

2014 in Review
The Year in Prophecy

Ron Graff

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Prophecy Central
8166 Vinmar Court
Alta Loma, CA, 91701

Dedicated to:
This Year's Million-Plus Visitors to Prophecy Central

Preface

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. ² He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’; ³ and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. – Matthew 16:1-3

Jesus expected the spiritual leaders of His generation to know the prophecies and recognize that He was the Messiah. They should have realized that He was fulfilling those predictions. Most of those Pharisees and Sadducees never did recognize the truth about Him. It is the same way today. It's time for Christians to recognize the signs of the times and do what they can to lead others to Christ while there is still an opportunity!

This book is a summary of major developments during 2014 that are of interest to prophecy students. Most of the information in this report has come from news stories and quotations from the daily updates on the Prophecy Central¹

web site. There are more than one hundred different sections on the site that deal with the various topics that we cover.

Each of these sections is devoted to a particular aspect of prophecy. These pages typically start with a brief summary of the importance of that subject, followed by a list of pertinent Scripture references that are linked to online Bible sites for easy reading and access to other study tools and commentaries. Important current events are collected on each page during the year with the headline and a brief summary. Visitors can link to the original article and read our summary of the story. The summaries remain for posterity even if the original news articles are no longer on line.

We have also included information from our blogs, commentary on Revelation, and the books we have written.

A free downloadable hypertext version of this report is available. It allows you to follow the links to the appropriate sections. In that version, clicking on any of the headlines will normally open the source article in your browser if it is still online. Throughout the material there are periodic links that will open Prophecy Central pages for further research.

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Introduction

At the end of each year we record a summary of recent events as they relate to Bible prophecy. There is a continual flood of interesting news and developments that convince us that we are indeed in the End Times!

The most challenging aspect of this assignment is knowing where to start. A month-by-month history is too tedious to read, and some of the most important developments happen late in the year.

In the past we have often listed the top stories of the year in order of their importance. For the sake of those who prefer that approach, here is a short list of the issues that were of highest interest, both to prophecy students and to the news media:

Top Stories of 2014

Terrorism & the rise of the Islamic State

The Ebola Scare

Persecution

Iran's Nuclear Ambitions

Israel/Gaza War

Strained Relations between the US and Israel

Apostasy and Revival

Blood Red Moons

Weak Governments

Economic Malaise

Technological Advances

All of these, and many other developments, will be considered in this year's report, but we have chosen to present them in the order of Jesus' own teaching about the future. In this way the book will not only be an accumulation of interesting information, but it will be an overview of the whole scope of things to come.

A Preview of the Bottom Line

Before we begin our review of some very bad news and terrifying prophecies, we should take notice of the fact that it all has a glorious ending and the Bible is still the "Good News!" Christians often say something like this: "Don't worry. I've read the end of the book and it turns out great."

Prophecy comprises more than one-fourth of the Bible, and believe it or not, most of it is good news! The prophecies of the first coming of Messiah were certainly good news. And the massive amount of Bible teaching about the Millennial Age and beyond is unquestionably positive!

But admittedly, much of "End Time prophecy" is depressing. We should remember that Jesus called this phase of the future "labor pains." Just as the birth of a baby is preceded by difficult and painful labor, the birth of the Millennium, and after that, the glorious New Heaven and Earth, is preceded by the Tribulation.

We need to balance our study of prophecy with a reminder that God is still on His throne. He is the loving, all-powerful creator and the designer of our incredible salvation.

The Gospel is the "Good News." The Bible is His love letter to us. The incredible Creation is His handicraft. The Family is His idea. Israel is still His chosen people. And the Church is the

greatest expression of His power and purpose during this age.

Additionally, the Bible tells us repeatedly not to be afraid! So let's forge ahead in our study!

Organization of this report:

Jesus' own famous message about the future is known as the Olivet Discourse. He spoke of a time of Tribulation, which was also foretold by Daniel's "Seventieth Week" (Daniel 9:26-27), and by Jeremiah's "Time of Jacob's Trouble" (Jeremiah 30:5-7).

Beginning of Birth-Pains (Matthew 24:3-8)

Before the Tribulation begins there is a period of increasing tensions that Jesus called "the Beginning of sorrows [literally: birth-pains].

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows. – Matthew 24:3-8

We will track three major aspects of this period of time that precedes the Tribulation: 1- Apostasy, 2- Judgment and 3-

Revival.

Apostasy means “falling away.” This is the description of negative developments in this phase of church history. It was predicted in the message to the Church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-21. This decline in the effectiveness of the Church is due partly to wrong (unbiblical) teaching, and partly to worldliness. These problems affect many who call themselves Christians but may not be true believers. However there are also many faithful believers in the Church. They are called “overcomers,”(Revelation 3:21) and they prove that Jesus’ promise was true that He will build His Church, and the gates of hades will not prevail against it(Matthew 16:18)!

Judgment is a description of many of the “Signs of the Times” during this build-up to the Tribulation. It includes a number of natural and supernatural events that serve as warnings or discipline to those who fear God, and as punishment for those who do will not obey Him.

Revival is the response of those who recognize their need of salvation. It begins with prayer and confession of sin, and results in a powerful spiritual awakening. It is available to individuals who are willing to repent and accept Christ’s sacrificial death as payment for their sins, and for Christians who have already been a part of the family of God, but who have drifted away, and want to return to the Lord. Hopefully there will also be a large-scale revival of groups and cultures in these critical days because God loves the world (John 3:16) and is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9).

The Rapture

Jesus did not mention the Rapture in His Olivet Discourse because it was not the right time to reveal this key aspect of the Church Age, which, as we will discuss later, was a “mystery”—a truth not yet revealed. He had indeed announced the creation of the Church in a private lesson for His Twelve Disciples (Matthew 16:15-18). However, the details of its commencement, when the Holy Spirit would descend (at Pentecost – Acts 2) were given by The Lord shortly before His ascension into Heaven (Acts 1:4-8). The nature of the Church, which would be explained later by Paul; and its end-point—the Rapture, or “catching away” of believers—were yet to be revealed.

However, Jesus had told His followers that He would go away to build a place for them, and would return again to receive them to Himself (John 14:1-3).

There are various views about the timing of the Rapture. We will list the reasons to believe that it will take place just before the beginning of the Tribulation.

BEGINNING OF BIRTH PAINS

Chapter One - Apostasy

Apostasy means “falling away.” This describes the unfortunate condition of the majority of so-called Christians at this point in history. It was predicted in the message to the Church of Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-21). This decline in the effectiveness of the Church is due partly to wrong (unbiblical) teaching, and partly to worldliness. These problems affect many who call themselves Christians but may not be true believers.

There are serious mistakes being made by different kinds of churches today. On the other hand, it acknowledges that there are still many faithful believers in the Church. They are called “overcomers,” and they prove that Jesus’ promise was true that He will build His Church, and that the gates of hades will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18)!

Lukewarm Church – The Laodicean Church

The first “sign of the times” Jesus mentioned in His Olivet Discourse was false teaching and false messiahs:

⁴ *And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying,*
⁵ *‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. – Matthew 24:5*

There have been false teachers throughout church history, but this prophecy indicates a major departure from the faith. Here is Jesus' warning to the Church at Laodicea—a prediction of this last church period:

¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. – Revelation 3:14-17

In our book, *The Church in Prophecy and History*², we trace the progress of the Church from its beginnings in apostolic times (Ephesus), through the period of martyrdom (Smyrna), the great compromises after Constantine legalized the church (Pergamum), the Middle Ages (Thyatira), the Reformation (Sardis), the missionary era (Philadelphia), and finally, our own times of disappointing worldliness and apostasy (Laodicea). The following description of the Laodicean Church is taken from the book.³

This Laodicean phase of church history stretches from the mid-Twentieth Century to the beginning of the Tribulation Period. We, of course, are eye-witnesses to the events of this time span. During these years we have seen a gradual erosion of biblical values and the increase of immorality. More and more, our culture is ignoring God's revealed will, and the Church is allowing

it to happen by not taking a strong enough stand against this trend. This is a spiritual struggle that has raged from the First Century until now. But it is getting worse in our generation for a number of reasons.

Before we list some of these reasons, let us explain why we call this seventh period the "Worldly Church." Bible teachers often refer to this as the era of the "Apostate Church."

The normal use of the word "apostasy" today refers to those who have defected from their belief system. It implies a serious, permanent decision to leave the faith, and a harsh judgment against them by those who still believe. However, the members of the Church at Laodicea had not formally given up on their Christian orientation; they had just gradually drifted away from a firm belief in what the Bible teaches about Jesus, salvation, and a godly lifestyle. That is why Jesus said, "I could wish you were cold or hot." Had they been cold they would not even have pretended to be Christians. If they had been hot, they would have been committed, "on fire" believers. But, for the most part they were in the middle--just lukewarm---and were not pleasing at all to the Lord. Jesus considered that kind of person "worldly":

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. - 1 John 2:14-17

The Bible sometimes refers to "the world "as the Earth and the created universe, but at other times it means the corrupted

"cosmos" world system that is temporarily dominated by Satan (Matthew 4:8-10; John 12:31; John 14:30; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 15:9).

The Apostle Paul also warned against being conformed to this evil world system.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. -Romans 12:1-2

Paul had a different way of describing the "lukewarm" Christian. In his letter to the Corinthians he explains a similar division of mankind according to one's spiritual condition. Where our current passage in Revelation describes the three possibilities as "cold, lukewarm, or hot," Paul speaks of people being "natural, carnal, or spiritual." He starts with the two extremes: natural and spiritual, and then describes the unfortunate middle position as carnal.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? - 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3

These three states correspond to the three-fold nature of humanity.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. - 1 Thessalonians 5:23

All living creatures on Earth, including plants, have a body. A living body normally does certain physical things, like eating, growing, and reproduction. It may do other things, like responding to its environment.

Animal life has another aspect: "personality," which includes the invisible characteristics of intellect, emotion, and will. As you know, plants do not have these (though some plant-lovers may think they do), but animals do have them. Your pets can be smart, loving, and obedient.

Human beings have an additional essence: a spirit. This is the part of man that was created "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26-28). Jesus said, "God is spirit..." (John 4:24). However, because of sin, humans are spiritually dead (separated) from God

until they are born again (made alive spiritually). They are then "spiritual" beings, able to communicate with God (John 3:3 ff.).

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. - Ephesians 2:1-6

Returning to Paul's explanation: a "natural" person (Greek *psuchikos* - "having a soul") can be intelligent, talented, and even "good" by human standards, but he or she does not know Christ or have the gift of, eternal life (John 1:12; 3:16). Such a person is controlled by his or her soul. In the context of our passage in Revelation, Jesus would call such a person spiritually "cold."

On the other hand, a "spiritual" person (Greek *pneumatikos*), is a "new creation in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17), and is controlled by his or her spirit, which, in turn, is directed by the Holy Spirit, as long as he or she submits to His control (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:16). Jesus would call this person spiritually "hot."

Paul complained that he could not talk with the Corinthian believers as spiritual people. They were not walking in the Spirit. Therefore, they were "carnal" (Greek *sarkikos* - "fleshly") or controlled by the appetites of the body. These are the ones Jesus would call "lukewarm."⁴

That is also the condition of the Laodicean period of the church. It is worldly or lukewarm.

Before going any further, we must stress once again that all the news is not bad by any means. We have every reason to expect revival—as we will consider in Chapter Five. And the Bible teaches plainly that when the Lord Jesus returns to Earth He will set up His righteous kingdom, and eventually create a “New Heaven and a New Earth.” We Win! (See Chapter Seven.)

[See the Topic: [“Revival”](#) in Prophecy Central]

There are several different ways that the church of our generation has become worldly. We will now consider some of them.

1. Theological Liberalism

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. - 1 Timothy 4:1-2

Before we look at some of the alarming headlines from this year, we should consider how Christianity was affected by the thinking of the Enlightenment, starting in the 1600's. This “Age of

Reason” elevated science and philosophy, and cast doubt on existing traditions and religious beliefs.

European skeptics from the Enlightenment began a new field of study called “Biblical Criticism.” Its proponents suggested that biblical texts had human rather than supernatural origins.⁵

This approach to Scripture undermined belief in miracles, the Creation account, the story of the Flood in Noah’s days, and even the supernatural aspects of Jesus’ life, such as His virgin birth, the signs and wonders He performed, and His resurrection. Colleges like Harvard, originally begun to train ministers of the Gospel, were gradually staffed by professors who were infected with belief in this Biblical Criticism. They began to turn out pastors who no longer believed that the Bible was inspired by God. Their new approach to Christianity ignored the basic teaching about sin and redemption, and gave rise to theological liberalism. Most of the old mainline denominations were gradually infiltrated with this false teaching. Yale and Princeton were begun in the 1700’ to combat this trend.

In the 1800’s another spiritual attack, led by proponents of the new theory of evolution, pushed these modernist theologians even further away from biblical truth. But Jesus had promised that He would build His Church, and that the gates of hades would not prevail against it. In the early 1900’s two major movements began to stand against this apostasy: Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism. Powerful new revivals grew out of these groups, which then became the evangelical movement of today—Bible-believing, born-again followers of Christ.

Some church analysts are calling the division between theological liberals and evangelicals “The Third Great Schism.” The first schism was the break between the Roman Catholic Church

and the Eastern Orthodox Church in 1054 AD. The second schism was the Reformation in 1517 AD.

Here are some of this year's developments:

[See the Topics: ["Apostasy"](#) and ["Religions"](#) in Prophecy Central]

Is Gospel Amnesia Creating a Third Great Schism?

In the book *Deep Church Rising: The Third Schism and the Recovery of Christian Orthodoxy*, Andrew Walker and Robin Parry explore this third great split in the Christian church. Many people are not aware of the controversy because it is not a division along denominational lines, but between those in any denomination who view the essence of Christianity in different ways.

*On one side stand those who affirm a broadly supernaturalist Christian orthodoxy embodied in the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds. And on the other, you find those who can at best recite the creeds with their fingers crossed.*⁶

Those who adhere to the ancient creeds see them as careful, time-honored distillations of what the Bible teaches about the Trinity and the supernatural nature of Christ. The other side is influenced by modernism and postmodern thinking, and is skeptical of supernatural claims. They doubt the idea of objective truth. To them Jesus is the greatest teacher and example, but not a miracle-worker.

The authors of the book are concerned about a widespread loss of the Gospel within the Christian community. They liken the situation to the early-20th-century's debate over liberalism. J. Gresham Machen made the case that the choice between orthodox Christianity and Liberalism wasn't between different branches of Christianity, but rather between two wholly

different religions.(Christianity Today)

[Do Bible Skeptics Now Equal Bible Lovers? American Bible Society Thinks So](#)

A New survey, conducted by the Barna Group for the American Bible Society indicates that, while the majority of Americans still believe that the Bible is the Word of God (53%), the number of people who are skeptical about it (19%) has risen to the same level as the people who are "Bible lovers" ⁷ (Christianity Today)

[Former archbishop of Canterbury: Britain is a post-Christian nation](#)

The situation is even worse in Europe. Lord Williams of Oystermouth, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, said that Britain is no longer a Christian nation. He added, "Research suggests that the majority of Anglicans and Roman Catholics now feel afraid to express their beliefs."⁸ (Telegraph-UK)

2. Feel-Good Christianity

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers. - 2 Timothy 4:3

The next examples of worldly churches are those that proclaim an attractive positive thinking, self-improvement message. These churches are some of the most popular in our generation because they focus on the encouraging portions of the Bible mixed with pop-psychology and practical advice about how

to succeed in life. Most of them are careful not to teach anything that is controversial. Sin and salvation are ignored or moved to a secondary place in the church's priorities. Cultural immorality is not addressed, the Christian foundations of our culture are forgotten, and politics are not an issue.

