

# The Coming Time of Trouble

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I hold in my hand a book called "The Fate of the Earth." [By Paul Erlich of Stanford University] This is a remarkable book. It is not a Christian book, but it is a very insightful penetrating analysis of the threat to the earth in our own day. It is not something that is coming. It is something that is here. Let me read a bit from the jacket describing the content:

This monumental work first appeared in three issues of the New Yorker and was quickly recognized throughout our country, indeed throughout the Western world as the definitive statement on our plight. In defining the shape and the dimensions of the nuclear predicament Schell describes within the limits of what is defensibly and unarguably known to science a full scaled nuclear holocaust. He describes the countless overlapping ways a paroxysm of redundancy in which human beings, and other creatures of the earth, would die if the existing 20,000 megatons of bombs with more than a million times the explosive power of the Hiroshima bomb should ever fall. In moderate tone, but in unforgettable particulars, he tells us how the world would end.

This is a sobering book, as the jacket has suggested. It is not a panic-stricken book. It is not an attempt to arouse an emotional reaction and to send people out into the streets in mindless protests and demonstrations. It is very calm and reasoned, but I think therein lies much of the terror of the book. It faces very plainly the stark realism of the nuclear threat of our day and goes on beyond that into the field of philosophy to explore the worth of human beings and to project, as far as the human mind is capable, into what an earth would be like in which humankind had become extinct and the terrible irreversible fact of human extinction, what would be lost in the process of that. Then it postulates a very radical and painful way out. The only way out of our present dilemma, which the author of this book can see, is that we abandon our commitment to national sovereignties as nations, surrender our rights to exist as national states, and somehow find a way to remove war as a means of settling disputes among peoples. If we cannot find that, he sees absolutely no hope of avoiding a nuclear holocaust of some dimension at least, and one which possibly, and, in fact given the history of escalation in times of war, almost certainly would result in the dimensions of nuclear holocaust that threaten the extinction of the race itself. Now that is why I say this is a very sobering book.

When you read a book like this, the question of the day the leaders of the nations today, and particularly the two super powers, must ask themselves is, "Will the decade of the eighties in which we now are living, bring into reality the terrible fate that this book outlines, i.e., Will the super powers themselves in the next few years trip the trigger of worldwide disaster and send the dark witches of nuclear terror riding their nuclear brooms across the skies to bring the world into its final night of doom." That is the question the world is facing today.

As I've said, this is not a Christian book. It views events purely from a humanistic outlook. It does not take God into any consideration whatsoever. It is not an anti-Christian book. The writer seems to have had considerable exposure to Christian literature. He quotes frequently from the Bible, from St. Augustine, from

other writers of Christian persuasion, but he himself does not allow Christian viewpoint to enter into the examination the book engages in. God plays no part in the human dilemma according to this book, nor is He expected to. Though He may exist, the author does not in any way sense that He has anything to do with the coming fate of the earth.

The remarkable thing to me about reading a book like this is not only its sobering content and its very insightful analyses, eloquently expressed, but the tremendous parallel it represents with what the Scripture has been saying all along. In other words, we have come to a time when a secular press is saying the same thing the Bible has been saying for many many centuries, and saying it with great influence and power in the affairs of men.

That in itself is a very remarkable thing. If, as the opponents of Christianity would love to see happen, it were true that Christianity is, as they claim, a mere psychological trick of the human mind, a religious trick that we play upon ourselves, and that there is really no God and no reality to Biblical pictures, then we could expect that, as human life goes on, surely the world would sooner or later grown away from the picture that the Bible draws. But that has not been the case. Even in this tremendously advanced technological-scientific age of ours, which opponents of Christian faith love to picture as having virtually wiped out any reason or basis for belief in Christianity, it is nevertheless true that events of today are inescapably and visibly underscoring and supporting the same position that the Bible draws.

This is what you would expect if the Bible is true. If it is true that there is a "God who rules in the affairs of men," as dear old Benjamin Franklin said at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. When the states were trying to form the document that is the basis of all our American liberties, and they came to a place where there was an impasse, unable to make any progress in their deliberations, he rose and said to the assembled delegates, "I have lived a long time, and the longer I live I am convinced that there is a God who governs in the affairs of men, and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his knowledge, how much less can a nation rise without his help." And he purposed that they open the assembly from that day on with a prayer to God that he would direct their deliberations.

