

TIM LAHAYE | LENYA HEITZIG | JOEL ROSENBERG | SKIP HEITZIG

Connection

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The Taliban In Valley



By Dave Merrill, USA TODAY

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THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRIBULATION

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ISSUE 10 | JANUARY-MARCH 2011
'We Cannot Be Complacent,' Says Director

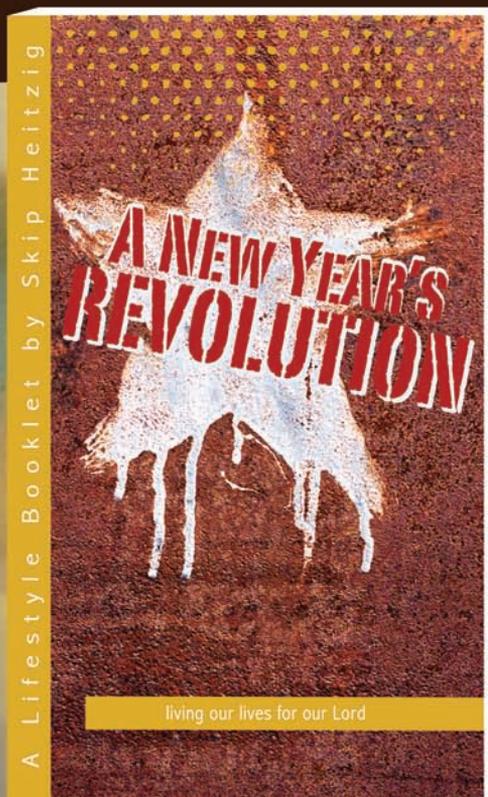
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(Ezekiel 36:26)

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Dear Friend,

Welcome to the New Year—2011! As we move into this year, our focus is on the future. And as Christians, we should always view the future through the lens of scriptural prophecy. We must always be looking to the soon coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Much of biblical prophecy centers on that singular event and all the surrounding happenings that are referred to as the “end times.”

Prophecy is one of my favorite subjects. I’ve taught on it numerous occasions and I have an upcoming book on understanding the book of Revelation. We’ve decided to devote this issue of *Connection—the magazine* entirely to prophecy in the Bible.

Our 2011 *Connection—the magazine* Bible studies are directly based on my devotional, *The Daily God Book*. We hope you find the new study both inspiring and spiritually nourishing.

Tim LaHaye, best-selling author of the *Left Behind* series, contributed an article from his *Prophecy Study Bible* entitled “Bible Prophecy and the Tribulation.” Here, Tim points out some fundamental keys to interpreting Bible prophecy.

My beautiful wife, Lenya, teaches readers to understand the indicators given by Jesus Christ to discern the false and dangerous from the true and certain prophecies.

Joel Rosenberg, American communications strategist, author, and my friend, speaks on the happenings in Israel and the events described in the book of Revelation in “Off the Cuff.”

Our “From the Blog” section addresses the topic of false prophets from a biblical standpoint. And “Hot Spots” draws our attention to a perpetually interesting question: What’s the significance of the number 666?

As always, you’ll find great resources, articles, and relevant information to help you grow in your personal walk with Jesus Christ. May God bless you this New Year!

In His Strong Love,

Skip Heitzig

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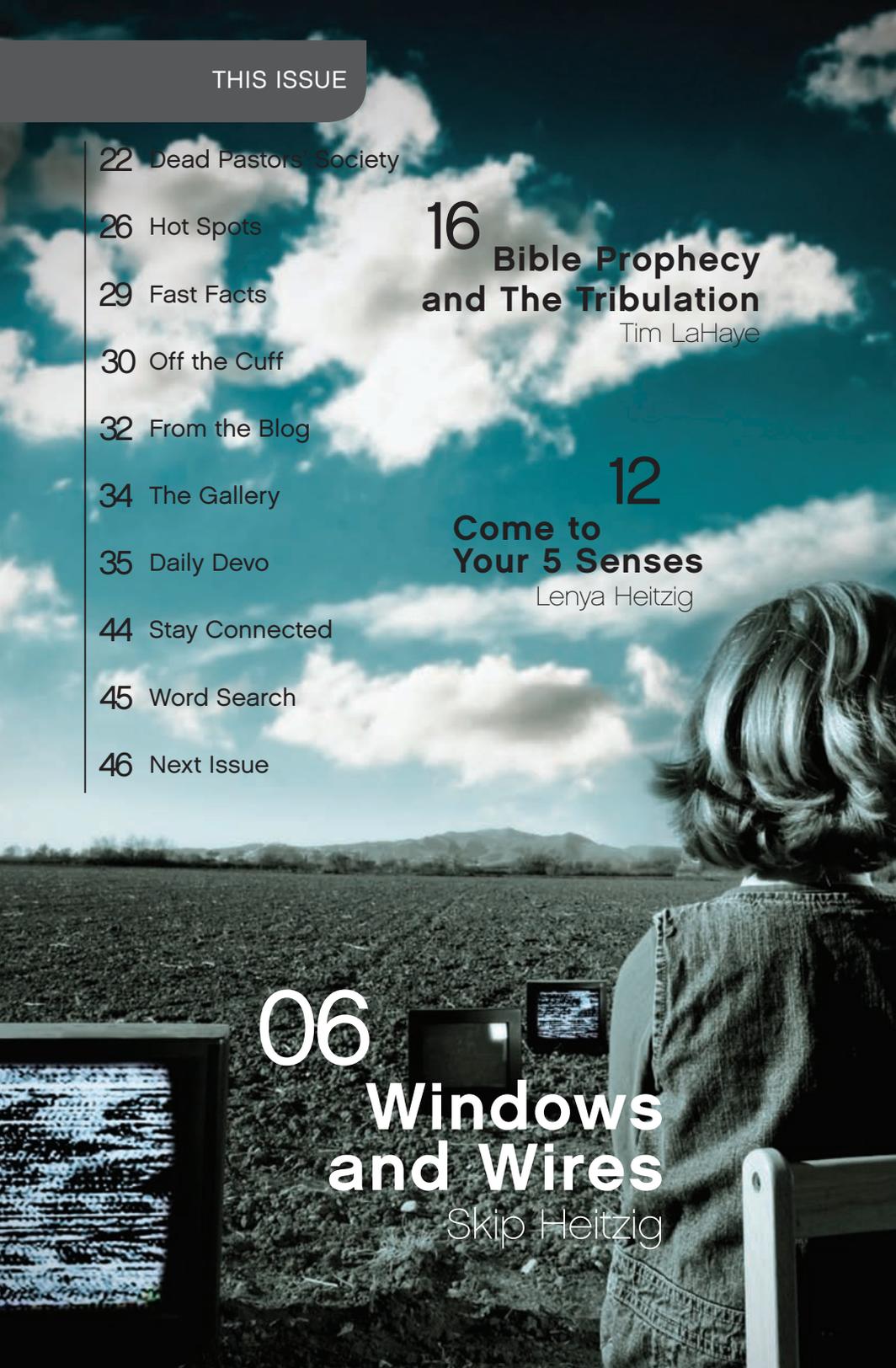
Come to Your 5 Senses

Lenya Heitzig

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Windows and Wires

Skip Heitzig



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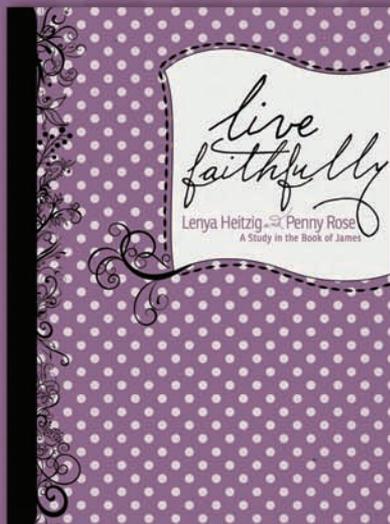
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1936

5, RADIO WAS A FAIRLY NEW MEDIUM

when an important broadcast was slated to air from station WJZ in New York City. King Edward VIII was about to explain to the world that he was giving up the throne of England for the woman he loved. Minutes before the broadcast started, a man in the studio tripped over a wire and snapped the only line of communication between England and America. Everyone was frantic. But one smart apprentice knew what to do. He grabbed both ends of the broken wire and allowed the signal to flow through his body. The king's words were literally transmitted through him.

Like the apprentice holding onto the wire, a prophet is a conduit who receives communication from heaven and carries

**a prophet
is a conduit
who receives
communication
from heaven
and carries
God's message
to the people**

God's message to the people. Our Lord has spoken to us through the biblical prophets. One pastor told a friend that he didn't preach on prophecy: "Prophecy only distracts people from the present." His friend replied, "Then there's certainly a lot of distraction in the Scriptures!"

About one-fourth of the Bible is prophetic. Eighteen books are completely devoted to prophecy: seventeen in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament. There are important prophetic passages in other books, like 2 Thessalonians and Matthew chapter 24. In fact, there are prophetic verses throughout the Word. Knowing prophecy is important.

Who's a Prophet?

God chose diverse people who used various methods to communicate His message to the people. Some of the prophets ministered through proclamation, speaking God's message for the people of a particular time. There was Noah, "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), who warned his generation of the coming judgment through the flood. Some prophets, like Moses, were patriotic. Remember how he boldly stood again and again before Pharaoh demanding, "Let my people go"? In some messages, God pointed a finger at people's sin. Many times these passages begin with the word "woe." When you see that, you'd better watch out! And sometimes the prophet's message was inspiring: God is going to do something great.

Sometimes prophets performed God's message in front of the people to get their attention. Jeremiah walked around wearing a huge wooden yoke on his neck to show that enslavement would come to the people of Israel in the future. And Hosea was commanded to marry a prostitute to demonstrate how God feels when His people are unfaithful.

