

2007 in Prophecy!

Where are we now in Bible prophecy? What is the significance of the year 2007? Could this be a dramatic turning point, a pivotal year, leading up to the final age-ending conflict and Armageddon and the coming of the Messiah?

William F. Dankenbring

Is the year 2007 significant in terms of the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy for the End Time?

In the past, I have been roundly criticized for “setting dates” for the fulfillment of prophecy, although the truth is I have never said Christ would return in a specific year, or that we “know” exactly what year He will return. How could I? I know perfectly well that Christ Himself declared in plain language, “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that He is near, even at the very gates” (Matt.24:32-33).

Yet, almost in the next breath, the Messiah declared, pointedly, “But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. . . . Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming” (Matt.24:36-42, NRSV).

Simply because we don’t know the day or hour, however, doesn’t mean we cannot have a good indication of when He is going to come! In fact, Christ gave us many “signs” to look for which would indicate His coming is NEAR! And He commands us to watch and be ready!

The apostle Paul explained this mystery. He wrote, “Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, ‘There is peace and security,’ then SUDDEN DESTRUCTION will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! *But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of*

darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us KEEP AWAKE and be sober” (I Thess.5:1-6).

The Day for a Year Principle

There are many “hints” and “indications” from Scripture that we are drawing very close to the END of this age. Some of these signs involve Biblical prophetic timelines and already fulfilled prophecy.

It is commonly understood that there is a “day for a year” principle in understanding Biblical prophecy. That is, often when the Bible says a “day,” the interpretation of prophetic fulfillment is a “year,” or a “prophetic year” of 360 days.

When the Israeli spies searched out the land of Canaan for forty days, and then returned to Moses with a negative report, saying the children of Israel were not strong enough to overcome the inhabitants of the land, God was furious with their lack of faith. So He said to them, “For FORTY YEARS – one year for each of the forty days you explored the land – you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you” (Num.14:34).

This same principle of a day for a year is illustrated by Ezekiel the prophet. God told the prophet, “Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. I have ASSIGNED you the SAME NUMBER OF DAYS AS THE YEARS of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel. After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you forty days, A DAY FOR EACH YEAR” (Ezek.4:1-6).

Daniel’s 2300 Days

In the book of Daniel the prophet is a most puzzling prophecy that has dumfounded Biblical students and researchers for thousands of years. It is found in chapter 8. We read: “In the third year of King Belshazzar’s reign, I, Daniel, had a vision . . . In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

“As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the WEST, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage. I saw him attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering his two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against him; the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him, and none could rescue the ram from his power. The goat became

very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven” (Dan.8:1-8).

The angel Gabriel explains to Daniel the basic meaning of this vision. In verse 20, he says, “The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia” – that is, the Persian Empire. “The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king” – that is, Alexander the Great. “The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power” (vs.20-22). After the death of Alexander by fever in Babylon, his natural brother and two sons were murdered. The kingdom was therefore divided up between Alexander’s four top generals, with Seleucus obtaining Syria and Babylon in the east, Cassander ruling Greece and Macedonia in the west, Ptolemy ruling in Egypt to the south, and Lysimachus ruling over Thrace, Cappadocia, and northern Asia Minor in the north.

The date of Alexander's world-changing, bench-mark invasion of Asia was 334 B.C. Thus the date of the vision of the shaggy goat smashing the two-horned ram begins with this incredible victory of the Greeks over the Persian army in 334 B.C.

But after Alexander's lightning-like conquests, he mysteriously died in Babylon and his kingdom was divided. The prophetic vision of Daniel 8 then continues: “Out of one of them [the four horns or kings that divided up the Empire] came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. Because of REBELLION, the host of the saints, and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

“Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, ‘*How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled* – the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?’ He said to me, ‘It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated’” (Dan.8:9-14). What is the real meaning of this strange vision?

Taking this principle, then, Daniel heard the question of HOW LONG would it take for the VISION he saw in Daniel 8 to be fulfilled, or accomplished – from beginning to end. That is, from the beginning moment when the Grecian “goat” attacked and pulverized the two-horned Persian “ram” – till the END of the vision, when the “sanctuary” would be cleansed or restored, during the “TIME OF THE END” (Dan.8:17; also 8:13, and 5-7).

The prophesied length or duration of this vision was to be 2300 “days” (v.14). Using the “day for a year” principle, we have therefore 2300 YEARS of fulfillment.

Alexander the Great attacked and conquered the assembled Persian army at the river Granicus in 334 B.C., storming across the river with fury, with only 30,000 troops. In so doing, he changed the course of the history of the world from that moment, with one world empire falling, and another rising. Since the prophecy begins with this event, we must count the 2300 years from that very date. Beginning in 334 B.C., counting 2300 years, we come to the year of 1967 A.D.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 2,300 \text{ years time} \\
 \underline{-334 \text{ B.C.}} \\
 =1966 \\
 \underline{\quad +1 \text{ (no year zero)}} \\
 =1967 \text{ A.D.}
 \end{array}$$

What happened in 1967 A.D.? How was this prophecy literally fulfilled? Let's review the incredible sequence of events that fulfilled this amazing Biblical prophecy!

The Amazing Fulfillment

In 1967 the state of Israel defeated the combined armies and air forces of the surrounding Arab nations in Six Days that shook the world. Was this incredible victory foretold in the pages of Bible prophecy?

In 1984, God Almighty began to reveal to me the most amazing and mind-boggling keys to understanding Daniel's enigmatic and mysterious prophecy of the "2300 days" ("evenings and mornings") found in Daniel, chapter 8. It's time we take another look at this pivotal Bible prophecy and its awesome, intriguing significance for us today!

