

Prophecy Update 2008

For follow up to specific information on the prophetic implications to current events, refer to –

<http://prophecynewswatch.com/>

<http://joelrosenberg.blogspot.com/>

<http://prophecytoday.com/>

<http://www.raptureready.com/>

<http://www.watch.org/>

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Isaiah 46:9-10*

1. One of the most potent proofs for the inspiration of Scripture is prophecy.

2. God says so Himself in Isaiah 46:9-10

Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.

3. In Isaiah 41 God *taunts* those who worship idols – precisely because they *can't* foretell the future.

4. God is so intent on making sure we understand the divine origin of Scripture He made a full third of it prophetic when it was originally written.

5. While a large portion of those prophecies *have already come to pass*, many more *await* fulfillment.

6. The only way to explain the Bible's 100% record of fulfilled prophecy is if the Author is eternal; Someone Who stands outside of time.

7. Of course, God does.

8. But in Isaiah 46 He makes it clear that not only does He know the future, because He is sovereign He directs events to accomplish His will.

B. *Last Year - Trends*

1. A year ago I gave a 2-part prophecy update that looked at 7 trends when *considered together* make it clear we're living in the Last Days.

2. That study is on our website & I encourage those of you who weren't here to be sure to take a look & listen.

3. As I was preparing for our update today over the last couple weeks, I found it difficult to decide *how* to go about sharing all that's going on – there's just so much.

4. After 4 revisions of the message I decided to lay out a scenario for how the events of the end times could very well go down.

5. Now, please understand, I am **NOT** saying this *is* the way it will occur.

a. Bible students & scholars differ widely on the order in which end time events occur.

b. The reason why is because no where in Scripture do we find a *timeline*.

c. What we have are numerous passages foretelling what will occur, but no passage lines them up one after the other.

6. So in laying out this scenario today, remember that this is merely one way things **COULD** unfold.

a. Whether or not they do is not important.

b. What *is* important is to understand that the world is poised to see a *literal fulfillment* of things the Bible talked about 2,000 years ago.

c. We don't have to give wildly speculative interpretations of prophecy in order to make them *fit* current events.

7. So what we'll do today is present a *possible* scenario for end time events, showing how *current events* indicate the world is ready for these things to occur at any moment.

II. The Scenario

A. Ezekiel 38:1-9

1. In chs. 36 & 37, the prophet Ezekiel foretold the end time rebirth of the nation of Israel.
 2. Against all odds, after nearly 2,000 years of dispersion among the nations, Israel became an independent state in May 1948.
 3. Though surrounded by some 300 million Muslims who vowed her annihilation, Israel continues to not only exist, but to thrive, just as Ezekiel predicted.
 4. Then we come to ch. 38 -

¹ Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ² “Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, ³ and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. ⁴ I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. ⁵ Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet; ⁶ Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah *from* the far north and all its troops—many people *are* with you. ⁷ “Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. 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.”
 5. Ezekiel gives the ancient names for a coalition of forces that will attack Israel in the end times.
 - a. These ancient names correspond to the *modern* nations of Russia & Iran, who *lead* the coalition,
 - b. Along with Sudan, Libya, & Turkey.
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6. Now → What’s wild about this list is that in the day Ezekiel gave this prophecy, these nations barely knew each other. They were *certainly* not allies.
 - a. It wasn’t until over a thousand years *after* Ezekiel that Islam spread across the Middle East, uniting Iran, Sudan, Libya & Turkey under the Crescent Moon of Islam.
 - b. And Russia, which is presented as the *main force* in this coalition isn’t Islamic even now.
 - c. In fact, until a few years ago, Russia & Iran were bitter enemies.¹
 - d. But all of that changed when Iran began using its vast oil income to buy arms from Russia to support its mission of conquering the world for Allah.
 - e. Russia, badly in need of cash in those days, was more than happy to sell weapons to Iran.
 - f. And not only weapons, but to help Iran with it’s ambitions to become a nuclear power.
 7. Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia & Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of Iran, have become quite close.
 - a. To give you an idea of how close, just this week the Russians sold a *new* surface-to-air defense system to Iran.

¹ The Shah was pro-western & was used by the west as an ally in the Cold War, a counter to the southern Muslim republics of the Soviet Union. When the Islamic Revolution came into power under Ayatollah Khomeini, the enmity continued as the ayatollah’s who ran Iran hated Communism, specially when the SU invaded Afghanistan.