Some of these churches have a history of good theology and evangelistic fervor, but they have changed their message to appeal to a more secular audience.

Churches that continue to move in this direction will find that their congregations will not be able to discern between true Christianity and philosophies like the New Age movement.

[See the Topics: ["Apostasy"](#) and ["Religions"](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Five Reasons Why Most Southern Baptist Churches Baptize Almost No Millennials](#)

May 29, 2014 - The number of baptisms in the Southern Baptist church has been dropping for seven years, especially among teens and young adults.

While the loss of nearly 4,600 baptisms was not as steep as last year's drop. . . LifeWay Christian Resources president [said] "I am grieved we are clearly losing our evangelistic effectiveness." ⁹

The first of five reasons given for the trend is that many pastors and churches are not intentionally sharing the Gospel, but are continuing to try to build the church through other activities. (Christianity Today)

[Is hit book 'Jesus Calling' pushing New Age?](#)

Jun. 6, 2014 - Sarah Young's wildly popular book, "Jesus

Calling,” first published in 2004 by Thomas Nelson, has now sold more than 10 million copies. But, as researcher and writer Warren Smith says in his book, “Another Jesus Calling,” the book has considerable New Age influence.¹⁰ (WND)

[Rick Warren’s Call for Christians to Unite With Catholics, ‘Holy Father’ Raising Concerns](#)

Dec. 16, 2014 - In a new video, megachurch leader and author Rick Warren calls for “an ecumenical vision for Catholics and Protestants to work together to defend the sanctity of life, sex and marriage.”

Apologist Matt Slick from Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry (CARM) warns that there are major differences between Protestants and Catholics.

“Though it’s technically correct to say that Catholics believe in salvation through Jesus Christ, they reject justification by faith in Christ alone. Instead, it teaches that good works of various kinds are necessary for salvation.”

He also points to serious non-biblical teaching about Mary and "offering of money for the sins of the dead." (Christian News)

3. Prosperity Gospel - Word of Faith

Christianity is the most positive message in world. And the Bible is full of amazing promises for those who believe. However, Scripture teaches and illustrates the fact that the godly are often allowed to experience trials, persecution, and personal loss. These things do serve good purposes in the Christian's life, refining his or her faith, proving the validity of Christian faith, or serving as a

"thorn in the flesh" so that the believer will trust in God's power instead of his own.

The "prosperity gospel," also known as "Word of Faith," was an unfortunate variation of the Pentecostal movement of the early Twentieth Century. It was espoused by popular preachers like the late Oral Roberts. It teaches that financial wealth and physical health are part of the "total salvation" brought by Jesus. It comes if you believe, and particularly if you donate one-tenth of your income to aligned Christian ministries.

Theologian Albert Mohler says that the message taught by Joel and Victoria Osteen is the latest and slickest version of the prosperity gospel. This teaching was an unfortunate variation of the American Pentecostal movement in the early twentieth century. At first it appealed to the very poor, but the Osteen version appeals to the middle class. He wrote,

"Whereas the early devotees of Prosperity Theology prayed for a roof over their heads that did not leak, the devotees of prosperity theology in the Age of Osteen pray for ever bigger houses."¹¹

According to Scott L. Thumma of the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, some 20 percent of U.S. churches hold to some form of the prosperity gospel.

A Gospel that only promises health and wealth, but ignores the other aspects of Christian growth is misleading and divisive. Jesus and His Apostles were rich in spiritual things but not in material wealth. Paul wrote:

⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can

carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. – 1 Timothy 6:6-10

This prosperity gospel has now spread to many parts of the world.

[See the Topics: [“Prosperity Gospel”](#) in Apologetics Central and [“Missions”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Here's What Protestants in 18 Latin American Countries Believe and Practice](#)

A recent extensive survey by the Pew Foundation revealed that Protestantism is flourishing in Latin America. About one out of three Protestants shares his or her faith with others weekly. About half of them pray daily and attend church weekly. Protestant attendance at church is growing at the expense of the Catholic Church.

The report also found that:

"Prosperity gospel" theology is widespread in Latin America, but not always the dominant view among Protestants.

The prosperity gospel affirms that “God will grant wealth and good health to believers who have enough faith.”¹²

The prosperity gospel is also popular in Africa. In the

second half of the Twentieth Century many Africans left Catholicism, Protestantism, and evangelical churches to launch so-called revivalist churches. These churches promote the prosperity gospel. The people respond to this teaching because so many of them suffer from poverty and need the relief that these preachers promise.¹³

4. Anti-Prophecy Theology

Due to the powerful evangelical ministries of the past generation, and the popular message of books like Hal Lindsey's "The Late Great Planet Earth, and the "Left Behind" novels of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, a large percentage of the American public believes that we are headed for the Apocalypse, and Jesus might return to catch away His disciples at any time. This is known as the "Premillennial, Pre-Tribulation Rapture" position. Nevertheless, there is a noticeable decline of messages from the pulpits today about this "Blessed Hope" (Titus 2:13).

There are several varieties of Christian thought that are basically opposed to any emphasis on End Times prophecy. Like Israel in the Old Testament, some of them do not want to hear negative news or warnings about judgment. Jesus cried out:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! – Luke 13:34

Shortly after the crucifixion of Jesus, Steven became the first martyr of the new faith. He also rebuked the hypocritical

religious leaders of his day:

⁵¹ *“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers. - Acts 7:51-52*

Before we list some of the varieties of Christian belief that do not take prophecy literally, we need to mention that many teachers in these church groups do offer sound evangelical teaching about other vital aspects of theology. We do not consider differences in eschatology to be a test of faith or fellowship. But a Christian’s understanding of Bible prophecy does have a profound effect on his or her overall understanding of God’s Word. After all, more than a fourth of the Bible is prophecy, and much of it has yet to be fulfilled.

Here is a short list of viewpoints of people who do not expect a literal future Rapture, Tribulation, or Millennium (Thousand-year reign of Christ) before the creation of a New Heaven and New Earth.

Preterism

One view of prophecy, known as Preterism (from the Latin word *praeteritus*, meaning "past"), teaches that many prophecies, especially those in the Book of Revelation, were fulfilled during the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and/or the persecutions of the Roman Empire. Most adherents to this belief are “partial” Preterists because they still expect the literal return of Christ and judgment of the dead. “Full” Preterists believe that all of

Revelation has already been fulfilled. They think the return of Christ and the rest of the book are allegorical.

This view was originated by the Jesuits to counter the view by many Reformers that the Pope was the Antichrist. The theory was later adopted by some Protestants. It is incompatible with a literal approach to Bible study. Their explanations about how the prophecies of Revelation were fulfilled are not at all convincing the way the Old Testament prophecies were about the life of Christ.

Replacement Theology/ Amillennialists

This is the belief that there will be no literal 1000 year reign of Christ. Thus Revelation 20 is taken symbolically, not literally, by adherents of this view. Amillennialists generally believe that Israel has been permanently set aside for all time and that God's current plan of salvation involves only the Church. They don't believe that the rebirth of Israel in 1948 was the fulfillment of the prophecies of Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37.

Kingdom Now / Postmillennialists

These folks agree that that Christ will return at the end of the present age to take over the earth. In the meanwhile, they assume that He is already reigning on earth through the Church. This is the mistake that the Roman Catholic Church made at the peak of their influence over world empires. Today this concept is reflected in the unscriptural hope that Christian influence and assistance will finally solve the world's problems and bring about global peace.

There is much confusion in our generation about the status of the Kingdom of Heaven, also called the Kingdom of God,

or just, "The Kingdom." Here is a short explanation of the biblical teaching on the subject from *The Church in Prophecy and History*.

Kingdom Work

During this trying time Jesus is incredibly active, using us to win converts to His Kingdom until He returns as King over all (Revelation 11:15-17; 19:11-16).

Jesus had told his disciples that the kingdom was "at hand." (Matthew 4:17). He knew his offer to be King at His triumphal entry would be rejected. Nevertheless, He will come in the future (Luke 21:25-31; 22:18, 30). In Acts 1:6 they asked Him, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He told them they couldn't know the time, but when the Holy Spirit would come, He would enable them to be witnesses to the whole Earth.

Evidently the Kingdom would not yet be [fully] established at that time. He would not yet reign on Earth, and the disciples would not yet reign with Him, but they would spread the message of the Kingdom, even as He had been doing.

That is why Jesus taught us to pray "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on Earth as [it is] in heaven." (Matthew 6:10). We still pray that way because even though His Kingdom does already exist in Heaven, and He is our King already, it still has not yet been established here on Earth.

Jesus told Pilate,

"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that

I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here” - John 18:36-37.

Born-again Christians are citizens of the Kingdom of God:

*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,--
Philippians 3:20*

We are also citizens of our earthly nations:

Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money.”

So they brought Him a denarius.

And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?”

They said to Him, “Caesar’s.”

And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. – Matthew 22:17-22

While we are here we are ambassadors, representing Christ and His Kingdom.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore

you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. – 2 Corinthians 5:20

During this time, we establish outposts of the Kingdom in our homes, churches, missions, and other Christian enterprises. We seek constantly to gain new members of the Kingdom by following His example of ministering to their needs and giving them the Gospel.

Many “New Evangelicals” in their emphasis on meeting the needs of the poor and needy have steered away from concern about prophecy. They correctly notice that some who are expecting the Lord’s imminent return have such a pessimistic view that things will just get “worse and worse,” that they neglect the other biblical instruction about environmental responsibility and humanitarian assistance.

However, the conflict between good works and prophecy is not an “either/or” question, but it requires a “both/and” solution. We should be aware that these are the end-times, but because of that we should be occupied with Kingdom work now. He taught this directly in the parable about using what has been given to us while we are waiting for the Kingdom to be established. He said, “Do business [KJV- “occupy”] till I come.” (Luke 19:13, Luke 19:8-26) As always, [Christian action] requires the balanced approach that involves teaching the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).¹⁴

[See the Topics: [“Apostasy”](#) and [“Religions”](#) in Prophecy Central]

5. Non-controversial/ Non-judgmental

This kind of church is often described as “Seeker-sensitive.” It is the result of a ministry approach that caters to Post-modern thought.

As its name implies, this world view rejects the outlook of the Modernists. Modernism, which had developed since the Enlightenment, taught that through science, logic and reason it was possible to identify or establish absolute truth. The postmodern mindset was based on the newer philosophy of existentialism and its emphasis on the importance of one’s unique personal experience. Postmodernists say there is no universal truth: only relative truth, depending on its cultural context.¹⁵

Therefore “my truth” is not necessarily the same as “your truth,” and one is not necessarily better than the other.

This led to a new definition of “tolerance,” which used to mean the willingness to treat another person well in spite of that person’s beliefs or conditions. Because of relativism, tolerance now means the willingness to accept other people’s ideas and beliefs as equal to our own ideas and beliefs. This is a logical absurdity, and would not work in the real world for any business person, doctor, scientist or engineer. But many people like the concept because it allows them to do what they want without guilt. They often quote what has become one of the best-known verses in the Bible:

Judge not, that you be not judged. – Matthew 7:1

When people use this verse flippantly, they might not realize that God Himself will judge them (Psalm 1:1-6; John 3:18; Romans 2:1-5; Romans 14:12; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 20:11-15),

and He even expects godly Christians to judge, in the sense of discerning what is right and wrong.¹⁶

But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ. – 1 Corinthians 2:15-16

Some evangelical churches have adopted the postmodern philosophy. They still believe in salvation through the atonement of Christ, but they are cautious not to offend “seekers” in the process, some of them avoid direct biblical teaching about sexual immorality, abortion, euthanasia, and other sins.

Because they offer a popular message, some of these congregations have become megachurches.

Some of these non-confrontational churches cater to the “consumer mentality” of this generation. Those who attend such churches make their choice on the basis of the question, “What’s in it for me and my family?”

A few of these churches are characterized as “emergent” because of their many departures from the traditional churches. Some of their teaching is considered heretical—such as denying belief in a literal heaven and hell, and emphasizing instead, the “here and now.”

Because so many churches are complacent about ungodly behavior, our culture has continued its immoral decline.

[See the Topics: [“Apostasy”](#) and [“Religions”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Clergy and Congress Poll Numbers Down, Darwin’s Up: Who’s to Blame?](#)

Jan 1, 2014 -While Pope Francis was named Time

Magazine's Person of the Year,[2013] a Gallup poll revealed that 53 percent of Americans have lost trust in the clergy. These are the worst ratings in 40 years. This article claims that the moral decline of the nation is the fault of the voices in the pulpit.

Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich recently said, "The only hope for America is for her clergy to start preaching the Cross of Christ again."

Charles Finney - the famous evangelist of the Second Great Awakening - faced a similar situation in 1873. In his message, "The Decay of Conscience" he said,

If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree. If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. ...If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. (Dan Cummins – Charisma News)

[Are Christians to blame for a Godless entertainment industry?](#)

Jan. 29, 2014 - This year's Grammy Awards featured same-sex weddings, profanity, sexual immorality, insults to Christianity, and a shocking tribute to Satanism. The show does still have awards in the Best Gospel/Contemporary Christian Music category, but some Christian artists are wondering if they should even pursue awards from such a godless organization. Natalie Grant was obviously disturbed and left the event early.

Al Menconi, author of The Christian Music Challenge, thinks the moral decline of the music industry is partly because Christian music has mostly withdrawn from the secular stage and formed its own organizations. He said,

"The Hollywood industry is run by Hell because we chose to leave – and it's the same with DVDs... we've got to get back in there and have a presence there." (OneNewsNow)

Fate of Christianity in UK not too far from U.S., warns evangelist

July 8, 2014 - If Christians are not revived soon, the church in America will continue to decline, just as it has done in the United Kingdom. British evangelist Nate Steuer of Jeremiah Cry Ministries laments the fact that church buildings in England have now become museums, stores and even nightclubs. Evangelism there is stifled by a strong belief in evolution and the homosexual-rights movement. He says the same condition is beginning to affect the American church:

"And if Christians do not wake up, and they do not go from the seats into the streets, make their voices be heard, it's going to be just like the UK."¹⁷ (OneNewsNow)

Good news, bad news: Barna shares state of church, family

Sept. 27, 2014 - Pollster George Barna told the Values Voter Summit that the United States is not the same country it was 20 years ago. The three foundations of our past strength - family, church, and government - are all "cracked if not broken." He said,

- Four percent of adults have a biblical worldview
- The number of couples who choose to cohabitate has doubled since 1990 while marriage has declined from 72 percent in 1960 to 51 percent in 2012
- Only 33 percent of Americans say they follow politics closely

On the positive side, Barna said, “Do not give up hope.” There are still enough Christians in the country to turn the tide if they can be mobilized. (OneNewsNow)

['Hip' church gives biblical Christians new label: 'Hater'](#)

Dec. 18, 2014 - Writer Jim Fletcher points out that a growing number of young millennial pastors are challenging traditional evangelicals "to basically get out of the way, because their time is past."

Witness Mr. Jonathan Merritt. I consider Merritt – son of former president of the Southern Baptist Convention Dr. James Merritt – to be a leading change agent within evangelicalism, in the broader attempt to move evangelicals to center-left perspectives.