In June of 1967 the world was astounded. In Six Days, the small nation of Israel demolished and devastated the combined land and air forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, recapturing the Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank of the Jordan River, and the Old City of Jerusalem. The War that shook the world – the unbelievable war – the incredible victory – was reminiscent of the miraculous Victory of the United States at Midway during World War II, when in five fateful minutes the U.S. fleet – vastly outnumbered by the Japanese vessels five to one – destroyed and sank Japan's four premier aircraft carriers, changed the course of the War, and blunted Japan's aggression in the Pacific.

Similarly, in the Six Day War, against seemingly hopeless odds, in less than three hours the Israeli air force destroyed three hundred Egyptian aircraft on the ground, losing only 3-4 planes in the bargain.

When Jordan entered the war, the Israelis attacked with a vengeance. To many, it was like the "day of the Lord" in Biblical prophecy. Quickly, the West Bank was seized from Jordanian forces, and the Old City of Jerusalem, from which Jews had been expelled during the time of Emperor Hadrian in 135 A.D., once again fell into Jewish hands. The news rang out in Israel – "HAR HA'BAYIT B'YADENU!" "The Temple

Mount is in our hands!” Throughout Israel, there was a spontaneous burst of incredible joy and exultation – newly-weds embraced, mothers hugged children, fathers and sons danced, comrades in arms shouted with glee, everywhere Jews embraced, danced and sang: “This is the day the LORD hath made . . .” David Ben Gurion, former Prime Minister of Israel, said in a quavering voice, “This is the greatest day of my life!”

It was truly a Day of *Nissin v'niflaot* – “*miracles and marvels*”!

At the time, Herbert Armstrong, head of the Worldwide Church of God, and an avid student of Bible prophecy, was dazzled, dumfounded. In the pages of *The Plain Truth*, he trumpeted: “This is one of the major fulfillments of Bible prophecy!” (“Personal,” June 1967 issue). Was it? But in all the excitement of the time, no one seemed to know precisely which Bible prophecy this amazing Israeli victory on the battlefield fulfilled!

After having been exiled from Jerusalem for some 1832 years, it seemed like a dream come true. Once again Jewish feet trod on the holy places of Zion! The enemies of Israel were vanquished *in six days*! Who could believe it? Surely the hand of the Almighty was evident in this spectacular victory – this momentous epic event!

The Incredible and Miraculous SIX DAY WAR

Says the *Worldbook Encyclopedia* in regard to this marvelous event:

“UN troops prevented raids across the Israeli-Egyptian border after the 1956 war. But Arab raids continued from Syria and Jordan into Israel, and Israeli forces raided those countries in return. Border clashes increased greatly in the mid-1960’s.

“In May 1967, Israel and the three Arab countries all alerted their armed forces for possible war. At Egypt’s demand, the UN troops left the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. The Egyptians then again closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli ships.

“On June 5, 1967, Israeli planes attacked airfields in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The Israelis destroyed the Arab air forces almost completely. Then they defeated the Arab armies. By June 8, Israeli troops occupied the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, and Jordanian territory west of the River Jordan, including Jordan’s half of Jerusalem. On June 10, Israel captured Syria’s Golan Heights. The war was over in six days.

“When the brief war ended, the Israelis controlled Arab territory totaling more than three times the area of Israel itself. In June 1967, Israel officially made Jordan’s half of Jerusalem a part of Israel” (“Israel,” p.393).

This astounding war occurred exactly 2300 years from the pivotal battle between Greece and Persia that began Daniel’s vision of the eighth chapter. This furious battle, like its predecessor 2300 years ago, was fought against overwhelming odds, and the

outcome was decided by Divine Providence. Something occurred during this battle in 1967 which proves it was the terminus of this ancient prophecy. The Jews seized the Old City of Jerusalem, historic Jerusalem, and along with it THE SACRED TEMPLE MOUNT, where history shows that Solomon's Temple, and the Second Temple, had both been constructed!

Wrote Winston and Randolph Churchill:

“Jerusalem was finally reduced to rubble and the harrow drawn across its former glories. In the new Roman city of Jerusalem no Jew was allowed to set foot more than once a year. The practice of Judaism was forbidden and even circumcision proscribed. Although the Jews remained in Palestine, there could be no further hope of a Jewish Kingdom” (*The Six Day War*, Churchill, p.2-3).

But now, incredibly, in 1967, for the first time since those ancient days, the Jews once again established Jewish CONTROL and sovereignty and authority over the TEMPLE MOUNT AREA OF JERUSALEM! Gentiles had ruled the region for almost two thousand years. Now, once again, it was under Jewish control – and the way was once again *prepared* for the rebuilding of the ancient Jewish Temple.

When the Jews conquered the Old City of Jerusalem, wresting it from the hands of the Jordanians, feelings were at an incredible level. Winston S. and Randolph S. Churchill wrote:

“The Wailing Wall is supposedly the last remains of the Temple, destroyed by the Roman Emperor Titus in the year 70 A.D. As he stood beside it Dayan affirmed: ‘We have returned to our holiest of holy places, never to be parted from it again.’ Ben-Gurion, too, when he visited the wall declared, in a voice charged with emotion: ‘This is the greatest day of my life’” (*ibid.*, p.141).

Winston and Randolph Churchill conclude:

“Thus, by nightfall on Wednesday June 7, the Israelites had in their hands Jerusalem, the city of King David, Hebron, the city of Abraham, and all the Holy Land. Just a couple of weeks before, there were few Jews who would have believed they would see any of these places in their lifetime. For Jews the world over but particularly for those who had come to make their homes in Israel, *this was the fulfillment of a hope of centuries*” (p.147).