God's Calling Card

Prophecy is history written in advance. The prophets were God's mouthpieces, revealing events before they occurred. In other words, their messages were predictive of something that would happen in the future. Sometimes it was in the

near future; sometimes in the far-off future—all the way to the end of the age. Through prophecy, God draws aside the veil of the future to give us an indication of His plans for the human race and the universe.

One of God's calling cards is fulfilled prophecy. He knows everything (His omniscience) and predicts certain things before they happen. God told Abraham that his "descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs...four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13)—and they were. Through His prophets, God predicted the Babylonian captivity even before Babylon existed as a military threat—and it happened. Prophecy demonstrates God's ultimate control over history. Jeremiah wrote, "I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword" (Jeremiah 20:4).

These passages are some of the most important and fascinating portions of Scripture. God is not confined to space and time. He has spoken of things to come. Prophecy is a powerful tool that opens the window of eternity. He said: "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'" (Isaiah 46:9-10).

Most importantly, God promised the coming of Jesus in the Messianic prophecies. These are Old Testament promises fulfilled in the New Testament. They speak about Christ, His power, authority, character, and future actions. It's rather easy to see their fulfillment: just watch for the way the New Testament writers make reference to Old Testament passages regarding Jesus. Jesus Himself said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

The Future and the Present

There is also prophecy yet to be fulfilled concerning the end times and Christ's second coming, notably in the book of Revelation. As you read the book of Revelation, a special benefit is bestowed: "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near" (Revelation 1:3).

Revelation is the only book in the Bible that has a promise: *Read me and you'll be blessed.* The more you read, the happier you'll be! But please note that it says to read it, hear it, *and* keep it. Let's remember that prophecy was intended to encourage obedience. Jesus warned His followers about the future so they could learn how to live in the present. The idea is to help us remain spiritually alert and prepared as we wait for His return.

**prophecy is a powerful
tool that opens the
window of eternity**

Grasping at Straws?

Prophecy is intended to give hope. Newspapers are filled with violence, scandal, and political haggling—they're depressing. But God's plan for the future provides encouragement: We know He will intervene in history to conquer evil. We need to choose whether we will live in the light of eternity or only for what we see and receive in this world.

We live in a time of very high anxiety. We all want to know what's going to happen tomorrow. What does the future hold? Will there be an Armageddon? Will there be an end to this world? Will Jesus really return to the earth visibly and physically—and when?

Many people are grasping at straws to get answers to their questions. They read the horoscope to find out what the stars show. They get their palms read. They turn to the “prophets” in tabloid newspapers or the late night television “psychics.” Meanwhile, God has written all about the future of the earth, the human race, and what we can expect. And not just in the book of Revelation—but in Daniel, Ezekiel, and other parts of Scripture.

Prophecy shouldn't make people uncomfortable. Instead, it should make believers confident. Biblical prophecy is not about predicting something that may or may not come true the way man makes predictions. Biblical prophecy isn't like shaking a Magic 8 Ball and turning it over for the answer. When God makes a prediction it's because He knows the end from the beginning. His precision is not “kind of” or “sort of” accurate—it's definite. His Word will come true in His perfect time and design.

The study of prophecy is a fruitful exercise because scriptural prophecy, when properly interpreted, provides a guideline for godly living. It motivates Christians to the highest standard of holiness.

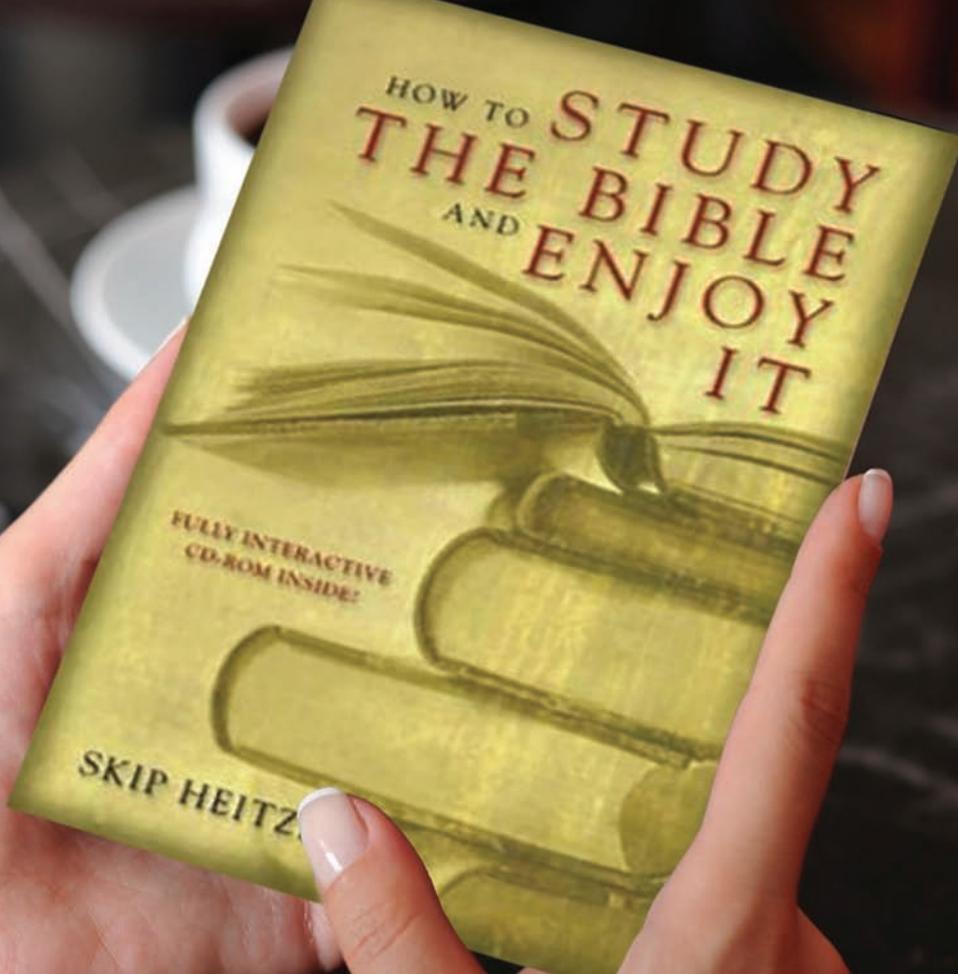
As we study prophecy, my prayer is that we won't walk away with new tidbits about who Gog and Magog are or with fancy charts on the end times to impress people. After examining God's prophecy, I pray we'll walk away trusting God more than we've ever trusted Him before.

Every tomorrow has two handles: the handle of anxiety and the handle of faith. Unfortunately, many people grab onto the handle of anxiety: *What's going to happen tomorrow? What about next month? Next year?* Every time God makes a promise and we witness its fulfillment, we should move closer and closer to the handle of faith: *My God is faithful. I trust Him completely.* As Corrie ten Boom said, “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”



Skip Heitzig is the author of the book *Homeland Security* and is the senior pastor of Calvary of Albuquerque.





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Come to know Senses



by Lenya Heitzig

YEARS AGO, A MAN CAME TO SKIP CLAIM- ING TO BE THE MESSIAH.

When asked what evidence he could give to support his claim, he replied that his proof was the “third testament”—which, by the way, he had written.

At this point, Skip was pretty sure this guy was off his medications, so he kindly asked, “What can I do for you?” Without missing a beat, the man said that in order to secure the future, the church needed to donate a million dollars to him so he could carpet his planet. Wow!

Obviously, this was a time when it was pretty easy to spot a false prophet. But there have been many times when well-respected sources have totally missed the mark when making claims about the future. In 1962, Brian Epstein approached Decca Records to sign an up-and-coming new group called The Beatles. The manager of the recording company replied, "Guitar groups are on their way out, Mr. Epstein." Wrong. Then there was the teacher who told the concerned father of a wayward student, "It doesn't matter what he does, he will never amount to anything." The student? Albert Einstein.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

People have always been curious about the future. Jesus knew Satan would exploit that curiosity to try to lead us astray. Therefore, Jesus gave us indicators to help us discern the false and dangerous from the true and certain. Jesus told us to watch for the following signs:

- false prophets
- wars and rumors of wars
- increased natural disasters
- signs in the heavens

False Prophets

And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them (Luke 21:8).

Although we may not remember the names Marshall Applewhite or Bonnie Nettles, we certainly remember the Heaven's Gate mass suicide in 1997. These two individuals convinced 39 people that an alien spaceship was following the Hale-Bopp comet. To reach the safety of the spaceship, they were instructed to kill themselves. Their gruesome remains were later discovered in a mansion near San Diego. Sadly, this group of people listened to false prophets—and paid with their lives.

Wars and Rumors of Wars

War is a fact of life. Any given day, soldiers are engaged in battle in 30 to 40 nations across the world. Although we see an obvious increase in wars, Jesus gave us a necessary perspective:

But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately (Luke 21:9).

If wars alone were the predictor of the end of the age, we would already be long gone. Like labor pains, the contractions of wars around the world will increase in intensity and frequency as the end times draw nearer.

Will mankind ever "give peace a chance," as John Lennon implored? Richard Staar, the director of the Hoover Institution of War, Revolution, and Peace doesn't think so. He anticipates an increase in regional conflicts confirming the words of Jesus: "*Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*" (Luke 21:10). And this is only one of the signs of the end times.

Natural Disasters

In April of 2010, Iceland's volcano, Eyjafjalajökull, erupted. Thousands of European flights were canceled due to the resulting giant cloud of ash. For five days, air traffic came to a virtual halt in northern European countries.

And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven (Luke 21:11).

We don't even have to look outside our own country to find evidence of this. Consider Hurricane Katrina. This Atlantic storm was the most costly American disaster to date. Katrina roared into the coast of Louisiana with 125 mph winds, breaking levees and leaving 80% of the city under water. Over 1800 were killed and damages were estimated at 125 billion dollars.

Signs in the Heavens

As another sign of the end of the age, Jesus told His disciples to look for celestial indicators:

And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars (Luke 21:25).

