

Prophecy Update 2007

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Prophecy Proves

1. One of the most potent proofs for the inspiration of Scripture is fulfilled prophecy.
2. How else to explain foretelling future events unless the Source is outside time?
3. And the prophecy isn't fulfilled in a general, broad-brush way. It's detailed & specific; with names & dates.
4. 1/3 of the Bible was prophetic when originally penned.
5. Most prophecy in the Bible centers on the nation of Israel & the mission of the Messiah.
6. The prophecies foretelling His 1st coming were all fulfilled in amazing exactness in the birth, life, mission, death, & resurrection of Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago.
7. There are many remaining prophecies about His 2nd coming—when He will enforce the victory over sin & satan He secured through the Cross.
8. Here's the key for us this morning: We ought to expect these remaining prophecies to be fulfilled in the same way the first were – literally & precisely.

B. Looking

1. When Jesus first came, 2 elderly Jews understood from their study of God's Word that the time of the Messiah's arrival was at hand & they were waiting expectantly for Him.
 - a. Anna & Simeon spent their days in the Temple waiting for Messiah to come.
 - b. Their patient & expectant waiting was rewarded by seeing Him when Jesus' parents brought Him for dedication to the Lord.
 - c. Anna & Simeon stand in stark contrast to the religious scholars who as experts in the scriptures ought to have known the Messiah had come.
2. In Luke 12, Jesus rebuked these scholars for their goofy interpretations of God's Word.
 - a. He said that just as they could forecast the weather by looking at the sky,
 - b. They ought to have recognized current events as the fulfillment of prophecy signaling His coming.
 - c. Their error was that they interpreted the prophecies spiritually instead of literally.
 - d. So the scholars missed the Messiah while the common people who interpreted God's Word literally welcomed Him.
3. That same error is being made by many scholars today.
 - a. They interpret the Bible purely spiritually & scoff at those who take it literally.
 - b. They have little interest in prophecy because they reject its real fulfillment in contemporary events.
 - c. Don't be put off by their skepticism.
 - d. Jesus rebuked their attitude & approach to the Scriptures & said they ought to have known He'd come because of all the prophecy He fulfilled.
4. In fact, the scoffing of such skeptics is one of the signs we're living in the last days.

Know this as certain: Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own desires, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 2 Peter 3:3-4

C. Signs = Literal!

1. When someone says we're living in the Last Days, you'll often hear the critic say, "Oh come on. People have been saying that for generations."
2. Actually, that's not the case. Throughout church history, there haven't been many who've thought they were living in the Last Days.
3. Sure—there have been minor movements & small groups who believed they were living in the End Times but they always constituted a tiny fringe.
 - a. What's important to know is that these groups had strange & convoluted interpretations in order to make prophecy fit their time.
 - b. They had to bend, twist, shape, & force it into their pet theories.
4. What's different about the study of End Times prophecy today is that there's no need to do that.
 - a. We can interpret prophecy literally & see it fulfilled in a straight-forward way by current events.
 - b. We'll see several examples of that in a moment.
5. In speaking to the disciples about the End Times, Jesus gave signs they were to see & know His return was at hand.
"Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." Luke 21:28
8. Prior to this, He gave them what He called "signs."
 - a. A sign is something meant to be seen & understood, quickly & easily.
 - b. If you're driving north on the 101 & come to a sign that says, "Carpentaria, Next 2 Exits" you know the next 2 off ramps will take you to the City of Carpentaria.
 - 1) You don't pull over & ponder what CalTrans can mean by the sign.
 - 2) Hmm, does that mean Carp is adjacent to Exits somewhere.
 - 3) Or maybe it means visiting Carp requires I leave the path I'm now on in life.



- 4) Or maybe it means Carp IS the next 2 exits, just them, nothing else; Carp isn't a City, it's an off ramp.
- c. This is all silly. You know the next 2 exits will take you to Carpentaria.
9. Signs aren't given to confuse us; they're given to point out a clear path & inform us about what's coming – to help us make decisions about what's up ahead.
 10. When traveling the freeway, you don't see a sign & say, "Wow, I wonder what that means."
 11. And so it is for prophecy.
 12. If scripture gives a sign identifying the last days & it's outside our field of understanding, instead of spiritualizing it or mashing into some tortured fulfillment of a current event, wait.
 13. Its fulfillment in a literal way is likely to come to pass as time goes by.
 14. Now--what's exciting for us today is that there is little that remains that can't be literally fulfilled by current events.
 15. And Jesus said to His followers, "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

D. Prophetic Scenario

1. For those who interpret prophecy literally many, maybe even most, lay out end times events like this . . .
 - Rapture → Tribulation → Second Coming →
 - Millennium → Final Judgment → New Heavens & Earth
2. Most prophecy deals with the 2nd Coming & Millennium.
3. So if we see the World scene being set up for that, it means the Rapture is close.
4. The stores started putting up Christmas decorations during the 1st week of November this year.
5. You know what it means when you see Christmas decorations going up? Thanksgiving is soon; because Thanksgiving precedes Christmas.
6. So it is with the signs of the 2nd Coming; they signal the nearness of the Rapture.
7. So, let's consider some trends, some things that need to be in place for the prophecies about the Last Days to come to pass.

II. TRENDS

A. Trend 1: Rebirth of Israel

1. On May 14th, 1948, after nearly 2,000 years, Israel became a sovereign, independent nation once more.
2. This was an event totally unique in history.
3. And it took place in the midst of incredible odds against it.
4. The surrounding nations immediately declared all out war & launched a huge invasion to drive the Jews into the sea.
5. Yet Israel managed to drive them back & secured her little patch of land.
6. Further wars saw that territory grow & Israel's status as a world power expand.
7. While many modern observers still shake their heads over the mystery of the Modern State of Israel, students of scripture consider it nothing more than one more example of the inspiration of Scripture.
8. In chs. 36 & 37 of Ezekiel, God said He would re-gather the Jews from the nations where they had been scattered & bring them back into their own land in the last days. Then He said He would bless & prosper them as never before.

Ezekiel 36:1-5 - 1 "And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel,

"Mountains" is *specific*; it speaks of the LAND, the geography of the nation of Israel.

and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord! 2 Thus says the Lord God: "Because the enemy has said of you, 'Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession,' "

This is precisely what the Romans, then the Muslims said once the land was wrested from Jewish control.

3 therefore prophesy, and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Because they made you desolate and swallowed you up on every side,

Prior to 68 AD, Israel was a fertile and forest covered land. But the Roman suppression of the Jewish revolts of the 1st and 2nd Centuries saw the land denuded of it's trees; being used as lumber for Roman siege works. Under Muslim occupation, poor agricultural practices saw the land turned into a desolation marked by either desert or malaria-infested swamps.

so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations,

Renamed *Palestine* by the Romans in an attempt to erase evidence of Jewish connection to the Land, Israel became a geographical football kicked back & forth by Syria, Jordan, the Turks, the British, & others. Today, possession of the land is **THE DEFINING ISSUE** of our time.

and you are taken up by the lips of talkers and slandered by the people"— 4 therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God! Thus says the Lord God to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, the valleys, the desolate wastes, and the cities that have been forsaken, which became plunder and mockery to the rest of the nations all around—

When Mark Twain visited the Holy Land, he described it as a God-forsaken wilderness.