Is this astonishing victory for Israel in 1967 significant? A nation of 2 1/2 million put to rout the armies and military forces of Arab nations with a combined population of over 140 million. This was “a staggering achievement,” in the words of Winston S. and Randolph S. Churchill. Colin Legum in *The Observer* called the Israeli victory “a *miracle of arms*” (*ibid.*, p.194-195). He added that one of Israel's leading soldier-politicians remarked:

“The only analogy I can think of is if Britain had found herself in occupation of Berlin just three days after Dunkirk. The suddenness of the transformation from a situation of acute danger to unparalleled victory is too much for any people to absorb. It will take time to get over it” (*ibid.*).

On June 27 three laws were passed through the Knesset annexing the Old City of Jerusalem and reuniting it with the New City on the next day. Was this amazing Six Day War significant in relation to Biblical prophecy? *Of course it was!*

The Awesome Significance

What is the real significance of this amazing fulfillment of Biblical prophecy? Since the prophecy terminates with the year 1967, that year itself must be a key linchpin in the overall plan of God. It must be extremely significant. Could it be the key pointer that tells us we are *now living in the “time of the end”*?

The Messiah, Jesus Christ, told us, “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (Matt.24:34). What is “this generation”? He is talking about the generation that *sees these signs of fulfilled prophecy* given in the Mount Olivet prophecy. Surely the fulfillment of the 2300 day/year prophecy is a major dating key in God's overall plan. It must pinpoint the “last generation” of which Christ speaks.

In Biblical language, a “generation” is generally a period of forty years (Numbers 14:34). Therefore, the END of this generation *could have been* within a period of 40 years from 1967, bringing us to 2007 A.D. However, in 1967 the Jews did NOT obey God, and begin to rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem. Even though they recaptured the Temple Mount, Jewish general Moshe Dayan gave control over the holy site to the MUSLIMS! So an opportunity to fulfill prophecy and usher in the coming of the Messiah was LOST!

The Year 2007 Revealed

The year 2007 is exactly FORTY YEARS since the epic Six Day War in 1967! 40 years have gone by since that date! Even as God caused ancient Israel to WANDER in the wilderness for 40 years, because they did not have FAITH in God to enter into the Promised Land – they “feared the GIANTS” – even so, this generation lacked FAITH in God to bring about His promises, and refused to seize the Temple Mount and REBUILD GOD’S HOUSE! So they, too, like their ancestors, have been punished with 40 YEARS of strife, trouble, warfare, suicide-bombers, terrorism, Hamas, Hezbollah, and incessant Palestinian VIOLENCE!

Those 40 years are now fulfilled – completed! This means that we are now on the cusp, the precipice, the edge of awesome prophetic events!

The fulfillment of this prophecy shows that we are surely living in the days called “the birth pangs of the Messiah.” What is destined to happen during this pivotal year?

Although we cannot be precise, we CAN and OUGHT to look very carefully at world events, as they are now stacking up and taking shape! The news developments are ominous indeed!

Mortimer B. Zuckerman in *U.S. News and World Report* writes,

“Question: What’s the most dangerous geopolitical development in the 21st century?
Answer: Iran’s emergence as the Middle East regional superpower. Why? Because it places the center of the world’s increasingly stretched energy resources more and more under the influence of an oil-rich, fundamentalist, pro-terrorist, anti-Semitic regime that not only has nuclear weapons but the means to use them.

“Iran’s malign hand now reaches directly into southern Iraq, to Syria, to Hezbollah in Lebanon, to Hamas in the West Bank, and to the shores of the Mediterranean. Iran’s long shadow now casts a deepening pall over the Sunni Arab countries of the region, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. All the Sunni Gulf states have sizable Shiite populations, which Iran could turn against them. And what once promised to be a seed for democracy in the despotic Middle East, a new free state of Iraq, has betrayed every hope in an increasingly violent religious schism aggravated by Iranian meddling. The elections in Iraq led not to collaboration between different ethnic and religious groups but to a Shiite majority with a mandate to introduce what is, in effect, a radical Islamic republic. The south of Iraq is now an Iranian quasi protectorate, with police and local militias controlled by Tehran. No longer a traditional bulwark against Iranian expansion and influence, Iraq is in a dizzying downward spiral that has left Iran the undisputed champion of political Islam.”

Zuckerman continues his analysis:

“Death and destruction. Look at the nature of the beast. It has hardly been talking peace. It has intensified its murderous anti-Semitic, anti-Israel rhetoric and reiterated its long-held position that the Middle East should be entirely Islamic, stripped of all western influence.

“The clock of military danger is superfast digital; the clock of diplomacy is 20th-century analog. All the West’s diplomatic efforts have failed to induce Iran to refrain from developing nuclear weapons, which it contends – utterly unconvincingly – that it is not doing. Europe has been supportive, but Russia and China are playing both sides at the United Nations. Iran’s Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, meanwhile, gleefully heaps scorn on the world body: ‘We are guided by what the Hidden Imam tells us, not by what you dictate in your resolutions’” (“The Mullah Menace, Dec.3, 2006).

The Peril from Iran

Stan Slavinsky in *The Washington Times* wrote of the peril the world faces as Iran develops nuclear weapons:

“We are mired in Afghanistan, which sheltered al Qaeda and its leader, who has vowed to bring down the United States. We are mired in Iraq, where our leaders believed Saddam had hidden weapons of mass destruction meant for us.