One example is Merritt's approval of Rob Bell, who lost his standing with mainstream Christianity when he questioned whether or not hell was real. He then moved into the orb of the Oprah Winfrey Network. Commenting on the affair, Merritt said that Bell did well, “by quietly bidding his haters adieu, leaving his church and attaining even more success.” (WND)

6. False Christs/ False Prophets

Jesus indicated that the time frame for things to come— from “The beginning of birth pains,” through the Tribulation, Armageddon, and up to Our Lord’s Glorious Return, would be approximately one generation.

³² “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!
³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. – Matthew 24:32-25

This passage is explained in our book, *Connecting the Dots: A Handbook of Bible Prophecy*:

The word for "generation" (Gr. *genea*), can have several meanings. Some think it means the Jewish people will not become extinct before these prophecies are fulfilled.

However, the most obvious meaning is the generation of people who are living when these events begin to come to pass in startling succession. The first and most amazing fulfillment is the rebirth of the nation of Israel. The fig tree is one of the symbols of Israel.

Since Israel became a nation in 1948, we have every right to consider ourselves the last generation of this age. But how long is a generation? Thirty-five years? Forty years? There are various biblical possibilities. It has now been more than 60 years since this great event. But notice that Jesus said this generation will not *pass away* until all these things have happened! If the rebirth of Israel is the starting point, this generation will not have passed away until the last person living at that time has died. That gives another 60 years or so! But we can seriously expect His return any day. Some of us have believed this for many years now, but in any case, his return is nearer now than it

ever was before!¹⁸

Jesus warned that there would be false messiahs. History has been punctuated by a steady flow of such usurpers. But in our own generation there have been many notable false saviors—some claiming to be Jesus-- and amazing numbers of others that were “here today and gone tomorrow.” In this one generation we have heard of Father Divine, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Lord Maitreya, Sun Myung Moon, Jim Jones, David Koresh, Jose de Luis de Jesus Miranda, and others.

Here are some additions from this year:

[See the Topics: [“False Christs/False Prophets”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Lord Rayel tweets about Adam Muema](#)

March 1, 2014 - San Diego State running back Adam Muema claimed that he believes in Lord Rayel, a person on the Internet who claims to be the second coming of Jesus. .¹⁹

An article in the Christian News documented some other examples of “false Christs” around the world today:²⁰

- Alan John Miller and Mary Luck. Miller - Queensland, Australia - claim to be reincarnations of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.
- Sergey Anatolyevitch Torop, the “Jesus of Siberia,” has more than 5000 followers.
- Brazil: Alvarro Theiss, also known as Inri Cristo, maintains a compound that houses his followers, who are mostly women

Another interesting fulfillment of this prophecy is the psychological condition known as the “Jerusalem Syndrome.” This is a baffling delusion that affects about 100 visitors to the Holy Land each year. Many of these tourists suddenly believe that they are Jesus.²¹(UT-San Diego)

Chapter Two – Ungodly Government

As the quality of Christian belief and practice has declined over time —first in Europe, and now in America—many of the governmental leaders, elected by the people, have become less biblical in their outlook. They, in turn, have chosen judges that don't necessarily believe in basic Christian values such as the right to life for unborn babies, and the importance of traditional marriage. In fact some, even on the Supreme Court, do not believe that our Constitution is a fixed standard, but an evolving set of guidelines.

Some of the issues that our government and others face in these days are just what one would predict for this period of turmoil leading up to the Tribulation Period: dealing with world problems like terrorism, the struggling global economy, the lack of trusted leadership, Israel's lonely plight, the breakdown of morality, and persecution.

Early in the Twentieth Century the Supreme Court began to make decisions that weakened the interpretation of the Constitution, and the Judaeo-Christian basis of law. Oliver Wendell Holmes was appointed to the high court by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1902. Holmes had written a book called *The*

Common Law some two decades earlier that proposed that law should evolve in keeping with Darwin's doctrine of evolution.²²

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) was formed in 1916 and became champions of the modern concept of "separation of church and state." By this expression they did not mean what the Anabaptist had believed: that the Church leaders should not run the government nor the government leaders control the Church.

The First Amendment to the Constitution had stated, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." But the ACLU ignored the fact that the Founders were nearly all devout Christians who quoted Scripture, took their oaths on the Bible, allowed national monuments to be embellished with Bible passages, and opened their sessions with prayer. After Presidential inaugurations they attended worship together. None of these things were considered by those who wrote the Constitution and the By-Laws as a violation of the First Amendment.

Over time the Supreme Court became less loyal to the original purposes of the Constitution. Lower court judges and legislators began to agree with the ACLU, and public schools often went out of their way to expunge Christian teaching and symbolism from their institutions.²³

Sadly, the United States has lost its distinctive as a "Christian nation." Our godly founders would be terribly upset by the current state of affairs. Worse yet, the governments of other countries are also corrupt and morally bankrupt. We will see evidence of this cultural decay in various sections of this report.

Search for World Order

One of the most interesting developments of this year was the publication of a book by Henry Kissinger titled *World Order*. Kissinger is arguably the most influential person among the political intelligentsia. After receiving his doctorate at Harvard University in 1954, he taught government there and was Director of the Harvard International Seminar until 1969.²⁴ He served as Secretary of State under presidents Nixon and Ford, from 1973 to 1977, and has been an advisor to most other Secretaries of State and Presidents since that time. Among his many achievements, he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 for arranging the Vietnamese cease fire. He is still a top-level influencer, serving as a member of the Defense Policy Board since 2001. He is a promoter of behind-the-scenes policy-making organizations like the Council on Foreign Relations and the Bilderberg Group, suspected by many as the rich and powerful king-makers and architects of an eventual one-world government.

During the Seventies, some prophecy students wondered if he could be powerful enough to become the Antichrist! The name "Kissinger" adds up to 666 by one of the simple methods of converting a name to a number²⁵. Of course we do not believe it can be known who Antichrist will be until the Tribulation Period has begun (See later notes about The Great Tribulation in Chapter Seven).

At age 91, Kissinger has given the world his opus on the subject of foreign affairs. He explains that there have been many different models of interaction between countries. He begins with a description of the "Westphalia Peace" of 1548, which was the agreement that ended the Thirty-Year War between the Catholics

and Protestants after the Reformation. This model viewed various European countries as sovereign states with a balance of power. Kissinger seems to consider this the best model, and the one that should prevail in the future, but modified to accommodate some of the other realities—The US model, the Chinese self-concept as a great regional leader, and the Islamic system of believers and infidels²⁶.

Kissinger sees the current resurgence of Russian hegemony over Ukraine and its alliance with Iran as problematic for a functioning world system. (See more about that in Chapter 7 under the discussion of the World War).

He also believes that the hope of a more unified world will be through economic institutions rather than political agreements.

Here is some news that relates to this search for a peaceful world system.

[See the Topics: [“America”](#) and [“New World Order”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topics: [“Wars”](#) and [“Economic Issues”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[85 Wealthiest as Rich as Half the World](#)

Jan. 20, 2014 - The World Economic Forum has identified income inequality as one of the greatest risks facing the world in 2014. A report issued by the British charity, Oxfam, says that the 85 richest people across the globe own as much as the poorest 3.5 billion — about \$1.6 trillion. The report did not identify the 85 richest people.²⁷

[Only 11 countries in the WORLD are not involved in conflict, new study reveals](#)

Aug. 16, 2014 - A new report from the Institute for

Economics and Peace (IEP) reveals that out of the 162 countries in the world, only 11 are not involved in conflict. The study also says that the world has been getting progressively less peaceful since 2007.²⁸

Disappointment with Leaders

Americans are wondering how we ever elected a Socialist president who has done everything in his power to end American exceptionalism and reduce the country's wealth, by pushing the national debt above the \$18 trillion mark, imposing an unworkable "Obamacare" health plan, providing amnesty to illegal aliens, and fostering world-serving trade unions like the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, which opponents say will destroy American jobs.

Following midterm elections there is hope of a course correction, but according to the news pundits, there may not be any outstanding choice in the wings to lead us out of recession and depression. And the average American has lost faith in most, politicians. They know that rich and powerful kingmakers have financed most of their campaigns, and if they take a strong position in regards to the Constitution, Christian morality or capitalism they will not be supported for re-election.

The situation is even worse in most other countries of the world. There are a few good and wise leaders of their nations today, but many others are anti-American, anti-Israel, and anti-Christian.

Some of them are monsters. North Korea's supreme leader, Kim Jong-un, had his own uncle executed. Saudi Arabia's king, Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, won't allow any religion but

Islam to be practiced in his country, and women have no virtually no rights. Syria's President Bashar Assad has presided over the death of 200,000 of his people during their current civil war, and gave opportunity for the bloodthirsty ISIS (Islamic State) movement to spread. Chinese president Xi Jinping has not, as far as we know, called for an end to the persecution of the valiant underground Christian church in that country. Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei encourages his country, which is developing nuclear capabilities, to eliminate Israel from the face of the Earth. Russian President Vladimir Putin captured Crimea, threatens Ukraine, and failed to apologize for the Russian destruction of a Malaysian Airlines passenger jet. (Express – UK)

[See the Topics: [“Obama Moral”](#) and [“Terrorism”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topic: [“New WorldOrder”](#) and [“Iran”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Putin and the New World Order: The Final Turning point](#)

Apr. 29, 2014 - Russia's Vladimir Putin has also called for a “new world order,” but he says it will be a world in which the United States is losing economic power and influence while China, India and Russia are gaining ground.²⁹

According to former US Ambassador to Iraq and Korea, Christopher R. Hill, Russia's annexation of Crimea and its “intimidation” campaign against Ukraine has brought an end to a 25-year historical period of cooperation with the existing world powers.³⁰

Israel Stands Alone

Israel had a rough year. From the first days of January, Secretary of State John Kerry, sometimes aided by the so-called

Middle East Quartet (The United Nations, The European Union, Russia and the U.S.) met repeatedly with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, trying to develop a workable peace plan between them. The main idea put forth was that there would be separate states: Israel and Palestine. However, numerous disagreements kept them from making progress. Meanwhile, Abbas and the Palestinians threatened to take their bid for independence directly to the United Nations, and most member countries were in favor of it – essentially turning their back on Israel. However, the U.S. position was that a two-state solution was necessary, but a plan must be worked out with Israel’s approval.

Israel kept a steady construction effort going all year, building Jewish settlements in Eastern portions of Jerusalem and other West Bank areas nearby. These settlements are meant to eventually be part of the final borders of Israel, or, in some cases, would be bargaining chips to trade with Palestinians for other land that Israel would need to control in order to maintain their own safety. The original partition – before the ’67 war – practically cut Israel in half.

The most pressing issue was the status of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. Whose capital would Jerusalem be? Could it be the capital for both? The future of the Temple Mount was most important. These 37 acres are considered by many the most valuable real estate in the world because they are sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims. When this part of Jerusalem was captured by Israel during the 6-Day War of 1967, Israeli General Moshe Dayan decided to allow the Waqf-, an Islamic trust controlled by Jordan, to administrate the area in order to keep peace. The Waqf basically only allows Muslims to worship there.

During the months of July and August Israel waged an

intense war with Gaza--the Western portion of the Palestinian territories. The conflict was precipitated by the building of numerous tunnels from Gaza to Israel, by abductions of Israelis, and by the launching of more than 4000 rockets into Israeli territory. This war resulted in heavy loss of lives and property for Gaza. As usual, it was misreported by world news outlets, resulting in a further propaganda loss for Israel. See more under "Israel vs. Palestinians" in Chapter Four.

Israel was also threatened by ISIS terrorists on the border with Syria during the year, and warnings that Hezbollah in Lebanon has much better rockets to use against Israel than the Palestinians have.

However, of greater importance to Israel than all of these issues, Iran has not been willing to give up its nuclear program, and might be able to produce nuclear weapons in the near future. Israel may need to act alone to keep this nightmare scenario from becoming a reality.

Late in the year, even the U.S. was not very supportive of the nation of Israel. By doing so, we, along with most of the rest of the world, are risking permanent spiritual damage because of the clear statements in the original Abrahamic Covenant. Nations that bless Israel will be blessed by God, and those who curse them will be punished by God.

*¹ Now the LORD had said to Abram:
"Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.
² I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you*

*And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
³ 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*

This abandoning of Israel has the additional result of fulfilling Zechariah’s prophetic warning to all nations:

*² “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. ³ And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. –
Zechariah 12:2-3*

It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. – Zechariah 12:9

At the very end of the year there was some encouragement for the Israelis. An attempt by the Palestinians to get approval for a U.N. resolution to force Israel to withdraw to pre-1967 borders by late 2017 was rejected by the Security Council.

Here are some of the headlines and details about Israel’s year from news sources:

[See the Topics: [“Israel”](#) and [“Middle East Conflict”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topics: [“Terrorism”](#) and [“Temple”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[John Kerry lands in Israel to lay foundations for 'framework agreement'](#)

Jan. 2, 2014 - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has returned to Israel to try to stimulate peace negotiations. It is his 10th visit to the region in less than a year. He hopes to establish the foundations of a "framework agreement" that could bring resolution to the nearly-deadlocked process. The key sticking-points are still the question of borders, security, refugees and the status of Jerusalem (Haaretz)

[Israel berates 'pro-Palestinian EU'](#)

Jan. 18, 2014 - After last week's announcement by Israel that they plan to build 1,400 new homes in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Britain, France, Italy and Spain summoned Israeli ambassadors to tell them that the plans are "an obstacle to peace".

In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu summoned the ambassadors from those four countries to tell them it was "time to stop this hypocrisy" and "inject some balance and fairness to this discussion".

Netanyahu explained his actions to a meeting of foreign journalists:

When did the EU call in the Palestinian ambassadors about incitement that calls for Israel's destruction?" (BBC)

['Israel, Prepare For Armageddon And Forget US Help'](#)

Mar. 13, 2014 - Henry Schwartz, founder of EMPact America, said that US President Barack Obama has given Iran permission to build a nuclear weapon through a "bogus deal."

Schwartz warned the Jewish state must "prepare for

Armageddon," given the clearly expressed Iranian intentions to destroy Israel coupled with the Islamic regime's nuclear program. (Israel National News)

[Israel can't rely on 'weak' US to deal with Iran, Ya'alon warns](#)

Mar. 18, 2014 - Israel's Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon told an audience at Tel Aviv University Israel could not afford to rely on the Obama administration to lead an action against Iran's nuclear program. He explained that the Obama administration had lost ground in the discussions about Iran's nuclear program, and it is broadcasting weakness throughout the world. This will invite further terrorism against US targets. (Times of Israel)

[Israeli official confirms US nixed arms shipment; pols argue over who's to blame](#)

Aug. 14, 2014 - The US has suspended a shipment of arms to Israel because of a disagreement between the leaders of the two countries.

The report claimed that US-Israeli tensions are at a record high, with US President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said to hold a "particularly combative phone call on Wednesday" and officials on both sides resorting to name-calling. (Times of Israel)

[UN to hold emergency meeting on Israel's settlement construction](#)

Oct. 28, 2014 - At the behest of Palestinians and Jordan, the UN Security Council will meet tomorrow to discuss Israel's plans to build more than 1,000 additional Jewish settlements in

east Jerusalem.

The European Union said that continued building of settlements would have serious consequences for relations between the EU and Israel. The US government said it was "deeply concerned" by the plans. (YNet News)

[Jordan warns that Jewish settlements may 'imperil' peace treaty with Israel](#)

Oct. 27, 2014 - Visiting Tel Aviv on the 20th anniversary of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty, Jordan's ambassador to Israel, Walid Obeidat, warned that continued building of Jewish settlements or any effort to change the religious status of the Temple Mount could invalidate their treaty. (Jerusalem Post)

[Boehner, Democrats Blast White House for Netanyahu Insult](#)

Oct. 30, 2014 - Following reports that one senior official in the White House described Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a "chicken**," and another official called him a "coward," House Speaker John Boehner said that for the past six years the Obama administration has eroded the trust of America's allies.