Man has always looked to the heavens with wonder and awe. This past August, the earth-side of the sun erupted in a blaze of activity known as the "coronal mass ejection" or a solar flare. The super-heated gas coming off the star hurtled through space. It was so

large it was visible on earth without the aid of a solar telescope.

The Apostle Peter made reference to future celestial disturbances unlike any we have ever seen:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10).

So how should we live our lives in view of a future filled with steadily greater challenges? How can we avoid becoming depressed, terrified, or dulled into complacency?

COME TO YOUR FIVE SENSES

KEEP AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

After a long winter, we look for signs of spring. It might be a yellow crocus pushing through the snow or the early blooming of the forsythia. We are to be aware and observant. Jesus said:

Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near (Luke 21:29-31).

We must keep our eyes always open—looking for signs of the coming of God's kingdom.

KEEP A LIGHT TOUCH ON THE WORLD

Perspective is everything. Our world is temporary, but God's Word is eternal. Keeping this in mind, we are likely to make wiser decisions about where and how we invest our energies.

But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly (Luke 21:34).

Keep a light touch on this world and keep eternity firmly in your heart.

REMEMBER THE SWEET AROMA OF PRAYER

Have you ever been driving somewhere and become so lost in thought that you went right by your destination? It's easy to become distracted by the enticements and cares of this world.

Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:36).

Jesus reminded us that to be counted worthy, we should pray—a lot. God so loves our prayers He regards them as a sweet aroma:

And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand (Revelation 8:4).

Watch what is happening around you and pray so that you can maintain a Godward focus.

DEVELOP AN EAR FOR THE TRUTH

There will always be people who ridicule the Word of God and cast doubt on its truthfulness:

Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and 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).

Just because something hasn't happened yet doesn't mean it won't happen. Remember the iconic scoffer, Harry Truman, who in 1980 refused to leave his home on Mount St. Helens in spite of the increasing rumblings of the volcano? The eruption came and Harry Truman was never seen again. Neighbors later said that Truman thought he would be able to see the lava coming down the mountain and still have time to get to safety. Unfortunately for him, the blast came at 300 miles per hour.

Listening to God's Word and taking heed of the signs result in wise actions.

TASTE AND SEE THAT GOD IS GOOD

When we look to Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith, we have reason to lift our heads in confidence and anticipation.

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near (Luke 21:28).

For the godly, there is genuine hope even in the midst of a world convulsing in chaos. Our heavenly Father is a good God with good things planned for His children. Until we are with Him in paradise, He wants us to seek Him diligently, know Him deeply, and trust Him completely.

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him! (Psalm 34:8).

I confess that when I'm reading a novel, I sometimes flip to the back of the book to see how it ends. Billy Graham apparently did the same thing. He said, "I've read the last page of the Bible. It's all going to turn out all right."

As forward-thinking believers, we can face tough times with confidence: knowing the work Jesus did on the cross means a happy ending for His children. He has promised "I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3). Good to know, isn't it? **L**

USE YOUR SENSES

1. Look for the coming kingdom
2. Keep your heart light
3. Watch and pray
4. Know your Master's voice
5. Remember God is good

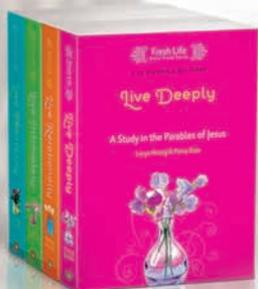


Lenya Heitzig is an award-winning author and sought-after speaker at conferences and retreats worldwide.

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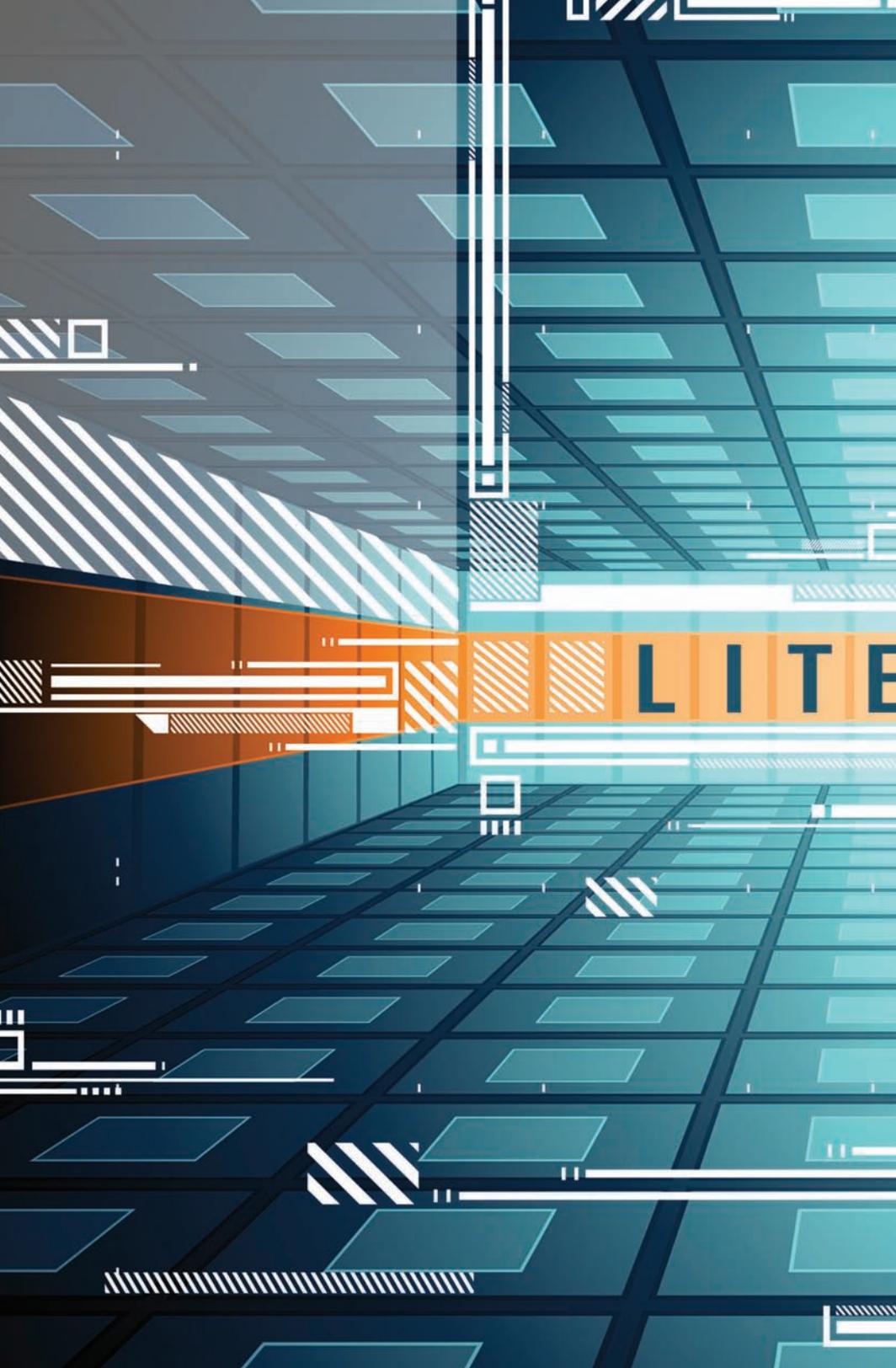


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TIM LAHAYE

Prophecy is God's roadmap to show us where history is going. The Bible's predictions claim literal and specific fulfillments that verify that such prophecies are indeed from God. **The key to interpreting Bible prophecy is in discerning what is literal and what is symbolic.** Therefore, the best way to avoid confusion in the study of

prophetic Scripture is to follow these simple directions:

1. Interpret prophecy literally wherever possible.

God meant what He said and said what He meant when He inspired “holy men of God [who] spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21) to write the Bible. Consequently we can take the Bible literally most of the time. Where God intends for us to interpret symbolically, He makes it obvious. One of the reasons the book of Revelation is difficult for some people to understand is that they try to spiritualize the symbols used in the book. However, since many Old Testament prophecies have already been literally fulfilled, such as God turning water to blood (Exodus 4:9; 7:17-21), it should not be difficult to imagine that future prophetic events can and will be literally fulfilled at the appropriate time. Only when symbols or figures of speech make absolutely no literal sense, should anything but a literal interpretation be sought.

2. Prophecies concerning Israel and the church should not be transposed.

The promises of God to Israel to be fulfilled “in the latter days,” particularly those concerning Israel’s punishment during the Tribulation have ab-

solutely nothing to do with the church. The Bible gives specific promises for the church that she will be raptured into heaven before the Tribulation (John 14:2-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

3. For symbolic passages, compare Scripture with Scripture.

The Bible is not contradictory. Even though written by numerous, divinely inspired men over a period of sixteen hundred years, it is supernaturally consistent in its use of terms. For example, the word “beast” is used forty-four times in Revelation and many other times in Scripture. Daniel explains that the word is symbolic of either a king or a kingdom (see Daniel 7-8). By examining the contents in Revelation and Daniel, you will find that “beast” has the same meaning in both books. Many other symbols used in Revelation are also taken directly from the Old Testament. These include “the tree of life” (Revelation 2:7; 22:2; 14), “the book of life” (Revelation 3:5), and Babylon (Revelation 14:8).

Some symbols in Revelation are drawn from other New Testament passages. These include terms such as “the Word of God” (1:2, 9), “Son of man” (1:13; 14:14), “marriage supper”

God meant what He said and said what

(19:9), “the Bride” (21:9, 22:17), “first resurrection” (20:5-6), and “second death” (2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). Other symbols in Revelation are explained and identified in their context. For example, “Alpha and Omega” represents Jesus Christ (1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13); the “seven candlesticks” (1:13, 20) are the seven churches; the “dragon” is Satan (12:3); and the “male child” is Jesus (12:5, 13).