I think this is a most remarkable thing because it shows that the events which men purpose are not finally in their hands. God rules in the affairs of men, and men may write books like this one that seem to infer that the fate of the earth is in the hands of men, but the Bible never takes that position. It says that it is God who is in ultimate control, and I want to start with that note in considering the "Coming Time of Trouble" lest anybody become faint of heart as they consider the fact that both the Bible and the savants of our day foresee a terrible time of trouble ahead for us among not only the American nation but all the nations of the world alike.

I would like to read for you some of the passages from the Old Testament that picture and describe that "Coming Time of Trouble." I will start with the little book of Zephaniah, (the fourth book back from Matthew). In it is a passage describing, along with many passages in the Old Testament which we could sight, the coming period of trouble known as "The Day of the Lord" or "The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord."

Zephaniah 1:14-18:

The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter, the mighty man cries aloud there. A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. I will bring distress on men, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the Lord. In the fire of his jealous wrath, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full, yea, sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

When the Bible uses a term like "all the inhabitants of the earth," though it is a frightening term, it does not necessarily mean the total extinction of the race. Other passages make that clear, that there is not coming a time

when the whole race of mankind is going to be obliterated from the earth. When he says he will make a "sudden end" of all the inhabitants of the earth, it does not necessarily imply their death. It means the destruction of all the ways of life that they have adopted, and that judgment will strike in all the parts of the earth, but not necessarily a total elimination. But that is a vivid description. Admittedly this is Hebrew poetry, and Hebrew poetry tends to paint in vivid colors. It can be in its literal interpretation subdued somewhat. It is not necessarily quite as vivid as the imagery implies. That is why I say you cannot take this as a fully literal statement. But it must be taken realistically, and that is that it does deal with a terrible day of trouble that is coming which will be widespread and will be a very painful and terrible time.

Another passage somewhat similar to that is in the little prophecy of Joel which is further back a few pages in the Old Testament. The prophecy of Joel falls in the minor prophets just after Hosea and before the prophet Amos. In Joel, beginning in the 2nd chapter, you have a prediction of "The Day of the Lord" again. Immediately following the great passage that was quoted on the day of Pentecost by the Apostle Peter when he said the Lord would "pour out his Spirit on all flesh, sons and daughters would prophesy," etc. This is the passage from which he quoted. And it goes on in verse 30 to say,

Joel 2:30:

And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. [Peter quoted that part too] And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls. [A remnant shall escape the trouble in Israel] For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat...

There is some doubt as to just where that valley is located. Some have identified it with the Kidron Valley right outside the City of Jerusalem, between the Mt. of Olives and the City of Jerusalem. However, it seems it is identified more accurately with the valley down near the little village of Tekoa. Any of you know what famous prophet came from Tekoa? That was the home town of the prophet Amos, just south of Bethlehem. There King Jehoshaphat went forth to meet the combined armies of Moab and Ammon and others that were coming up from the south against Jerusalem. As recorded in the historical books, God gave him a great victory without even a fight. God dispersed the armies, turned them against each other and by the time the armies of Israel arrived on the scene, most of the enemy was already dead, having destroyed themselves. This is what was later known to be the Valley of Jehoshaphat. So it seems to be associated with the scene around the mountains of Judea south of Jerusalem, and here God says, "I will gather the nations, ...

Joel 3:2b;

...and I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations, and have divided up my land, [Notice how He insists He owns it] and have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and have sold a girl for wine, and have drunk it.

Then in a very dramatic, prophetic, poetic passage in verse 9 comes a very stirring challenge to the armies.