5 therefore thus says the Lord God: "Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom,

Edom is modern day Jordan, which was the nation left exerting control of Palestine in 1948. Interesting that the ONLY nation mentioned in this entire passage is Edom/Jordan—the one that would hold political control at the time this prophecy speaks to.

who gave My land to themselves as a possession, with wholehearted joy and spiteful minds, in order to plunder its open country.”’

Skip down to v. 8

8 You, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. 9 For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. 10 I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11 I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better for you than at your beginnings. Then you shall know that I am the Lord. 12 Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance; no more shall you bereave them of children.”

9. In vs. 24-30 of ch. 36, God says He will do this for Israel, not because the Jews deserve it. On the contrary, they’ve been a rebellious, wayward people deserving the judgments they’ve endured.

10. No – God says He will restore the people & land for His name’s sake – because He made a promise to their fathers that the land would be theirs forever. Listen to Him –

24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. 28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29 I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses.

Not only will Israel be reborn as a geopolitical nation, when that happens, God will bring about a spiritual revival among the Jewish people.

29b: I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. 30 And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.

[One of the marks this is a genuine spiritual revival is the depth & honesty of their broken repentance before God.]

32 Not for your sake do I do this,” says the Lord God, “let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!”

Israel’s rebirth will not be because she deserves it. It’ll be solely because God made a promise, and He ALWAYS keeps His Word.

33 ‘Thus says the Lord God: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt.

Israel’s rebirth in 1948 and her continued presence in the land is NOT due to treaties, alliances, negotiations, Road Maps to Peace, the UN, Rabin, Barak, Clinton, Arafat, Abbas, Hamas, Ohlmert, Bush, anything or anybody else! She exists and will continue to because God is God & made a promise.

34 The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. 35 So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ 36 Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it.”

11. There’s an old teaching that’s seen a renewal in recent years called Replacement Theology.

- a. It says all God’s promises to Israel have been taken over by the Church, including this promise in Ezekiel 36.
 - b. RT was easy to swallow during the Middle Ages when a reborn Israel seemed absurd.
 - c. But the last 50 years & Israel’s amazing growth & prosperity have brought about a whole new possibility.
 - d. God ties His Name/rep to His promise to Israel = THE LAND!
 - e. Interpreting these promises as applying spiritually to the Church is absurd!
12. In ch. 37, Ezekiel describes how the Jewish people will be called out of all the nations where they’ve been scattered & will become a vital, strong nation once more.
13. He says it’s then they’ll see the fulfillment of all their desires in the coming of their Messiah who will conquer evil & establish the Kingdom of God on Earth. [37:24-28]
14. Just as Ezekiel foretold, the Jews are flooding back to Israel from all over the world.
- a. They’ve rebuilt the waste places.
 - 1) The ancient ruins are now the archaeological sites we tour when we visit the holy land.
 - 2) Cities that had long been ramshackle villages are now thriving populations centers with tract homes, lush parks, strips malls, & playgrounds filled with laughing children.
 - 3) In our last trip to Israel, as we were walking through the streets of Old Jerusalem not far from the Temple Mount, we came upon a playground tucked between the ancient buildings.

- a) In fact, it was right next to a section of the wall King Hezekiah built.
- b) A dozen ultra-orthodox children were playing on a bright, new jungle-gym while their grandmothers sat & watched. The sounds of play filled the air.
- c) As we watched, the words of Zechariah 8:4-5 came to mind.

Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, Each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.'

- d) Zechariah was describing the same period of time Ezekiel was – the Last Days when God regathers & restores Israel to her land and prospers her as never before.
- b. In literal fulfillment of God's Word, the desert blooms with rich harvests of flowers & fruit. Israel is a leading exporter of flowers & agricultural products to Europe.
- c. Construction is going on all over Israel. Amir, our tour guide, said that Israel had adopted a new national bird; The crane – the construction crane which you see dominating the skyline in every urban center.
- d. Israel has become the world's leading hi-tech center outside Silicon Valley.
 - 1) Most of the recent breakthroughs in computer technology have taken place in Israeli research facilities.
 - 2) Both Intel's & Sun's latest chips were developed in Israeli labs.
 - 3) Most of the innovations in cell phones have come out of Israel's hi-tech centers.
 - 4) There are more Israeli-based/started companies listed on NASDAQ than from any other country.
 - 5) In Feb. of this year, Intel began construction of a \$3.5 billion microchip factory & research facility in Israel, & now employs more people in its Israel facilities than in Silicon Valley.
 - 6) Google announced in 2005 that it was opening new headquarters in Israel.
- e. Israel leads the world in exports of industrial oils, fertilizers, & polished diamonds.
- f. In 2005 the tiny nation was 8th in worldwide per capita exports.
- g. Israel's 2005 Gross Domestic Product was \$123 billion. In comparison, Egypt's was \$81 billion - \$42 billion less!
- 15. The point is this → The mere possibility a nation which had been extinct for nearly 2,000 years could be reborn in the modern era is mind-numbing.
 - a. That it could overcome the opposition that's come against it by the world community for 5 decades is staggering.
 - b. That it could prosper so dramatically in the midst of it all is beyond comprehension.
- 16. But this is what God said – that He would make Israel's rebirth & blessing a testimony to His greatness. All the world would come to see His glory through what He does for Israel.
 - a. What's at the center of world attention & the news week after week? Turmoil in the Middle East.
 - b. And what's at the center of that? Israel!

B. TREND 2: The Rise of Militant Islam

- 1. Remember the chs. of the Bible weren't part of the original; they were added centuries later.
- 2. Ezekiel's prophecy in chs36-37 about the land of Israel & the Jewish people being regathered into her is followed in chs38-39 with a massive, multinational invasion of that reborn & prospering new nation.
- 3. In. v8 of ch38 the prophet says of this invading force . . .

After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely.