Though some prophetic passages should be interpreted symbolically, it is important to remember that symbols in the Bible depict real people, things, and events. For example, the “seven candlesticks” in Revelation 1 represent real churches that actually existed when the prophecy was given.

As an example of how to interpret prophecy, let’s look at the Tribulation as described in Scripture.

The Tribulation

There is no question this world will yet experience a time of “great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time” as predicted by our Lord (Matthew 24:21). In Revelation 3:10, He promised to keep believers from “the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to

try them that dwell upon the earth.”

Such a time will have to be worse than anything ever known in human history; far worse than the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (1 million casualties), than the Black Plague (9 million killed), than World War I (20 million killed), than the devastation of World War II and Hitler’s Holocaust (6 million Jews and at least 4 million Christians killed).

The Scripture gives more space to describing the coming Tribulation period than to any other prophetic event. The Hebrew prophets mention it 39 times, calling it a “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7), “Tribulation” (distress, Deuteronomy 4:30), and many other titles denoting distress. The New Testament calls it “the day of the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 5:2), “the wrath of God” (Revelation 14:10; 15:1, 7; 16:1), and “the wrath of the Lamb” (Revelation 6:16-17). Revelation 6–19 describes the events of that Tribulation period, the best description of this terrifying, close-at-hand time that will try the whole world.

Daniel, the Hebrew prophet that Jesus quoted most, predicted that troublous times would last seven years and be started by the signing of a seven-year covenant between Israel and “the prince that shall come” (called elsewhere

He meant

“antichrist” or “the beast”). Then he predicted this “beast” or governmental ruler would break that covenant in the middle of the Tribulation and desecrate the temple (Daniel 9:26-27). Again, Daniel predicted that when Antichrist arises, he will be empowered by Satan himself with “all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9), and will desecrate the temple and set up an image of himself, demanding that the people worship him.

There is little doubt as to when this Tribulation occurs or how long it will last. Daniel predicts it will last “one week” (seven years, 9:27). John in Revelation divides it into two periods of three and one-half years each or 1,260 days each, a total of seven years. During the first three and one-half years, more than one-half of the world’s population dies. During the second half, conditions get even worse after Satan is cast out of heaven and indwells the Antichrist’s body and demands the world worship him. Our Lord Jesus predicted this Tribulation would end immediately prior to His return



We should never lose sight of the true purpose of that Tribulation period: a divine expression of His mercy and grace



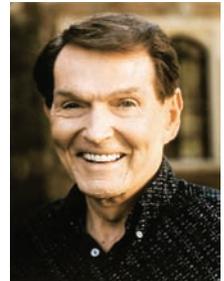
to this earth to set up His earthly kingdom for 1000 years (Matthew 24:29, see Daniel 9:24).

We should never lose sight of the true purpose of that Tribulation period: a divine expression of His mercy and grace. For in that brief seven-year period, at a time when the world’s population is at its largest, God will shake the earth in an attempt to lessen man’s false sense of security. He will send 144,000 Jewish witnesses filled with the Holy Spirit (Revelation 7; Joel 2:28-32) and other witnesses. God will go to the most extreme measures in all of history during the final days of man’s life on

earth to bring a massive number of souls to faith in Him so multitudes of people may enjoy the blessings He has prepared for their eternal future. 

Excerpt taken from *Prophecy Study Bible* (KJV) by Tim LaHaye

Tim LaHaye is an American evangelical Christian minister, author, and speaker. He is best-known for the *Left Behind* series of apocalyptic fiction, which he co-wrote with Jerry B. Jenkins. He has written over 50 books, both fiction and non-fiction.

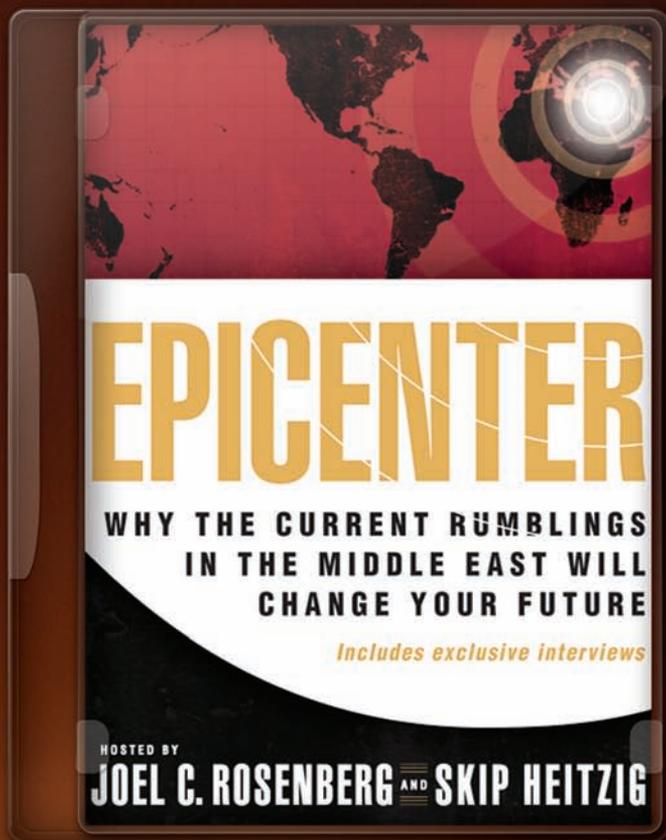


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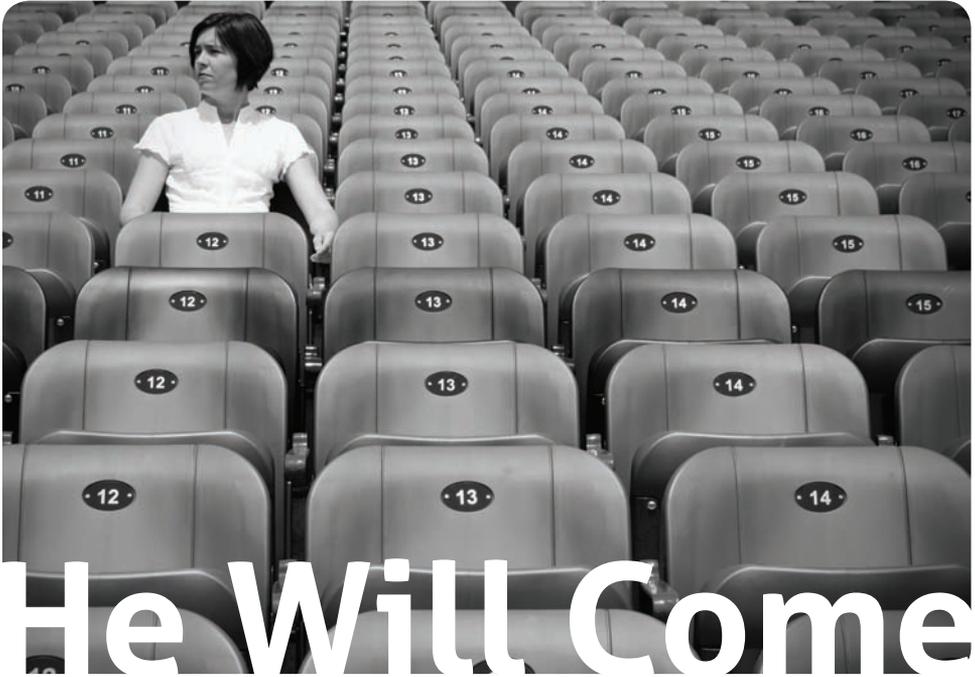
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featuring Stephen H. Tyng, Jr.



He Will Come

I will come again and receive you to Myself (John 14:3)

Our separation from this world at His coming are graphically sketched by His own predictions; "I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left."¹ So silently will we be stolen away that the world will be for a time confounded by the number of missing people. The "little flock" will hear the shepherd's voice and follow Him. Search will be made for us and we will not be found. The initial horror, which such disappearances must cause, will

So silently will we be stolen away that the world will be for a time confounded by the number of missing people.

soon cease to concern those who will be "left." Everything on earth will soon become as commonplace as before. Government will not be changed. The courts will still decree judgment among

men. The churches will not be emptied. Pews and pulpits will be filled with those "having a form of godliness but denying its power."² All these things will soon be sifted by the great tribulation, but at our departure, godless and anxious men

will quickly be consoled and begin to laugh at their own fears. How different it will be for us who are taken!

¹ Luke 17:34, 35 *Some biblical scholars regard this passage as a reference to the Jews during the tribulation period rather than the rapture of the church.

² 2 Timothy 3:5

On the eve of His death, our Lord was most explicit in the promise of His reappearance to His disciples. Over and over again, He told them, “I go away,” but He always added the refrain, “I will come again.”³ That they certainly understood Him to pledge His veracity to a literal, personal, visible and special return to them is evidenced by the whole course of their conversation. Had they been wrong in their understanding of His words it would seem to be fatal to His trustworthiness that He did not correct their error. But He continued to repeat the promise. We may with absolute confidence anticipate the realization of His appearing and claim as our assurance, the words of Him who could not lie: “If it were not so, I would have told you.”⁴

D

This article edited by Greg Nelson

³ John 14:3

⁴ John 14:2

Stephen H. Tyng, Jr.

(1703–1791) served in the United States Army as Chaplain of the 12th regiment. He was a popular preacher and took an active part in the revival movement of 1875 directed by D.L. Moody.

- We are all at times unconscious prophets
–Charles H. Spurgeon
- Which prophecy of Christ we see wonderfully to be verified, insomuch that the whole course of the Church to this day may seem nothing else but a verifying of the said prophecy
–John Foxe
- Science has not yet mastered prophecy
–Neil Armstrong
- And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing
–1 Corinthians 13:2
- No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit
–2 Peter 1:20-21



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Skip is the minister who inspired me after a lifetime of searching for a church. His ministry (in person and on the radio) spoke directly to my heart.