"When the president discusses Israel and Iran, it is sometimes hard to tell who he thinks is America's friend and who he thinks is America's enemy. The House of Representatives has no trouble drawing that distinction," he added. (NewsMax)

[The Crisis in U.S.-Israel Relations Is Officially Here](#) (The Atlantic)

Trump: 'Never a greater enemy to Israel than Obama'

Nov. 2, 2014 - On the "Justice with Judge Jeanine" television program Donald Trump voiced strong disagreement with President Obama and his administration's "concessions" to Iran and its poor relations with Israel. Jeanine Pirro mentioned that Susan Rice, the U.N. ambassador walked out ahead of Israeli Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu's speech to the General Assembly, and some administration official had referred to Netanyahu as "chicken**." Trump made this forceful reply:

"Probably, maybe from the beginning, there has never been a greater enemy to Israel than Barack Obama. It's incredible the way he treats them, the way he's speaking to them. I think he treats our known enemies much better."(WND)

Top EU Diplomat Calls to Divide Jerusalem

Nov. 10, 2014 - Federica Mogherini, the European Union's new foreign affairs chief, called for the establishment of a "Palestinian state" and some arrangement for Jerusalem to serve as the capital of both Israel and Palestine.

"We need a Palestinian state - that is the ultimate goal and this is the position of all the European Union," Mogherini said during a trip to Gaza, devastated by its third conflict in six years.

Mogherini also said that the world "cannot afford" another war in Gaza. Billions of dollars have been given to rebuild Gaza after its latest battle with Israel. She called the situation "a global issue," not just a conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. (Israel National News)

Ministry leader warned of White House action against Israel

Dec. 9, 2014 - Jan Markell, founder and director of Olive

Tree Ministries, says she has expected for many years that the White House would turn against Israel. Now the Israeli newspaper Haaretz claims that President Obama's administration is considering sanctions against Israel because they are continuing to build Jewish homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem,

Markell admits she's concerned the White House's actions could bring the wrath of God upon the U.S. "My concern is the repercussions against America for cursing the nation of Israel."

She pointed to Zechariah 12:2-3, where it is predicted that "all nations – not all nations except one" will come against Israel in the End Times. (OneNewsNow)

[Will there be a 'third intifada'? If so, what would cause it?](#)

Dec. 11, 2014 - Israeli leaders have downplayed the fear of a "third intifada." However, recent violence has grown worse because Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has incited Palestinians about the status of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Last week, Abbas comforted the family of the Palestinian murderer of a Jewish activist in Jerusalem by saying, "He ascended to the high heavens as a martyr, while defending his people's rights and the holiness of sanctuaries."

If the current unrest does escalate, the next intifada could be worse than the previous two because it would probably be conducted, not by Palestinians from Gaza or the West Bank, but by Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel who have the ability to move about freely within the country. (Eric R. Mandel - Jerusalem Post)

[Palestinian statehood bid fails to pass UN Security](#)

Council

Dec. 31, 2014 - A Palestinian proposal calling for peace with Israel within a year and an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories by late 2017 failed to pass a UN Security Council vote on Tuesday.

There were eight members in favor of the plan. Two were opposed and five abstained. (Haaretz)

[Palestinians plan next steps after failed UN bid](#) - CTV News

Acceptance of immorality

¹ But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! – 2 Timothy 3:1-5

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
The people He has chosen as His own inheritance. – Psalm 33:12*

*Righteousness exalts a nation,
But sin is a reproach to any people. – Proverbs 14:34*

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do

those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.–
Romans 1:28-32

Immorality is the destroyer of empires. History illustrates this repeatedly. The great and powerful kingdoms of the past were not conquered from outside forces until they had already begun to decay from within.

There have always been occasional scandals in government, but the current distrust of the President and his appointees, a do-nothing Congress, and an unpredictable Justice system that “legislates from the bench,” has left our nation demoralized.

The major moral battles that Bible-believing Christians are losing, thanks to the mistakes of our government, are abortion, same-sex marriage, and protection of our children.

Abortion has claimed the lives of more than 55 million babies since the Roe v. Wade decision in 1973. The latest insult to the sensitivities of “sanctity of life” Christians is the requirement of the “Obamacare” health law that requires employers to provide abortifacient birth control drugs, even if the employer is a Christian hospital or a Christian owned-and-principled company. Some of these businesses, like Hobby Lobby, have gained relief

from the unreasonable requirement, but others, without the resources to fight back, have had to give in or go out of business.

In the area of same-sex marriage, voters had passed laws against same sex marriage in the majority of the states. Nevertheless, little by little, federal appeals courts have struck down the voice of the majority by declaring many of these state initiatives unconstitutional. The Supreme Court has declined to rule against these appellate decisions because, up to that point, all of the courts had been in agreement. None of them had endorsed the will of the voters to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Now, however, one federal appeal court has upheld initiatives in some state that would prohibit same-sex marriage. Time will tell whether the Supreme Court will now consider this issue. If they do, it is anyone's guess what they will decide because of their own changing mores.

Protection of our children is also a serious issue. Under the guise of freedom of speech, there is virtually no control of immoral language and actions in the music and entertainment world—especially on the Internet. Nudity is available on the smart phones that ever-younger children are beginning to use. Violent and sexually suggestive video games get a free ride even though it is known that they have led to schoolyard shootings and are now desensitizing some young adults to the point that they would be willing to travel to the Middle East in order to do real-life violence.

Some states have now put innocent children at risk by passing laws that allow restrooms and locker rooms to be used by LGBT people who feel like they are of the opposite sex.

The following articles will provide some of the highlights of this battle during the year.

[See the Topics: [“Abortion”](#) and [“Homosexuality”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Putin: America Is Godless, Has Turned Away from Christian Values](#)

Jan. 29, 2014 - Russian President Vladimir Putin decried the slide of Western nations away from their Christian roots. He said, "Policies are being pursued that place on the same level a multi-child family and a same-sex partnership, a faith in God and a belief in Satan."

For their part, Russia has recently adopted laws that ban homosexual propaganda and criminalizes the insulting of religious sensibilities. It is ironic that in 1983, Ronald Reagan called Russia the focus of evil in the modern world and called on Americans to pray for those who live in that totalitarian darkness. (Breitbart)

[California sued over coed-bathrooms vote](#)

Mar. 26, 2014 - The Pacific Justice Institute filed a lawsuit against the State of California for throwing out 131,000 signatures, which would have qualified a voter's referendum on a law passed last year that ...

... essentially allows students in public schools to use gender-specific facilities, such as restrooms and locker rooms, according to the gender with which they choose to identify. (Bob Unruh – WND)

[Supreme Court backs Hobby Lobby in contraceptive mandate challenge](#)

Jun. 30, 2014 -

The Supreme Court ruled Monday that certain "closely held" for-profit businesses can cite religious objections in order to opt out of a requirement in ObamaCare to provide free

contraceptive coverage for their employees.

The 5-4 decision was the first time the court has ruled that for-profit businesses can cite religious views under federal law. Justice Samuel Alito wrote the majority opinion. The document calls the contraceptive mandate in its current form "unlawful." (Fox)

['Imperialist president' at it again, says attorney](#)

July 22, 2014 - Matt Barber, vice president of Liberty Counsel Action, warns that President Obama's latest executive order ignores the recent Supreme Court decision regarding the rights of businesses like Hobby Lobby to operate their business on the basis of their faith. His order requires federal contractors to provide special protections for homosexuals, lesbians, and transgender people in the workplace, and does not include an exemption for Christian companies.

"[He's] telling Christian companies that they have to leave their biblical beliefs at the workplace door and that ... under penalty of law and if they want to have any kind of contract or work with the federal government." (OneNewsNow)

[Supreme Court declines to review same-sex marriage cases, allowing unions in 5 states](#)

Oct. 7, 2014 - In a surprise move, the Supreme Court decided not to review court rulings that allow same-sex marriage in Virginia, Utah, Oklahoma, Indiana and Wisconsin. Traditional marriage advocates were disappointed and gay marriage groups were pleased. However, the court's inaction does not bring a final resolution to the question.

The denials of cases from three federal appeals courts

carry no formal instruction for other lower courts still considering challenges to state bans; if one of them upholds such a measure, the issue could return to the high court.

Court cases in other parts of the country are still pending, and if any of them ultimately rules against same-sex marriage, the Supreme Court could still take up the issue, based on disagreement in the lower courts. (Washington Post)

[The Supremes Punt on Same-Sex Marriage: Four Blunt Points](#) - Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had explained earlier that there was “no need for us to rush” at the Supreme Court level. . . This comment reflects the justices’ preference to allow controversial issues to “percolate” in the lower courts until a clear conflict emerges—at which point the Supremes intervene to resolve the conflict. (Business Week)

[Obama says gay marriage a constitutional right](#)

Oct. 22, 2014 - President Obama's understanding of marriage is still evolving. When he was running for a U.S. Senate seat in 2004 he said marriage is between a man and a woman - though he continued to back civil unions. Now he believes gay marriage is a constitutional right.

In an interview with the New Yorker the president was quoted as saying, "Ultimately, I think the Equal Protection Clause does guarantee same-sex marriage in all fifty states." (Fox)

[Gay marriage bans upheld in four states](#)

Nov. 7, 2014 - The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals has broken the trend of overruling the will of the people. In four states where same sex marriages are banned, the court upheld

the bans, increasing the chances that the Supreme Court will make a ruling on the issue. The ruling affects Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee.

The judges argued marriages had been created as an "incentive for two people who procreate together to stay together for purposes of rearing offspring" and was "still relevant".

Same-sex marriages are now legal in 32 states and in Washington DC. Last month the Supreme Court declined to consider the issue, saying that at that time there was no dispute among the appeals courts. Now that there is such a disagreement they may be willing to settle the matter. (BBC)

[Appeals court: States can define marriage as 1 man, 1 woman](#) - Definition 'shared not long ago by every society in the world' (WND)

Progressive Education

For the sake of those who are not aware of the unfortunate changes in education during the past couple of generations, here is an excerpt from our book, *The Church in Prophecy and History*:

While Evangelicals successfully held back the church's drift toward worldliness, another spiritual battle was being fought in the realm of public education.

As far back as 1787, the Founding Fathers of the United States prescribed public education based on

Christian principles. The Northwest Ordinance, which provided for the government of new territories, included this statement:

“Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”³¹

Standard textbooks like *The New England Primer* and *McGuffey Readers* were used in schools. They combined the mastery of essential skills with moral—even biblical—standards. *The New England Primer* included rhymes like these:

*In Adam’s fall
We sinned all.*

*Thy life to mend,
This Book attend. [Picture of the Holy Bible]*

*Peter denies
His Lord, and cries.*

From the third *McGuffey Reader*, the most popular and widely used textbook series for schools in America from 1836 to 1960, here is an excerpt from a section called “Things to Remember.”

12- Trust in the Lord, and He will guide you in the way of good men. The path of the just is as the

shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

13- We must do all the good we can to all men, for this is well pleasing in the sight of God. He delights to see his children walk in love, and do good one to another.³²

In 1919 John Dewey, an American pragmatist, psychologist, and educational reformer, together with a group of fellow socialists, founded the New School for Social Research in New York City. He had been influenced by a view of utopian socialism even before the Russian Revolution. Because of his “progressive” philosophy, he taught that rigorous reading and writing should not be required of young students because it would inhibit their social development. He felt that the “center of gravity” was not in the teacher or the textbooks, but in “the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself.” His experimental methods started to be used in private schools, and by 1940 they became the norm in public schools.³³ Little by little, public education became less academic and more social. There was a gradual shift from concepts of morality to a new definition of tolerance: acceptance of each person’s beliefs as equally valid. This would become an even greater problem in the ‘50’s and 60’s when prayer and Bible reading were banned in schools.

Except for private Christian colleges and universities, higher education drifted far to the left in politics. Secular universities became mass-producers of liberal-minded, evolutionary, agnostic or even anti-Christian leaders and teachers of the next generations.³⁴

Public schools vary widely from place to place in America, depending on different state laws, regional cultures, and the philosophies of school administrators. But, increasingly, federal laws that are usually much more liberal than state guidelines, and state laws that may be more liberal than local standards, are being implemented to bring about a more unified system that purposely promotes humanism, evolution, multiculturalism, moral relativism and socialism, while suppressing American history and social studies (Constitutional government) as well as Christian beliefs and morals.

Christian schools and homeschooling are popular alternatives for those who are able to utilize them.

Christian teachers and administrators are often vexed by the changing educational scene, but they are an essential stabilizing force. They deserve our fervent prayers for God’s wisdom and direction.

Christian students in the public school system also need our prayers – not to be pressed into the worlds’ mold (Romans 12:1-2), but to be “light and salt” (Matthew 5:13-16) in their schools.

The following articles will shed light on this subject.

[See the Topics: [“Youth”](#) and [“Apostasy”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See Revelation Commentary: [“Moral Relativism and the Sexual Revolution”](#)]

[Common Core qualms spike homeschool numbers](#)

Dec. 7, 2014 - The proliferating numbers of homeschoolers in America — estimates place the population at more than 2 million — have been boosted even higher of late due to increasing agitation from parents over the federally imposed Common Core

in public schools. (OneNewsNow)

[New Study: Common Core ELA Standards Harms U.S. History Instruction](#)

Sept. 2, 2014 - One of the problems conservatives cite with "Common Core" standards is that English teachers are being expected to teach U.S. History, and in the process, the curriculum leaves out essential historical information.

For example, there are no themes on federalism, separation of powers, the Federalist Papers, or the Gettysburg Address. The curriculum doesn't ask teachers to teach about Benjamin Franklin and contains no mention of Thomas Jefferson or James Madison.

Another example is the fact that the September 11, 2001 disasters are never referred to as terrorist attacks. (Caffeinated Thoughts)

[Imperiling the Republic: The Fate of U.S. History Instruction under Common Core](#)

Sept. 2, 2014 - According to the National Council for the Social Studies, the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act and the Common Core State Standards (adopted by over 45 states) has caused an increased emphasis on mathematics and reading. This has nearly eliminated time to teach Social Studies.

“Abundant research bears out the sad reality that fewer and fewer young people, particularly students of color and students in poverty, are receiving a high quality social studies education, despite the central role of social studies in preparing students for the responsibilities of citizenship.” (Pioneer Institute)

[Obama quietly serves up 3,415 new regulations this Thanksgiving, 3 target educators](#)

Nov. 30, 2014 - Just months after taking control of America's education system with its federally imposed Common Core, the Obama administration unloaded its colossal regulatory agenda on the eve of a major holiday (Thanksgiving) to reportedly avoid major detection.

Oponents to the new package of 3,415 regulations, known as the federal Unified Agenda, claim that, if it is approved, it will limit the ability of states, local school districts and parents to decide what children should learn.

Source: OneNewsNow (Youth)

Economic Turmoil

The world is still recovering from the major recession of 2008, with its loss of jobs, homes and businesses. The U.S. government and other countries have struggled to provide unemployment and other welfare programs during these years.

Those who already had great wealth were usually able to increase their holdings while middle-class families lost their savings and property.

Cyber-attacks from home and abroad have compromised the identities of millions of credit card holders.

Some countries, like Greece, had to restructure their whole economy. Others, like Egypt, experienced an uprising of the very poor that caused severe governmental turmoil.

Russia's financial problems are a factor in their new aggressive stance—retaking Crimea and threatening the rest of

Ukraine.