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- b. The S-300 missile system is cutting-edge technology, able to take down not only aircraft but cruise & ballistic missiles.
 - c. Some analysts claim it's more effective than the US Patriot Missile defense system.
8. Russia has also been helping Iran with its nuclear program which we've heard so much about lately.
- a. Up until a couple weeks ago, the White House was keeping the pressure on Iran to halt its nuclear research, saying that all options were on the table if Iran should continue.
 - b. The concern is that if Iran produces a nuclear weapon, they won't hesitate to use it against Israel or the United States since Ahmadinejad has stated publicly on numerous occasions that he & his followers are dedicated to the eradication of what they call the Big & Little Satan of the US & Israel.
 - c. As I shared last year, Ahmadinejad is part of an ultra-radical sect of Islam that believes the Muslim Messiah, the 12th Imam as they call him, is ready to return & lead Islam to global domination.
 - d. Muslim prophecies say he will arise during a time of great upheaval & Ahmadinejad's group think they can *hasten* his coming by stirring the pot.
 - e. So the idea of a nuclear weapon in the hands of a regime like Ahmadinejad's is extremely unsettling & explains why the Bush Administration has been so vocal in trying to raise international pressure on Iran to halt it's nuclear program.
 - f. Despite the pressure, Ahmadinejad keeps saying nothing & no one will stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power.
9. Then, a couple weeks ago, US Intelligence services released the NIE = *National Intelligence Estimate* that said Iran *halted* its nuclear research 4 years ago & that the threat was not as serious as previously thought.
- a. Since the release of the NIE, the White House & State Department have backed down from their pressure on Iran.
 - b. *Israel's reaction* has been one of great concern because *their* intelligence, recognized by nearly everyone as the *best* in the world, says the NIE is simply *wrong!*
 - c. Their sources say Iran *hasn't* halted its research & is getting close to the place where they will possess the ability to produce a nuclear weapon.
 - d. Just a couple of days *after* the NIE was released, the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, reported Russia announced its intention to supply 82 tons of nuclear fuel to Iran.
 - e. What do they need it for if they've halted their nuclear program?
 - f. Israeli Internal Security Minister Avi Dichter warned that the NIE report could pave the way for "another Yom Kippur War."
 - g. Israel has vowed they will *never* allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon. Even if they have to act unilaterally – they will do whatever it takes to deny Iran that ability.
 - 1) They've already shown their willingness to move against what they perceive a grave threat to their security when they struck the Osirak Nuclear Reactor in Iraq in 1981
 - 2) On Sept. 6th, *just 4 months ago*, Israel staged an air strike on a Syrian nuclear facility.
 - a) Israeli agents learned North Korea was supplying Syria with nuclear technology.
 - b) Then a large, well-defended underground facility sprang up in a short time in a remote section of the Syrian desert.
 - c) An Israeli agent was able to take photos of the inside of the facility. It was clear it was for nuclear research & production.
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d) The Israelis brought the evidence to Washington, but when US officials refused to do anything, Israel felt it had only one option & sent a strike team that completely wiped out the place.

3) What's *strange* about all this is that the Syrians said little & did nothing.

4) If this had been anything other than a covert nuclear facility, they would have howled & called it an act of war – calling down yet more international condemnation on Israel.

5) But the Israelis had all the evidence they needed to prove to the world what Syria was up to – & the Syrians do NOT want that made public, so they kept quiet.