- 4. We can't go into all the details of this, this morning. Let me just say in summary that the nations & people listed here are their ancient names.
- 5. Suffice it to say that this invading coalition is made up of Russia & several radical Islamic states, the chief of which is Iran.
- 6. Iran has made no secret of its desire to be the leader of the Muslim world & of its fierce hatred of Israel.
- 7. Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has vowed to wipe Israel off the map.
- 8. His determination to pursue Iran's nuclear program is well known to anyone who listens to the news.
 - a. One of the biggest foreign policy crises facing the US & Europe today is Iran.
 - b. Even the UN is concerned about how to handle Iran's determination to become a Nuclear power.
- 9. What's troubling many Western observers but building a widening base of support among radical Muslims is Ahmadinejad's devotion to a sect of Islam that believes the Muslim Messiah, the 12th Imam, or Mahdi, is about to appear.
 - a. This group believes when the Mahdi arrives he will rule the world for 7 years & bring a time of unparalleled peace, prosperity, & Muslim dominance.
 - b. A little over a year ago Ahmadinejad said, "Our revolution's main mission is to pave the way for the reappearance of the 12th Imam, the Mahdi. Therefore, Iran should become a powerful, developed, and model Islamic society. Today, we should define our economic, cultural, and political policies based on the policy of Imam Mahdi's return."¹

¹ *Persian Journal* – 01/10/2006 – "Iran President Paves the Way for Arab's Imam Return" – Quoting story from Reuters, Nov. 17, 2005, Paul Hughes

- c. Ahmadinejad's entire cabinet is made up of members of this same apocalyptic sect.
10. What makes observers really concerned is that this sect believes the Mahdi will come at a time of global chaos & upheaval, & that they can hasten his coming by fomenting international strife.
 11. That's one of the reasons they're so spooked at the idea of Iran with nuclear weapons.
 12. Some of the things Ahmadinejad has said about recent experiences he's had indicate he believes he's been charged with a divine mission of setting the stage for the End Times.
 13. The recent war between Israel & Hizb'Allah in Lebanon was little more than Iran's probing of Israel's defenses, seeing how prepared she is for invasion.
 - a. Hizb'Allah is Iran's surrogate in Lebanon, a puppet regime whose strings are pulled in Tehran.
 - b. Israel's poor showing in the contest with Hizb'Allah has emboldened Iran in their invasion plans.
 14. In Eze38, the coalition of nations that will invade Israel in the Last Days are today nearly all dominated by the new brand of Jihadist Islam that's redefining the face of Modern Islam.
 15. But some of the nations we'd expect to be a part of such an invasion aren't there; Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, & Saudi Arabia.
 - a. These are all strongly Muslim nations, but they're obvious by their absence from the list of invaders. Why? After all, historically these nations have hated & attacked Israel.
 - b. Egypt & Jordan both have strong & mutually profitable peace treaties with Israel.
 - 1) Both nations have gone to war with Israel & come out the other side licking their wounds.
 - 2) They've discovered peace with Israel is both safer & more profitable.
 - c. Iraq is today struggling toward democracy. That she's not listed with the invading nations may mean Western troops are still there when the invasion comes.
 - d. Saudi Arabia isn't part of the invasion because she's Sunni Muslim while Iran, the lead Muslim invader is radically Shiite. Shiites & Sunnis hate each other only slightly less than they hate Israel.
 16. What's remarkable about Ezekiel's list, is that 2,500 years ago this coalition of nations weren't allies in the least sense. For the most part, they were bitter enemies.
 - a. Or they lived at such a great distance from each another, they didn't know the others existed.
 - b. It was a thousand years after Ezekiel that Mohammed spread his religion across the Middle East, uniting people who had been enemies into a new community; the Umma of Islam.
 17. And it's only been in the last half-century that Radical, Militant, Jihadists have become the defining movement of Islam.
 18. Let's recap: Ezekiel 36-39 foretells the rebirth of Israel. Once established and prospering in the land a coalition of nations will invade.
 - a. In v8 of ch38, Ezekiel said this invasion would take place in the "latter years" = the End Times.
 - b. Look at Eze. 38:1-6
 - c. Don't be put off by these names here. They're simply the *ancient names* for regions & peoples who lived at Ezekiel's time.
 - d. Vs. 5 & 6 are the ancient descriptors for the modern states of Iran, Sudan, Libya, & Turkey.
 - 1) Iran, Sudan & Libya are already radically militant jihadist.
 - 2) Turkey's leaders have been trying desperately for the last 30 years to move the nation toward a Western culture but Europe has snubbed them time & again and a backlash is gaining momentum.
 - 3) Militant Islam is growing rapidly in Turkey & terrorist attacks against the government have been numerous.
 - 4) It won't be long till the Jihadists take over in Turkey as they did in the Islamic Revolution that deposed the Shah in Iran in 1979.
 19. It's not at all difficult envisioning these nations uniting in an attack on Israel.
 - a. As militant Islamists, they hate Israel.
 - b. They see her presence on sacred Muslim soil as an abomination & insult to Allah.
 - c. As good Muslims, they have a *duty* to erase it!

C. Trend 3: The Rise of Russia

1. In v2 of ch38, Ezekiel speaks to the *real leader* of this multi-national coalition that invades Israel in the last days.
2. *Magog* was ancient name for what today we know as Russia & the southern Muslim republics of the former USSR.
3. While militant Islam is a major player in the invasion of Israel, *the leader* of the invading coalition is Russia.
4. This makes the recent alliance between Iran & Russia all the more interesting.
 - a. Historically, Iran & Russia have been at odds, enemies even.
 - b. It wasn't till the last 2 decades that they became pals.
 - c. Today, Russia is stalling western attempts to bring Iran's nuclear program under scrutiny.
 - d. Probably because Russia is the one that's sold Iran their technology & built most of her nuclear plants.



- e. Iranian research facilities have hundreds of Russian-born & trained technicians.
 - f. Iran has paid Russia billions to secure nuclear technology & equipment.
 - g. Since Russia desperately needs the cash, she's not going to turn her back on the cash-cow that is oil-rich Iran.
5. What's interesting about Ezekiel listing Russia as the lead nation in the coalition that attacks Israel, is that he specifically refers to Gog = Russia's ruler as the one who heads up the whole affair.
 6. Under Presidents Gorbachev & Yeltsin, Russia made huge strides in moving away from her Soviet Communist past.

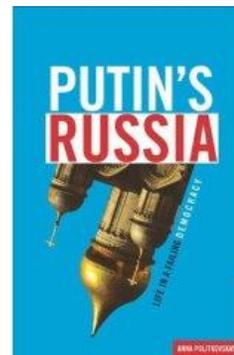


7. But under the current president, Vladimir Putin, the theme is "Back to the USSR."

a. In April of 2005 Putin, one time head of the KGB, said,

"First & foremost, it is worth acknowledging that the demise of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century."

- b. In light of 2 World Wars & the death of 10's of millions through Communist atrocities in Siberia, Ukraine, China, & Southeast Asia – that's a remarkable thing to say!
 - c. In Putin's mind, the demise of the USSR outweighs all these.
8. Many of the democratic reforms Russia embraced under his 2 predecessors, Putin reversed.
 - a. He dissolved the system of electing Russia's regional governors, replacing them with his own appointments.
 - b. This would be like the President of the US saying, "The States will no more elect their own governors. I'll appoint them from now on."
 - c. Putin nationalized all media, then promptly shut down all news sources critical of him.
 - d. He up military spending 40% & authorized the development of a new fleet of nuclear missiles.
 - e. The BBC has repeatedly reported those who oppose Putin have a funny habit of turning up dead.²
 - f. Yushchenko, a popular pro-democracy candidate for president of Ukraine was an outspoken critic of Putin's.
 - 1) In the middle of the campaign against Putin's heavily financed favorite, he suddenly became ill; poisoned, it turns out.
 - 2) When his picture appeared in the papers people were shocked at the terrifying change in his appearance. So a huge backlash against Putin's candidate followed.
 - 3) When the election was held, exit polls said Yushchenko was the run-away winner. Yet the final tally said Putin's candidate won.
 - 4) Evidence of fraud was so clear a run-off was held & Yushchenko won handily.
 - g. In October, a journalist named Anna Politkovskaya was found shot to death in the elevator of her apartment building.
 - 1) The murder had all the marks of a contract killing.
 - 2) Politkovskaya was one of Putin's most outspoken critics.
 - 3) She was known as the conscience of Russian journalism.³



Error!

² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5416218.stm>

³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5416218.stm>



h. Following her murder, one of her friends & sources came out in an interview sponsored at the British Frontline Club saying he knew Putin ordered her death, because at one time he'd worked for Putin & knew what he was up to.

1) A few days later, he became gravely ill, poisoned it turns out, by a radioactive agent.

2) This was Alexander Litvinenko & if you've paid any attention to the news in the last month then you're aware of his story.

3) British & German police are even now running down leads on who poisoned Litvinenko.

4) The experts say all these deaths & poisonings are classic

KGB & have Putin's fingerprints all over them.



9. What's interesting in Ezekiel's pegging Russia as the lead nation in the invading coalition is that 2,500 years ago when he wrote this Russia was little more than a motley collection of barbaric horsemen.

10. The idea they would one day comprise a threat to Israel 1,500 miles away was ludicrous.

11. Look at vs8-9 again –

8 After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. 9 You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you.”

12. We're faced with a monumental question: Why would Russia think it in her best interest to lead this end time invasion of Israel?

a. It's easy to understand why Militant Islam would attack Israel, they hate her & see her as an insult to their religion.

b. But what profit is there for Russia in attacking Israel?

13. 38:10-13 gives us a clue. In speaking to the leader of Russia -

10 'Thus says the Lord God: "On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: 11 You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'— 12 to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. 13 Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions

These are the ancient names for Saudi Arabia, Spain, & possibly England. Their young lions refers to nations that have come from them – which would be the New World, & specifically the US.

will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?' ” ’

The idea is that these other nations know the motive behind Russia's part in the invasion & object.

14. Russia's motive will be plunder, booty, wealth.

15. What's the one commodity that fuels most global politics & policy today? Oil – Black gold.

16. Recent exploration suggests the presence of oil in northern Israel & natural gas offshore in the Med that rivals the reserves of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, & Iran.

a. Such treasure is hinted at in several OT passages.

b. For instance, in Deut. 33 as Moses is giving his final blessings on the tribes of Israel before his death, he begins to prophecy & in v. 13 says –

And of Joseph he said: "Blessed of the Lord is his land, With the precious things of heaven, with the dew, And the deep lying beneath.

v. 19 –

They shall call the peoples to the mountain; There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; For they shall partake of the abundance of the seas And of treasures hidden in the sand.

v. 24 –

And of Asher he said: "Asher is most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, And let him dip his foot in oil.

c. Asher's territory was in northern Israel, the place where the reserves are found.

17. It's not difficult imagining Russia backing a Muslim invasion of Israel ostensibly to eradicate the Jewish state, but with the real purpose of gaining access to vast oil reserves there.

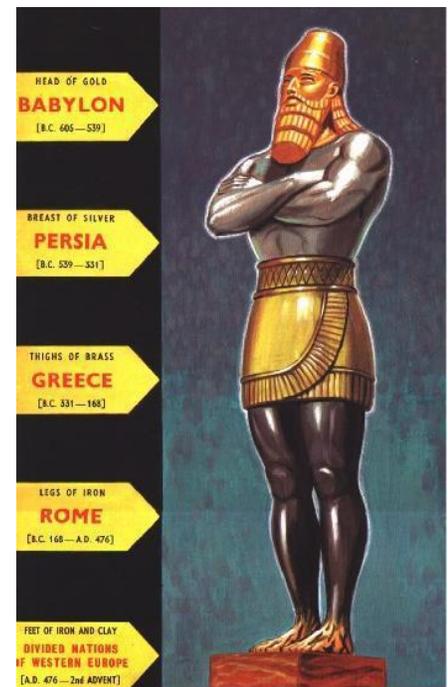
18. But such a bold, unprovoked, & massive invasion by this coalition would result in immediate condemnation by the world community. So students of prophecy have wondered what might spark or give an apparent justification for this invasion.

a. Consider current events: Right now the UN & US are involved in furious talks with Iran over its nuclear program.

- b. The US has made it clear a nuclear Iran isn't acceptable & has said all options are open in stopping the Iranians from producing a nuke.
 - c. But world opinion has moved strongly against the US in recent months & our diplomatic corps has backed down from a strong stance.
 - d. Israel has no such reserve or concern. They know they will never gain world favor, & they've made clear their position: Iran will NOT be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon – Period!
 - e. You can be sure the Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency & the best in the world at espionage, knows exactly where Iran's nuclear program is & where the materials are.
 - f. A preemptive strike by Israel on Iranian nuclear sites would be all the excuse Iran & Russia would need to attack, specially if Russian personnel were killed in the attacks.
 - g. Here's an article that was recently in the paper about 2 brand new nuclear-capable submarines Israel bought as a counter to Iran's nuclear ambitions.
 - 1) In the past, Israeli strikes had to happen by air.
 - 2) Striking Iran would mean violating other nations' airspace.
 - 3) But with subs, Israel could strike from right off Iran's coast.
19. Ezekiel goes on to say God will wipe out this invasion force while Israel stands back & watches.
20. It's this miraculous deliverance that begins the Jews return to faith in God.
21. That's one reason some think this invasion will take place just prior to the Tribulation, a time when God turns His redemptive focus from the Church which has been raptured, back to Israel.