In the last month of this year it was announced that China has become the top economic power in the world, exceeding the Gross National Product of the U.S.

All of this economic malaise is preparing the way for the eventual economic world dictator, the Beast, and his “Mark of the Beast” system (See Chapter Seven).

[See the Topic: [“Economic”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[85 Wealthiest as Rich as Half the World](#)

Jan. 20., 2014 - The World Economic Forum has identified income inequality as one of the greatest risks facing the world in 2014.

A report issued by the British charity, Oxfam, says that the 85 richest people across the globe own as much as the poorest 3.5 billion — about \$1.6 trillion.

The 85 richest people were not identified by the report. (NewsMax)

[Heartbleed: Internet Security Bug Even Worse Than First Believed](#)

Apr. 11, 2014 - An accidental flaw in the Open Source code used by two-thirds of the Internet's servers to provide secure transactions is just now becoming common knowledge. It is now known that a major aspect of the Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology, known as "heartbeat," can be intercepted and decoded.

The intercepted information, now being called "heartbleed," may reveal Internet addresses, passwords and other information that can be used to steal the identities of users. The

problem is widespread, and even affects some hardware, but cannot be fixed by doing anything to the users' computers. Experts say that it will take time to replace the software and equipment in all the affected servers. (Time)

Report: Russian Hackers Steal 1.2B Passwords

Aug. 6, 2014 - Hold Security, a company that has a history of uncovering Internet security problems, reported that Russian hackers have recently stolen 1.2 billion user names and passwords -- affecting 420,000 websites. They were not at liberty to identify the sites that were hacked.

Retailer Target Corp. is still struggling to win back its shoppers' trust after hackers believed to be attacking from Eastern Europe stole 40 million credit card numbers and 70 million addresses, phone numbers and other personal information last winter. (NewsMax)

Why the Bash Shellshock Bug Could Be Even Worse Than Heartbleed

Sept. 25, 2014 - Shellshock is newly discovered vulnerability in software that's in computer systems we use every day. It's kind of like Heartbleed, the Open/SSL bug . . . Shellshock could be much worse, and it's been around for decades. (Gizmoto)

As Apple Pay Arrives, Witnessing the Next Step in Money. Maybe.

Oct. 21, 2014 - With the release of Apple Pay yesterday, owners of the iPhone6 can make purchases at thousands of retail locations, including Macy's, Walgreens and McDonald's by just

pressing a button and using the phone's fingerprint scanner to validate the purchase. They can forget about their wallets and plastic cards.

“Their brand, their technology and their choices in security made it compelling to us,” said James Anderson, senior vice president of emerging payments at MasterCard, who also pointed to Apple’s fingerprint identification system . . . an impressive additional way to fight credit card fraud.

Nearly three quarters of a billion credit cards are in use in the United States, [and recent computer theft of millions of credit card names and numbers have made consumers worried about identity theft].

Merchants are not as enthusiastic as consumers about the development because there is little incentive for them to pay for new terminals to receive the "Near Field Communication" payments. However, Apple's timing is excellent because American merchants face a deadline next fall to upgrade their equipment to accept E.M.V.-- Europay, MasterCard and Visa technology. Those new terminals will probably be equipped to handle Near Field transactions. (N.Y. Times)

[China's Rise to No. 1 Economy 'A Geopolitical Earthquake'](#)

Dec. 5, 2014 - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) revealed that China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will total \$17.6 trillion this year, topping \$17.4 trillion for the United States. Harvard economist Jeff Frankel said that, on a per capita income basis, China is still a relatively poor country.

MarketWatch columnist Brett Arends explained that this is bad news for the U.S., and calls it a "geopolitical earthquake."

"Throughout history, political and military power

have always depended on economic power . . . This will not change anything tomorrow or next week, but it will change almost everything longer term." (NewsMax)

Persecution

There has always been persecution of Christians. Jesus said:

¹⁰ *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,*

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.*

¹² *Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. – Matthew 5:11-12*

The Apostle Paul said this:

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. – 2 Timothy 3:12

Persecution was intense for the first Christians because it was new, different, and considered extreme by the Jews. It was not compatible with the Roman religions either. This resulted in the great Roman persecutions of the First to Third Centuries. There were other periods of elevated antagonism such as the Reformation, the Inquisitions, and the Thirty-Years' War (1618-1648).

It is shocking that persecution has been worse than ever in our own generation. It is believed that more Christians have died for their faith in the 20th Century than in all of history before this time.³⁵ Communism and Islamic terrorism have been responsible for most of these atrocities.

Persecution will be even more horrendous during the Tribulation. This is what our Lord said about this future time of trouble:

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. - Matthew 24:9

Here are selections from the many stories about persecution this year. The first article actually pertains to the previous year because it takes time to gather and tabulate the information.

[See the Topics: [“Persecution”](#) and [“Terrorism”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Number of Christians killed for their faith doubled in 2013](#)

Jan. 9, 2013 - Open Doors, a non-denominational group supporting persecuted Christians worldwide, said on Wednesday it had documented 2,123 “martyr” killings, compared with 1,201 in 2012. There were 1,213 such deaths in Syria alone last year, it said.

Open Doors, a ministry to persecuted Christians has published a list of the 50 countries that are the worst persecutors of Christians. North Korea is at the top of its list. Radical Muslims are the main source of persecution in 36 of the countries on the list.

The persecution watchdog group estimates that last year about 100 million Christians around the world suffered persecution for their faith. (Globe and Mail)

[Top 50 list of Christian persecutors](#) - WND

[World Watch List](#) - Open Doors

[**Hobby Lobby & the war on religious liberty**](#)

Mar. 26, 2014 - The Supreme Court heard arguments yesterday about the right of two companies (Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood Specialties) to not provide the "morning after" pill, a drug that terminates the growth of a just-conceived embryo. Jordan Sekulow of the American Center for Law and Justice told One News Now that he hopes the public is aware of the importance of the case;

"It's the top case when it comes to the healthcare law and it's the top case when it comes to the life issue and abortion."

Attorney Cathy Ruse of the Family Research Council reported that the court heard a "startling" admission by the government attorney."... When Justice Kennedy asked the government's attorney whether he believes family businesses could be forced to pay for abortion even over their religious objections, the government attorney said yes." (One News Now)

[**Egyptian Islamists Murder Young Christian, After Dragging Her From Car**](#)

Apr. 1, 2014 - Eyewitnesses have given a harrowing account of the murder in Cairo of a young Coptic Christian woman, hauled out of her car and beaten and stabbed to death by a Muslim mob, apparently targeted because of a cross hanging from her rear-view mirror.

The victim, 25-year-old Mary Sameh George was planning

to deliver medicine to an ill and elderly woman. The incident was barely reported by Egyptian news, but an Interior Ministry spokesman told one wire service that the Muslim Brotherhood was to blame. (e: CNS News)

[The Middle East War on Christians](#)

Apr. 18, 2014 - The latest report from Open Doors revealed that 9 of the 10 most oppressive countries for Christians are Muslim-majority states like Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. At the beginning of the 20th century 26% of the residents of the Middle East were Christians.

Today, that figure has dwindled to less than 10%. Intolerant and extremist governments are driving away the Christian communities that have lived in the Middle East since their faith was born.

Israel is the only country in the Middle East with a growing Christian population (from 34,000 in 1948 to 140,000 today). (Ron Proser, Israeli Ambassador to the UN - The Wall Street Journal)

['I will sell them,' Boko Haram leader says of kidnapped Nigerian girls](#)

May 6, 2014 - In Nigeria Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau released a video explaining about the organization's abduction of more than 200 girls. He warned,

"There is a market for selling humans. Allah says I should sell. He commands me to sell. I will sell women. I sell women," he continued, according to a CNN translation from the local Hausa language.

Boko Haram was named by the U.S. as a terrorist group in 2013. They are Islamists who are opposed to Western education.

The name Boko Haram means "Western education is sin." The group received training from al Qaeda affiliates. (CNN)

Source: CNN

[ISIS to Iraqi Christians in Mosul: Convert or Die](#)

July 18, 2014 - Leaflets were distributed to Christians in Mosul, Iraq, requiring them to convert to Islam or pay extra taxes to the Islamic Sharia courts.

According to a message from ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, non-complying Christians were permitted to "evacuate themselves only from the caliphate state" by 12 p.m. local time on Saturday or their "only option is the sword."

Meanwhile ISIS has reportedly turned parts of Mosul over to another Sunni militant group, the Naqshbandi Army (also referred to as JRTN - led by Saddam Hussein-era Baathists). ISIS has gone on to fight Iraqi armed forces in Tikrit. (Breitbart)

[Iraq Christians flee as Islamic State takes Qaraqosh](#)

Aug. 7, 2014 - Up to a quarter of Iraq's Christians are reported to be fleeing after Islamic militants seized the minority's biggest town in the country.

The Islamic State (IS) group captured Qaraqosh in Nineveh province overnight after the withdrawal of Kurdish forces.

It is believed that some 100,000 displaced Christians are fleeing into the autonomous Kurdistan Region. (BBC)

[Vatican calls on Muslim leaders to condemn Christian persecution in Iraq](#)

Aug. 13, 2014 -

The Vatican has called on Muslim leaders to denounce

unambiguously the persecution of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq – and hinted that it is considering breaking off dialogue with Islamic representatives if they fail to do so.

Some 100,000 Christians have reportedly fled their homes in Iraq because of death-threats by ISIS. The statement said that ISIS was slaughtering people solely for religious reasons and were committing "the execrable practice[s] of decapitation, crucifixion and hanging of corpses in public places."

The Vatican's Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue said that all religious leaders, including those espousing Islam, must condemn these crimes if they want to continue dialogue with the Catholic Church. (The Guardian)

[Let me see your sermons: Lesbian mayor subpoenas the First Amendment](#)

Oct. 15, 2014 - Houston's city council recently passed an ordinance, a "bathroom bill" that gave protection to homosexuals and lesbians. Since then, a petition to obtain the citizens' vote on the matter was rejected by the City of Houston.

Alliance Defending Freedom is now reporting that the City of Houston, fighting a lawsuit related to the ordinance, is demanding that five pastors turn over sermon notes and private communications with church members. (OneNewsNow)

[Is This the End for Mideast Christianity?](#)

Nov. 5, 2014 - "For Christians in the Middle East, 2014 has been a catastrophe. The most wrenching stories have come from Iraq, where the nascent Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL ...) has savagely persecuted ancient Christian communities, including Assyrians,

Chaldeans, and Syrian Orthodox."

Ever since the seventh century, when Islam conquered the Middle East, Christianity has been subdued, but even as late as 1914, the Christian population of the whole region from Egypt to Persia (Iran) was still 10%. The percentage has declined greatly in Iraq since the first Gulf War in 1991, but Christians still maintained a strong presence in Mosul, where the church was founded in the early days of Christianity.

Now observers say that the end of Christianity in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East is in sight. Only Egypt and Lebanon have a sizeable Christian population, and they too are being persecuted.

The article explores the history of persecution and the question about why God allows it. Examples are given of persecution resulting in Christian growth, especially in the case of China. The author concludes, "Suffering, Yes. Extinction, No." (Philip Jenkins - Christianity Today)

[Pope Francis: Christian Persecution, Prohibition of Worship Signs of the End Times](#)

Nov. 29, 2014 - Preaching on Jesus' Olivet Discourse in Luke 21, Pope Francis said that Christian persecution and the cultural fear of public expressions of faith are signs of the end times.

"Worship is prohibited – this is at the center of the end of time." Once we "reach the fullness of this pagan attitude truly the Son of Man will come in a cloud with great power and glory." (Christian Post)

Editor's Note: The Catholic Church does not believe in the Rapture or the thousand year reign of Christ (the Millennium), but

they do believe that things will get much worse before His return. See our blog: [Understanding the Future.](#)

[Happy 2015? Newsweek hit piece smears Bible, Christians](#)

Dec. 31, 2014 - Newsweek and Time magazines are known for taking swipes against the Bible and Christianity during the holy seasons of Easter and Christmas. Newsweek's new management intensified their attack with an issue about the Bible. Their articles are predictably skeptical of the Bible and are especially disdainful of evangelical Christians.

Read Newsweek to get a feel for the spirit of persecution that permeates the globe and is now coming to the U.S. Then read the reviews of this issue by Christian leaders. (Fox)

Chapter Three – Personal Deterioration

In this last age of church history, while Christianity has become the largest major religion on the globe, its “worldliness” has resulted in a failure to be all that it should be: first, for the sake of the Church community itself, then as a godly influence on governments, and ultimately, as light and salt for the general population. We now see that the majority of the Earth’s inhabitants, disappointed by an apostate church and corrupt governments, is spiritually bankrupt. This situation will be at its worst during the Great Tribulation, but it is already spreading immorality rapidly.

On the other hand, there is a large, spiritually vibrant remnant of the population that is being led by the Holy Spirit—living, and sometimes dying, for the cause of Christ. Even about these difficult times Jesus promised, “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). We will consider the possibility of a great revival in Chapter Six.

Spiritual Ignorance

And they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. – 2 Timothy 4:4

Surveys show there is a steady decline of godly influence and an increasing percentage of the population that is biblically-illiterate. One such survey, conducted by The Bible Society showed that 46% of adults surveyed did not know that the story of Noah's Ark came from the Bible, but about half of them thought that the Hunger Games were biblical. One third said that "Harry Potter" could be a biblical story. About 30% of the children interviewed did not know that the Nativity was from the Bible.³⁶

The minds of many in our generation are full of worthless or dangerous thoughts generated by the flood of questionable entertainment in the theaters, television and the Internet. They are not aware of the lessons of history.

Another serious problem that affects most people today is the postmodern version of "tolerance" which has come to mean acceptance of other people's ideas and beliefs as equal to our own concepts. In essence this philosophy denies the existence of any absolute truth allows people to do what they want without guilt. (See notes under the topic Non-controversial/ Non-judgmental in Chapter One)

[See the Topic: "[Apostasy](#)" in Prophecy Central]

Immorality/ Lawlessness

¹ *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will*

come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! – 2 Timothy 3:1-5

And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. – Matthew 24:12

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. – Galatians 5:19-21

⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. ” – Revelation 21:8

Immorality and lawlessness will become increasingly worse before The Tribulation, but they will accelerate off the scale during those seven dreadful years because the Holy Spirit will no longer be acting as The Restrainer, and Antichrist will be revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:5-12- See Unholy Trinity in Chapter Seven).

This is a short chapter in our book, not because there is so

little to say about the subject, but because these evils are so prevalent in our society that every reasonable person knows they exist, so they do not need special documentation. Nevertheless, we will present a short list here.

Terrorists are beheading people wholesale in the Middle East, including children. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have fled from such violence. Hundreds of Christian schoolgirls were kidnapped in Africa and sold as wife-slaves to Muslims.

Race riots are occurring in the streets of many U.S. cities because of tensions with the police.

Drug dealers are kidnapping and killing innocent people at will in Mexico and other places.

Young people are idolizing terrible role models: music and movie stars, and immoral sports heroes. Ungodly movies and television programs are also corrupting their minds, as are many social media contacts on the Internet.

Alcohol, drugs and other substance abuse is destroying the lives of millions. Marital unfaithfulness, pornography, and homosexuality are being ignored or condoned.

Prophecy Central doesn't usually collect articles about this general immorality because it is so prevalent in regular news. Here are some that were recorded:

[See the Topics: ["Apostasy"](#) and ["Youth"](#) in Prophecy Central]

[6 truths about pornography](#)

Jun. 1, 2014 - Studies indicate that at least 70 percent of American men and 30 percent of American women regularly view online pornography. . . . 50 percent of Christian men and 20 percent of Christian women regularly use porn.

