

The End Times
The End Of The Age
1 Thess 5.1-11

Often we hear from preachers who claim that Bible prophecies are being fulfilled in our day all around our world. The truth is that the next Bible prophecy that will be fulfilled, and must be fulfilled before any other Bible prophecy can be fulfilled is the Rapture of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. No other Bible prophecy can be fulfilled until the Rapture occurs.

So what about all these Bible teachers and preachers who claim that Bible prophecies are actually being fulfilled in our day. There are a few obvious facts we must understand about these prophets,

- If they sincerely teach that Bible prophecies are being fulfilled then they must be of a doctrinal position other than the premillennial Rapture of the Church. Only mid and post tribulation rapturists can somehow see prophecies being fulfilled in our world because they believe that we could be living in the Tribulation Period as we await the Rapture.
- The Bible gives us clear guidelines about dealing with Prophets.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 ²⁰ But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. ²¹ And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? ²² When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

There have been many preachers and prophets who have set a date and said this will be the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall return. Then the day comes and goes and our Lord did not come. Such prophets we should have nothing to do with. Yet, it seems that people continue to follow these false prophets. I have known of one preacher who as written books setting the date of the coming of the Lord. He wrote one book and the day came and went, so then he wrote another book that set another date and the day came and went. And yet He still has a very large Church.

Folks, have nothing to do with these false prophets.

There will be no other Bible prophecies that will be fulfilled before the Rapture of the Church. Yet there will be things that must occur in order to make preparations for the things that must occur as the Tribulation Period comes upon all the earth.

These are referred to as **Precursors To The Tribulation Period**. These are often mistaken for the fulfillment of Bible Prophecies but in reality they are merely those things that must be in place before certain Bible prophecies can occur.

Precursors To The Tribulation Period,

1. The Restoration of Israel, May 14, 1948 –

Israel is mentioned often in The Revelation, which describes in great detail many things which will occur during the Tribulation Period.

For many years, over 1900 years, Bible scholars claimed that the book of Revelation was allegorical or symbolic because Israel figured so prominently in The End Times, but for the world in their day Israel was not a nation. The Jews were a people, but they were a dispersed people, a people without a land, and people without a nation. So how could any of those prophecies in the Bible that spoke of Israel as a nation be taken literally.

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But after the end of World War II, on May 14, 1948 Israel became a nation again. For the first time since the penning of The Revelation the things prophesied in The Revelation could be literally fulfilled. Thus revealing that the Word of God is literally true from cover to cover.

Allegory was largely responsible for all of the errors of Christianity throughout the dark middle ages. Allegory was the foundation of the Catholic religious errors like penance, indulgences, the worship of Mary and the saints, and transubstantiation. When the Word of God is interpreted literally, as God says we should understand it, all of these false doctrinal errors disappear.

One of the reasons I know that we are very close to the Rapture is because Israel is a nation again.

2 Thess 2.1

2. The Condition of the Church (2 Thess 2.1-3, 4-8; John 14.16) – The Timing of the Rapture. There must be a Great Falling Away.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 ¹ Now we beseech you, brethren, **by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,** [This is clearly the Rapture] ² 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.

³ **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;**

Two things are clearly identified here. These must precede the beginning of the tribulation period.

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1. The Restoration of Israel
2. The Condition of the Church

- **A Falling Away** - What does falling away mean? We get our English word **Apostasy** from this Greek word.

Falling Away - ἀποστασία (gk) - *apostasías*, fem. noun from *aphístēmi* (868), to depart. Departure, apostasy. Occurs in Acts 21:21 translated “forsake” and in 2 Thess. 2:3, “a falling away” . . . In 2 Thess. 2:3 the word *apostasía* does not refer to genuine Christians who depart from the faith, but mere professors who, without divine grace, succumb to the Satanic deception of the Antichrist. If those who are truly Christ’s and through the Holy Spirit have become members of His body (1 Cor. 12:13) could be detached, then the assurances Jesus gave that His own will not perish would be made null and void (John 10:28, 29). See Sept.: 2 Chr. 29:19.¹

Hence, this apostasy will look very much like the Laodicean Church of The Revelation. The Church will be the Church of the People, and not the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact our Lord Jesus Christ will be seen on the outside of this Church knocking to get into it (Rev 3.20).

- **The Anti-Christ Revealed** – The one thing that will mark the beginning of the Tribulation Period, which begins after the Rapture of the Church, will be the appearance of the Anti-Christ. Listen to the description that undeniable reveals who this is,

2 Thessalonians 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Without any doubt this is the Anti-Christ, who is the first horseman released when the first seal is broken in Revelation 6.1-2.

¹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

But notice the condition that must be fulfilled before the Anti-Christ can be revealed.