10. So – consider this scenario . . .

- Israel approaches the US with evidence Iran is developing a nuclear weapon, despite what the recent NIE says.
 - The US, reluctant to go against its own intelligence services & still hurting in world opinion from the debacle in Iraq, declines to press the issue with the UN.
 - Israel believes it must take action as it did last Summer in Syria. They do the same in Iran, using some of their recently acquired missile subs to launch a strike on Iranian nuclear labs & reactors.
 - The world rises in condemnation of Israel, as they have done dozens of times in the past.
 - Radical Muslim Jihadists renew their demand for the annihilation of Israel & take to the streets in violent demonstrations all over the world,
 - Just as we've seen again & again at the slightest provocation – in Europe, throughout the Middle East, even in Indonesia.
 - Then Iran & Russia, along with their allies attack Israel as described in Eze. 38.
 - But what could draw Russia into this coalition?
 - Well, Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, is an ex-KGB officer who's made it no secret he wants to return Russia to its former glory as a Superpower & major player in world politics.
 - He's incredibly popular among the Russian people because he's gone far in accomplishing his goals.
 - 1) He's used Russia's oil wealth to shore up the economy.
 - 2) Over the last year alone the standard of living in Russia has risen 12%.
 - 3) Though heavy-handed, he's been able to reduce government corruption & made the cities safer.
 - 4) All of this has come at the cost of the loss of a lot of Russia's democratic reforms.
 - 5) But the people would rather eat & be safe than be free & hungry.
 - 6) Putin's critics have a habit of turning up dead, but instead of outrage, the reaction of many is – “Well, stop criticizing him.”
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- 7) Since Russia's constitution doesn't allow him to serve another term as president, his hand-picked successor, **Dmitry Medvedev** is sure to be Russia's new president.
 - 8) Medvedev has already made clear as soon as he's elected, he'll appoint Putin as Prime Minister & greatly expand his power.
 - 9) Most analysts think Medvedev will then take his orders *from* Putin in *governing Russia*, while Putin will turn his attention to foreign affairs & his attempts to resurrect the Soviet Union.
 - 10) He's already begun. He was in the republic of Belarus last week talking with officials there about aligning with Russia in a new superstate.
 - 11) Putin was this year's *Time Magazine*'s Person of the Year – validating his prominent role in geopolitics.
 - As I said, Iran's nuclear program is run by Russian scientists & technicians.
 - If Israel stages an attack hundreds of Russians would be killed.
 - It's not difficult imagining Iran & Russia uniting in an attack on Israel in response.

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- Ahmadinejad's already said if they're attacked they *will* retaliate.
 - And the way Putin's dealt with the Chechnyan rebels shows he won't hesitate to bring the full-weight of Russian military to bear if he deems it necessary.
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- Now → Ezekiel mentions *other* nations as part of this attacking coalition.
 - Each of them, save one, has pledged itself to the eradication of Israel.
 - The one nation listed as part of the coalition that **ISN'T** *currently* hostile to Israel is Turkey.
 - But recent developments in Turkey indicate things are changing.
 - 1) Just as the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 swept a pro-western government out & installed a radical Muslim regime in a matter of days – Turkey *will* see a similar transformation.
 - 2) For decades, Turkey has looked west & tried to align herself with Europe instead of the Middle East.
 - 3) Though it's a member of NATO, her application to be a part of the EU has been consistently rejected.
 - 4) Many Turks who've immigrated to European nations have recently *returned* because they can't find work. They return embittered because of the way they've been treated.
 - 5) When we were in Germany we were told one of the biggest problems they face is crime committed by unemployed Turkish youth.
 - 6) Remember the riots in France a while back? They were perpetrated by unemployed Muslim young people who're feeling increasingly *alienated* from the European culture in which they live.
 - 7) As a result of all this there's growing movement in Turkey to give up trying to find a home in the West & return to their roots as a Middle Eastern Muslim nation.
 - 8) The Turkish Ottoman Empire ruled the Muslim world for 600 years & many are calling for a return to that legacy.
 - 9) This past August, Abdullah Gul, an ardent *Islamicist*, was elected President of Turkey by a popular majority.
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- The one piece of the end times puzzle that *needs* to fall into place for Eze. 38 to begin is for Turkey to move from being an ally of the West to an *enemy* of Israel.
 - 1) Watch for it. Keep you eye on Turkey.
 - 2) What triggers that change remains unknown –
 - 3) But it's no secret that Radical Islam is a revival movement that's sweeping the Muslim world with hundreds of thousands of young people being taken into its ranks.
 - 4) And these jihadists hold the annihilation of Israel as a central tenet of their faith.
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- Ezekiel 38 hints that when this coalition attacks Israel, Europe & the US *warn* the invaders to back off. [v, 13]
 - When the invaders refuse to heed the warning Europe backs down while the US, bound by its commitment to protect Israel steps in to intervene.
 - There's an exchange of missiles between Russia & the US that effective *decimates* both nations, removing both as factors in the events of the Tribulation which follows not long after. [38:18-22]
- Let me pause right here to say that there's a debate among prophecy students on *when* Ezekiel 38 takes place. Some put it *before* the Tribulation, others *after*, making it synonymous with the Battle of Armageddon. I think it comes *before*.
- You see, there are **4 important outcomes** to this invasion –
 1. Ezekiel says the attacking coalition is wiped out. [39]
 - The Muslim armies as well as a good part of Russia are annihilated.
 - A major threat to Israel's security is over.
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2. The **US** is also removed from the scene as a major factor in the end times, which fits prophecy well because no mention of the US is made – which is odd if we were still around.
3. The **power vacuum** left by the removal of Russia & the US leaves the world ripe for the emergence of those power-centers the Bible **does** speak of in the last days – **Europe & China**.
4. It's my belief that the events of Ezekiel 38 & 39 take place a short time **before** the Tribulation & act as a kind of distraction or shield for the **Rapture**.
 - As the missiles come down, believers go up.
 - The world is so wiggled out about the war they don't have time or energy to worry about the millions of Christians who've disappeared.
 - The chaos unleashed around the globe will be so great it will put everyone in state of profound shock.