Matt Barber gives scriptural insights about this problem.

(WND)

Articles from Christianity Today that encourage Christians to abstain from drinking

Jun. 6, 2016 - [Why I Gave Up Alcohol](#) - In a rush to shed our separatist past, have young evangelicals forgotten to love their neighbors? - D.L. Mayfield (Christianity Today)

[The Teetotalers I Never Knew](#) - Abstaining Christian activists of previous generations were radically committed to the common good. - Jennifer Woodruff Tait – (Christianity Today)

[James Dobson: America headed toward 'depravity,' needs revival](#)

Oct. 25, 2014 - In his recent newsletter James Dobson recounted the Bible story of the depravity of Sodom and Gomorrah and their destruction by God. He said America is heading in the same direction.

Dobson added, “Judge Robert Bork, the brilliant jurist who was shamefully denied a seat on the Supreme Court, wrote a book about this danger 18 years ago. It was titled, ‘Slouching Towards Gomorrah.’ I think he had it right.”

Dobson's stern warning was matched by Evangelist Billy Graham's assessment in the latest Decision magazine. Graham said America is just as wicked as Sodom and Gomorrah. However, he wrote that, "God would spare us if we were earnestly praying, with hearts that been cleansed and washed by the blood of Christ." (WND)

Chapter Four – Judgment

Reading through the Bible, we discover that God only allows evil actions to go so far before He steps in. In the case of believers, God’s discipline is actually patient correction. Like someone caught making a serious mistake for the first time, the consequences may be minor – giving a loving rebuke and suggestions about how to avoid that course of action in the future.

However, in the case of a repeat offender, the sentence may be a harsh punishment—incarceration or worse. For such a person, giving another chance would be foolish and dangerous.

In an age like ours, God must issue startling wake-up calls for those who will listen, and punish those who will not listen. This is why the list of “signs of the times” for this period of time includes severe: wars and rumors of war, the quest for peace, intensifying persecution, the threat of old diseases that have developed resistance to drugs and new ones, like Ebola, that are even harder to control, earthquakes and volcanoes, storms, drought, famines, and various fearful events in the heavens, like blood moons and rogue asteroids.

We will explore the wars that affect almost everyone on the planet, and relate some of them to

biblical battles that must still be fought.

Correction

⁵ *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:*

*“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;*

⁶ *For whom the LORD loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives.”*

⁷ *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? – Hebrews 12:5-7*

God is love (1 John 4:8). He is the perfect father-image. If a parent really loves his or her children they know there are times when they must discipline them. Discipline is training, not punishment. That is why Jesus' followers were called “disciples.” Some of the harsh things that God allows are meant to be loving correction—a wake-up call for those who will learn from their mistakes.

Punishment

⁴ *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and turning the cities of Sodom and*

Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly. . .⁹ then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment. – 2 Peter 2:4-6, 9

God is also holy (Psalm 99), and He is the Righteous Judge of His universe (Psalm 96:10-13). He loved the world so much that He allowed His Son to die in our place (John 3:16). But when most of the people of any given time and place reject God's gift and rebel against Him, He must bring judgment. The writer of Hebrews had to ask, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation" (Hebrews 2:3).

Wars and Rumors of War

⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. – Matthew 24:6-7a

World at War

There have always been wars, but in the last century they have been worse than ever. World Wars I and II, the development of nuclear warfare, and the rise of modern terrorism have made this planet a very dangerous place. According to Global Security's "The World at War,"³⁷ there are about 40 wars being fought at any given time.

A new report from the Institute for Economics and Peace reveals that only 11_countries in the WORLD are not involved in conflict.³⁸ The study says that the world has been getting progressively less peaceful since 2007.

Jesus said “nation will rise against nation.” The Greek word for nation is *ethnos*, and it is derived from *etho*, meaning “forming a custom, culture.” So Jesus’ prophecy was not just about one country versus another, but about “ethnic” groups fighting each other. It includes racial conflict and religious wars. Today’s headlines are loaded with bad news about these ethnic wars. Russia is invading Ukraine. Israel and the Palestinians are still threatening each other after an intense war this year. The worst Islamic jihadist group yet, the “Islamic State” (also called ISIS and ISIL) is butchering people of other religions and political viewpoints. And even in America, where the Civil War guaranteed emancipation of slaves, and where the Civil Rights movement and legislation of the ‘60’s prevailed, there is racial rioting on the streets of many U.S. cities during these last few weeks of the year.

We can’t know just when Jesus will return again, and He warned us not to set dates. But this period of ethnic wars should be a wake-up call for anyone who doesn’t believe that prophecy is being fulfilled in our times.³⁹

We have summarized many news stories about war this year that have some prophetic importance. We have divided the subject into several sub-categories. Here are some of those headlines from the broad category: “Wars and Rumors of War.”

[See the Topics: [“Wars”](#) and [“Middle East Conflict”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topic: [“Terrorism”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[**North Korean leader warns of nuclear disaster, threatens**](#)

US

Jan. 1, 2014 - North Korean leader Kim Jong-un warned that a small, accidental military clash with South Korea could lead to an all-out war.

"If the war breaks out again in this land, it will bring about a massive nuclear disaster and the US will never be safe," Kim said in his New Year message, broadcast on state television.

(WND)

Pentagon: U.S. Not Capable of Detecting Foreign Nuke Threats

Jan. 26, 2013 - The Pentagon's Defense Science Board has released a report that warns:

"The nation is not yet organized or fully equipped" to detect clandestine nuclear activities across the globe, and in most cases "current solutions are either inadequate, or more often, do not exist."

The report explains that current methods of treaty verification and inspections are not adequate. (Free Beacon)

North, South Korea exchange fire across disputed western sea border, Seoul says

Mar. 31, 2014 - South Korean Marines fired artillery shells across a disputed sea border Monday after North Korean shells from a live fire drill conducted by Pyongyang fell into the water south of the frontier.

The Korean Peninsula remains in a technical state of war since 1953 when the war there ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty. Lately North Korea has been frustrated with the slow pace of improvement in ties with the U.S. and South Korea. They have threatened to conduct a fourth nuclear test in the near future. (Fox)

NATO Commander Warns of Putin Invasion Threat

Mar. 23, 2014 - NATO's top military commander said on Sunday Russia had built up a "very sizable" force on its border with Ukraine and Moscow may have a region in another ex-Soviet republic, Moldova, in its sights after annexing Crimea.

NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe is U.S. Air Force General Philip Breedlov. According to him the 28-nation alliance needs to improve its readiness for possible conflict. (NewsMax)

U.S. sends ballistic missile destroyers to counter North Korean threat after Pyongyang announces 'new' nuclear test

Apr. 7, 2014 - Because North Korea is planning more nuclear tests, and Japan has ordered their military to shoot down any threatening projectiles, the U.S. is sending two additional ballistic missile destroyers to Japan to counter the North Korean threat. The U.S. is also warning China against aggression in the area following Russia's annexation of Crimea. (National Post)

Attorney general visits Ferguson, says he understands why black Americans mistrust police

Aug. 22, 2014 - After more than a week of rioting in a St. Louis suburb where a black 18-year-old was shot and killed by a

white officer, the country's Attorney General visited the area.

Eric Holder sought Wednesday to reassure the people of Ferguson about the investigation into Michael Brown's death and said he understands why many black Americans do not trust police, recalling how he was repeatedly stopped by officers. (Fox)

Nato summit: Russia criticised over Ukraine crisis

Sept. 4, 2014 - Before the summit began, Ukraine's president briefed US and EU leaders on the ceasefire plan that they had made with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Approximately 2,600 people have died so far in the fighting in Ukraine.

The West says it has evidence that Mr. Putin is supporting the separatists with training and arms. (BBC)

Pope Francis: World's Many Conflicts Amount to WW III

Sept. 14, 2014 - Speaking at a war memorial in Italy, where more than 100,000 soldiers who died in World War One are buried, Pope Francis said "War is madness."

"Even today, after the second failure of another world war, perhaps one can speak of a third war, one fought piecemeal, with crimes, massacres, destruction," he said.

However, last month the Pope said that it would be legitimate for the international community to use force to stop "unjust aggression" by Islamic State militants. (NewsMax)

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel: Get Used to Endless War

Oct. 29, 2014 - According to Defense Secretary Chuck

Hagel the current world mess-- ISIS, Ebola, Russian imperialism, Chinese saber-rattling, etc. -- are not going away any time soon. His message seems to be, "Get used to endless war." He told the Washington Ideas Festival:

"Tyranny, terrorism, the challenges and threats to our country ... is going to be with us. ... We are seeing a new world order—post-World War II, post-Soviet Union implosion—being built."

He stressed that the conflict with ISIL will be a long-term effort. And it will require better cooperation among lawmakers in Washington. (The Atlantic)

Middle East Wars

Israel vs. Palestinians - The unrest in the Middle-East focuses on the civil struggle between the government of Israel and the Palestinian people. Both sides agree that under the right conditions the Palestinians should have a separate state. However, the two sides have never been able to define mutually acceptable terms for this to happen. From Israel's point of view the main issues are security and the status of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount. The original borders of Israel before the 1967 "Six-Day War" left them at risk of having their little country cut in half if their many enemies could just capture a small area in the middle of their territory. Because of this danger, and because of their desire for Jerusalem to be a safe place to establish their capital, the Israelis have established many Jewish settlements on the outskirts of Jerusalem and in West Bank areas. These areas

could help insure security for Israel once Palestinians have their own state.

For their part, Palestinians are not unified, but they usually insist on restoring the borders to the pre-1967 status. They want East Jerusalem for their capital. And they want Palestinians from the time of Israel's 1948 declaration of independence to have the right to return to Israel. And, although peace talks have never really defined the future of the Temple Mount, they seem to expect to have the exclusive right to worship there—a privilege temporarily granted by Israeli General Moshe Dayan in order to keep peace after the 1967 war.

The United States, the U.N., the European Union, and even Russia have all been trying to bring about peace in the region. Most of the Arab and/or Islamic nations in the area are also involved in the quest for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

As mentioned before (in Chapter Two), tensions reached a boiling point in July and August when Israel fought back to stop the incessant rocket attacks and the construction by Palestinians of tunnels from Gaza (part of the Palestinian's area) to Israel. The war resulted in severe loss of life and property for Gaza, and a great deal of damage to Israel's rapport with other world nations.

Palestinian leaders are appealing to the United Nations to recognize them as a separate country even though there is no peace agreement with Israel.

At the end of the year Israel is on alert for a "third intifada (uprising)" of Palestinians, but experts warn that if it does occur it will be worse than the first two because the activists will not be Palestinians from the insulated area of Gaza or from the West Bank, but they will be citizens of Israel who do not need to cross

borders to reach their targets.

The current wave of violence could die out and become one of many such cycles in the area, or it might lead to a more serious regional war, like the one that was foretold in Psalm 83 (See Appendix C - Psalm 83).

The outcome of this war could be a most welcome peace agreement. Such a treaty might be just another phase in the age-old struggle between these nations, or it might possibly be the false peace mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5.

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

When Israel finally is at peace, it will be the first time since they became a nation in 1948 that they will have enjoyed such security. This could cause them to lower their guard, which would set the scene for yet another war, such as the one that will occur when the Second Seal of Revelation 6:3-4 is opened (See the notes on “World War – Second Seal” in Chapter Seven).

The dramatic end of this great war of the Second Seal could produce the seven-year treaty predicted in Daniel 9:27, which many prophecy scholars identify as the beginning of the Tribulation period.

[See the Topics: [“Middle East Conflict”](#) and [“Terrorism”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topics: [“Israel”](#) and [“Temple”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topic: [“Peace”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Amid uproar, Netanyahu reportedly reaffirms commitment to two-state solution](#)

Jan. 2, 2013 - Last week some of the members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party claimed that the concept of “two states for two peoples was never part of [Likud's] election platform.” In June of 2009 at Bar-Ilan University Netanyahu expressed support for a Palestinian state. This week hard-line Likud MK Tzipi Hotovely said the Bar-Ilan speech was a tactical maneuver only meant to placate the world. According to an Israeli television report Netanyahu reaffirmed his support for a two-state solution Monday.

He added the caveat that recognition of a Palestinian state hinged on the Palestinians’ recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, resolution of the conflict, and resolution of Israel’s security concerns. (Times of Israel)

[White House lowers expectations ahead of Obama's Middle East trip](#)

Mar. 18, 2013 - President Obama will visit Israel on Wednesday to try to improve his relationship with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The major issues to be discussed are the furtherance of the efforts by Israeli and Palestinian leaders to reach a peace agreement and how to cope with Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons.

The centerpiece of Obama's visit will be a speech in

Jerusalem to an audience mainly of Israeli students. It's part of the president's effort to appeal to the Israeli public, particularly young people. (Fox)

[Middle East descends further into chaos, endangering Israel -- and US influence](#)

July 11, 2014 - Israel's war against Hamas continues. Hezbollah in Lebanon is threatening to use rockets against Israel.

Egypt and Libya have struggled to establish stable governments, and Islamic extremists wreaking havoc in Iraq have declared their own "caliphate" in territory across a wide swath of land.

In addition, former U.S. ambassador to the U.N. John Bolton noted that Syria is in chaos and nearby Jordan -- a U.S. ally -- is feeling the strain. He said, "And another significant fact, the United States is almost absent here." (Fox)

[Khamenei: Keep arming Palestinians until Israel is destroyed](#)

July 25, 2014 - The "Zionist regime" must be destroyed, Iran's Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said. This should be achieved "by a referendum of the people living there," but until that happens, there should be "total armed resistance" against it." He said that anyone who is capable should help arm the Palestinians. (Times of Israel)

[Hamas says Gaza blockade must end before ceasefire](#)

July 24, 2014 - The leader of Islamist militant group Hamas

has said there can be no ceasefire to ease the conflict in Gaza without an end to Israel's blockade. (BBC)

['Their God changes path of our rockets in mid-air'](#) - WND

[Israel calls up 16,000 reservists as Netanyahu vows to destroy Hamas tunnels 'with or without a cease-fire'](#)

July 31, 2013 - Israel's military announced Thursday that it had called up 16,000 reservists as the country's Prime Minister vowed to destroy tunnels used by the Islamic militant group Hamas to attack soldiers and civilians inside Israel.

Thirty-two tunnels have been discovered, and most of them have been demolished. The operation should be finished within a few days.

The additional soldiers will bring the total number of reserve troops to 86,000. (Fox)

[Israel, militants trade rocket fire as Gaza truce broken](#)

Aug. 19, 2014 - During a 24-hour extension of the Israeli/Gaza peace talks in Cairo, three rockets were fired from Gaza City at Israel.

In a statement Tuesday, Israel's military accused Palestinian militants of violating a cease-fire and said it maintains "both defense and striking capabilities in order to address the renewed aggression."

Indirect talks in Cairo continue to explore major differences between the two sides. Israel continues to blockade Gaza and calls for disarmament of Hamas. Palestinians demand a seaport and an airport.(Fox)

[Gaza conflict: Israel and Palestinians agree long-term truce](#)

Aug. 27, 2014 - A long-term ceasefire has begun between Israel and Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip. It calls for opening of borders for humanitarian aid and building materials and an extension of the Palestinian's Mediterranean fishing zone.

Indirect talks on more contentious issues, including Israel's call for militant groups in Gaza to disarm, will begin in Cairo within a month.