-Caren Vendetti



HOT SPOTS



666



666

Social Security numbers get us driver's licenses and passports. Credit cards have black strips on the back containing our personal information. When I travel to the East Coast and put my ATM card into the machine the screen blinks, "Good morning, Skip Heitzig." It knows who I am! Historically, slaves were tattooed with the numbers or names of their masters. In the cult of Sable, members were forced to have an image on their bodies for identification. Numbering is nothing new.

In the future tribulation period, the Anti-christ's sidekick—the false prophet—will impose a numbering system: "It is the number of a man: His number is 666" (Revelation 13:18). He will require a numeric

by skip heitzig

identifying mark for those who worship the beast. His followers will bear “the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” on their right hand or on their foreheads (see Revelation 13:16-17).

This is a mark of worship and an economic instrument: “No one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:17). No mark? No milk. No mark? No bread. People can’t be involved in daily commerce unless they have this mark.

The mark may be like microchips implanted into pets. One company claims it can keep track of

**No mark?
No milk.
No mark?
No bread.**

one billion pets within ten feet of their current location. If they can track billions of pets, they can keep track of billions of people. Whether it’s a chip, card, or other imprint, people will be compelled to participate in this system not just to worship—but to live and survive.

So what about the number 666? It could be the numeric equivalent of the beast’s name. Throughout history, people have guessed who

the Antichrist might be by looking at specific names in Greek, Latin, or Hebrew. They’ve wrongly speculated it was the Pope, Caesar Nero, Adolf Hitler, and others. I believe some people living in that day will figure out who it is because Scripture says, “Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast” (Revelation 13:18). They will know what the system is and what it means to be involved in it; some will accept the mark of the beast and some will refuse.

Symbolically, the number of man in the Bible is six because he was created on the sixth day. Thus, the number 666 could represent “man, man, man” or “the ultimate man”—the Antichrist. 666 could be repeated three times to denote the unholy trinity of the dragon, the Antichrist, and the false prophet in contrast to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Or it could be a comparison to the characteristics of God: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty” (Revelation 4:8).

Man and his government are represented by the number six. And even at his best, man always falls short of the glory of God. The number of perfection is seven. At creation, on the seventh day, there was rest. God’s seven is the God-Man, Jesus Christ, who will come at the end of the tribulation to overthrow the Antichrist and bring completion. So let’s not get hung up on the number—let’s remember our salvation through Christ. 🔥

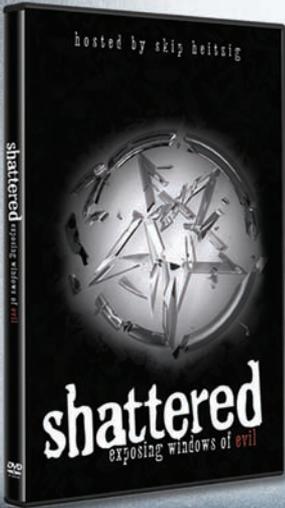
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- There would be a Son called God (Isaiah 9:6-7)
- The Messiah would be rejected (Isaiah 53:1-3)
- Daniel predicted when an anointed One would be rejected (Daniel 9:24-26)
- All who believe in Jesus will be saved (John 3:16)

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with
Joel Rosenberg

Skip: Joel, thanks for being with us today. I want to talk specifically about the book of Revelation. A lot of people read the book and not see it as literal—not see it as having any contemporary meaning whatsoever. It's either been fulfilled or it's too hard to understand; therefore it's ignored. Speak a little bit on that.

Joel: The book of Revelation is definitely hard to read. I think it's a tough book to get your hands around but it's important and we need to allow the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to it. It's critical and interesting that both [the Apostle] John and the angels speaking to him said seal some of this up—and Daniel said the same thing. Some prophecies aren't going to be able to be understood or easily understood until we get closer to the end times. Yet the book of Revelation is the only book in the Bible that has an actual, direct blessing for those who read it. I think when people slow down and go through the book, it's not as hard as many would have expected. Yes, some of it is symbolic language. Some of it is metaphorical. But that doesn't mean it's not literal. In other words, it's true but God is at times using some word pictures to help people understand future events that would've been absolutely impossible for John himself, much less anyone reading, to understand what in the world they were talking about.

Skip: So it's imagery that points to reality.

Joel: Let me give you an example. I think of Revelation chapter 12. People look at that and they say OK, there's a woman, she has a Child, and they are attacked by a red dragon. People throughout the ages have said it doesn't mean anything and, even if it did, who could understand? But actually it's not that difficult. Yes, at first glance we're getting a word picture. The woman gives birth to a male Child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron and her Child was caught up to God and to His throne. That's verse 5. Verse 17 says the dragon goes to war against the offspring who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. I mean, just a little bit of effort and you realize the woman is Israel as a nation who gave birth to a male Child who became Jesus who will rule the world one day, right? In verse 9, the dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan. He deceives the whole world and goes on the attack. So again, it's not difficult to see the dragon is the devil, the woman is Israel, and the male Child is Christ. The red dragon is Satan and there's going to be a massive battle. Satan is continually trying to destroy Israel, Christ, and His followers in the last days. And that's really where we're heading. Israel is back as a country again—prophetically—and there's a satanic attack from almost every direction hitting Israelis, Jews, and followers of Christ.

Skip: Let's talk a little bit about signs of the times. There are signs and then there are mega signs—big pointers that something's happening. And I would say the happenings in Israel are one of the mega signs. From your viewpoint, what are those signs of the times that we, as believers, should see as a wake-up call?

Joel: Are we seeing anything that suggests we're getting closer to the events described in the book of Revelation? Yes. For me,

In verse 9, the dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan. He deceives the whole world and goes on the attack.

there are three major happenings. First, the rebirth of Israel. Israel is central to all the attention of the earth and there is a sort of satanic battle against Israel. The second one is that the temple will be rebuilt and will be fully operational as the events of Revelation unfold. Now we don't have a temple today, but there is an awful lot of activity. Many preparations are being made right now by Orthodox Jews in Israel. They've got architectural plans done. They're sewing the priestly garments. They've rebuilt most of the implements used for sacrifice. They're training Levitical priests on how to run a temple. One of the most significant things is that the Sanhedrin, the

council of 71 rabbis that ran the temple in ages past, disbanded around the 5th century. But it's back. In 2006, the Sanhedrin recovered and is getting ready to run a temple in the not too distant future. The third event is Babylon. In the book of Revelation, Babylon is described as not only being reborn as a country and city, but also as the focal point of evil and commerce. Babylon is going to become this incredibly, enormously, wealthy, powerful focus so that when it's destroyed supernaturally with judgment, all the merchants of the earth are going to be weeping. People have said that's allegorical but I believe Babylon is Babylon—the actual city in Iraq. And that city is being rebuilt as we speak. The walls are up. The palaces are being built. Iraq's government actually has a master plan to finish the city. *The New York Times* reported not too long ago they want an amusement park and a Holiday Inn. I mean, these guys have a plan. And they're not evangelical Christians sitting around going, *how can we make the book of Revelation seem more relevant—like it's literally true?* These are Sunni and Shia Muslims who view the city of Babylon as a goldmine. That's the game plan of the Iraqi government today.

Skip: Hearing all this, I wish we would rekindle that old church axiom: *maranatha*. We should say it to one another more often—the Lord is coming. It's such a great reminder. We're being shaken today economically and that can be such a good thing for our nation. We see it as bad, but if it drives us to the anticipation of His

Coming, would you agree that the Lord could use that?

Joel: One of the other indicators of where we are now and how close we may be getting to the book of Revelation coming true is the economic and political reunification of Europe. The Antichrist is going to emerge out of Europe and we're going to have a system: one political and economic system. It's hard to imagine even 100 years ago that Europe could be the center of explaining to the world how we should all be one. I mean, what continent was more divided by World War I, World War II, the Holocaust, and the Cold War? That region has come together, not necessarily for the good, but it's come together with borderless crossings, one political system, and one currency. And I think they are going to be the model for the rest of the world to follow after the rapture. 



Joel Rosenberg is a *New York Times* best-selling author, producer of two documentary films, and founder of The Joshua Fund. He was previously a communications advisor who worked with a number of U.S. and Israeli leaders, including Benjamin Netanyahu.

with Pastor Skip Heitzig

Question:

I've heard several radio and television preachers predict and/or prophesy regarding events, occurrences, and dates—yet they never happen! Are these preachers considered false prophets according to the Bible?

Answer:

Throughout the years, many people have both prophesied and predicted events that never came to pass.

One of the best examples is Charles Taze Russell, the first president of the Watchtower Society (an organization founded for Jehovah's Witnesses). Russell prophesied that the second coming of Christ would occur in 1874. When the year came and went without Christ's appearance, he altered his prediction—only to conclude that 1918 would be the official date of God's judgment. Not surprisingly, this day also came and went. And in 1974—once again—the Watchtower Society proclaimed that 1975 would be the year of Christ's return. Guess what? It didn't happen!

It's important to note that Charles Taze Russell is not the only person who has made spurious predictions regarding the future. Below are several other fairly recent "calculations":

William Miller, a founding member of the Seventh-Day Adventists, predicted that Christ would return between March 1843 and March 1844.

Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God, said events ushering in Armageddon would occur in 1975.

Harold Camping, the president of Family Stations, Inc., predicted that Christ would return in September of 1994.

The one thing all of these men had in common is—they were wrong! The events they predicted never occurred. Why? Jesus said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

The above is only a partial list of people

throughout the ages who have prophesied or predicted events that never happened.

So what should we—as believers—learn from this?

First, we need to clearly understand the definition of *prophecy*. According to *Nelson's New Christian Dictionary*, prophecy is "a message conveyed by a prophet acting on behalf of God in any given situation."

The definition rules out any of the above-mentioned people as being a prophet. The events they predicted did not come true. The messages they proclaimed were false—and God would never give His prophet a wrong message.