D. Trend 4: The Rise of Europe

1. In Daniel 2, God gave the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar a template for the future.
2. Neb had been wondering what future empires would follow his own. God gave him a dream laying out the answer.
3. The prophet Daniel interpreted the dream for him.
 - a. Babylon would be followed by the Persians, who would be followed by the Greeks, who would be followed by the Romans.
 - b. But something unique would happen to the last, the Roman empire.
 - c. It would split in 2, then as time passed, lose its unity & strength.
 - d. In the end, it would experience a kind of revival.
 - e. It would be during the days of this revived empire that Messiah would come & sweep away the corrupt rule of man & set up the glorious Kingdom of God on Earth.
4. Of course, the Roman Empire did split in 2 in the 4th century when Constantine moved the center of the empire from Rome to Constantinople in the East.
5. The Middle Ages saw the last vestiges of the Roman Empire in Europe dissolve into warring factions while the Eastern Empire was conquered by the Muslim Turks.
6. And so Europe remained a conflict ridden battleground for the next 1,500 years.
7. World Wars I & II reveal how deep the divide was in Europe until the last few decades.
8. If you would have told someone in 20's or 40's that the nations of Europe would one day merge into a European superstate, they'd have put you away as a loon.
9. But here we are; the EU is a reality, just as Daniel foretold.
 - a. Europe now has its own unit of currency – the Euro.
 - b. It has its own central government- European Parliament that's increasingly taking the place of the national governments.
 - c. It's entered into far-reaching trade & military pacts that blend both economies & forces.
 - d. Many European borders are now as easy to cross as state lines here in the US.
10. As a student of prophecy, I've been keeping an eye on Europe for years.
 - a. In the mid-70's when I first became interested in this, there were less than 10 members of the EU.
 - b. 10 was the magic number for prophecy buffs because of Neb's dream.
 - c. The image in his dream had feet & toes of iron mixed with clay, which Daniel said was the last world empire in which days the Messiah would come.
 - d. We understand that to be symbolic of a revived Roman Empire that will be militarily mighty but politically weak.
 - e. The toes suggest there would be 10 nations that comprised this revived Empire.
 - f. Daniel's own vision in ch. 7 confirmed it. He was given his own vision of the future & the empires to come. Instead of a glorious image, he saw ravenous beasts.
 - g. The 4th & last beast was the fiercest & looked like a monster. Daniel 7:7-8



7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns,

and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

- h. The 4th beast refers to Rome. And Dan says it's different from the others.
 - 1) Its difference lies in the fact that unlike them, it isn't superseded by another empire.
 - 2) It's the last, & its final form is seen in its 10 horns.
 - 3) But as he watched, another littler horn rose up among them which uprooted 3 of the 10.
 - i. Then the little horn went on to make blasphemous & arrogant claims.
 - j. In vs23-27, Daniel is given the interpretation of his vision.
 - 1) The 10 horns are 10 rulers whose kingdoms come out of the 4th beast, the Roman Empire.
 - 2) They all rule at the same time, but rising to dominance over them is another ruler who topples 3 of the 10 in order to assert control.
 - k. Daniel is told it's during the time of these 10 kings & the little boaster that Messiah comes & redeems the Earth from sin & death.
11. For years, many thought Daniel's vision of the 10 horns meant the EU would be comprised of 10 nations over which the antichrist, the 11th little horn would rule. When 3 of the European rulers oppose him, they'll be deposed.
12. All this was very exciting when the EU was 8, then 9 nations.
 - a. When the 10th was added, excitement reached a fevered pitch.
 - b. Then the 11th, 12th, & 13th came into the EU & a lot of people scratched their heads, wondering what was up.
 - c. Today there are 27 EU nations so that pretty well nixes the EU as the fulfillment of Daniel's vision. Or does it?
13. Inside the EU is the WEU = Western European Union which is recognized as the real core; the political, economic, & military heart & soul of the EU.
 - a. It's founding document – The Brussels Treaty, limits its membership to 10 nations, which were all a part of ancient Rome.⁴
 - b. Recent developments in the WEU present an eerie picture of what's foretold in Scripture for the last days.
 - c. And that brings us to the next major trend –

E. Trend 5: The Rise of Antichrist

1. Daniel saw a little horn that came up in the midst of the 10 horns.
2. Uprooting 3 of the 10, it then asserted itself over the others & thought to make war on God.

Daniel 7:21-25 - 21 "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. 23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. 24 The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. = 3½ years.

3. There are several passages in both the O/N/T's which speak of this figure often referred to as the antichrist, the end times ruler who will rise to power over the revived Roman Empire.
4. Recent events in Europe point to the emergence of just such an uber-ruler.
5. For instance, in October of 1999, when Javier Solana's term as head of NATO ended, he became secretary-general of the EU.
 - a. A month later he was made Sec-Gen of the WEU, for the first time uniting the 2 most powerful offices in Europe in one.
 - b. At the same time, the EU designed a new post – High Representative for Foreign & Security Policy.
 - 1) The post was designed for coping with an international crisis that would require immediate & drastic action.
 - 2) The EU governing council recognized one of its greatest weaknesses is that with so many member countries, each having an equal say in governance, in the event of an emergency, choosing a course of action would be too unwieldy & slow.
 - 3) So they agreed to create a kind of micro-dictator who in case of a large-scale emergency would be empowered for a short period of time to unilaterally make executive decisions in how to use EU resources.