“And today we still face the sworn threat of bin Laden, and millions of Muslim radicals, to kill us, whenever they can – as they have already been killing Americans around the world, blowing up our embassies, troop stations, even one of our destroyers. Do you consider this situation an empty threat?

“For the U.S., the situation may get worse. Muslim Iran openly hates us, supports our enemies, and is building the bomb. Pakistan supports us tentatively, but a threatening revolution could turn that vast Muslim nation against us and it already has the bomb.

“Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, we knew – we knew – Hitler and Tojo would one day attack us. We simply waited for it to happen. Today we know al Qaeda and its fanatical followers – radical Muslims, fundamentalist Muslims, brain-washed Muslims – are taught in their schools to hate America, and to kill Americans.

“We can’t just wait for calamity to happen. It’s time to stop dithering and prepare our nation for all-out war” (“Commentary,” Nov.11, 2006, *The Washington Times*).

The Drumbeats of War

It appears the United States and Israel are taking the danger seriously and full-fledged WAR may well be in the offing in the Middle East for the year 2007! This could be a pivotal year indeed in terms of Biblical prophecy!

“**Israel** Sees Possible Regional War in 2007,” says Ryan R. Jones (All Headline News, January 10, 2007).

“Jerusalem, Israel (AHN) – In its strategic assessment for 2007, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) sees a further deterioration of regional stability and greatly increased chances of full-scale war with both Syria and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

“Military Intelligence chief Brig.-Gen. Amos Yadlin delivered the assessment to the parliamentary Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Tuesday . . . Yadlin noted that ‘dozens to hundreds’ of Al Qaeda operatives have arrived in Lebanon in recent months with the intent of destabilizing the area and sparking further conflict with Israel in the wake of last summer’s Lebanon war. A senior IDF official cited by news agencies on Wednesday said that the army’s strategic assessment also sees Iran crossing the technological threshold in its nuclear research, enabling the Islamic Republic to begin production of nuclear weapons with little or no additional outside aid. ‘The axis of evil in the region is gaining strength, and global jihad elements are moving into the region’, said the official.”

However, despite this warning, Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz sent out a message of calm and vehemently rejected claims of an impending war this summer. He declared, “There is no evaluation whatsoever that Israel is preparing for a war in the summer”, adding that in the event of any confrontation, “the IDF will be ready.”

Were Peretz's remarks just "damage control"? Military Intelligence chief Brig.-Gen. Amos Yadlin was the one to originally testify to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the IDF was expecting a war this year. Military Intelligence chiefs, and Brigadier Generals specifically, are not known to be "loose cannons."

We can only wait to see what will soon transpire. However, the prophetic signs are like a red flashing light, and they are signaling their somber warning.

The Twelfth Imam

"TWELFTH IMAM COULD APPEAR THIS SPRING," says an Iranian TV series which explains signs of the "last days," and suggests apocalyptic war against Jews and Christians could come in 2007. Writes Joel C. Rosenberg, (Washington, D.C., January 2, 2007:

"The Islamic Messiah known as the 'Twelfth Imam' or the 'Mahdi' may come to earth in 2007 and could be revealed to the world as early as the Spring Equinox, reports an official Iranian government news website. The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) website says the world is now in its 'last days.' It claims that the Mahdi will first appear in Mecca, and then Medina. He will conquer all of Arabia, Syria, Iraq, destroy Israel, and then set up a 'global government' based in Iraq, interestingly enough, not Iran. Such Islamic eschatology (end times theology) is driving the Iranian regime and helps explain why Iran has no interest in helping the U.S. and E.U. create peace in Iraq or the region, much less in ending its bid for nuclear Weapons

"Anticipation of the imminent arrival or 'illumination' of the Islamic Messiah has been steadily intensifying inside Iran since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad emerged as president of the country in June of 2005. A television series on IRIB called 'The World Towards Illumination' has been running since last November to help answer the many questions Iranians have about the end of the world as we know it. The series explains the signs of the last days and what to expect when the Islamic Messiah arrives. The program also says that Jesus is coming back to earth soon as a Shiite Muslim leader and it denounces 'born again Christians' for supporting 'the illegal Zionist state of Israel.' An Israeli news site was the first to pick up the story and its significance to Israeli national security, noting that the Mahdi will soon 'form an army to defeat Islam's enemies in a series of apocalyptic battles' and 'will overcome his archvillain in Jerusalem.'

"Some intelligence analysts are growing concerned by Ahmadinejad's announced plans 'to hold the big celebration of Iran's full nuclearization in the current year.' Iran's calendar year ends on March 20, which is the usual date of the Spring Equinox. Is Ahmadinejad signaling that Iran will have nuclear weapons by then? Is he suggesting that an apocalyptic war to annihilate Jews and Christians in Israel and the U.S. could come in 2007, perhaps as early as this spring or summer? It is not yet clear, though Ahmadinejad today vowed to 'humiliate' the U.S. and continues to vow that Israel will 'vanish' soon."

The Iranian TV series offers some intriguing clues as to how Iranian Shiites believe their prophecies will play out. According to the Mullahs, after the Twelfth Imam's uprising from Mecca, all of Arabia will submit to him and then he will march

upon Iraq and established his seat of global government in the city of Kufa. Then the Imam will send 10 thousand of his forces to the east and west to uproot his enemies, and lands will come under his control one after the other. He will appear as a handsome young man, clad in neat clothes and exuding the fragrance of paradise. His face will glow with love and kindness for the human beings. He will overcome enemies and oppressors with the help of God, and as per the promise of the Almighty, the Mahdi will eradicate all corruption and injustice from the face of the earth and establish the global government of peace, justice and equity.