Second, we need to distinguish between authentic prophecies and, let's say, a hunch or a feeling. Prophecy is a *distinct* message *from* God given to a prophet that will *definitely* occur in the future. But what about a person who has a feeling about an event which proves to be wrong? This isn't prophecy. If the person isn't claiming that the hunch is "from the Lord" then he is not making a prophetic announcement on behalf of the Lord—and shouldn't be called a false prophet. However, there is a fine line between claiming something is from the Lord or from personal opinion. It's a dangerous position for a preacher of the Word to place himself.

Third, I recommend that all Christians study Scripture thoroughly. The true biblical prophets help us understand the full counsel of God's Word. Don't listen to only one person regarding the end times. More often than not, he or she will leave you confused or lacking information.

Entrust to the Lord the ultimate understanding of prophecy. Believe the Bible—nothing more, nothing less—in relation to prophetic announcements. God has revealed His truth in His Word. □

Entrust to the Lord the ultimate understanding of prophecy.



12-21-2012
THE END IS
NIGH



Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
 If I lack'd anything.

“A guest,” I answer'd, “worthy to be here”;
 Love said, “You shall be he.”
“I, the unkind, the ungrateful? Ah my dear,
 I cannot look on thee.”
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
 “Who made the eyes but I?”
“Truth, Lord, but I have marr'd them; let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.”
“And know you not,” says Love, “who bore the blame?”
 “My dear, then I will serve.”
“You must sit down,” says Love, “and taste my meat.”
 So I did sit and eat.



Love 3

by George Herbert

DAILY DEVO

through the Bible with Pastor Skip Heitzig

JANUARY 1

Read: Genesis 1:1-13

Reflect: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light (Genesis 1:1, 3).*

Respond: "No matter what... somewhere in the Bible 'God said' something about it."

Return: Genesis 1:14-23

JANUARY 2

Read: Genesis 1:24-2:14

Reflect: *This is the history of the heavens and the earth... the LORD God made the earth and the heavens (Genesis 2:4).*

Respond: "None of it 'just happened.' Our Father made it that way!"

Return: Genesis 2:15-25

JANUARY 3

Read: Genesis 3

Reflect: *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked (Genesis 3:6-7).*

Respond: "Their disobedience marred the reflection of God's image in every person who came after them."

Return: Genesis 4-5

JANUARY 4

Read: Genesis 6:1-22

Reflect: *So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the*

air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD (Genesis 6:7-8).

Respond: "His obedience and willingness to respond to God made him different from those who would be destroyed in the Flood."

Return: Genesis 7-10

JANUARY 5

Read: Genesis 11:1-9

Reflect: *And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4).*

Respond: "Whenever you say no to God, you're essentially planting a rebel flag in the ground of your heart."

Return: Genesis 11:10-32

JANUARY 6

Read: Genesis 12:1-9

Reflect: *Now the LORD had said to Abram... "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).*

Respond: "But Abraham believed what God told him in spite of the odds."

Return: Genesis 12:10-Genesis 21

JANUARY 7

Read: Genesis 22:1-14

Reflect: *Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and*

go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you" (Genesis 22:2).

Respond: "Before God ever made the world, He had you in mind and your salvation ready to be set in motion."

Return: Genesis 22:15-25:18

JANUARY 8

Read: Genesis 25:19-34

Reflect: *But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:22-23).*

Respond: "The marvel of Jacob's life was that God used him in spite of who he was, not because of who he was."

Return: Genesis 26-36

JANUARY 9

Read: Genesis 37:1-24

Reflect: *Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me" (Genesis 37:9).*

Respond: "God can use what may seem trivial to accomplish something monumental."

Return: Genesis 37:25-Genesis 48

JANUARY 10

Read: Genesis 49:1-27

Reflect: *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people (Genesis 49:10).*

Respond: “You need never doubt God’s promises because He keeps every one.”

Return: Genesis 49:28-Genesis 50

JANUARY 11

Read: Exodus 1:1-14

Reflect: *Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob (Exodus 1:1).*

Respond: “God’s people groaned in Egypt and grumbled in the wilderness, but they experienced God’s glory at Sinai.”

Return: Exodus 1:15-22

JANUARY 12

Read: Exodus 2:1-10

Reflect: *Then Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him (Exodus 2:9).*

Respond: “God has a way of supernaturally arranging things in surprising ways.”

Return: Exodus 2:11-3:6

JANUARY 13

Read: Exodus 3:7-22

Reflect: *But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (Exodus 3:11).*

Respond: “Throw away every excuse, and ask Him to use you today.”

Return: Exodus 4-5

JANUARY 14

Read: Exodus 5:1-10

Reflect: *And Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I*

should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go” (Exodus 5:2).

Respond: “God tailored every plague against the Egyptians to correspond to Egypt’s false worship system.”

Return: Exodus 5:11-Exodus 11

JANUARY 15

Read: Exodus 12:1-14

Reflect: *Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:13).*

Respond: “Only the blood would save them, not the fact that they were Israelites.”

Return: Exodus 12:15-14:12

JANUARY 16

Read: Exodus 14:13-30

Reflect: *So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left (Exodus 14:22).*

Respond: “Every moment of crisis can crystallize your faith; it can become a line in the sand.”

Return: Exodus 14:31-Exodus 17

JANUARY 17

Read: Exodus 18

Reflect: *So when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, “What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?” (Exodus 18:14).*

Respond: “No one person, no matter how gifted, can do ministry alone!”

Return: Exodus 19

JANUARY 18

Read: Exodus 20:1-17

Reflect: *And God spoke all these words, saying: “I am the*

LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:1-3).

Respond: “Let God’s law be a road sign to point you to Jesus for cleansing and change.”

Return: Exodus 20:18-Exodus 24

JANUARY 19

Read: Exodus 25:1-22

Reflect: *And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it (Exodus 25:8-9).*

Respond: “There was only one door into the tabernacle, just as there is only one way into heaven, through Jesus Christ.”

Return: Exodus 25:23-33:11

JANUARY 20

Read: Exodus 33:12-22

Reflect: *And he said, “Please, show me Your glory” (Exodus 33:18).*

Respond: “No matter how spiritually well informed or biblically mature we are, at our core, we long for God Himself.”

Return: Exodus 34-40

JANUARY 21

Read: Leviticus 1

Reflect: *Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him (Leviticus 1:4).*

Respond: “The approach that God accepts is the approach that God prescribes!”

Return: Leviticus 2-3

JANUARY 22

Read: Leviticus 4:1-12

Reflect: *Speak to the children of Israel, saying: “If a person sins unintentionally against any of the command-*

ments of the LORD in anything which ought not to be done, and does any of them, if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering" (Leviticus 4:2-3).

Respond: "Honestly admitting sin and weakness is a sign of maturity."

Return: Leviticus 4:13-8:21

JANUARY 23

Read: Leviticus 8:22-36

Reflect: And Moses killed it. Also he took some of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot (Leviticus 8:23).

Respond: "Here I am, LORD. Use my body to do your work today."

Return: Leviticus 9-10

JANUARY 24

Read: Leviticus 11:1-8

Reflect: Speak to the children of Israel, saying, "These are the animals which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth" (Leviticus 11:2).

Respond: "All of life is to be lived under the watching eye of God."

Return: Leviticus 11:9-Exodus 18

JANUARY 25

Read: Leviticus 19:1-24

Reflect: Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy." (Leviticus 19:2).

Respond: "To be holy is to be whole."

Return: Leviticus 19:25-23:32

JANUARY 26

Read: Leviticus 23:33-44

Reflect: And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the

boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days (Leviticus 23:40).

Respond: "Joy was to mark God's people. Does it mark you?"

Return: Leviticus 24-27

JANUARY 27

Read: Numbers 1-Numbers 2:9

Reflect: Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting (Numbers 2:2).

Respond: "It's the honest narrative of what happens when people refuse to believe God's promises."

Return: Number 2:10-9:14

JANUARY 28

Read: Numbers 9:15-23

Reflect: Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents (Numbers 9:17).

Respond: "Looking up is more important than looking around."

Return: Numbers 10-Numbers 13:16

JANUARY 29

Read: Numbers 13:17-33

Reflect: There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight (Numbers 13:33).

Respond: "Dare to view life through the lens of faith."

Return: Numbers 14-20

JANUARY 30

Read: Numbers 21:1-15

Reflect: So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when

he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived (Numbers 21:9).

Respond: "Just as the Israelites looked in faith at the snake on the pole, people would look in faith to the cross for salvation."

Return: Numbers 21:16-22:14

JANUARY 31

Read: Numbers 22:15-35

Reflect: Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" (Numbers 22:28).

Respond: "Ask God to help you to be one of His faithful representatives."

Return: Numbers 22:36-Numbers 33

FEBRUARY 1

Read: Numbers 34:1-15

Reflect: The border shall go down along the Jordan, and it shall end at Hazar Enan. This shall be your northern border (Numbers 34:12).

Respond: "Are you fully experiencing your inheritance in Christ?"

Return: Numbers 34:16-Numbers 36

FEBRUARY 2

Read: Deuteronomy 1:1-18

Reflect: Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them (Deuteronomy 1:3).

Respond: "An understanding of biblical truth and of God's plan for you is essential for your spiritual vitality and growth."

Return: Deuteronomy 1:19-Numbers 2

FEBRUARY 3

Read: Deuteronomy 3:1-11

Reflect: For only Og king of Bashan remained of the

remnant of the giants. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. (Is it not in Rab-
bah of the people of Ammon?)
Nine cubits is its length and
four cubits its width, accord-
ing to the standard cubit
(Deuteronomy 3:11).

Respond: “But what are such
enemies before a King-size
God?”

Return: Deuteronomy 3:12-
Deuteronomy 5

FEBRUARY 4

Read: Deuteronomy 6:1-15

Reflect: *You shall teach them
diligently to your children, and
shall talk of them when you
sit in your house, when you
walk by the way, when you lie
down, and when you rise up*
(Deuteronomy 6:7).

Respond: “Passing the
spiritual baton to the next
generation is part of obeying
God’s commands.”