2 Thessalonians 2:5-8 ⁵ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? ⁶ **And now ye know what withholdeth**

that he might be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only **he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.** ⁸ **And then shall that Wicked be revealed,**

whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

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He who letteth is without any doubt the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way, my friends the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ must go with Him, because our Lord's promise is that we Christians will never be left without the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord said,

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

My brothers and sisters in Christ when the Holy Spirit is "taken out" must be the same event as the Rapture when the Church is "Caught Up" to meet the lord in the air (1Thess 4.17).

There will be a great Falling Away and we are seeing this apostasy occurring all around us.

- People who call themselves Christians have abandoned the Word of God. It does not matter what the Bible says, people just do what they want to do.
- So called Christian Churches and Pastors have called good evil and evil good. So much so that abominable sins are being accepted and endorsed in Churches as wholesome and acceptable lifestyle choices. Homosexuality, Adultery, fornication, and all kinds of heinous sins.
- So called Christian Teachers and Professors are now teaching that all religious views are just as valid as the Christian view about Salvation and Redemption. Today, all ways lead to heaven. This is universalism and it is wrong.

All of these and many more apostate declarations and positions reveal the condition of the Christian Church to be that described by this text and the teachings of the Seven Churches of Revelation and the Kingdom Parables.

2 Tim 3,1

We are in the middle of a great falling away, overcome this Christian.

3. The Rebellion Of The World (2 Tim 3.1-9) - Perilous Times in the our world.

2 Timothy 3:1-9 ¹ This know also, **that in the last days perilous times shall come.** ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ⁶ For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷ Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. ⁹ But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

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What a terrible description of the confusion that will permeate our world's cultures just before the End comes.

Folks, there was a times in years gone by, many of you remember, when it seemed that all people, Christian and non-Christian alike sought to be honest and compassionate. Now, we do not deny that there were Hilters and other vicious tyrants in our world, but they seemed to be the exception and not the rule.

I hear people talk about times in the past when they did not lock their houses. I have heard older folks talk about leaving their keys in their cars and trucks when they went into town to the store. There was a time when people could trust one another, even strangers.

Those times seem to be long gone and forgotten.

We are living in Perilous Times, and the description of this text seems to accurately describe the people of our day. Therefore, I believe we are on the threshold of the Rapture.

4. The Preparations For The Tribulation Period – There are also things that are described in The Revelation that require preparation if they are to be fulfilled.

a. Worldwide instantaneous communication (Rev 11.7-11)

Revelation 11:7-11 ⁷ And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. ⁸ **And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city,** which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. ⁹ **And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.** ¹⁰ And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. ¹¹ And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

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1. The Restoration of Israel
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3. The Rebellion of the World

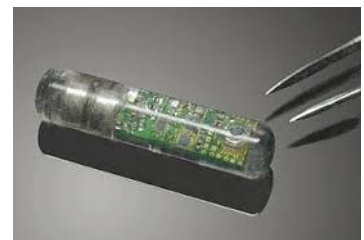
All the vile rebellious world will see these two prophets of God slaughtered and then resurrected. They only way for this to occur if for our worlds communication system to be what it is today.

b. The Mark of the Beast (Rev 13.16-18)

Revelation 13:16-18 ¹⁶ 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: ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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.

Today it is said that only 6% of all transactions in America are completed with cash. Most people buy and sell using Credit Cards or some other form of electronic payment.

I believe that the Mark of the Beast will be an electronic chip, a bio chip, placed under the skin



and will be used to carry all your vital information, including your financial transactions. Folks, this reality is almost upon us.

Chips similar to this one are already used in animals and will one day soon be available for use by all of us. Be warned, anyone who gets the mark of the beast is eternally condemned to the Lake of Fire.

Technologies like this convince me that we are very close to the Rapture of the Church.

Rev 13.1

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1. **The Restoration of Israel**
2. **The Condition of the Church**
3. **The Rebellion of the World**
 - a. Worldwide Instantaneous Communications
 - b. The Mark of the Beast

c. A One World Order (Rev 13.1,7-9) – The Beast arose out of the sea, and the Word of God says,

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Revelation 13:7-9 ⁷ And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: **and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.** ⁸ **And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him,** whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. ⁹ If any man have an ear, let him hear.

This is indicative of A One World Government. While there are struggles in our world, wars and rumors of wars, we see every day, day-by-day how our world governments are working closer together than they have ever worked before.

It seems like we are close to finding enough common ground to fall under a one world government, one day soon.

While none of these precursors are fully developed yet, I believe that the right catalyst could throw all of these requirements into place in very short order. What might that catalyst be, perhaps the rapture of the Church and the destruction of North and South America.

We are living on the threshold of the Rapture and the beginning of the fulfillment of all of the Word of God.

Are you ready?

CrossRoads Baptist Church, Nov 16, 2014 Evening

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