B. Antichrist

- It's this state of affairs that provides the antichrist his grand opportunity. [2 Thess. 2]
 - Against the howling dread of a bleak future, he's able to propose & implement solutions that bring the world back from the brink of destruction.
 - He seems so wise & accomplishes so much at such a desperate time, people fall all over themselves to honor & follow him.

- The prophet Daniel had a lot to say about this powerful end times ruler, as does the Book of Revelation. [Daniel 2, 7, 9, 11]
- In Daniel 2 we learn that in the last days there will be a revival of the old Roman Empire over which the antichrist will rule.
 - 1) Bible students have recognized in the modern EU the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy.
 - 2) While we covered a lot of this in the update last year, recent events have been interesting.
 - 3) The European Constitution that **would have** unified the 27 nations of the EU was signed by representatives of the members in 2004 but was **subject to ratification by each nation**.
 - 4) After 18 nations ratified it, **France & the Netherlands** failed to & it was put on hold.
 - 5) A little over 2 weeks ago, a **replacement** constitution, known as the **Lisbon Treaty** was passed.
 - 6) Due to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2009 it also must be ratified by all 27 member nations.
 - 7) The difference this time is that it's the **parliaments** of the member nations that will be voting, **not the people** who tend to be more patriotic & loyal to their country.
 - 8) **Immediately** upon ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, Europe will hold elections to establish a new parliament & a new President with wide ranging powers – the perfect set-up for the end times ruler known to as the Antichrist.
- But you know, when Eze 38 plays out, it will **compel** the nations of Europe to unite to cope with the aftermath.
- If the fall of the twin towers on 9/11 could shake the world economy so badly, imagine what impact the fall of the US & Russia will do.
- Why, the world will be desperate for help – and the antichrist will be right there with the answers.

- One of the first things he does is to make a treaty among the nations of the world that **guarantees** Israel's safety, which **everyone** has now come to see is essential. [Dan. 9:27]
- Since the Jews have just witnessed what their prophet Ezekiel foretold was the intervention of God in their surviving this attack, they feel **compelled** to rebuild the temple. [Matthew 24:15]
 - And since Islam has been dealt a massive blow, the Muslim nations no longer resist.
 - All of the construction plans, building materials & furniture for the temple are already waiting in Israel.