There are various versions of the exact day of his reappearance. Some say it would be Friday and the date will be Ashura or the 10th of Moharram, the heart-rending martyrdom anniversary of his illustrious ancestor, Imam Husain. Others say the date will be the 25th of the month of Zil-Qa'dah and may coincide with the Spring Equinox or Nowrooz as the Iranians call it. A saying attributed to the Prophet's 6th infallible heir, Imam Ja'far Sadeq (PBUH) says the Mahdi will appear on the Spring Equinox and God will make him defeat Dajjal the Impostor or the anti-Christ as the Christians say, who will be hanged near the dump of Kufa.

Shiite Islamic scholars also say Jesus is coming back to Earth soon. He will not, however, come as the Son of God or even as a leader but will serve as a deputy to the Mahdi to destroy the infidels, such scholars say. "We read in the book Tazkarat ol-Olia, 'the Mahdi will come with Jesus son of Mary accompanying him,'" the series explains. "This indicates that these two great men will complement each other. Imam Mahdi will be the leader while Prophet Jesus will act as his lieutenant in the struggle against oppression and establishment of justice in the world."

Coming To A Head

How great is the risk to the world of an Iranian vs. U.S. and Israel conflict in the year 2007?

September 19, 2006, columnist Charles Krauthammer in the *Washington Post*, wrote with great insight and wisdom:

"WASHINGTON – In his televised 9/11 address, President Bush said that we must not 'leave our children to face a Middle East overrun by terrorist states and radical dictators armed with nuclear weapons.' There's only one such current candidate: Iran.

"The next day, he responded thus (as reported by Rich Lowry and Kate O'Beirne of National Review) to a question on Iran: 'It's very important for the American people to see the president try to solve problems diplomatically before resorting to military force.'

" 'Before' implies that the one follows the other. The signal is unmistakable. An aerial attack on Iran's nuclear facilities lies just beyond the horizon of diplomacy. With the crisis advancing and the moment of truth approaching, it is important to begin looking now with unflinching honesty at the military option.

“The costs will be terrible:

“Economic. An attack on Iran will likely send oil prices overnight to \$100 or even to \$150. That will cause a worldwide recession perhaps as deep as the one triggered by the Iranian revolution of 1979.

“Iran might suspend its own 2.5 million barrels a day of oil exports, and might even be joined by Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez, asserting primacy as the world’s leading anti-imperialist. But even more effectively, Iran will shock the oil markets by closing the Strait of Hormuz through which 40 percent of the world’s exports flow every day.

“Iran could do this by attacking ships in the Strait, scuttling its own ships, laying mines or just threatening to launch Silkworm anti-ship missiles at any passing tanker.

“The U.S. Navy will be forced to break the blockade. We will succeed but at considerable cost. And it will take time – during which time the world economy will be in a deep spiral.

“Military. Iran will activate its proxies in Iraq, most notably, Moqtada al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army. Sadr is already wreaking havoc with sectarian attacks on Sunni civilians. Iran could order the Mahdi Army and its other agents within the police and armed forces to take up arms against the institutions of the central government itself, threatening the very anchor of the new Iraq. Many Mahdi will die, but they live to die. Many Iraqis and coalition soldiers are likely to die as well.

“Diplomatic. There will be massive criticism of America from around the world. Much of it is to be discounted. The Muslim street will come out again for a few days, having replenished its supply of flammable American flags most recently exhausted during the cartoon riots. Their governments will express solidarity with a fellow Muslim state, but this will be entirely hypocritical. The Arabs are terrified about the rise of a nuclear Iran and would privately rejoice in its defanging.

“The Europeans will be less hypocritical because their visceral anti-Americanism trumps rational calculation. We will have done them an enormous favor by sparing them the threat of Iranian nukes, but they will vilify us nonetheless.

“These are the costs. There is no denying them. However, equally undeniable is the cost of doing nothing.

“In the region, Persian Iran will immediately become the hegemonic power in the Arab Middle East. Today it is deterred from overt aggression against its neighbors by the threat of conventional retaliation. Against a nuclear Iran, such deterrence becomes far less credible. As its weak, non-nuclear Persian Gulf neighbors accommodate to it, jihadist Iran will gain control of the most strategic region on the globe.

“Then there is the larger danger of permitting nuclear weapons to be acquired by religious fanatics seized with an eschatological belief in the imminent apocalypse and in their own divine duty to hasten the End of Days. The mullahs are infinitely more likely to use these weapons than anyone in the history of the nuclear age. Every city in the civilized world will live under the specter of instant annihilation delivered either by

missile or by terrorist. This from a country that has an official Death to America Day and has declared since Ayatollah Khomeini's ascension that Israel must be wiped off the map.

“Against millenarian fanaticism glorying in a cult of death, deterrence is a mere wish. Is the West prepared to wager its cities with their millions of inhabitants on that feeble gamble?”

“These are the questions. These are the calculations. *The decision is no more than a year away.*”

Charles Krauthammer wrote this in September 2006 and concluded, “The decision is no more than a year away.” One year from September 15, 2006, brings us to September 15, 2007 – this present year. President Bush has just sent another aircraft carrier Task Force to the Middle East. He has increased the American manpower in Iraq by some 20,000 troops on the ground.

Is the stage being set? Are the forces being assembled?

The Jewish Year 5767

September 23, 2006 to September 23, 2007, is the Jewish year 5767. The numbers “5” and “7” in Hebrew numbers are represented by the letters Tau [ט] and Shin [ש]. Together, these letters signify “in the days of,” or, “as it was in the days of.”