Joel 3:9,

Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare war, stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, "I am a warrior." Hasten and come, all you nations round about, gather yourselves there. Bring down thy warriors, O Lord. Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the nations round

about. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the wine press is full. The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. And the Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shake. But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

Many have taken these passages to be a picture of spiritual judgments, desolations, poverty, etc., but it is clear, I think, from the many passages in other parts of Scripture as well, that these are to be taken with both a spiritual application as to what happens to a mind and heart which turns away from God and destroys itself by idolatry and immorality and also with a literal fulfillment in the coming "Great day of the Lord." Scripture everywhere speaks of this coming time of trouble, "The Day of The Lord;" the day of the Lord's wrath; the day when he will settle his controversy with the nations, and it is impossible to read either the Old or the New Testaments without running into this repeated theme. There is coming a day when God is going to settle accounts with the earth. We love, of course, the preaching of the "Grace of God." And God is a God of grace, but grace never sets aside the necessity for a final settling of the accounts of those who refuse to avail themselves of God's grace, and this is that time when among the nations of earth God will bring forth his judgment.

One other passage from the Old Testament is in the prophecy of Jeremiah (back still further, Isaiah and then Jeremiah) and in the 27th chapter of Jeremiah you have a very vivid picture.

The prophet says in Jeremiah Chap 27:30:

You, therefore, shall prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: [This is God speaking] The Lord will roar from on high, and from his holy habitation utter his voice; he will roar mightily against his fold, and shout, like those who tread grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.

[Notice how many of these passages use the figure "treading out the winepress." This comes again in the Book of Revelation, a vivid picture that God is, in a sense, like a man getting into a vat of grapes and treading out the grapes so the wine, the blood, splatters his garments, and here you have it again, he will "shout like those who tread grapes against all the inhabitants of the earth."]

The clamor will resound to the ends of the earth, for the Lord has an indictment against the nations; he is entering into judgment with all flesh, and the wicked he will put to the sword, says the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts: Behold, evil is going forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth! [A great storm is forming] And those slain by the Lord on that day shall extend from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall be dung on the surface of the ground.

That seems to picture a terrible calamity which is so universal and widespread that virtually nobody is left to do the burying, or it is such a monstrous task to take care of the dead that they are simply left upon the surface of the ground.

This, of course, is a very sobering picture, and there are many biblical expositors who claim that all these were fulfilled already in the judgments that came upon Israel in the days of the Babylonian invasion and that these poetic descriptions were all fulfilled by then. Others says, as I have suggested, that they are to be spiritually taken. But it is very interesting that when you come to the New Testament, which comes long after the Babylonian captivity and all the terrible times of Israel's troubles during the days of the Maccabees, etc., and you come to the Olivet discourse recorded in the 24th chapter of Matthew where Jesus, before his betrayal, is on the Mount of Olives teaching his disciples, he reviews what is coming in history. It is one of the most

fascinating passages of Scripture, and in my judgment, the most revealing of all the prophetic passages of the Bible. It is the so-called Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24 and 25, and it comes at a time when our Lord is facing his own death, and yet he speaks with calmness about what is going to come and clearly predicts that he will emerge eventually the triumphant one on the face of the earth. As he looks down the centuries he describes what will take place in all the periods of time between his first appearing and his second coming. He describes false Christs who go out and wars and rumors of wars and earthquakes and famines and times of trouble which will come. Then he says these words in verse 21 where he speaks of the fulfillment of a passage of the prophet Daniel which is yet to be fulfilled even after his day.

In Matthew 24:21 he says:

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. [Never will be. Worse time of trouble ever seen on earth. When you think of the terrible days of the holocaust in Europe when 6,000,000 Jews were put to death, you can see how terrible time this must be since it is a worse time than that, and our Lord says] And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved...

Isn't that amazing? Here is the prediction of the Lord himself that there is going to come a time when the population of the earth will be threatened, when the extinction of the race will be possible, and when unless God intervenes it will happen. He says, "If those days had not been shortened." Who will shorten them? God himself. He alone has power to do that. Jesus said to his disciples, "The times and the seasons are not for you to know but the Father had put them in his own power and he governs in the affairs of men."

...but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

We do not know how much shorter they are going to be made, but in mercy God is going to see to it that man does not destroy himself from the face of the earth. Now, that is a very remarkable passage.

I refer now to only one more out of many passages that deal with this issue, but in the Book of Revelation you have a number of extensive passages that describe this terrible time of trouble, "The Great Tribulation," and I will share with you, at this point, one from the 6th chapter, the opening of the 6th seal. John, you remember, saw a book sealed with seven seals, and, as the Lamb took the book and opened them one-by-one, terrible events happened on earth. When he comes to the 6th seal he records these words.