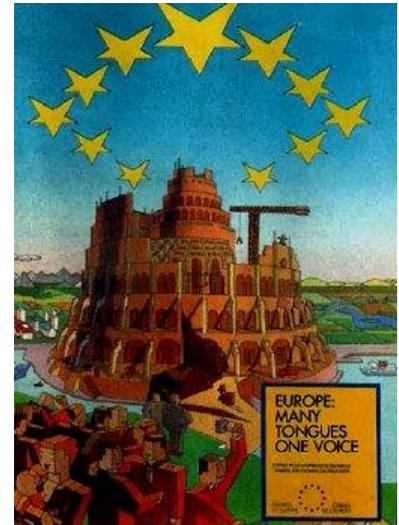


⁴ France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Greece

- 4) Now – here’s what’s probably coincidental but really tweeky: The action that established this uber-boss position was WEU Recommendation #666.
6. And guess who was picked to fill this role of uber-boss? Javier Solana.
 7. So now, the 3 most powerful offices of the EU have been united in 1 person.
 8. I’m not saying Solana is the antichrist. I’m saying that we see a trend already in play that unites tremendous authority in the EU in 1 person, paving the way for the role of the antichrist as seen in Scripture.
 9. Let me present a scenario, one that gathers various current events into a highly plausible sequence of events.
 - a. Israel learns Iran has reached a critical point in developing a nuclear bomb.
 - b. She launches an strike against a dozen sites inside Iran, as she did in 1981 against the Osirak Nuclear facility in Iraq.
 - c. Several Russian personnel are killed in the attacks.
 - d. Iran appeals to Russia to join her in a retaliatory attack & invites other sympathetic Muslim nations to join in the long awaited war with Israel.
 - e. The invading force is wiped out, but the global chaos that follows the devastation moves the EU to activate their High Rep post.
 - f. He mobilizes the joint WEU military force & sends them into the Middle East.
 - g. 3 of the leaders of the 10 WEU nations balk at committing troops.
 - h. Using the emergency powers granted him by Recommendation #666, he has them removed from office.
 10. Now – I’m not saying this is the way it’s going to go down.
 - a. I’m just using current events to suggest a way it could proceed, thus fulfilling prophecy.
 - b. The point is – all of the necessary pieces are in place to see prophecy fulfilled – LITERALLY!
 11. Another provocative piece that fits the last days prophecy puzzle is the EU’s European Neighborhood Policy.
 - a. In 1995, Solana designed a plan to expand the EU’s influence with its Mediterranean neighbors called Euro-Med.
 - b. It was never really implemented because it wasn’t well funded.
 - 1) Basically what Euro-Med aimed to do was pay nations to adopt policies favorable to the EU.
 - 2) It was a bribe thinly disguised as aid.
 - 3) It failed because it lacked the money to attract other nations.
 - c. With Europe’s growing awareness of the problems in the Middle East, Solana has revamped Euro-Med, folded it into the new ENP, and made sure there was plenty of money to fund it.
 - e. This plan promises economic aid to nations that make certain steps in joining the European sphere of influence.
 - f. It’s a 7 year treaty which is re-negotiable at the mid-point.
 - g. Israel was the first nation to sign on to the new ENP, which went into effect 2 days ago.
 12. What’s provocative about this is that in Dan. 9, Daniel was told the antichrist would confirm a covenant with “the many” meaning many nations, for 7 years.
 - a. He doesn’t make a covenant, he confirms, or enforces it.
 - b. The ENP isn’t really a new covenant so much as a revamping of the previous Euro-Med agreement.
 - c. Daniel says that half way through the 7 year covenant the antichrist confirms with many nations, he breaks it, & reveals himself as the diabolical fiend he really is.
 13. Listen, I’m not saying the ENP is the fulfillment of Daniel 9 – I’m saying that we see a pattern for literal fulfillment already in place – pointing to the fact that we live in an age when Bible prophecy can be literally fulfilled.
 14. This has never been true in history before.
 15. Another thing to note here in Trend 5 – Immediately after Javier Solana was made Sec-Gen of the EU, he pushed through the infamous “Solana Decision” which made the proceedings of the WEU’s governing Council secret.
 16. Not only does this one man & office exercise unparalleled power but he’s allowed to operate in complete secrecy & w/o accountability.
 17. One more quick thing before we move on to the next Trend . . .
 - a. In Rev. 17, John has a vision of this same end time Empire & sees it as a woman riding a beast.
 - b. The woman represents a corrupt religious system coupled to the antichrist’s military-political system, represented by the beast.
 - c. A couple of Euro coins have an image of a woman riding a beast on them.



- d. And outside the EU Council of Ministers Office in Brussels is a sculpture of the same thing.



18. The EU commissioned a poster some time ago to help cultivate greater interest & momentum for a united Europe.



- a. It used a 16th century painting of the Tower of Babel by Peter Brueghel as its central motif.
- b. The EU Parliament meets in a building in Strasbourg designed on this image.
- c. Really, the Tower of Babel is a perfect model for what the EU will become under the leadership of the antichrist.



F. Trend 6: The Movement to Rebuild the Temple

1. In speaking of the antichrist in 2 Thess 2, Paul says he will enter the temple in Jerusalem & demand people worship him.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 - 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**
2. In order for this to be fulfilled, the temple must be rebuilt.
3. It was destroyed in 70 AD by the Romans & has been in ruins ever since.
4. There was little chance of the temple being rebuilt for the 1800 years the Jews were in exile.
5. But with the conquest of Jerusalem in 1967, the opportunity to rebuild became a reality.
6. Several Jewish groups have united in their efforts to rebuild & have begun preparations.
7. Research has been done to find men of the priestly line.
 - a. They've been trained in special schools for temple service.
 - b. The furniture & implements to be used in the temple have been remade.
 - c. Special animals for sacrifice are being raised.

8. A little over 2 years ago, for the first time in 1,600 years, the Jewish Sanhedrin was formed.⁵
9. Many Jews believe the Sanhedrin has to be in place before the temple can be built because the Sanhedrin is charged with overseeing the temple.
10. One of the first things the reconvened Sanhedrin did was to call for blueprints for the temple.⁶
11. Each year, polls taken of Israelis show that the number of those who think the temple ought to be rebuilt inches up slightly.
12. What all agree would change opinion sharply in favor of rebuilding is if the famed ark of the covenant were discovered.
13. The testimony of respected witnesses who claim they caught a brief view of it in a tunnel under the temple mount some year ago fuel persistent rumors of the ark's location.
 - a. Realizing the importance of their find, they left to go get help.
 - b. But when they returned, the area they'd been digging in was sealed off by the temple mount authorities.
 - c. And their tunnel was later plugged with several feet of cement.
 - d. This moves many to call for renewed archaeological work to either silence the rumors or find the ark.
14. The Israeli government refuses to permit any digging on the mount because it would incite massive protest by Muslims who would see it as subversive to Islam, since the Dome of the Rock shrine is located there.
15. There's a lot more we could examine here but we'll leave it to some other time.
16. The point is, the Bible says the temple will be an important scene of end time events & since it doesn't exist at present, it will need to be rebuilt,
17. Seeing real, determined movements already under way to that end is just one more thing that militates toward a literal fulfillment of these prophecies.
18. In Matthew 24, after the disciples had asked for THE sign that would stand as the marked of Christ's return, He gave many things that would go on in history but were not to be taken as the evidence of the end. In v. 15 He gave THE sign they were to see & know His return was at hand –



“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

- a. Then Jesus went on & told them what those who see it are to do.
 - b. The point is –Jesus spoke this to Jews who understood “the holy place” as speaking of the temple; there was no other meaning possible.
 - c. Matthew gives his readers the clue for understanding what Jesus meant by pointing them back to Daniel 9 where the prophet referred to the antichrist who half-way through the 7 years of the covenant confirmed with many nations, breaks it, enters the temple, & as Paul says, demands that all worship be rendered to him as God.
19. And that brings us to our last trend . . .

G. TREND 7: Post-Humanism

1. This is something I've only recently become aware of, & it's deeply disturbing.
2. The core of this trend is something I've long suspected but hoped I was wrong about.
3. Michael Crichton's latest novel, *NEXT*, reveals that this trend is already a lot farther along than I realized.
4. Futurists are today pointing to a new era of what it means to BE human.
 - a. The concept of evolution, which is taken as a given/fact, is being merged with technology, genetics, medicine, and the idea of progress.
 - b. The result is a new definition of humanity – the emergence of a new species or whole group of species.
 - c. This era is called “post-human” because what men & women will be then is not what they are now.
5. The famous futurist Alvin Tofler says “The world is moving fast towards a ‘fourth wave’ in which humans will transition themselves into posthumans, thanks to multiple and simultaneous advances of technology. Such a change has been described by some experts as analogous to when apes evolved into humans.”⁷
6. In its simplest form, posthumanism is the idea that evolution, aided by the active participation of technology, genetics, & medicine will produce something better, a creature more advanced than homo sapiens.



⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_attempts_to_revive_the_Sanhedrin

⁶ WorldNetDaily.com – Article posted June 8, 2005 – “New Sanhedrin plans rebuilding of Temple”

⁷ Betterhumans website article – *Posthuman Possibilities and the Future of Intelligent Life* - May 19, 2003

- a. In fact, there will probably be different versions, models of the new man, so some prefer to call it transhumanism; meaning humanity will include a whole range of new species.
 - b. Suggested labels for these transhumans are - Bio-orgs, Cyborgs, Silorgs, Symborgs & the Global Brain.⁸
7. This is from the Betterhumans website –

As the possibility for conscious human redesign has emerged, so too has a philosophical movement that considers the implications. This approach to future-oriented thinking, known as transhumanism, works on the premise that the human species does not represent the end of human evolution but, rather, its beginning. Its proponents believe that what is required to manage the process is an interdisciplinary approach to assist us in understanding and evaluating the possibilities for overcoming biological limitations through scientific progress.