The number “60” in Hebrew is represented by the letter Samech [ס]. This letter is shaped like an “O” in English, with a “hook” on the upper left, and represents an endless cycle, beginning and recycling at the “hook.” It symbolizes the fundamental truth of the Word of God – the whole Torah of God. The “end” is inwedgeed in the beginning, and the beginning in the end. Thus this letter signifies the end of a cycle and the beginning of a new cycle – in other words, a *fateful year of TRANSITION!*

The letter Samech also means “to support,” and “Divine presence.” It can also mean “to rely on.” It reflects the power of God to support His people – shows that we can “rely on” God in time of need.

The circular shape of Samech also symbolizes a “wedding ring.” This emphasizes our Christian-Messianic relationship with the Bridegroom, Yeshua – our covenantal relationship, as His Bride for all eternity, based on the “marriage” vows of the Torah, which is our marriage document. In a circle, all points on the perimeter are equidistant from the center – Christ. This illustrates how all of us are equally loved and important before God – and He should be the center of our lives. Just as in the Israeli “hora” dance, where the participants all form a circle, if we all together hold hands, and look to God as our center, our central focus, we should cling together in perfect harmony, unity, hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder.

It is also interesting that the Aaronic blessing recited by the priests in the Temple of God consisted of sixty (60) Hebrew letters – the numerical value of Samech. Also,

since each hand has thirty (30) bones, when the priest raises his hands to bless the people, 60 bones are thus used in blessing. The blessing reinforces the theme of “new beginning,” in the endless cycle represented by the letter Samech. This letter first appears in Scripture in Genesis 2:11 and 2:13, in the word *sabab*, meaning “to surround, compass, revolve, or border” (*Strong’s Concordance*), referring to the rivers that flowed from and surrounded the Garden of Eden. The river divided into four, and like the Word of God, represents the water of life that “surrounds all worlds.” According to Rabbinic thinking, this is contained in the blessing when the Kohanim – priests – bless the people of God.

The final number “7” is represented by the letter Zayin (ז) which is the symbol of spirit, sustenance, and struggle. Its numerical value is “7.” Its shape resembles a lightning bolt! It is the number of the “Sabbath,” and reminds us that “the vast and mighty Universe cannot endure unless it is continuously permeated by the spiritual aspects represented by the seven, which is symbolic of God’s own essence” (Rabbi Michael Monk, *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet*, p.104). It represents the completion of the week, the final day of the week.

Will the year 5767 be such a year, when we will need to learn to RELY ON GOD AND HIS DIVINE PRESENCE FOR OUR SUPPORT? WILL IT BE THE YEAR OF THE COMPLETION OF ONE CYCLE AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW “CYCLE” OF PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT? WILL IT BE A FINAL “TRANSITION YEAR” IN PROPHECY TO WHAT LIES BEYOND? Will it be a year characterized by “struggle,” “war” and “conflict”? A year of a flashing lightning bolt?

“Zayin” (ז) may also be translated “weapon.” It is representative of both sustenance and armament. This is no coincidence. The letter is shaped like a spear, indicating that man’s sustenance is obtained by his struggle. Says Monk, “Reliance on self-defense applies not only to livelihood, but to all situations where life and survival are endangered, situations in which man must take action and initiative before he can expect help from above – as our Sages taught: One must not rely on miracles” (p.107).

2007 and Counting

Tick tock, tick tock . . . The clock is ticking.

The Muslims are looking for the coming of their Messiah, or Imam, the Mahdi, the secularized Western world is trying to create a New World Order based on its own principles of government and international trade, and true Christians are looking for the soon-coming of Jesus Christ, whereas Orthodox Jews look for the soon appearance of the long-awaited Moshiach ben David, the Messiah, son of David, to restore the Kingdom of God on the earth.

The year 2007 is shaping up to be a pivotal linchpin in the Countdown to the Messiah, and the apocalyptic battle of Armageddon!

The Iranian Mullahs are right when they say that the End will be brought about by a “series of apocalyptic wars,” culminating in one final Grand Smash conflict, a thermonuclear World War III which will scour and scourge the Planet Earth. They are diametrically wrong as to who the final victor will be!

Those wars could well begin with a major Middle Eastern war waged to put a crimp in Iran’s plans to “go nuclear.” The collateral damages to the world economy, the flow of oil, trade, and the resultant terror strikes which would likely accompany such a war, could plunge the world into deep depression and hard times. This present year may well be the pivotal year when we SEE these things begin to fall in place, with no backing down or chance left to draw back, and prevent the inevitable.

The Prophecy of Haggai

The prophet Haggai wrote, “These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord’s house. Then the word of the LORD came to the prophet Haggai, saying: Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. You have sown much but harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and you that earn wages earn wages to put them into a bag with holes.

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored, says the LORD” (Haggai 1:4-8).

“Consider,” God says. The second Temple of God was rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity by Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest. It was begun in 520 B.C. and finished in 515 B.C.

Today, the time has come to begin building the END-TIME House of God, the Temple of God, at Jerusalem! A period of “seven” times has passed since the second Temple was built.

2,520 years
<u>-515</u> B.C. (when temple construction began)
2,005 A.D.
<u>+1</u> (because there’s no year zero)
2,006 A.D. (the very year of the 9/11 holocaust)

With the Jewish fall to fall calendar reckoning, this would be the year September 2006 to September 2007 – *this present year!*

A house of God will be built in these End Times. God told Haggai, “Once again, in a little while, I will SHAKE the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; and

I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:6-7).