Revelation 6:12:

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale; the sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the generals and the rich and the strong, and every one, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand before it?"

That is a very vivid summary of what is coming on the face of the earth.

One question, among others, which we have to ask is, "These judgments produced by man; are they nuclear forces turned loose in this nuclear age creating worldwide catastrophe among the nations or are they natural powers released by God, such as, in the past in limited ways, have occurred on our planet, i.e., volcanic eruptions, great earthquakes, even perhaps the shifting of the continents?" Most scientists agree there was a time when the continents drifted apart, still are drifting in fact, and that much of the trouble in California is

caused by one plate rubbing against another deep in the surface of the earth, and by the continents moving, floating on a great ocean of molten rock, creating many of the earthquakes. Will this time of trouble be a time of natural disaster when perhaps volcanic eruptions occur in widespread areas or when even meteors or stars fall upon the earth?

I think you see a combination of forces like that. It seems to me, in looking at these passages, that you have both possibilities taking place. Man is allowed to work his worst upon himself through the terrible powers of nuclear fission and fusion which he has discovered and, perhaps, combined with that an invasion from outer space. I am not talking about Star Wars. I am talking about perhaps the near approach to our solar system of a visitor from space, a comet, a meteor, another planet about to collide with ours.

Whatever you may think of the discoveries of Immanuel Velikowski, the Russian scientist, who startled the scientific world in the earlier decades of this century with several books, one of which was "Worlds in Collision." He documented from many, many sources around the earth, that in the past there have occurred such near approaches of planetary bodies to the earth that have greatly disturbed the gravitation of earth and have created tremendous tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, upthrusts of whole levels of land, disturbances in many ways on the face of the earth, and we may be coming to something like that again. There is a passage in Luke, Chapter 21, verse 26 that strongly suggests this. Luke says that "men's hearts shall fail them with fear" as they look at the things that are coming to pass on the earth, at the waves and the seas roaring. It is highly suggestive of terrible natural disasters. So, I think the passages suggest that we have both of these forces at work.

I do not have time to go into all the passages that deal with the coming time of trouble. In a brief survey like this it would be impossible to cover in detail all the Bible says will happen, so I am going to have to content myself with a quick trip through the Biblical scenario of the "Last Days." You will understand that I will not be able to take time to either answer all the questions or expound all the passages to the extent you may wish me to. I am also going to have to summarize a lot of things and take for granted knowledge that you may or may not possess.

Clearly the Bible has said in the last days there will arise another figure, a remarkable figure in human history. Jesus gave, perhaps, the first clue to the nature of this individual in the 5th chapter of John's gospel when he said to the Pharisees of his day, "I have come in my Father's name, and you received me not. Another will come in his own name and him you will receive." That suggestion is picked up by the Apostle Paul in his letters to the Thessalonian church. He speaks in the second letter of a "Man of Sin" who shall arise, a man of lawlessness who will exalt himself against the knowledge of God and sit in the temple claiming to be God.

This remarkable figure appears in many passages of Scripture under various names and guises, and it is only necessary to take all these passages and compare them together to see emerging a portrait of a very powerful, influential, remarkable man who is called by various terms. The "Antichrist" is one term given to him. The "Man of Sin," Paul calls him. The "Beast" of Revelation 13, the political ruler who is the incarnation of Satan on the earth and is described in that remarkable chapter. He has associated with him another individual called the "Second Beast" or the "False Prophet," a kind of religious surrogate of the first beast who operates and activates on the power of the political ruler. He is called the "False Shepherd" in the prophecy of Zechariah, and by various titles he is designated throughout the Bible. But Jesus speaks of him, and all the apostles speak of him, and the prophets have predicted that there is coming one who will, in a sense, gather up in himself all the humanistic philosophies of earth and by them oppose the worship of the true God.

I am going to devote a whole evening to this man, so I will say no more about him now. We will be taking up the coming "Man of Sin" our next study together.