Return: Deuteronomy 6:16-
18:14

FEBRUARY 5

Read: Deuteronomy 18:15-
22

Reflect: *The LORD your God
will raise up for you a Prophet
like me from your midst, from
your brethren. Him you shall
hear* (Deuteronomy 18:15).

Respond: “When God the
Father sent Jesus the Son,
He put a period at the end of
the salvation sentence.”

Return: Deuteronomy 19-27

FEBRUARY 6

Read: Deuteronomy 28:1-19

Reflect: *Now it shall come to
pass, if you diligently obey the
voice of the LORD your God, to
observe carefully all His com-
mandments which I command
you today, that the LORD
your God will set you high
above all nations of the earth*
(Deuteronomy 28:1).

Respond: “Because there is
nothing to add to the cross,
the only ‘if’ is whether I be-
long to Christ.”

Return: Deuteronomy 8:20-

Deuteronomy 30

FEBRUARY 7

Read: Deuteronomy 31:1-8

Reflect: *And he said to them:
“I am one hundred and twenty
years old today. I can no lon-
ger go out and come in. Also
the LORD has said to me, “You
shall not cross over this Jor-
dan.””* (Deuteronomy 31:2).

Respond: “Counting the
years is not nearly as im-
portant as making the years
count.”

Return: Deuteronomy 31:9-
Deuteronomy 34

FEBRUARY 8

Read: Joshua 1-Joshua 2:14

Reflect: *Now Joshua the son
of Nun sent out two men from
Acacia Grove to spy secretly,
saying, “Go, view the land,
especially Jericho.” So they
went, and came to the house
of a harlot named Rahab, and
lodged there* (Joshua 2:1).

Respond: “The individual
most unlikely to become an
example of confidence in
God became just that.”

Return: Joshua 2:14-
Joshua 3:8

FEBRUARY 9

Read: Joshua 3:9-17

Reflect: *And it shall come to
pass, as soon as the soles
of the feet of the priests who
bear the ark of the LORD, the
LORD of all the earth, shall
rest in the waters of the Jor-
dan, that the waters of the
Jordan shall be cut off, the
waters that come down from
upstream, and they shall stand
as a heap* (Joshua 3:13).

Respond: “Sometimes the
first step of faith or obedi-
ence is the hardest one, but
we’ll never make any prog-
ress without it.”

Return: Joshua 4-Joshua 5:9

FEBRUARY 10

Read: Joshua 5:10-15

Reflect: *And it came to pass,
when Joshua was by Jericho,*

*that he lifted his eyes and
looked, and behold, a Man
stood opposite him with His
sword drawn in His hand.
And Joshua went to Him
and said to Him, “Are You for
us or for our adversaries?”*
(Joshua 5:13).

Respond: “Public victories
are the result of private visits
with God!”

Return: Joshua 6:1-14

FEBRUARY 11

Read: Joshua 6:15-21

Reflect: *So the people shout-
ed when the priests blew the
trumpets. And it happened
when the people heard the
sound of the trumpet, and the
people shouted with a great
shout, that the wall fell down
flat. Then the people went
up into the city, every man
straight before him, and they
took the city* (Joshua 6:20).

Respond: “Just get march-
ing, and leave the walls up
to God!”

Return: Joshua 6:22-
Joshua 9

FEBRUARY 12

Read: Joshua 10:1-11

Reflect: *And it happened, as
they fled before Israel and
were on the descent of Beth
Horon, that the LORD cast
down large hailstones from
heaven on them as far as
Azekah, and they died. There
were more who died from the
hailstones than the children
of Israel killed with the sword*
(Joshua 10:11).

Respond: “Heaven’s Sharp-
shooter will be the one to
execute the final judgment.”

Return: Joshua 10:12-
Joshua 13

FEBRUARY 13

Read: Joshua 14:1-12

Reflect: *As yet I am as strong
this day as on the day that
Moses sent me; just as my
strength was then, so now
is my strength for war, both
for going out and for com-
ing in. Now therefore, give
me this mountain of which*

the LORD spoke in that day
(Joshua 14:11-12).

Respond: "There are none so old as those who have out-lived their own enthusiasm."

Return: Joshua 14:13-
Joshua 17:13

FEBRUARY 14

Read: Joshua 17:14-18

Reflect: *Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?"* (Joshua 17:14).

Respond: "When we long for more than we have, we must first use what we have; then perhaps God will give more."

Return: Joshua 18-Joshua 19

FEBRUARY 15

Read: Joshua 20:1-9

Reflect: *Speak to the children of Israel, saying, "Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses"* (Joshua 20:2).

Respond: "You need the protective refuge of the love of Christ."

Return: Joshua 21-
Joshua 22:9

FEBRUARY 16

Read: Joshua 22:10-29

Reflect: *And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them* (Joshua 22:12).

Respond: "We can become jury and judge on the basis of nothing but sinful assumption."

Return: Joshua 22:30-
Joshua 24:13

FEBRUARY 17

Read: Joshua 24:14-33

Reflect: *And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD* (Joshua 24:15).

Respond: "A nation cannot be stronger than its individual families."

Return: Judges 1-Judges 2:6

FEBRUARY 18

Read: Judges 2:7-19

Reflect: *Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals* (Judges 2:11).

Respond: "Make right choices that will become godly habits."

Return: Judges 2:20-
Judges 3

FEBRUARY 19

Read: Judges 4-Judges 5:7

Reflect: *Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel* (Judges 5:7).

Respond: "May God strengthen the hand of today's moms to be the guiding influence for this generation."

Return: Judges 5:8-
Judges 6

FEBRUARY 20

Read: Judges 7:1-8

Reflect: *And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me'"* (Judges 7:2).

Respond: "Faith that is not tested cannot be trusted."

Return: Judges 7:9-
Judges 8

FEBRUARY 21

Read: Judges 9

Reflect: *But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull* (Judges 9:53).

Respond: "Commit the injustices and wrongs you see around you to God, and let Him administer His hand of fair play."

Return: Judges 10:1-9

FEBRUARY 22

Read: Judges 10:10-18

Reflect: *And the children of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned! Do to us whatever seems best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray"* (Judges 10:15).

Respond: "When they cried out, God heard, and God acted."

Return: Judges 11-12

FEBRUARY 23

Read: Judges 13:1-7

Reflect: *For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines* (Judges 13:5).

Respond: "We are all vulnerable to something."

Return: Judges 13:8-25

FEBRUARY 24

Read: Judges 14:1-7

Reflect: *Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines* (Judges 14:1).

Respond: "Ask God to give you eyes that seek out and appreciate the inner beauty of godliness."

Return: Judges 14:8-14

FEBRUARY 25

Read: Judges 14:15-20

Reflect: *Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily* (Judges 14:19).

Respond: "A Spirit-controlled life will have sufficient inner force to withstand the wickedness of our culture."

Return: Judges 15

FEBRUARY 26

Read: Judges 16:1-20

Reflect: *And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did*

not know that the LORD had departed from him (Judges 16:20).

Respond: “As children of God we’re made to respond to the LORD’s voice.”

Return: Judges 16:21-19:21

FEBRUARY 27

Read: Judges 19:22-30

Reflect: *When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel (Judges 19:29).*

Respond: “Make sure your own moral compass is connected to the guiding principles of God’s Word.”

Return: Judges 20-21

FEBRUARY 28

Read: Ruth 1

Reflect: *But Ruth said: “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God” (Ruth 1:16).*

Respond: “Jesus was born in the city of David because David, the great-grandson of Ruth and Boaz, made the right choices.”

Return: Ruth 2:1-2

MARCH 1

Read: Ruth 2:3-23

Reflect: *Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech (Ruth 2:3).*

Respond: “God is behind the scenes, but He moves all the scenes He is behind!”

Return: Ruth 3:1-7

MARCH 2

Read: Ruth 3:8-18

Reflect: *And he said, “Who are you?” So she answered, “I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close*

relative” (Ruth 3:9).

Respond: “You can’t choose to have a friend, but you can choose to be a friend.”

Return: Ruth 4:1-9

MARCH 3

Read: Ruth 4:10-22

Reflect: *Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day (Ruth 4:10).*

Respond: “As Boaz willingly redeemed his bride, Ruth, Jesus Christ willingly endured the cross to save us from eternal death.”

Return: 1 Samuel 1:1-18

MARCH 4

Read: 1 Samuel 1:19-28

Reflect: Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD.” So they worshiped the LORD there (1 Samuel 1:28).

Respond: “Our world needs children whose hearts burn with a desire to follow God.”

Return: 1 Samuel 2

MARCH 5

Read: 1 Samuel 3:1-18

Reflect: Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel answered, “Speak, for Your servant hears” (1 Samuel 3:10).

Respond: “God called Samuel three times but never revealed His will until Samuel responded to Him unconditionally.”

Return: 1 Samuel 3:19-1 Samuel 7

MARCH 6

Read: 1 Samuel 8:1-18

Reflect: Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a

king to judge us like all the nations (1 Samuel 8:5).

Respond: “Problems come when we begin to trust government more than we trust God.”

Return: 1 Samuel 8:19-22

MARCH 7

Read: 1 Samuel 9:1-24

Reflect: *And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people (1 Samuel 9:2).*

Respond: “The LORD wants to use us, but only when we are yielded to His direction

Return: 1 Samuel 9:25-15:9

MARCH 8

Read: 1 Samuel 15:10-29

Reflect: *Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice” (1 Samuel 15:24).*

Respond: “Instead of following God, Saul followed his own rules.”

Return: 1 Samuel 15:30-35

MARCH 9

Read: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Reflect: *But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).*

Respond: “Make a conscious choice to wear God’s glasses throughout your day.”

Return: 1 Samuel 16:14-17:30

MARCH 10

Read: 1 Samuel 17:31-47

Reflect: *This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this*

day I will give the carcasses of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel (1 Samuel 17:46).

Respond: “If we follow David’s example and put our faith in the living God, we can face today’s battles with courage.”