The US and the UN supported the truce, but UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed concern that its failure to "tackle the root causes of the crisis will do little more than set the stage for the next cycle of violence." (BBC)

[Palestinian leader accuses Israel of 'genocide' at UN](#)

Sept. 28, 2014 - Speaking to the UN General Assembly, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas called the recent conflict between Israel and Gaza a "war of genocide." He claimed that Israeli "war crimes" in Gaza should be punished, but he did not indicate that he would take the issue to the International Criminal Court.

The UN says that most of the Palestinian dead were civilians. Israel says the high civilian death toll was because of Hamas fighters launching attacks from residential areas, including schools and mosques, drawing return fire. (BBC)

[British Parliament votes on Palestine state recognition is](#)

part of growing international trend

Oct. 14, 2014 - A non-binding vote by the British Parliament to recognize the state of Palestine illustrates the world tensions on the issue.

The case for the motion is that Britain should follow 135 of the UN's 193 member states and recognize Palestinian statehood. The case against is that doing so unilaterally would prejudice the outcome of future negotiations between the two parties. (The Guardian- UK)

Temple-rebuilding activist shot in Jerusalem

Oct. 30, 2014 - Rabbi Yehuda Glick, chairman of the Temple Mount Heritage Foundation, was shot multiple times in the chest in Jerusalem by an unknown assailant on a motorcycle. Glick was putting up posters for a conference titled "Israel Returns to the Temple Mount." (WND)

Will there be a 'third intifada'? If so, what would cause it?

Dec. 11, 2014 - Israeli leaders have downplayed the fear of a "third intifada." However, recent violence has grown worse because Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has incited Palestinians about the status of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Last week, Abbas comforted the family of the Palestinian murderer of a Jewish activist in Jerusalem by saying, "He ascended to the high heavens as a martyr, while defending his people's rights and the holiness of sanctuaries."

If the current unrest does escalate, the next intifada could be worse than the previous two because it would probably be conducted, not by Palestinians from Gaza or the West Bank, but by Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel who have the ability to move about freely within the country. (Eric R. Mandel - Jerusalem Post)

Islamic State vs. the World – The most shocking news of the year was the sudden explosion on the scene in the Middle East of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), also known as ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant [most of the Middle East]). In June this radical jihadist group took control of large portions of Syria and Iraq. They then claimed that they were establishing a new Islamic caliphate with the goal of reclaiming the lands once held by the Ottoman Empire. Using the most brutal tactics seen in our lifetime--including beheadings, crucifixions, mass slaughter, and burying opponents alive -- they have invaded large portions of Syria and Iraq, and have killed or driven out almost all Christians and opposing Muslims. They butcher the men who oppose them and take their women and children to be used as sex slaves.

They make videos of the beheading of innocent American and European captives and post their evil propaganda on the various social media sites.

Young radicalized jihadists and other misfits from many countries, including young women who are willing to serve these barbarians, have left their Western countries and families to join their cause.

Terrorism experts were not as surprised as the rest of the world because ISIS has been one of the rebel groups involved in

the devastating Syrian civil war. It was an offshoot of al-Qaeda and was considered more radical than the other groups that were fighting against the Syrian government.

Their leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had been a prisoner in a U.S. detention camp in Iraq. r release from a U.S. detention camp in Iraq in 2009. When he was released in 2009, he told reporters, “I’ll see you guys in New York.”⁴⁰

The group is motivated by the radical element of their Sunni branch of Islam. They are therefore opposed by the Shite Muslims, led by Iran. Western powers, including the United States. The more moderate Sunni nations such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt are also alarmed by their actions and intentions.

ISIS released a map of their intended conquests that included most of Europe. And they have called for supporters everywhere to engage in “lone wolf” attacks in their own countries, even if they are not officially members of ISIS. Such attacks have now occurred in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Pakistan, and other countries.

The U.S. and other nations reluctantly agreed to do what they can, short of sending troops to the area. Bombing missions have been helpful, but marginally effective at stopping the conquests of the group.

At the end of the year it appears that a semi-secret “spring offensive” will be waged next year by the U.S. and her allies against the Islamic State. From June to December, during the wrap-up of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, billions of dollar worth of military vehicles and other gear has been stockpiled in Kuwait in preparation for this event.

As mentioned above, in relation to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, this new would-be caliphate could

escalate into a regional war that would fulfill the prophecies of Psalm 83 (See Appendix C - Psalm 83). It could possibly result in the temporary peace mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5, just before or after the Rapture of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation.

Here are some of the important stories that broke on this topic this year.

[See the Topics: [“Terrorism”](#) and [“Islam”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[ISIS: The first terror group to build an Islamic state?](#)

Jun. 13, 2014 –

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has thrived and mutated during the ongoing civil war in Syria and in the security vacuum that followed the departure of the last American forces from Iraq.

ISIS is in the process of creating an Islamic state across Sunni areas of Iraq and in Syria. Because of the collapse of state authority it has suddenly taken control of hundreds of square miles from Syria's Mediterranean coast to south of Baghdad. (CNN)

[ISIS changes name, declares Islamic 'caliphate'](#)

Jun. 29, 2014 - In the midst of its campaign against Syria and Iraq, the terrorist group ISIS has made a bold move. It has renamed itself "Islamic State" and proclaimed its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as "Caliph" for Muslims everywhere.

The move is a direct challenge to Al-Qaida, and, indeed to all existing Islamic nations from the Mediterranean to the Gulf. A statement from the group says,

"It is incumbent upon all Muslims to pledge allegiance to (him) and support him...The legality of all emirates, groups, states, and organizations, becomes null by the expansion of the khalifah's authority and arrival of its troops to their areas." (Haaretz)

[Syria-Iraq 'caliph' incites Muslims to holy war](#)

July 2, 2014 - Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, claiming to be caliph of the new "Islamic State," carved out from the terrorist advances in Syria and Iraq, issued a call to Muslims everywhere to join the jihad [holy war] and be part of a "new era" in which Muslims will ultimately triumph.

Baghdadi, who has assumed the mediaeval title of caliph, used the message to seek to assert authority over Muslims everywhere. He called on them to rise up and avenge the alleged wrongs committed against their religion, from Central African Republic to Myanmar (Reuters)

[ISIS to Iraqi Christians in Mosul: Convert or Die](#)

July 18, 2014 - Leaflets were distributed to Christians in Mosul, Iraq, requiring them to convert to Islam or pay extra taxes to the Islamic Sharia courts.

According to a message from ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, non-complying Christians were permitted to "evacuate themselves only from the caliphate state" by 12 p.m. local time on Saturday or their "only option is the sword."

Meanwhile ISIS has reportedly turned parts of Mosul over to another Sunni militant group, the Naqshbandi Army (also referred to as JRTN - led by Saddam Hussein-era Baathists). ISIS has gone on to fight Iraqi armed forces in Tikrit. (Breitbart)

[First Air Strike Against Islamic State](#)

Aug. 8, 2014 -

The Pentagon said American aircraft attacked artillery that was being used in northern Iraq against Kurdish forces defending the city of Irbil. President Barack Obama authorized air strikes on Thursday, but said he would not send US troops back to Iraq. (BBC)

[Iraq: Islamic militants 'buried women and children alive in attack that killed 500'](#)

Aug. 11, 2014 - In Iraq, a government official lamented the plight of civilians who are being slaughtered by the ISIS terrorist group.

Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said his government had evidence that 500 Yazidi civilians had been killed so far, and that some of the victims had been buried alive. A further 300 Yazidi women have been kidnapped as slaves, he added. (Belfast Telegraph – UK)

[Beheading video prompts calls for US to escalate campaign against ISIS](#)

Aug. 20, 2014 -

Military analysts and U.S. lawmakers say the apparent beheading of an American journalist by Islamic State terrorists should be a wake-up call to the need to

dismantle the organization which has taken root in Iraq and Syria.

A video has been released purportedly showing the beheading of American journalist James Foley. This is the first time the Islamic State has killed an American citizen. They are now threatening to kill another American journalist if President Obama continues to conduct air strikes against them.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Rogers, told reporters that the video underscores the need to develop a clear strategy for defeating the terrorist group. He said the Islamic state is dangerous and should be dismantled. (Fox)

[ISIS 'beyond anything that we've ever seen,' Hagel warns](#)

Aug. 21, 2014 - Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told a press conference,

"ISIL is as sophisticated and well-funded as any group that we have seen. . . They're beyond just a terrorist group. They marry ideology, a sophistication of strategic and tactical military prowess. They are tremendously well-funded. "

Hagel added that this threat is beyond anything that we've seen, and because of that, we must prepare for everything. (Fox)

[Iraq crisis: Acts of inhumanity on unimaginable scale - UN](#)

Sept. 1, 2014 -

Deputy Human Rights Commissioner Flavia Pansieri said Islamic State (IS) was believed to have committed

systematic and intentional attacks on civilians. They include targeted killings, forced conversions, slavery, sexual abuse, and the besieging of entire communities.

In what Ms. Pansieri called "ethnic and religious cleansing," thousands of people have been killed, and more than a million others have been forced to flee from their homes. (BBC)

[International Support Grows for U.S.-led Campaign Against Islamic State](#)

Sept. 15, 2014 - Many nations have agreed to assist in the campaign to break the strength of the Islamic State. The U.S. and the U.K. have vowed to destroy the group, and many other countries, including leading Middle East countries say they will join the coalition and help with air strikes.

Military experts doubt that the problem can be solved by air strikes alone. Gen. Michael Hayden, a former CIA director, told Fox News, "It is my estimation, that after all the dust settles...I'm betting we're up to around 5,000 [soldiers] by the end of the year "in Iraq."

It is not clear what the next steps will be and the extent of military forces that the supporting countries will commit. (Wall Street Journal)

[ISIS Threat: Syrian Town Fears Massacre](#)

Sept. 29, 2014 - In spite of airstrikes against ISIS, the terror group is about to overwhelm the Syrian Kurdish city of Kobani near the Turkish border. If ISIS takes Kobani, it will gain control of

the land from its self-declared capital of Raqqa to the Turkish border -- more than 60 miles away.

“We need help. We need weapons. We need more effective airstrikes,” Kobani official Idriss Nassan said. “If the situation stays like this, we will see a massacre. I can’t imagine what will happen if ISIS gets inside Kobani.” (Fox)

[ISIS nearly made it to Baghdad airport, top U.S. military leader says](#)

Oct. 13, 2014 - Gen. Martin Dempsey told ABC's "This Week" that ISIS forces nearly reached the Baghdad airport until the U.S. used Apache helicopters to stop their progress. Apaches had also been used to stop advancing forces advancing on Falluja on Oct. 13.

"The tool that was immediately available was the Apache [helicopter]. The risk of operating in a hostile environment is there constantly," the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

Use of the helicopters in Iraq is risky because of a possible strike by surface-to-air missiles, which ISIS is known to possess. (CNN)

[Kurds key in fight against Islamic State group](#)

Oct. 29, 2014 - The Kurds, millions of people from a previously nomadic ethnic group, live in five Middle Eastern countries: Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran and Armenia. The majority of them are Sunni Muslims and most of the rest are Shia Muslims.

They have valiantly defended Kobani against ISIS so far. The Turkish government has now agreed to allow a group of Kurds to cross into Syria to assist in the ongoing battle in Syria.

The cooperation between Kurds in these countries underscores their loyalty to the shared dream of establishing an independent and unified Kurdistan, or Land of the Kurds — and not to the nations in which they live. (Washington Post)

Jihadists from around the world flock to fight with Isil:

UN

Oct. 31, 2014 - A UN report reveals that jihadists from more than 80 countries have travelled to Iraq and Syria to join the cause of the Islamic State.

Around 15,000 people have travelled to fight alongside Islamic State (Isil) from "countries that have not previously faced challenges relating to al-Qaeda," the report said, despite weeks of US-led airstrikes on the region. (Telegraph – UK)

Sinai terror group swears allegiance to Islamic State

Nov. 6, 2014 - Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, the al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group that occupies the Sinai Peninsula and threatens both Israel and Egypt, has sworn allegiance to the Islamic State.

“After entrusting God we decided to swear allegiance to the emir of the faithful Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, caliph of the Muslims in Syria and Iraq and in other countries.”

Source: Times of Israel

U.S. airstrikes help push ISIS back in Kobani

Nov. 17, 2014 - The number of U.S. airstrikes against ISIS in the besieged Syrian city of Kobani has increased this week. This has allowed the Kurdish fighters to push back the terrorists there.

Rear Adm. John Kirby told the State Department's daily briefing that the increased bombing was not a strategic shift.

Kirby said the number of airstrikes in Syria or Iraq depends on how "target rich" an area is. The past few days around Kobani have seen more ISIS targets, he said. (CNN)

ISIS to annex more Arab lands into caliphate

Nov. 19, 2014 - In his announcement, Baghdadi said he has accepted bayah – an oath of allegiance to a leader – from jihadi groups in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and the Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria, the Majis Shura Shabab al-Islam in Libya and the Ansar Beit al-Maqdis in the Sinai. (WND)

US, Turkey Close to Deal on Joint Action against ISIS

Dec. 1, 2014 - An article in the Wall Street Journal says that The US and Turkey are expected to agree on joint military action against the Islamic State terrorists in Syria.

Citing officials from both the U.S. and Turkey, the paper reported that the proposed deal would allow the U.S. and its coalition partners access to Turkish air bases for launching air strikes.

A no-fly zone would also be established along the border between Turkey and Syria. (Israel National News)

Syria says Israel has bombed two areas near Damascus

Dec. 8, 2014 - Syria's military report that Israeli planes bombed two areas near Damascus yesterday. One target was near

the city's international airport and the other was near Dimas, close to the Lebanese border.

Since Syria's conflict began in March 2011, Israel has carried out several airstrikes in the war-torn nation that have targeted sophisticated weapons systems, including Russian-made anti-aircraft missiles and Iranian-made missiles.

It is believed that the targets were weapons [from Iran] being delivered to the Lebanese Hezbollah militant group. (NY Daily News)

US military equipment being detoured for possible battle vs. ISIS

Dec. 25, 2014 - As the US war in Afghanistan was winding down, some \$7 billion worth of military equipment was going to be destroyed, sold or given away. However, Air Force Maj. Gen. Rowayne "Wayne" Schatz, the director of operations and plans for U.S. Transportation Command, said that from June to December roughly 3,100 vehicles and other military gear was moved into Kuwait while plans for a massive spring offensive against ISIS is being developed.

The gear is being housed near a busy commercial port, which is now the place where -- mostly ambush-protected vehicles known as MRAPs -- are parked, in addition to electronic equipment and other supplies.

The spring offensive will help Iraqi and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters take back territory from the Islamic State. But Lt. Gen. James Terry would not comment on details or the timeline for the

program. (Fox)

Iran Nuclear Threat – The greatest risk for a devastating world war continues to be the persistent quest by Iran for nuclear capabilities. While they try to convince the world that their nuclear program, which by now--with the help of Russia and possibly North Korea--has become quite advanced, they still claim that their only interest is in nuclear power. This is unlikely since they are already one of the top suppliers of oil in the world. It is also questionable because of their heavy water facility at Arak, which could be used to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. Additionally, the Supreme Leader of the country, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei still calls for the extermination of Israel! He said that the only way to stop the "Israeli crimes" is to eliminate the "fake Zionist regime." Again, just as it was before World War II, world leaders ignore these outrageous threats. If the world had resisted Hitler when he talked like this we would not have had that horrendous war!

It was thought that Israel, aided in some way by the United States, would eliminate this physical threat to their existence in the same way that they eliminated Iraq's *Osirak* reactor in 1981, and a Syrian reactor in 2007 that was thought to have been supplied by North Korea.⁴¹

Pressure from the United States convinced Israel to wait reluctantly for the outcome of negotiations by the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China to stop Iran's drive to possess nuclear arms.