According to the Scriptures, this man, when he appears, will do some remarkable things. Probably the most remarkable, as far as the world is concerned, is that he will offer a solution to the present conflict between the Arab nations and Israel. He will resolve the tensions of the Middle East. You know how long people have been trying to do that, and how futile the effort has been; a little progress here and there, two steps forward and three back. It has been very difficult. But here will come a brilliant mind which will somehow resolve that conflict and bring peace to the Middle East. That will be one of his major accomplishments. Furthermore he will permit the rebuilding of the temple on Mt. Zion in Israel. Lambert and I and others have been very closely

associated with a group of Jews who are intent on rebuilding the temple. We know how far their plans and programs have progressed and how much remains yet to be done. It is not there yet, despite what you may hear, but there is a strong group within Israel which is intent on rebuilding the temple. They live, breathe and die for that purpose, and this will be accomplished under the covenant which this remarkable "Man of Sin" makes. He will rise, apparently, in connection with the Western Confederation of Nations. Those present nations of the world which derive their foundation from nations which were part of the old Roman Empire. Several passages both in Daniel and in Revelation substantiate that he will be the leader of the Western Confederation of Nations.

It is clearly evident from many Scriptures that, while we do not come to quite a one-world society, as many people are talking about today, there is a lessening of national authority in great confederations of nations, and the world seems to divide up at last into three major camps. The Western world, which gives much of its authority and power to this single leader and thus is able to control and effect much of the current events all over the earth. And also there is a Northern confederation of nations headed clearly by Russia. There is no doubt about that identification. It is clearly documented from the prophecy of Ezekiel. There are passages that specifically refer to the northern powers of the earth, northern in relationship to Israel, which are dominated by Russia. And then there is another group called the "Kings of the East." This seems to be a very loose confederation of eastern powers, probably including China, Japan and India, those nations in the eastern part of Asia. These three are the major camps of earth. It is interesting that the Bible has never predicated that any of the, so called, southern nations, below the equator, or equatorial nations, would ever have much of a part to play in the world of the "last days." History confirms that. No nation below the equator has had much of an influence on world affairs. It is all in the north and the division of the world confirms and conforms to the Biblical pattern in this regard.

Now I want to turn to a specific passage in the Book of Daniel, the 11th Chapter. It comes at the end of a very long series of predictions given to him by the angel Gabriel and which traced the course of prophetic events after Daniel's time, between what is called in this chapter, "The King of the North" [which happens to be Assyria, north of Israel, and includes the present nation of Syria], and its rival which was the Ptolemaic nation of Egypt. Alexander the Great, you remember, had two generals, Seleucus and Ptolemy who took part in his kingdom when Alexander died. Seleucus developed the area north and Ptolemy took over Egypt and the nations west of that. One was called "The King of the North," all the different personalities that occupied that throne, and the Egyptians were called the "Kings of the South." This passage details much of the conflict that would follow.

I would say that everything up to verse 36 of the chapter has already been fulfilled. This is one of the most remarkable predictions in the Bible. If you want to see the accuracy of prophecy, get some books that will help you understand these clear predictions and how fully they have already been fulfilled in history. They include predictions about Cleopatra who is a figure in one of these. It speaks of the Romans who come in and take over the land of Israel, and it brings up it right down to the time of the coming of the Lord.

But beginning at verse 36, you come to the "last days," what is called here "The Time of the End." You will notice verse 35 refers to that. It says:

Daniel 11, verse 35:

And many shall join themselves to them with flattery; and some of those who are wise shall fall, to refine and to cleanse them and to make them white, until the time of the end, for it is yet for the time appointed.

[That is a clue that you have skipped over, as prophetic passages often do, to the time of the end, and then you read this:]

And the king shall do according to his will.

The king here, if you will permit me to just summarize, is this "Man of Sin" or his false prophet. It is a little

difficult to tell which one of the two is actually the personage involved, but it is clearly the one whether it is the religious ruler (which I think it is, the false prophet) who is actually in Jerusalem, but his power and authority are derived from the Western Confederation and the great political leader of that which is the "Man of Sin." Nevertheless he is located in Jerusalem.

The king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods.