Return: 1 Samuel 17:48-58

MARCH 11

Read: 1 Samuel 18:1-16

Reflect: *So the women sang as they danced, and said: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands”* (1 Samuel 18:7).

Respond: “Don’t allow jealousy to diminish your effectiveness or performance.”

Return: 1 Samuel 18:17-25:1

MARCH 12

Read: 1 Samuel 25:2-35

Reflect: *Then David said to Abigail: “Blessed is the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me!”* (1 Samuel 25:32).

Respond: “You can keep walking and do nothing. Or, like Abigail, you can step into the situation to change it. How will you be known?”

Return: 1 Samuel 25:36-1 Samuel 30

MARCH 13

Read: 1 Samuel 31

Reflect: *Then Saul said to his armorbearer, “Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me.” But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it* (1 Samuel 31:4).

Respond: “Your character is what you are when no one else is looking.”

Return: 2 Samuel 1:1-16

MARCH 14

Read: 2 Samuel 1:17-27

Reflect: *I am distressed for*

you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me; your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women (2 Samuel 1:26).

Respond: “When Christians are in trouble, they learn who their real friends are, because those are the ones who stay with them no matter what happens.”

Return: 2 Samuel 2-3

MARCH 15

Read: 2 Samuel 4:1-12

Reflect: *For when they came into the house, he was lying on his bed in his bedroom; then they struck him and killed him, beheaded him and took his head, and were all night escaping through the plain* (2 Samuel 4:7).

Respond: “The first civil war had erupted between the house of David and the house of Saul.”

Return: 2 Samuel 5

MARCH 16

Read: 2 Samuel 6:1-11

Reflect: *So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart* (2 Samuel 6:3).

Respond: “Sincerity isn’t enough. God wants our sincere obedience.”

Return: 2 Samuel 6:12-7:3

MARCH 17

Read: 2 Samuel 7:4-19

Reflect: *Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house. “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom”* (2 Samuel 7:11-12).

Respond: “Through the reign of Jesus Christ, David’s throne would be established forever.”

Return: 2 Samuel 7:20-2 Samuel 8

MARCH 18

Read: 2 Samuel 9

Reflect: *Now David said, “Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”* (2 Samuel 9:1).

Respond: “Seize every opportunity to show kindness to others.”

Return: 2 Samuel 10

MARCH 19

Read: 2 Samuel 11:1-17

Reflect: *Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king’s house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold* (2 Samuel 11:2).

Respond: “An unchecked weakness can destroy.”

Return: 2 Samuel 11:18-27

MARCH 20

Read: 2 Samuel 12:1-15

Reflect: *Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul’”* (2 Samuel 12:7).

Respond: “If our consciences aren’t sufficient, God will get our attention in some other way.”

Return: 2 Samuel 12:16-2 Samuel 14

MARCH 21

Read: 2 Samuel 15:1-12

Reflect: *Then Absalom would say to him, “Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you.” Moreover Absalom would say, “Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and anyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice”* (2 Samuel 15:3-4).

Respond: “It’s the classic example of a father who provoked his child to anger and then reaped the consequences



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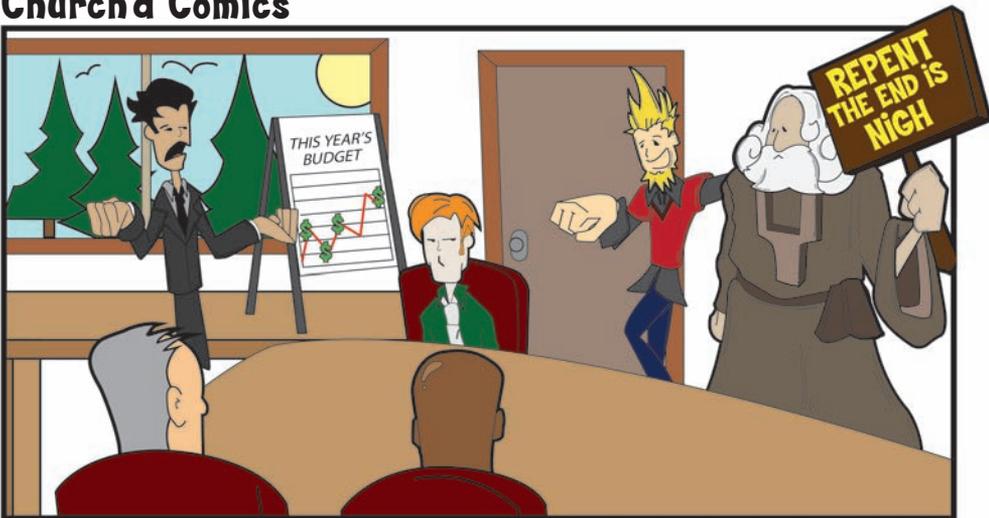
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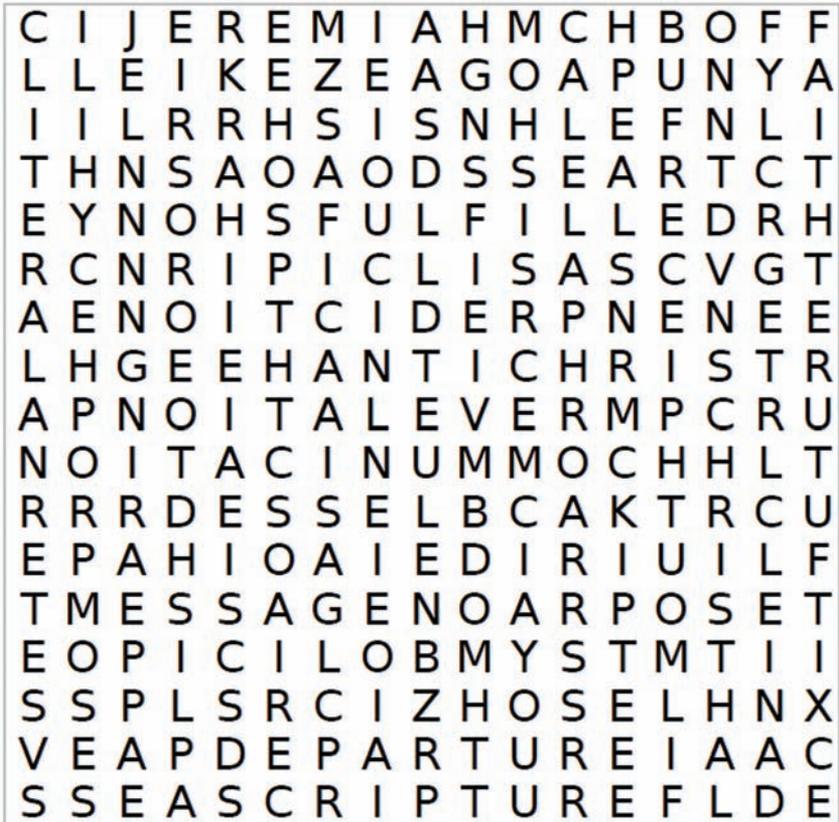
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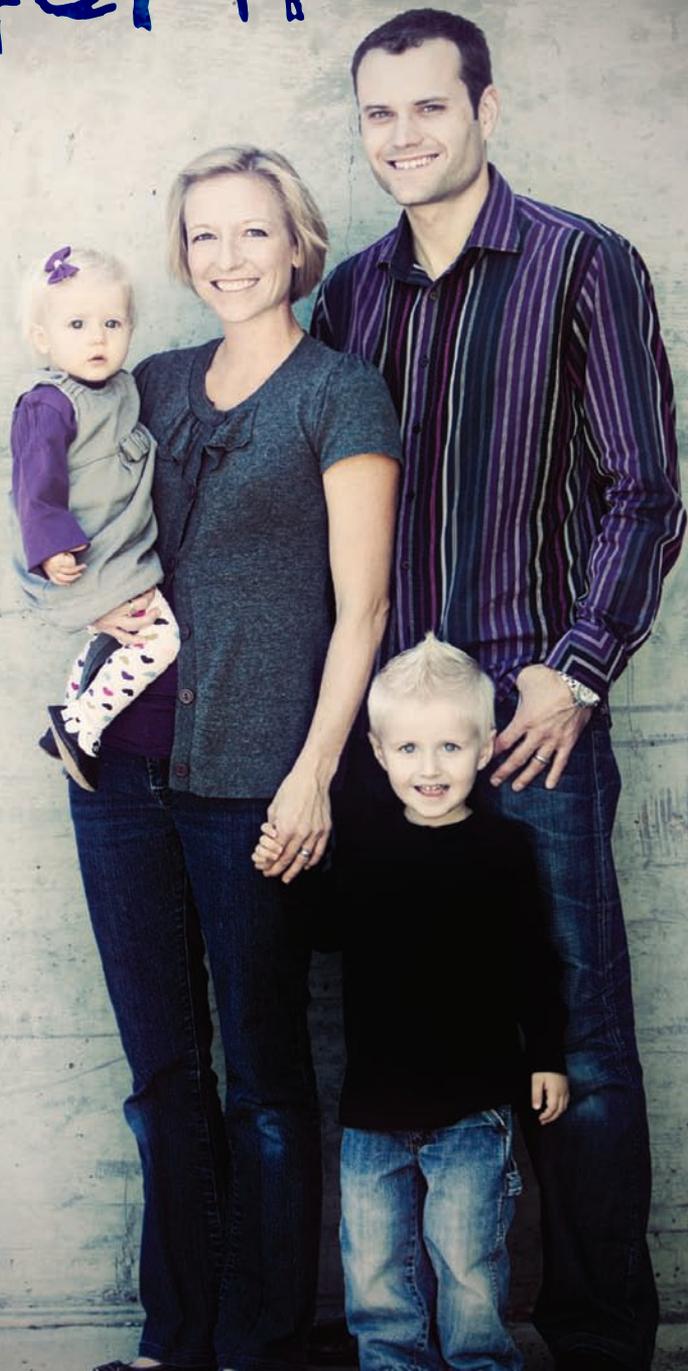


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