

THE END TIMES

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The War to End All Wars

World War I was declared by the Nations to be *“the war to end all wars.”* But following it came the rise of communism, World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War with the Soviet Union, Viet Nam, Desert Storm, and conflicts in Israel, Ireland, Central America, Bosnia, Angola, Somalia, Argentina, Pakistan, etc., etc. And now, the war against worldwide terrorism rages. In these conflicts, each side has held to the thought that theirs is the just cause, and their ideology worthy to be imposed upon their fellow man.

“WHY DO THE PEOPLE IMAGINE A VAIN THING?”

Men have tried and failed to bring about order in the world by force, but changes in society by coercion will never bring about changes in the heart. Consider communism in the Soviet Union and the many holy wars fought by numerous religious systems—all failing, because they have imposed a government that is continually overtaken by selfishness and corruption. The *“vain thing”* spoken of in Psalm 2 is that men believe they can establish universal peace without the *Prince of Peace*.

The concept of a just and holy war, such as we see perpetrated by the Holy Jihad of Islam is nothing new. During the time of World War I, persecution, torture and oppression were also the result of a society convinced that they were doing God’s work. While the First World War was raging, the following extracts were reported in the *Methodist Times* illustrating the misguided zeal of some Christian ministers in Germany. Their sermons remind us of the similar religious zeal found in the mind-set of bin Laden and his followers:

“Pastor Zoebel, speaking in the great Lutheran church in Leipsic, said: *‘It is this deep consciousness of our mission that permits us to congratulate ourselves, and rest content*

with a heart full of gratitude, when our guns beat down the children of Satan, and when our marvelous submarines— instruments to execute the Divine vengeance—send to the bottom of the sea thousands of the non-elect. We must fight the wicked with every means in our power; their sufferings should give us pleasure; their cries of despair should not move German hearts. There ought to be no compromise with hell, no mercy for the servants of Satan—in other words, no pity for the English, French, and Russians, nor indeed for any nation that has sold itself to the Devil....’”

“Pastor Fritz Philippi, of Berlin, from his Protestant pulpit, among other things, said: *‘...It is really because we are pure that we have been chosen by the Almighty as His instruments to punish the envious, to chastise the wicked, and to slay with the sword sinful nations.... The immoral and the friends and allies of Satan must be destroyed, as an evil plant is uprooted. Satan himself, who has come into the world in the form of a great Power [England], must be crushed. On Germany is laid the Divine command to bring about the destruction of those who are the personification of evil. When this work is finished, fire and sword will not have been used in vain. The redemption of humanity will be achieved. The kingdom of righteousness will be established on the earth; and the German Empire, which will have created it, will remain its protector.’*”



“Thus saith the Lord... I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.” Haggai 2:6,7

Indeed, these men had imagined a “*vain thing!*” What a pity that the name of Christ should in any sense of the word have been associated with such horror! And yet, religious zeal coupled with ignorance as to God’s truth is once again attacking innocent people on a worldwide scale. This is an example of what happens when there is a lack of knowledge as to the one true God’s loving character and plans.

In this “*present evil world,*” charismatic leaders will continually arise and will indoctrinate hatred into the minds of their followers. There will always be another Hitler, another Ayatollah Khamenei, another Saddam Hussein, another bin Laden. Each leader has convinced himself and others that God is on his side, and that he has a just cause for which to inflict terror upon those not in agreement with him.

Efforts to abolish forced ideology will be fruitless, as long as Satan is allowed to prey upon the weaknesses of men’s hearts—feeding their lust for power, greed, and selfishness. But, thank God, Satan will be bound during the kingdom or Messiah, and Christ will rule with a rod of iron those who impose their unrighteous wills upon others. (Rev. 2:27; 20:1-4) There will be no more Hitlers, Husseins or bin Ladens, for none shall “*hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*” Isa. 11:9

THE FIFTH UNIVERSAL EMPIRE

A powerful prophetic lesson illustrating the transition from this “*present evil world*” into God’s “*holy mountain,*” is found in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Because of their unfaithfulness, God took away the kingdom from His people Israel, and gave it over for a time to this mighty Gentile Emperor. In a dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a great image, the head of which was made of gold, the breast and the arms of silver, the belly and the thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet of iron mingled with miry clay.

The Prophet Daniel explained that this great image represented four universal Gentile kingdoms which would rule over Israel and the world. Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom, Babylon, was represented by the head of gold: “*Thou art that head of Gold.*” Next came the Medo-Persian empire, represented by the breast and arms of

silver; Greece, represented by the belly and thighs of brass; and finally came Rome, represented by the legs of iron. An outgrowth of that fourth universal empire was the Holy Roman Empire, represented by the feet of iron mingled with miry clay. From this came the ten crown heads of Europe, represented by the ten toes—also of iron mingled with miry clay. Dan. 2:36-44; 7:14,17,27

According to this vision, the period of time during which these four universal empires controlled the world is termed the *Times of the Gentiles*. This was to be the period of time during which Israel was to be overturned (Ezekiel 21:25-27)—

to have their kingdom and their government subject to the Gentiles. History has proven that this prophecy has reached its fulfillment. Indeed, an indication that the fifth and final universal kingdom is about to take full control is seen in the fact that Jerusalem is no longer “*trodden down of the Gentiles.*” (Luke 21:24) The Nation of Israel is a miracle of history! Although it is one of the smallest nations of the world, it has taken its place as a mighty nation among nations, never to be “*pulled up out of their land*” again! Amos 9:15

The best and the worst of earth’s nations are but “*kingdoms of this world,*” whose lease of power from God has now expired. These shall soon give place to their ordained successor, the kingdom of Messiah, the fifth universal empire of earth. But the last Gentile kingdoms will not give up without a fight, and hence, we see spasms of trouble in the earth,

spoken of by the Apostle Paul as birthpangs: “*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.*” 1Thess. 5:2, 3