The time for the rebuilding of the House of God is drawing close.

Another Time Line of Prophecy

In Ezekiel, chapter 4, God declares, “And you, O mortal, take a brick and set it before you. On it portray a city, Jerusalem; and put siegeworks against it, and build a siege wall against it, and cast up a ramp against it; set camps also against it, and plant battering rams against it all around. Then take an iron plate and place it as an iron wall between you and the city; set your face toward it, and let it be in a state of siege, and press the siege against it. This is a *SIGN* for the house of Israel” (Ezek.4:1-3).

“Then lie on your left side, and place the punishment of the house of Israel upon it; you shall bear their punishment for the number of days that you lie there. For I assign to you a number of days, three hundred and ninety days, equal to the number of years of their punishment; and so you shall bear the punishment of the house of Israel” (vs.4-5).

Here again the “day” for a “year” principle is invoked. 390 days = 390 years.

Interestingly, if we take this number, 390, and multiply it by the “seven times” of Leviticus 26, we come up with 2730 years. Israel was sent into captivity by God in the year 718 B.C. In 721-22 king Shalmanezar came against the capital, Samaria, and besieged it for three years (II Kings 17:5). It fell in 719-718 B.C. Therefore,

$$\begin{array}{r}
 2,730 \\
 \underline{-718/19 \text{ B.C.}} \\
 2,012 \text{ A.D.} \\
 \underline{+1 \text{ (no year zero)}} \\
 2,013/12 \text{ A.D.}
 \end{array}$$

The year 2012 is the year of a Jubilee time cycle, according to the cycles which began at the conquest of Canaan in the time of Joshua. It is also the end point of the Mayan calendar, which predicts the beginning of a New Age, after much conflict, in that year.

Or, if we count from the beginning of the siege of the Assyrians upon ancient Israel, in 721-722 B.C., we come to the year of 2009/2010 A.D.

Could this year be significant? Could it be the year that the temple of God is to be rebuilt in Jerusalem? It is only a thought – but a very provocative, insightful thought – isn’t it? That is the year the Jewish “wall of separation” is to be completed between the land of Israel and the Palestinian occupied territories.

Prophesied to Come – a Period of Great Suffering

Jesus Christ declared of this scenario which looms in front of us, “For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short” (Matt.24:21-22).

Yeshua added, “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:20-24).

Gog and Magog

These great climactic battles, which will rage among the nations, are destined to converge and culminate in one awesome, cataclysmic holocaust. It known variously as the battle of “Gog and Magog,” depicted in Ezekiel 38-39, and the “battle on the great day of God the Almighty” (Rev.16:14), also commonly called “the battle of Armageddon” (Rev.16:16).

Three final phases of that war are referred to, in the book of Revelation, as the “three woes.” In the first of these, “locusts,” troops of the New World Order, America, Europe and the West, go forth to wage war against the Muslim world, centered in the Middle East and Africa. Daniel prophesied, “At the time of the end the king of the south [the Muslim world] shall attack him [the “king of the north” aka Europe and the Western Alliance]. But the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots [tanks], horsemen [troop carriers], and with many ships [the U.S. and European fleets]. He shall advance against countries and pass through like a flood” (Dan.11:40-43).

The second phase, known as the second “woe” is a dramatic counter-attack from the Eastern hemisphere. Daniel goes on, “But reports from the east and the north [Russia, China, and their allies] shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to bring ruin and complete destruction [thermonuclear war] to many” (Dan.11:44). John in the book of Revelation describes this massive attack from the East: “Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates [in Iraq!].’ So the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, *to kill a third of humankind*. The number of the troops of the cavalry was *two hundred million*” (Rev.9:13-16).

This great attack is described by Joel. The armies and forces of the Eastern bloc, Gog and Magog, will attack not only the state of Israel, in the Middle East, but also

America, Great Britain, Canada, and Europe in a surprise attack. Joel wrote, “Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near – a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a GREAT AND POWERFUL ARMY COMES; their like has never been from old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. FIRE devours in front of them, and behind them a FLAME burns [thermonuclear bombs exploding all around!]. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, but after them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them”(Joel 2:1-3).

Final Deliverance

The Almighty God urges His peoples to repent of their sins, so they can ameliorate and lessen the severity of this awesome catastrophe – or even avert it (Joel 2:12-17). If and WHEN they repent, and cry out to Him, He will then send the Messiah – Yeshua – who will come from heaven, and intervene, and SAVE His people from total, utter destruction!

The armies of the world will finally converge on Jerusalem. Demonic spirits will “go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty . . . And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmagedon” (Rev.16:14-16).

Joel continues the description: “Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare war, stir up the warriors. Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up. . . Come quickly, all you nations all around, gather yourselves there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD. Let the nations rouse themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat [on the eastern side of Jerusalem]; for there I will sit to judge all the neighboring nations. . . . Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision” (Joel 3:9-14).

At this point, God WILL intervene!

The final, third woe – the seventh trumpet – will announce the intervention of Yeshua – Jesus the Christ – with His armies from heaven, to save His people Israel, and His saints around the world!

“Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever. . . The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for judging the dead, for rewarding your servants the prophets and saints and all who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying those who destroy the earth’” (Rev.11:15-18).

John picks up the dramatic story in chapter 19, with the announcement:

“Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its

rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire . . . He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has a name inscribed, ‘King of kings and Lord of lords’” (NRSV, Rev.19:11-16).

“Halleluiah!”

Halleluiah, for our God and Messiah comes! Halleluiah! He will take to Him His great power and Reign over the nations! He will bring Universal PEACE to this war-racked, weary, desolate planet and all humankind!