Ultimately, transhumanists hope to see technological opportunities expanded for people, so that they may live longer and healthier lives and enhance their intellectual, physical and emotional capacities.

Transhumanism emphasizes that we have the potential not just to "be" but to "become." Not only can we use rational means to improve the human condition and the external world, but we can also use them to improve ourselves, namely the human organism. And we are not limited only to the methods, such as education, which humanism normally espouses.

Rather we will have the means that will eventually enable us to move beyond what most would describe as human. Transhumanists believe that, through the accelerating pace of technological development and scientific understanding, we are entering a whole new stage in human history. Advances in artificial intelligence, robotics, bioengineering, cloning, cryonics, nanotechnology, new energies, mind uploading, dietary interventions, "designer babies," cyborgs, molecular chemistry, telecommunications, space exploration, immortality and virtual reality will lead to substantial physical and mental augmentation, possibly converging at a "singularity" point.

Now- Listen carefully to this next part . . .

Still, the historical human desire to transcend bodily and mental limitations is deeply intertwined with a human fascination with new knowledge, which might be both inspiring and frightening. How these technologies are used could fundamentally change the character of our society, and irrevocably alter the definitions of ourselves and how we have assessed our place in the larger scheme of things.

If we believe that biological evolution has reached a limit, what will come next?

8. Let me read that one paragraph again - & as I do, think Biblically and tell me if it doesn't make the hair on the back of your neck stand right up.

Still, the historical human desire to transcend bodily and mental limitations is deeply intertwined with a human fascination with new knowledge, which might be both inspiring and frightening.

9. Does that recall a Bible passage to mind? Genesis 3:1-7
- a. Satan appealed to Eve's desire to improve herself.
 - b. He stirred up her curiosity about something "new" –
 - c. Knowledge that would make her MORE & BETTER,
 - d. Allowing her to transcend what she then was.
10. It was their fallenness that moved them to add to their physical bodies.
11. Well, here we are, in the last days, & everything has come full circle.
12. Post & Transhumanism says it's time to force evolution's hand by actively using both physical & spiritual technologies to make better humans.
13. Let's read 2 Thess. 2:1-12

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first,

- a. The Thessalonians had heard some goofy teaching about the ends times that had confused them.
- b. Persecution had become pretty hot & some thought that they were nearing the end of the Tribulation.
- c. What troubled them was that they knew, because Paul had taught them, that the Rapture occurs BEFORE the Tribulation. So if they were in the Trib, it meant they'd missed the Rapture.
- d. Paul wrote to comfort them; they hadn't missed anything.
- e. They weren't in the Tribulation, because if they were, they'd have seen certain things.
- f. First would be a great falling away of people from the Faith, a wholesale apostasy.
- g. Of course there will be. Once true believers are raptured, all that'll be left are the frauds & fakers.
- h. Churches & denominations will be taken over by lost men & women.
- i. You think the mainline denominations are bad now – just wait.
- j. Then Paul speaks of the emergence of the antichrist -

⁸ ibid

and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition [hell], 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

- k. In Daniel 9 we're told that half way through the Tribulation, the antichrist will cause the temple service that's been renewed in Jerusalem to cease & will turn on the Jewish people he's tricked into thinking he was their Messiah.
- l. Daniel says he does something so abominable in the sight of God that it results in immediate judgment that brings utter desolation.
- m. That's why Jesus called it the abomination of desolation. And He said when it's seen standing in the temple, the Jews needed to immediately flee.
- n. Here Paul gives us a clue what the abomination of desolation is – the antichrist – claiming to be god, and demanding that he be worshipped.
- o. But don't miss the import of the last phrase of v4 – the antichrist shows that he IS God.
- p. As the spawn of hell, he's given power by satan to work miracles that seem confirm his claim to deity.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

- q. Paul says it's the Holy Spirit, resident in the world through believers, who Christ said were the salt & light of the world, that prevents the emergence of the antichrist.
- r. But when believers are removed in the Rapture, when the salt & light are yanked out, nothing will stand in the antichrist's way.
- s. What's interesting is that Paul could see how threads of all this in his day.
- t. Well of course – he lived at the height of Rome's power – when the emperor of Rome was worshipped as a god.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- u. The people of the world will fall all over themselves in admiration of the antichrist who validates his claim to deity by performing obvious miracles through demonic power.
- v. He will also tell huge lies that people will buy, because they WANT to believe them.
- w. Paul says that because they've knowingly rejected truth, He'll give them over to the lies they want to be true.
- x. But there is one lie that rises above them all – v11.

For this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe THE lie.

- y. What's that? The first lie, the original – that man can be god.
 - z. The devil knows that lie got the first humans to turn from God; here at the end, he sticks to the same ole' bait with the last humans.
14. Putting this all together, it's not difficult imagining the antichrist, empowered by satan who wants to dominate & destroy the human race, making the claim to being god, then backing it up by performing miracles.
 - a. Then he says that the human race has reached the end this era of its evolution.
 - b. Crises & challenges are coming that require humanity adapt, or it won't survive.
 - c. He claims to be the first to enter the next stage in human development & evolution; one that possesses powers that appear god-like, but really are available to all who will follow his path to enlightenment.
 15. Consider what's already in play that's softening people up for this message.
 - a. Despite all the evidence against it, evolution is accepted nearly universally as fact.
 - b. The delusion is pervasive, even among a large number of those who consider themselves religious.
 - c. Stories of current human evolution are popular – Superheroes like Spiderman, X-Men, the new TV series – Heroes.
 16. The 20th Century saw 2 examples of how powerful & seductive the appeal to perfect the human race can be on large groups of people.
 - a. Based on the concept of evolution, Hitler called the German people, who he said were the most fully evolved of all races, to embrace their destiny as the masters of the world.
 - 1) It was their right to rule and to take the responsibility for human evolution.
 - 2) As its guardian, the Germans needed to stamp out the lesser races, the human “weeds” as Hitler referred to them.
 - 3) That how he justified the Holocaust. It was the Final Solution for dealing with those who would hinder human evolution.
 - 4) Millions bought Hitler's propaganda and brought untold death & suffering to tens of millions.
 - b. Communism is nothing but a socialized evolution.
 - 1) Communism's goal is the perfectibility of humanity without the restraint of morality.
 - 2) And in the pursuit of that goal, more tens of millions have been slaughtered.