[That accords exactly with what Paul says in II Thessalonians that he shall enter and sit in the temple and exalt himself as God]

He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished;

[That is the time of judgment which the prophet predicts, which would be 3-1/2 years according to this prophecy]

for what is determined shall be done. He shall give no heed to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women;

[The gods of his fathers are very likely Jewish leaders and prophets and God himself, or to the one beloved by women which many commentators take to be a reference to the Messiah]

he shall not give heed to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of the these; a god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god;

[There are two individuals involved, one who is kind of a religious ruler who is operating in the strength and power of another, a political ruler who, apparently, depends for his influence upon his superior military might]

those who acknowledge him he shall magnify with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price. At the time of the end [says the prophet] the king of the south shall attack him;

[The king of the south throughout this whole account is the leaders and rulers of Egypt. They shall attack him, for reason we are not sure. It does not say here]

but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships; and he [the king of the north] shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through.

This is the beginning of the end, as it were. There will come the political peaceful settlement of Israel, which is broken suddenly by this religious leader declaring himself to be God,. This is unacceptable both to the Muslim world and to the Jewish world. They will not put up with that, and as a result he is under attack by the king of the south and the kings of the north. Here we have to rely upon Ezekiel. In the 38th and 39th chapters, we have a very vivid and detailed picture of the kings of the north who come against Israel in the last days. There the identification, as I have said, is clearly that of Russia and certain allied nations. Iran would be one of them. Russia does not come directly down to Jerusalem but seems to come through from this area which would be Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, though eventually coming in from the north into Jerusalem. He shall overflow many countries and shall pass through.

Daniel 11:41:

He shall come into the glorious land. [that is Palestine] And tens of thousands shall fall, but



these shall be delivered out of his hand. Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites.

[This is the present country of Jordan. And for some reason, either because of an alliance or because they are not considered worth dealing with the northern hordes pass through and do not destroy Ammon, Moab and Edom]

He shall stretch out his hand against the countries and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

[So he moves right on down through to take over Egypt. The Russians, of course, have been very upset with Egypt every since President Sadat ordered them out of the land, and there has been an uneasy alliance between them that has angered the Russians very much]

He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt [taking much spoil in this area] and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train.

[as allies. This is remarkable because these two countries today and now allied with Russia. Libya, of course, has horrified the world with its wooing of the communist philosophy and the Russian camp, and Ethiopia has become dominated by Russia and Somalia, which is right below has been the source of a great struggle against the communist takeover.]

But tidings from the east and the north shall alarm him,

[Follow the scenario here. The king of the north come down with an overflowing army, moves in and captures Jerusalem. You will find it vividly described in the 14th chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah, where he ravages the city, takes it over, captures the city, passes through captures Egypt and while he is here tidings from the east and the north trouble him. He is down in Egypt in Africa. East and north would be back in the land of Israel]

and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many.

What has happened? Well, remember there is a great western confederacy of nations which is opposed to the king of the north headed by a political ruler who is in league with the religious ruler who is seated in the temple in Jerusalem. Now he is not just sitting on his hands while all this takes place. If you think the Cuban missile threat was a terrible crisis we passed through during imagine what this is going to be like. The whole world sees a tremendous invasion of this land and knows that the only ones who have any possibility of stopping this invasion are the west. They, therefore, act and send an army down and, according to the Book of Revelation, the kings of east also come in.

These combined forces can only land at one major port in Israel. It is the port of Haifa which is located at the foot of Mt. Carmel where the only bay capable of handling any sizable armada of ships is located. Haifa is also the opening to a plain and valley which runs back southeast to the Plain of Esdraelon, also called the Plain of Jezreel. In the center of it is a small hill called the hill of Megiddo. Therefore, the whole region has been given the name "Valley of Armageddon." You have all heard of Armageddon. Evidently it is the landing of the western powers in this area along with the trouble from the east coming in, "the east and the north come tidings of trouble," which provokes the Russian invader to go forth to destroy. At this point there doesn't seem to be any indication that there is nuclear attack. It would appear that, up to this point, conventional weapons are used. But notice what happens now.

Daniel 11, verse 45a:

And he shall pitch his palatial tents [i.e., his headquarters] between the sea [the Mediterranean] and the glorious holy mountain; [which can be none other than Jerusalem]

The northern forces come back up and pitch their headquarters down on the mountain southwest of Jerusalem right in the area where you remember is Tekoa and the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and in this area God says he summons the nations that he may judge them there.

