. 18
 - 26 ● The preparation for THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON See Rev. 16:16
 - 27
- 28 4. The Second Coming of Christ See Rev. 19:11-21
- 29
- 30 5. Satan Is Thrown Into The Bottomless Pit for 1,000 Years Rev. 20
- 31
- 32 6. THE MILLENNIUM, the 1,000 Earthly Reign of Christ
- 33
- 34 7. The Great White Throne Judgment Rev. 20:11-15
- 35
- 36 8. A New Heaven and Earth
- 37 9. Eternity
- 38
- 39
- 40
- 41

1 THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH - THE NEXT EVENT IN PROPHECY

3 1 Thes. 4:13-18

4 **But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are**
5 **asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. [14] For if we believe**
6 **that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring**
7 **with him. [15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are**
8 **alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are**
9 **asleep. [16] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the**
10 **voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise**
11 **first: [17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with**
12 **them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the**
13 **Lord. [18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.**

- 14
- 15 ● It is the fervent belief within the Assemblies of God, and most evangelical
- 16 fellowships or denominations, that the rapture of the church is the next event in
- 17 prophecy. We say THE RAPTURE IS IMMINENT, that is, the next thing to
- 18 occur.
- 19
- 20 ● There are three basic beliefs regarding the timing of the rapture:
- 21 1. **The Pre-Tribulation Rapture - that is, the Christ takes His people off the**
- 22 **earth before Antichrist and the Tribulation**
- 23 2. The Mid-Tribulation Rapture - that is, that Jesus takes His people home mid-
- 24 way through the Tribulation
- 25 3. The Post-Tribulation Rapture - that is, the church goes through the
- 26 Tribulation just as does everyone else and then the Lord returns.

27

28 We believe in the highlighted #1 position for the following reasons:

29

- 30 ● The scenario begins in John 13 as Jesus meets with His disciples in the Upper
- 31 Room on Mount Zion. It's evening time, and Jesus knows that by mid-morning
- 32 the next day He will be nailed to the cross on Calvary.
- 33
- 34 ● As John relates the story, Jesus has washed the disciples' feet, confronted Judas
- 35 with His knowledge that Judas will betray Him and Judas leaves the room, notifies
- 36 the remaining 11 that His time has come and foretells Peter's denial.
- 37
- 38 ● You can imagine the consternation of the disciples at the distressing turn of events
- 39 at this dinner meeting. Then Jesus picks up their spirits with these words,
- 40 beginning in the 14th chapter:
- 41

1 **John 14:1-4**

2 **Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. [2] In my**
3 **Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to**
4 **prepare a place for you. [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come**
5 **again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. [4] And**
6 **whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.**

7
8 Thomas, the doubting disciple, replied to Jesus, "Lord, how can we know the way?"
9 To which Jesus responded, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no man comes to
10 the Father but by me."

- 11
12 ● What about these "mansions?" In Jesus' society, when a boy married, his father
13 would either add on or prepare a place within the family home where the newly-
14 weds would live. Jesus was telling His disciples that within Heaven, the eternal
15 Father's house, there will be many apartments or dwelling places.

We like to sing, "I've Got a Mansion Just Over the Hilltop." But that's not really a biblical reality. But we will be in God's presence in the "place" he has prepared for us forever.

- 16
17
18 ● All that Jesus has so far promised is that He will someday come to take us to be
19 with Him. But the method, timing, procedure - none of this - is told us so far.
20 This information we gather from the Apostle Paul.

21
22 **1 Cor. 15:51-54**

23 **Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,**
24 **[52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall**
25 **sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53] For**
26 **this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.**
27 **[54] So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall**
28 **have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,**
29 **Death is swallowed up in victory.**

- 30
31 ● Note the word "mystery." This word in this connotation does not mean a "who
32 dunnit" or mysterious secret. The word MYSTERY means SOME TRUTH NOT
33 PREVIOUSLY REVEALED BY GOD TO MEN. What was this "new truth?"
34 THE NEW TRUTH WAS THAT THERE WAS COMING A GENERATION OF
35 CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS WHO WOULD NOT DIE. They would be
36 transformed into the presence of God, out of our corruptible bodies into

1 incorruptible ones, without the process of death and resurrection.

2

3 ● Paul said it would be an INSTANTANEOUS change....in the “twinkling of an
4 eye.”

“The word ‘twinkling’ should not be confused with the ‘blinking’ of an eye. Twinkling refers to the sudden flash that may pass between two individuals, that instantaneous, indivisible unit of time in which there is a flash of recognition without a lapse of time whatsoever. Our translation is going to be that rapid. One moment we will be on earth, and in a twinkling we will find ourselves translated into glory.” Pentecost p. 17

5

6 ● “At the last trump.” That is the moment God will conclude this present age.
7 The last person will have been saved in this dispensation of grace. But there is no
8 time period given in Scripture when this “last trump” will sound. Anyone who
9 says he or she knows when the rapture will occur, is not scripturally sound.

10

11 ● “We shall be changed.” In that moment of time, these bodies of ours will be
12 changed into the resurrected and glorified bodies such as Jesus had following His
13 resurrection. Our new bodies will be free from all time and space limitations.
14 “We shall be like Him....for we shall see Him as He is.

15

16 ●
17 Paul addressed the concerns of Christians in his day who saw some of their Christian
18 brothers and sisters dying. Would they miss the return of the Lord? they wondered.
19 “No,” Paul wrote, “in fact, the dead in Christ would rise first.”

20

21 ● The shout! This refers to the type of command issued by a military leader.
22 Jesus is pictured here as a military commander who is moving out the troops who
23 are under His authority.

24

25 ● The voice of the archangel! That would probably be Michael.

26

27 **WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON EARTH AMONG THOSE STILL HERE**
28 **AFTER THE RAPTURE?**

29 There is mixed response to that question. However, the populace of the world will not
30 have long to consider it before the advent of Antichrist. From that moment on, events
31 will take place at break-neck speed.

32

33 *Next week: GOD’S PICTURE OF THE TRIBULATION*