These things are coming upon our world – and very soon! This article is a WARNING blast of a shofar – a trumpet! The prophet Amos writes, “Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does disaster befall a city, unless the LORD has done it? Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:6-7).

These things are coming! They are sure! They are absolute!

God says, “For a voice declares from Dan and proclaims disaster from Mount Ephraim” (Jeremiah 4:15). “For there will be a day when sentinels will call in the hill country of Ephraim: ‘Come, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God’” (Jer.31:6). The time to return to the Lord our God is *NOW!* Before His wrath waxes hot, for, “Look, the storm of the LORD! Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has executed and accomplished the intents of His mind. *In the latter days you will understand this*” (Jer.30:23-24).

We do not know the exact day or year these things will happen – but we do know that it is going to happen soon – very soon. Christ declared: “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts the slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, KEEP AWAKE – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes SUDDENLY.

“And what I say to you I say to all: *Keep awake*” (Mark 13:32-37).

God warns us all: “Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, *prepare to meet your God, O Israel!*” (Amos 4:12).

“Setting Dates”

Years ago I thought as a teenager that 1975 would see the return of Christ, because a certain broadcaster, Herbert Armstrong, wrote dogmatically that He would return in that year. Since then I thought at one time that maybe Christ would come 6000 years after Adam and Eve’s creation in 4004 B.C. – or about 1997. Hale Bopp’s comet appeared that year, but not the Messiah. Someone alerted me to the fact that the Jewish book of Jubilees states Adam and Eve sinned 7 years after their creation (or in 3997 B.C). Counting from that date would mean that the end of 6000 years was 2004 A.D.

At the present time, I believe it is very *possible* that we may be in the beginning of Daniel’s final “seventieth week”, a week of seven years, the last 3 ½ years of which will see GREAT tribulation, leading up to the return of the Messiah. The original Jewish Jubilee cycles shows that the year 2012 will be a Jubilee year (Lev.25), a year of freedom and release and restitution, and Peter speaks of Christ returning at “the times of the restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21) – possibly indicating that He would return in a “Jubilee year.”

If so, this *possibly* links His coming with the year 2012 – which would be a Jubilee year, counting from the Exodus, and also happens to be the date of the END of the Mayan calendar and the beginning of a new age, according to ancient Mayan belief. Daniel’s seventieth week may well conclude with the year 2012, but I am NOT dogmatic about it.

But isn’t it better to be READY, just in case, than to ASSUME He won’t come for another twenty or thirty years or more? Speculation, and trying to “be ready,” is not “failed prophecy.” Failed prophecy is when one is too dogmatic and states something WILL happen on a certain date, and claims God says so, and then it doesn’t come to pass.

As far as “setting dates” is concerned, many feel the ministry should not “set dates.” I agree whole-heartedly with that. But on the other hand, I feel too many today are scared of their own shadow, or the “shadow of things to come,” and are FEARFUL of even MENTIONING *POSSIBLE DATES*.

I believe such an attitude of FEAR is counter-productive. It is an overreaction to the fact that many have failed in the past to understand the true “signs of the times,” such as William Miller in 1848, the Jehovah witnesses in 1914, and Herbert Armstrong, and his “1975 in Prophecy.” It is a severe reaction to the fact that many were far too DOGMATIC in their prophetic “dates” and assumptions! And when they failed to come to pass, many felt disillusioned, misled, and very disappointed.

Sadly, many ministers today are completely “GUN SHY” and afraid to speak out, or to even study dates, possibilities, or prophetic “times.” They won’t touch them with a ten foot pole, or longer.

Yet we know there are many prophecies in the Bible which “set dates” – Dan.9’s 70 weeks prophecy predicted the first coming of the Messiah in 27 A.D. He did. Read my article, “Daniel’s 70 Weeks Prophecy PROVES Jesus Christ is the Messiah!”

The Scriptures also speak of a 2520 year period of punishment which would happen to ancient Israel when they transgressed God’s covenant (Lev.26 – “seven years” equals 2,520 “days” – a “day” for a “year” – based on the Biblical prophetic year of 360 days each). This punishment began in 718 B.C., when Israel was carried into captivity, and ended in 1803 A.D. – 2,520 years later. This was the year of the great Louisiana Purchase by Thomas Jefferson of the United States, when modern Ephraim began their climb to ascendancy.

A similar 2,520 year punishment on ancient Judah began in 604 B.C. when the Jews were carried into captivity by king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. This 2,520 years expired or was accomplished in 1917, which was the year of the Balfour Declaration, permitting the Jews to once again have a homeland in Palestine. It was also the very year that General Allenby conquered Jerusalem and the Holy Land, thus ending over a thousand years of Turkish control and dominance in the region!

Therefore, prophetic dates are very important to study. They give us vital clues to the unfolding of the future. We should, however, study them with caution, and use great care and be responsible, and not go off “half cocked.” We should not become proud, self-inflated, and arrogant, and become too “dogmatic.” We should always maintain a humble attitude when it comes to the Word of God.

If our timing is wrong, then remember, even the very apostles thought Christ would return in their own generation, for years. Paul wrote as if Christ would return while he was still alive. He declared, “We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord Himself, with a cry of command . . . will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then WE who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever” (I Thess.4:15-17).

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “Listen, I will tell you a mystery. We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” (I Cor.15:51-52).

One thing we do know, however. We know His coming is close at hand, and getting closer all the time! So, as the Messiah Himself warns us: “*Be on guard* so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, *like a trap*. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. *Be alert at all times, praying* that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36).