Daniel 11, verse 45:

And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

Now turn back to Ezekiel where we get a little further detail of this in the 38th and 39th chapters. I will not read the whole thing but will summarize these for you. It begins with the word addressed through the prophet.

Ezekiel chapter 38, verse 2:

Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him

The word "chief" of chief prince is the word Rosh, and many translators translate this instead of the "chief prince," "the prince of Rosh" and Meshech and Tubal. You can read the evidence and there is documentation for that, but there is little doubt that that word "Rosh" is the word from which "Russia" is derived, so these are clearly identified. According to this word the Lord says to him:

Ezekiel chapter 38, verse 3b:

Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh of Meshech and Tubal; and I will turn you about, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you forth, [Notice who does this. God summons him] and all your army, horses and horseman, all of them clothed in full armor, a great company, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords. Persia [Iran], Cush [Ethiopia], and Put [Libya] are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer [Germany] and all his hordes. Bethtogarmah from the uttermost parts of the north [those would be the satellite countries around Romania, Hungary, the Balkans, etc.] with all his hordes--many peoples are with you. Be ready and keep ready, you and all the hosts that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. After many days you will be mustered; in the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land where people were gathered from many nations upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste;... You will advance, coming on like a storm, you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many peoples with you.

Well what happens. Look on:

Ezekiel chapter 38, verse 18:

But on that day, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, says the Lord God, my wrath will be roused. For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

[This is a great earthquake. Remember in Revelation 6 it said there would be a great earthquake]

the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. I will summon every kind of terror against Gog, says the Lord

God, every man's sword will be against his brother. With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many people that are with him, torrential rains and hailstones, fire and brimstone.

As I have suggested this seems to be a combination of both supernatural, or natural, forces and human forces. Without a doubt it could easily be a description of a nuclear attack upon this great army that is gathered here on the mountains of Israel. The western powers using nuclear warheads against him would explain the fire and the brimstone and the sulphur, etc. that will fall upon them.

But you also have reference to torrential rains and hailstones. Now those hailstones are described in the book of Revelation as each one weighing hundreds of pounds. From time to time, even here in America, there fall from the sky great ice stones weighing hundreds of pounds. For years, every time they appear, I have been clipping from newspapers little items, usually on the 15th page, that record the falling from the sky of a tremendous huge piece of ice usually weighing 300 or 400 pounds. Where do these come from? Well the best scientific guess is that somehow they are coming from debris of space, the death of a star or a planet. Scientists tell us a comet's tail is made up of ice. The rings of Saturn are ice. The rings of some of the other planets that are now being discovered are big junks of ice. Occasionally the earth passes through where some of this debris falls upon earth. You never read about it very much but it is there. This would suggest, therefore, that some natural calamity occurs as well. The near approach to our solar system of some heavenly body that has in its tail great chunks of ice which will fall upon the earth in great hailstones. Torrential downpour of rain mingled with a nuclear attack utterly destroys the northern army as this account goes on to say.

Ezekiel chapter 38, verse 23:

So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

Chapter 39, verse 5:

You shall fall in the open field, for I have spoken, says the Lord God. I will send fire on Magog

[Where is that? That is the land from which Gog comes. That is what the opening verse of Chapter 38 say. The land of Magog is the land of Russia and this seems to suggest a nuclear attack against Russia, the very headquarters of the nation. Now we can hardly believe that this will occur without some retaliation for the west. So, here you have the coming nuclear confrontation that this book "The Fate of the Earth" is so fearful of seeing come to pass.]

and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands;

[Where that is it is hard to say. Areas around the oceans of the earth]

...and they shall know that I am the Lord.

It is a very impressive display both of divine wrath and of human wrath, and the result is a terrible time of destruction that will result, as it goes on to describe, in men having to bury the dead for months afterwards. It is a peculiar way of doing it. They set up a sign when they find a body. They do not touch it. It is probably very radioactive and they simply indicate that it is there. Properly equipped squads come by later and bury it. It takes months to cleanse the land.