17. How seductive will the antichrist's appeal be, do you think, when he seemingly validates his claim to having evolved by performing miracles in the sight of all?
- If *millions* followed Hitler & Stalin with nothing more than a *promise*,
 - Then *billions* will follow one who gives *proof*.
18. This trend of Posthumanism sheds some possible light on one of the most popular but least understood passages of prophecy – Rev. 13 & the mark of the beast.
- After describing his vision of the rise of the antichrist, John tells us of another vision of the antichrist's chief lieutenant – a guy referred to as the false prophet.
 - The antichrist is primarily a political, economic & military leader.
 - The false prophet is his liaison with the religious realm -
- 11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.**
- As we've already seen, horns are symbols of kingdoms & rulers.
 - 2 little lamb horns could refer to 2 religions; maybe Islam & Christendom.
 - While this guy appears religious – his words are clever, seductive deception.
- 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth— by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.**
- This passage usually doesn't get much comment by teachers.
 - In light of what's taking place today in the field of transgenics & bio-technology, the image the false prophet makes & gives life to takes on a whole new realm of potential.
 - This image could be a clone of the antichrist. Cloning is already a reality.
 - It could be some form of artificial intelligence.
 - Here's an article from the FOXNews website about brain cells being fused with computer chips to create neuro-chips that make "living computers."
 - From the National Geographic website, here's an article about Animal-Human Hybrids. Human genes are being plugged into chimp DNA to produce Humanzees.
 - Animal genes are being plugged into human DNA to produce various chimeras, creatures that cross species lines.
- 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**
19. This of course is the famous "mark of the beast" that's been the subject of so much imaginative work in novels & films.
20. Just 30 years ago, most consumer financial transactions were either conducted by cash or check.
- 25 year ago, credit cards achieved parity with cash & checks.
 - 20 years ago, the credit card was the predominant form of payment.
 - 10 years ago, the debit card became popular.
 - The point is, buying & selling without handling cash is not only common, it's the norm.
 - The technology supporting EFT is constantly being revised, with the consumer side using various mediums for accessing their financial accounts.
 - First it was the check, then the card, then a key fob, then a wand.
 - All the major credit companies are experimenting with new technologies but the common direction is toward a personal miniature device carried on one's person, inserted under the skin, that interacts with an external reader.
 - The technology is already being used in tagging pets.
 - A tiny chip is inserted in the skin of the neck or ear.
 - When a reader is held near it, it activates the chip that feeds all the pertinent data about the pet to the reader via a weak radio signal.
21. These chips are called RFID's – radio frequency identification devices.

nature -redefined



a. They come in various shapes & sizes.



b. WalMart's entire inventory system utilizes RFID wafers.

- 1) Readers are on the door of their warehouses and stores.
- 2) When a pallet leaves the warehouse, it's noted when it left, what was on the pallet, and where it was headed.
- 3) When it arrives at the store, it's entered into inventory.
- 4) When an item is sold, it's subtracted from that store's inventory and when enough of that items has been sold, an order for more is automatically generated at the warehouse, and another pallet is shipped out.
- 5) It's all done wirelessly, automatically.
- 6) WalMart knows where all its product is, at any given time. Total control!

d. The RFID planned for human use is a bit smaller than a grain of uncooked rice.

e. There are already thousands of people who've been implanted –

including hundreds in the Mexican federal government.

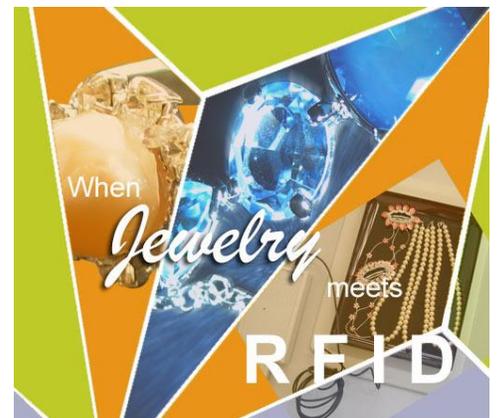
f. Readers in the door frames of sensitive offices record when they enter & exit so that tabs can be kept on them.

22. What's provocative about all this is that the Greek word for "mark" in Rev. 13:16 is that it refers to something made with a sharp, pointed instrument.
 - a. In the ancient world, it was used to describe etching, carving, or sculpting with a chisel.
 - b. There was no better word in the ancient world to describe a hypodermic needle, which is how human RFID's are implanted.
23. The false prophet & antichrist will demand this kind of system because in the desire to BE god – they want total control of humanity.
24. Without the chip, no one can buy or sell, so that's economic control.
25. And if the chip possessed GPS technology as some are experimenting with, then it would be possible to know where everyone was at any given time; a kind of technological omniscience for the antichrist.
26. While many of us who are older would balk at getting chipped, the youth culture's love of tattoos & body-piercing can be perceived as part of a collective social consciousness being prepped for the mark of the beast.
27. Cell phones, Bluetooth, instant & text messaging, wireless, broadband, are all accepted parts of the emerging culture.
 - a. They're grooming this generation to be plugged in & online 24/7.
 - b. Electronics are no longer seen as neat toys to play with, or even tools to work with.
 - c. They've become vital organs to live with.
28. For such a culture, the requirement of getting chipped in order to be a part of the New World Order & help the human race get ready for the crises Planet Earth is about to face will seem like the right, even the loyal thing to do.
29. Those who refuse will be considered by those who join the antichrist as a dangerous threat to humanity; a threat that has to be eradicated quickly so the race can enter the next phase of it's evolution under his benevolent leadership.
30. The Holocaust that follows will make Hitler's Final Solution look like a picnic.
31. While looking for pictures for tonight's visuals, I ran across this ad - & nearly fell off my chair!
32. Getting chipped is already taking on in Europe among young adults.
 - a. Nightclubs there use implanted chips as a way to grant access to club patrons without the need to carry a wallet or purse.
 - b. The chip tells what areas of the club they have access to and keeps a running tab of their expenses which they pay monthly.
 - c. Without the chip, you don't get in.
33. I've have a whole folder here of articles about chip implants that goes back several years now. This tech is not new & is rapidly gaining acceptance among young adults as just one more way to stay connected in a connected world.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Never Before

1. Never before has there been a time when prophecies regarding the last days could be fulfilled literally – but they can now.
2. These 7 trends we've looked at ought to conspire to convince anyone with an ear of 2 things;
 - 1) The Bible is the inspired Word of God
 - 2) These are the end times.
3. The next great event to occur is the Rapture of the Church, when Jesus removes believers from the Earth and God turns His redemptive focus back on to the nation of Israel.
4. He's already brought them back to their land and blessed them beyond measure.



5. All that's left is for this invasion to come so as Ezekiel tells us – God can miraculously wipe it out and show Israel their security is in Him; not treaties, not the US or UN.
6. Militant Islam will be dealt a death blow in a day – but it will be God that does it.
7. And when it happens, Israel's eyes will begin to open & a spiritual revival will begin.
8. But first, before God can turn His redemptive attention back to Israel, He must remove those who are the focus of that attention now – the Church.
9. That's what the Rapture is. And it's next. Are you ready?