THE FINAL CONFLICT

Before lasting peace and safety shall be established throughout the earth, prophecy tells us that wars will increase until men’s hearts are humbled enough to admit that they, with imperfect judgment and selfish hearts, will always be failures in bringing about peace. Indeed, the Bible foretells that these conflicts will build to a climactic clash between good and evil which shall change this selfish, evil world



forever. Daniel prophesied that *“There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.”* Jesus confirmed this prophecy and added the words, *“No, nor ever shall be.”* Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21

This final conflict is that great *Battle of Armageddon* foretold in Revelation. *“And he gathered them together into a place called...Armageddon. ...and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven... saying, It is done.”* (Rev. 16:16-17) As terrible as this trouble is expected to be, it is comforting to know its lessons will be so severe as to make no repetition of them necessary. It will truly be **the war to end all wars!** Furthermore, a grand and beautiful outcome is also prophesied, for upon the ashes of Armageddon, Messiah’s kingdom will be established with full power and glory throughout heaven and earth. Christ and his Church will reign, Satan will be bound, and the rivers of the waters of life will flow to all who have ever lived. Rev. 20:1-4, 22:17

“MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD”

Jesus said: *“My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight...”* (John 18:36) Christians should ever keep in mind that we are peacemakers, seeking to live peaceably with all men, and helping others to see the events which are taking place in the light of the *Prince of Peace*.

In the midst of troublous times, we should remember that God is at the helm, and that thus He is allowing human pride to further work out the great troubles incident to the *Battle of Armageddon* and the inauguration of Messiah’s kingdom. Armageddon is not the end of the world, but the end of this *“present evil world.”* (Gal. 1:4) The permission of evil will soften men’s hearts so that they will desire to live in harmony with righteousness. *“...this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith.”* (Eccl. 1:13) All one need do is look at the outpouring of love and cooperation which took place in the hearts of the world after the tragedy of September 11. Selfishness, rivalry and jealousy gave place to compassion, sympathy and brotherly love.

Mankind has been learning a hard lesson that obedience to God is the only method of achieving true peace, joy and security. But, thank God, this harsh lesson will soon be

accomplished. We are not to expect the interposition of the Lord’s power to stop this great *time of trouble* until mankind shall have been greatly humbled to the dust and shall call upon the Lord in their desperation. When the people turn to God for deliverance, He assures us that every member of the human family that has ever lived shall have a full opportunity of coming to a knowledge of the truth and accepting a new life of righteousness under the New Covenant. *“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together...”* Isa. 40:4-5



“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.” Isa. 11:6

“When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your deliverance draweth nigh.” (Luke 21:28,31) We are to lift up our heads and rejoice—not rejoicing in the trouble, nor in the sufferings of others, but in the knowledge that something wonderful is about to happen. The entire present global arrangement will soon be replaced by a new heavens and a new earth—far superior and more advantageous and desirable for all.

“AND I WILL SHAKE ALL NATIONS”

The shaking process of the *time of trouble* will continue until Messiah’s unshakable kingdom shall assert itself and take control of the world’s affairs—after total anarchy shall have demonstrated to the human mind the fact that nothing man can do will be able to bring order out of the chaos. The Lord assures us of the blessed result: *“I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.”* (Haggai 2:7) By the end of this terrible shaking, man’s only desire will be for peace and happiness, such as God purposes to provide through Messiah’s kingdom. Then, all mankind will *“...beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, either shall they learn war any more.”* (Isa. 2:4) And the God of Heaven *“...shall make war to cease unto the ends of the earth.”* (Psa. 46:9) *“And He will destroy... the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; ...for the LORD hath spoken it.”* Isa. 25:7, 8

THE FIRST ARMAGEDDON BATTLE

Armageddon will be the last great battle between good and evil where God's truth and righteousness will prevail against the forces of evil. The lesson of Armageddon was first illustrated in the battle fought in the Valley of Megiddo. This valley is noted for its many slaughters, and therefore made the basis of the Divine Revelation. "And he gathered them together into a place called... Armageddon." Judges 4 & 5; Rev. 16:16-17

The Israelites had nearly lost their knowledge and love of the one true God. To bring them back into harmony again with him, God chastened them by permitting their enemies to vanquish them. The Canaanite General, Sisera, having humbled the Israelites of Northern Israel for years, started southward with a mighty army containing nine hundred iron chariots. By the time he had gotten as far south as the Valley of Megiddo, messengers informed him that Barak, a leader among the Israelites, was also leading an army of ten thousand men southward. Under Divine guidance General Barak made Mount Tabor his army base—the same *Mount of Transfiguration* where Jesus portrayed God's coming kingdom

in a vision. This is a remarkable picture of the future association of the glorious kingdom of peace in proximity with the Armageddon overthrow of this "present evil world." Matt. 17:1-13



Sisera, mocking the poorly armed Israelites, advanced with his army on both sides of the River Kishon toward Mount Tabor. The word of the Lord then came to General Barak, directing him to advance against the Canaanite army. At the same time, a great storm swelled the river, making quagmires of the lower valleys, rendering useless the 900 chariots and horses of Sisera. His soldiers, fleeing for their lives, were cut down by the Israelites while thousands were swept away by the flood to the sea.

This intervention of God on behalf of His people is a picture of the coming Armageddon battle which will cause all wars to cease. Just as God provided a miracle to deliver His people, so too, the cloudburst of Truth and the rising waters of knowledge which are bringing to pass this great human catastrophe shall overrule for the blessed deliverance of the world. "He maketh the storm a calm." Psa. 107:29



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