But this ends the Russian threat. Well, then what? What about all these powers of the West and of the East that have come into the Valley of Armageddon? Here we have to turn to Revelation for one final passage. In the 19th chapter of Revelation where we read of the coming of these great powers together, John sees a

remarkable thing.

Revelation chapter 19, verse 11:

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly in midheaven, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army.

The destruction, you see, of the northern forces tells the world that their battle is not against man ultimately but against God. Yet in the pride and arrogance of the fallen human heart they believe they have a chance to overcome the powers of God, and they see it as an invasion from space, or whatever, but they think they have opportunity to destroy God himself.

And what happens:

Revelation chapter 19, verse 20:

And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur. And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; [What is that? The Word of God] and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

I won't take time to go further now, but it is clear that the final battle is won by the coming of the Lord himself, the return of Jesus Christ in glory. We will get into more detail of that in subsequent lectures, but that is enough, I think, to let us see that there is indeed coming a terrible time of trouble on the earth. There is no doubt about it. It could be now. Never has there been a time when world conditions are as close to these events as they are now. Or it could fade back again. We must not forget that. The world has been close to the end many times before and God, in mercy, has turned off the spigots of destruction and we have faded back into a relative time of peace. It may happen again. No one can say. The fact that it is close now does not necessarily mean that it will happen. But it is also very possible that it will.

What it does is raise the question for every human being on the earth who knows about this to face this question, "Where is your treasure?" Jesus told us we were to lay up treasures not on earth where men can break in and destroy, but treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust does corrupt and thieves do not break in to steal. I am not talking about what do you do with your time. The treasures in heaven are laid up by the evidence of faith, by the works of faith, i.e., by you being what God wants you to be in the situations in which you find yourself. It is not a question of whether you are in the ministry or not in the ministry. Some have interpreted it that way.

It is not a question of what kind of work are you doing. It is what kind of a person are you at that place? What kind of a person are you in your family? Are you one of hope and faith and love? Or one of self-centeredness and concern for yourself only and your own advancement? Those are the issues of life. And if you are only concerned about amassing wealth and getting comforts and luxuries, etc., we are building for ruin, for ultimate disaster. All these treasures of earth shall be wiped out in a nuclear holocaust. Nothing will be left. Only that, you see, which represents the work of the Spirit in us, and the deeds and reactions of our life where we are. Those are being preserved in glory and can only come, of course, from a heart that is truly God's, and through whom the Spirit of God is working. You cannot put this on. You cannot fool God. You cannot pretend to be godly and expect it to hold up at the end. We are going to be subject to an evaluation which cannot be deceived. The question, therefore, that we are to ask in times like this is -- Peter asks it, if you read his second epistle. He says, "What manner, therefore, of persons ought we to be?" That is the question that I leave with you tonight.

**Note:**

Let me outline what I am going to do in these next three studies. Next we will take "The Coming Man of Sin," and following that "The Coming King of kings." There I want to deal with the church and its relation to this period of trouble. The last study will be on "The Coming New Earth," and what it will be like.

**In answer to a question from the audience:** The Jews have to get some kind of permission first before they can get up on the Temple Mount. At the present time the Temple Mount is under the control of the Arabs. Jews are not even permitted to pray up there, which they bitterly resent and constantly protest. It seems very likely to me that soon they will probably obtain access to the temple mount. Certainly under the arrangement of the "Man of Sin" they will be given permission to rebuild the temple. The plans for it are being laid, the blueprints are being drawn, the site of it is being established and funds are being raised worldwide to make it possible. So, it is on the way. There is a good deal of debate as to actually where the ancient temple was located. A very thoughtful, scholarly Jewish archaeologist named Asher Kaufmann, whom we know, has explored in that area and has decided, to his own satisfaction at least, that the temple was not built at the site of the Dome of the Rock, the Muslim mosque that is there, but rather to the north of that in an area that has no building on it at all at this time. So it is possible, that being accepted by the Jewish leaders as the site of the temple, a temple could be built without destroying the Dome of the Rock. The "Western Wall" was never part of the temple building. It was part of the foundation ground upon which the temple rested, but it was never part of the building itself. Next week: "The Man of Sin."

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