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- When we visit Jerusalem in Sept. we'll see several of the pieces of the furniture at the Temple Institute.
 - Not only are the plans & materials ready but special schools have been set up in Israel to train priest in the work of the temple service, including the sacrifices.
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- So, the Antichrist's power grows & many Jews herald him as Messiah since he's appeared in the nick of time to save the world. That his treaty has allowed them to rebuild the temple seems to *prove* he's the Messiah. [John 5:43]
 - Because his solutions work so well at first, he's given more power.
 - He implements sweeping economic & political reforms. [Rev. 13]
 - He uses what's just happened as *justification* for *uniting* the religions of the world under one banner. [Rev. 13 & 17]
 - As more & more people laud him as a great leader, the praise goes to his head & he begins to believe what they say about him, that he is a kind of superman. [2 Thess. 2]
 - But not everyone loves him. A small group of rebels hatch a plot to *assassinate* him. [Rev. 13:3]
 - They succeed in killing him, but that's when things make a decided turn toward the surreal –
 - Satan himself possesses his body & in a counterfeit resurrection, raises the antichrist.
 - This moves what's left of those who've *not* thrown themselves at his feet to do so.
 - He then reveals his master plan. [2 Thess 2]
 - He says the human race stands poised on the brink of its next evolutionary step.
 - The recent troubles the world has seen were all a part of a great plan to *weed out the weak* & unfit in a survival of the fittest kind of thing.
 - But now it's time to **TAKE** the next evolutionary step, one that he's already taken, as his recent resurrection proves.
 - The next phase of human evolution, he will say, is into what we now would call *godhood*.
 - He will even work wonders before the eyes of all to *prove* his new powers.
 - 1) Listen, there's a *reason* why there's such a battle over the theory of evolution in science & the public schools.
 - 2) It dates all the way back to the Garden & the Fall where the devil told Eve she could become something more by following his counsel and eating of the tree of knowledge.
 - 3) The idea of evolution is central to his deception and it will come full-circle in the end times.
 - 4) In 2 Thess 2 Paul says that in the last days because people have rejected the truth, God will turn them over to the delusion of THE LIE – not 'a' lie but 'THE' lie: the one that started the whole sorry thing – that man can become a god.
 - 5) Think of the abundance of movies & TV shows that present this idea of everyday people who suddenly develop special powers; *X-Men & Heroes*, to name just a couple.
 - 6) You see, people's minds are being conditioned to accept the idea that evolution isn't just for *looking back* to understand where we came from. It's also for looking ahead to what we can become.
 - 7) The antichrist will reap the seeds popular culture & the media are even now sowing into the hearts & minds of people.
 - He will say the *only way* to follow him into a new era of humanity is to take a mark that identifies those who are with him. [Rev. 13]
 - 1) This will be like his appeal to Eve to eat of the tree.
 - 2) "Do this and it will usher you into a new place of consciousness where you will realize your deity."
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- He will say that a *great crisis* is coming that humanity can ONLY survive by learning to wield new powers.
- And anyone refusing to join him is *hindering* this shift in global consciousness & must be *eliminated* – as millions of Tribulation believers will be.
- He will then enter the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem & demand everyone worship him as god. [2 Thess. 2]
 - It's then that the Jews realize he is **NOT** their Messiah – he's a dangerous fraud.
 - For refusing to worship, he will order their annihilation.
 - But a remnant flee to the fortress of Petra in Jordan where God protects them for the last half of the Tribulation. [Rev. 12:13-17]
- The antichrist will be distracted from pursuing them by news that the mighty Chinese, who've remained separate from his system, are mobilizing to come against him. [Rev. 9]
- As each side prepares for war they both have to deal with the plagues & problems that come from the fallout of the nuclear exchange between the US & Russia.
- But finally, at the end of the Tribulation, China marches an army of 200 million westward to face the forces of the antichrist. They meet in the Plain of Esdraelon in northern Israel. [Rev. 9:16]
- The resulting conflict is so great it threatens all life remaining on Earth. [Matt 24:22]
- It's **then** the Father says to the Son – “It's time! Go end it & make all things new.”
- Jesus returns with the saints. [Rev. 19-22]
 - He puts an immediate end to the fighting & tosses the antichrist into hell.
 - He rescues Israel from their hiding place & rebuilds Jerusalem where He restores the throne & rule of David.
 - Earth is healed & the saints are given charge over different regions, to make sure that the survivors of the Tribulation walk in the Knowledge & Fear of the Lord.
 - This goes on for a thousand years, during which the devil is bound & shut out of Earth.
 - Earth's population, which had been decimated by the horrors of the Tribulation, rebound once more.
- But at the end of the thousand years, the devil released & sets out once more to entice men & women into joining his rebellion against God.
 - Even though the world has had perfection for a thousand years, people will still foolishly join the devil's last hurrah.
 - This will prove once & for all that the problem has *never been* with God – it's always been with foolish man.
 - The rebellion will be short-lived because it's served its purpose of vindicating God.
- The devil is cast into hell & the human race is assembled for before the throne of God for judgment.
 - Those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life will enter the eternal bliss of heaven.
 - Those not found there will be sent to eternal torment in hell.
- Then the creation as we know it will dissolve & a whole new reality will begin.

III. CONCLUSION

A. So Much More

1. There is so much more I wish I could share but we're out of time.
2. Besides, this is enough.
3. Will it all unfold like this? Only God knows.
4. The point is – we live in a time when what the Bible foretells about the Last Days can happen literally.

B. A Stage

1. If we were to stage a play here tonight, after service we'd bring in the props & backdrops & go to work getting everything ready for the opening scene of Act 1.
2. The world stage has been all set for the Great End Times drama.
3. The props are in place, the actors readied, even though they don't know it.
4. As far as I can seem, there's only 1 piece that is yet to be put in place – Turkey needs to change it's stance from being an ally to an enemy of Israel.
5. As the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 shows, that's something that could happen in a matter of days.
6. Time is short! The trumpet signaling the Rapture could sound at any moment.
7. Are you ready? What about your loved ones?