Other Islamic countries in the Middle East are also alarmed by Iran's nuclear aspirations because their Shi'a brand of Islamic

belief differs from the Sunni majority in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and many other Middle East nations. They fear that Iran, supported by Russia, would dominate or even conquer their populations.

Various nations, including the United States, imposed some financial and political sanctions on Iran to try to bring them to a peaceful agreement to discontinue their efforts to obtain nuclear weapons.

Because of the effect of the sanctions on their economy, Iran entered into talks with negotiators, but after many years, these efforts have not produced an acceptable agreement. The talks expired on November 24th, but instead of cracking down on Iran's lack of cooperation, another seven-month period of talks began on December 15th. Israel insists that these delays have allowed Iran to nearly reach their goal. The Israelis have done what they could to slow Iran's progress. They used cyber-attacks to cripple some of Iran's nuclear capabilities. They apparently also caused the death of some of Iran's nuclear scientists. The big question at the end of this year is whether or not they will actually attack Iran's facilities.

The Iran nuclear issue has been almost daily news all year. Here are a few of the summaries from Prophecy Central.

[See the Topics: ["Iran"](#) and ["Gog and Magog"](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topic: ["Mid-East Conflict"](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Iranian cleric: 'Having a nuclear bomb is necessary to put down Israel'](#)

Jan. 7, 2014 - Iranian lawmaker and cleric Muhammad Nabavian said Iran could build a nuclear weapon "in two weeks" if they needed to in order to "put down Israel." (Fox)

Iran, Russia negotiating big oil-for-goods deal

Jan. 10, 2014 - Russia and Iran have agreed on a preliminary deal to swap Iranian oil for Russian goods. Agreement on the trade would be in defiance of the Western sanctions that helped force Tehran in November to agree a preliminary deal to end its nuclear program.

Russian purchases of 500,000 bpd of Iranian crude would lift Iran's oil exports by 50 percent and provide a major flip to its struggling economy. (YNet News)

Iran nuclear deal to enter into force on 20 January

Jan. 13, 2014 - A temporary agreement has been made between Iran and world powers about their nuclear program.

Iran has agreed to halt enrichment of uranium above 5% purity, and "neutralize" its stockpile of near-20%-enriched uranium. In return, the world powers agreed to suspend certain sanctions on trade.

Talks to reach a permanent agreement on this issue are scheduled to continue in February. (BBC)

Ex-CIA head: US would use force to stop Iran

Jan. 29, 2013 - Former Central Intelligence Agency director David Petraeus says that Israelis can believe that the United States is willing to use force if necessary to stop Iran's nuclear program.

"This is not an off the cuff comment. He [US President Barack Obama] has articulated his approach on the Iranian nuclear program many times," Petraeus said at the Institute for National Security Studies' (INSS) annual conference in Tel Aviv. (Jerusalem Post)

[Poll: Americans prefer military strike to nuclear Iran - Times of Israel](#)

[Netanyahu: Deal Set Iran's Nuclear Drive Back by Only 6 Weeks](#)

Jan. 30, 2014 - An international deal capping Iran's nuclear work set the program back by just six weeks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday, accusing Tehran of using the hiatus to hone technologies with bomb-making potential.

Netanyahu has called the deal a "historic mistake."
(NewsMax)

[Ahead of nuclear talks, Iran flexes muscles \(fires two missiles\)](#)

Feb. 12, 2014 - With negotiations between Iran and six world powers on a permanent nuclear deal set to get underway next week in Vienna, Iran is continuing to flex its muscles.

Iran reportedly tested two new domestically made missiles. One of them, named "Bina" ["Insightful"], is a long-range ground-to-ground device with a fragmentation warhead, capable of striking targets with great precision.

Iran already has its Shahab missiles, which they claim can reach 1,250 miles--far enough to strike Israel and U.S. military bases in the Middle East. (Israel Hayom)

[IDF intercepts major Iranian missile shipment to Gaza](#)

Mar. 6, 2014 - Israeli naval commandos boarded a merchant ship, the "Klos-C," carrying medium-range missiles from Iran to the Gaza Strip. The ship was in the Red Sea when it was

apprehended.

The army said soldiers carried out a preliminary inspection of the ship and found several dozen advanced Syrian M-302 missiles, with a range of up to 200 kilometers (125 miles) and a payload of up to 170 kilograms (375 pounds). (Times of Israel)

[Iran's Finger on Trigger to Destroy Zionist Regime](#)

Mar. 11, 2014 - Addressing some 5000 volunteer commanders in Tehran at a conference called 'The Islamic World's Role in the Geometry of the World Power,' Lieutenant Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards General Hossein Salami said that Iran was ready to destroy Israel.

"Islam has given us this wish, capacity and power to destroy the Zionist regime so that our hands will remain on the trigger from 1,400km away for the day when such an incident (confrontation with Israel) takes place," he added. (FARS News)

[Large explosion at oil depot in northern Iran](#)

May 6, 2014 - According to Israel's Channel 2, a large oil explosion occurred in the city of Qavzin, an "unreported nuclear site." The Iranian Fars news agency reporting that there were around fifty people injured.

In January of last year Israeli intelligence officials confirmed that an explosion damaged Iran's Fordow nuclear facility, which is being used to enrich uranium. (Jerusalem Post)

[Iran defiant on Arak facility, right to enrich uranium as nuclear talks appear to falter](#)

May 19, 2014 - Talks have ended between world powers and Iran over their nuclear program.

In comments carried by Iran's Press TV, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi emphasized that the Arak reactor would remain a heavy water facility and also stressed that Iran has the right to enrich uranium. (Jerusalem Post)

[Khamenei: Keep arming Palestinians until Israel is destroyed](#)

July 25, 2014 -

The "Zionist regime" must be destroyed, Iran's Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said. This should be achieved "by a referendum of the people living there," but until that happens, there should be "total armed resistance" against it."

He said that anyone who is capable should help arm the Palestinians. (Times of Israel)

[Netanyahu at UN warns "militant Islam is on the march," from Hamas to ISIS, but greatest threat is a nuclear armed Iran.](#)

Oct. 1, 2014 - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the United Nations General Assembly that ISIS and Hamas are serious problems, but the greatest threat to his country and the world is an Iranian regime that that could rapidly produce nuclear warheads.(Joel Rosenberg)

['Deadly fire' at Iran military explosives facility](#)

Oct. 7, 2014 - A fire and an explosion occurred at Iran's Parchin military site near Tehran. This explosives experimentation

site has been linked to Iran's nuclear program.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has not been given access to the complex since 2005.

Analysts say the IAEA suspects Iran of experimenting with explosives capable of triggering a nuclear weapon at Parchin.

Six world powers are still trying to negotiate a permanent agreement with Iran over its nuclear ambitions. According to the IAEA, there has been an increase of activity at the Parchin facility, and Iran missed a missed a deadline to answer further questions about its nuclear plans. (BBC)

[Iranian opposition activists claim sabotage was responsible](#)

- Honest Reporting

[Iran explosion: An accident or a reminder ?](#) - Washington Post

[Mysterious blast at Iran nuke plant proves weapons program alive, say experts](#)

Oct. 9, 2014 -

The massive blast at an Iranian nuclear plant earlier this week remains shrouded in mystery, but it cleared up one thing, according to those who track the Islamic Republic: The nuclear weapons program Tehran has long denied is real. (Fox)

[Israeli PM says Iran poses greater global threat than IS](#)

Oct. 19, 2014 - As the November 24 deadline for a deal about Iran's nuclear program approaches, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that making the wrong decisions will make Iran a "far more serious" threat than the Islamic State.

“We are facing the danger of an agreement with the world

powers that will leave Iran as a nuclear threshold state, with thousands of centrifuges with which Iran will be able to make a nuclear bomb in a short time." (Times of Israel)

[Iran's Khamenei proposes plan for Israel's elimination - on Twitter](#)

Nov. 10, 2014 - Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader has posted a nine-point plan to eliminate Israel.

In the post, Khamenei accuses Israel of seeking to realize its goals "by means of infanticide, homicide, violence & iron fist," and says that the only way to stop the "Israeli crimes" is to eliminate the "fake Zionist regime." (Haaretz)

[Khamenei's plan](#) - Twitter

[Iran nuclear crisis: Oman hosts talks as deadline nears](#)

Nov. 10, 2014 - A year has passed since Iran and six world powers - the US, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China - made a temporary agreement that eased Western sanctions if Iran would limit their nuclear program. A new deadline for completion of talks was set for this coming Nov. 24th. So far no further agreement has been reached.

President Obama said "big gaps" remain in negotiations concerning uranium enrichment and sanctions relief. (BBC)

[Iran Nuclear Talks Continue Without A Clear Resolution In Sight](#)

Dec, 16, 2014 - After failing to reach agreement about Iran's nuclear program on Nov. 24th, representatives of six world powers met again in Geneva to start an extended effort for seven more months to solve the issue.

They are aimed at resolving a 12-year stand-off over Iran's disputed nuclear aspirations that has wrought heavy economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic and fears of a new Middle East war unless the dispute can be settled diplomatically soon. (Business Insider)

Rumors of War

New Cold War – The world enjoyed the relaxing of tensions after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1991, symbolized by the literal dismantling of the Berlin Wall that had stood as a symbol of the Cold War between Russia and the U.S. for over 40 years.

Little by little since then Russia has become less friendly to the West. They resented the proposed U.S. missile defense system for Eastern Europe, and embarked on a strong rebuilding program for their military.

Economic problems in Russia caused them to miss the power they had over the Soviet Union. They proposed the building of a “Eurasian Union” with other countries. During this year they took back the Crimea, a vital part of Ukraine, and have been involved in support of rebels in eastern Ukraine that would like to rejoin Russia. They apparently shot down a Malaysian Airlines passenger plane over Ukraine and have not been willing to admit their actions.

Vladimir Putin is a strong leader who is admired by many and was named “The World’s Most Powerful Person” by Fortune Magazine for the second year in a row.⁴²

Politically, Russia is aligned with Iran, Syria, and some other Islamic nations. They are especially involved with Iran,

supplying weapons, nuclear reactors and expertise to them.

In spite of nuclear proliferation treaties, The U.S. and Russia still have enough nuclear power to destroy one another, so it is troubling to watch a new Cold War emerge.

The Internet has provided another channel for friction. Russian hackers have made many incursions into the computer networks of Americans. Russia has also provided safe harbor to Edward Snowden, the defector who revealed the extent of governmental surveillance.

News summaries give additional insight about the new Cold War.

[See the Topics: [“Wars”](#) and [“Cold War”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topics: [“Cyberwar”](#) and [“Gog and Magog”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Russia upgrading, strengthening military](#)

Jan. 12, 2013 - Russia has recently suggested a customs-free "Eurasian Union" concept that would link their country with Europe. The concept has been criticized by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and others. Russia is also concerned about a proposed U.S. missile defense system located in Europe. Currently they plan to increase their national defense spending to more than 30 percent of their annual budget.

The intent is to show a “resolute” determination that it will not allow Western interference in the region which encompasses its Eurasian Union concept. (WND)

[Russia Sending Nuke Submarines South in First Since Soviet Era](#)

June 1, 2013 - Russia plans to resume nuclear submarine

patrols in the southern seas after a hiatus of more than 20 years following the break-up of the Soviet Union, Itar-Tass news agency reported on Saturday, in another example of efforts to revive Moscow's military.

They will be Borei-class submarines, designed to carry 16 long-range nuclear missiles. This move, and their decision to deploy a naval unit in the Mediterranean Sea on a permanent basis, are part of President Vladimir Putin's plans to strengthen Russia's military. (NewsMax)

[Ukraine PM: Crimea 'was, is and will be an integral part of Ukraine'](#)

Mar. 7, 2014 - Crimean lawmakers have voted to leave Ukraine and join Russia. They have scheduled a public vote to confirm it on March 16.

This act drew widespread condemnation, with Ukrainian interim Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk calling such a referendum "an illegitimate decision." "Crimea was, is and will be an integral part of Ukraine," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin claims the right to use military force in Ukraine if necessary to protect ethnic Russians during the crisis.

President Barack Obama weighed in on the issue. He said that the legitimate government of Ukraine must be involved in such a decision. He said, "In 2014, we are well beyond the days when borders can be redrawn over the heads of democratic leaders." (CNN)

[State television presenter warns Russia could 'turn the US into radioactive dust'](#)

Mar. 17, 2014 - Dmitry Kiselyov, a leading TV personality on state-controlled Rossiya 1 television, said, "Russia is the only country in the world realistically capable of turning the United States into radioactive ash,"

He also added that President Vladimir Putin is a much stronger leader than Barack Obama, pointing to opinion polls on his screen, and Americans know it.

Source: The Independent - UK

[Russia to ban US from using Space Station over Ukraine sanctions](#)

May 14, 2014 - Russia is to deny the US future use of the International Space Station beyond 2020 and will also bar its rocket engines from launching US military satellites as it hits back at American sanctions imposed over Ukraine crisis.

Currently the space station is manned by both U.S. and Russian astronauts, but all of them must use Russia's Soyuz spacecraft to get there and back. (Telegraph)

[Feinstein: US Now in a Cold War With Russia](#)

July 20, 2014 - Senate Intelligence Committee Chairwoman Dianne Feinstein called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to "man up" and admit his country's role in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17.

Feinstein told CNN that U.S.-Russia relations are now at Cold War levels. (NewsMax)

[US accuses Russia of violating 1987 missile treaty](#)

July 29, 2014 - Between 2008 and 2011 Russia apparently violated a 1987 nuclear missile treaty by testing a ground-

launched cruise missile.

President Obama informed Russian President Vladimir Putin in a letter Monday of the U.S.' determination that Russia broke the agreement. The official said the U.S. is prepared to engage in "senior-level bilateral dialogue immediately" with Russia.

Russian officials responded by saying that they have looked into the allegations and consider the matter closed. (Fox)

[Gorbachev: World 'on Brink of New Cold War'](#)

Nov. 8,, 2014 - Former Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev says that the world is close to a new Cold War. He said that United States is in danger of giving in to "triumphalism" after the fall of the Soviet Union a quarter century ago.

The result, he said, could partly be seen in the inability of global powers to prevent or resolve conflicts in Yugoslavia, the Middle East and most recently Ukraine. (NewsMax)

Cyber War – China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, the U.S, Israel and many other countries are involved in cyber-espionage--mining technology secrets from other countries. Cyber-attacks can often be traced to a certain country, but not usually to the individuals who are responsible. In some cases hackers are able to take remote control of vital utilities, such as water or electricity.

New vulnerabilities with names like "Heartbleed," and "Bash Shellshock" have recently been discovered in old operating systems. These previously unknown "back doors" into thousands

of computer networks is a startling development that has already resulted in the theft of millions of people's identities from banks and retailers.

Israel and Iran have evidently both used the Internet to obtain sensitive information from each other and even release computer viruses to control or destroy equipment.

The ultimate example of cyber-terrorism to date came at the end of the year when an anonymous group calling themselves "Guardians of Peace" hacked into the network of Sony Pictures, stole and disseminated a great deal of sensitive information and unreleased media. They then threatened to perpetrate a 9/11 attack on theaters if they showed the Sony Pictures comedy, "The Interview." The film portrays the assassination of North Korea's dictator. Theaters were afraid to show it and Sony withdrew it from the marketplace.

In the aftermath of the Sony threats it came to light that North Korea had some 3000 computer experts employed for the purpose of conducting such cyberattacks⁴³. The U.S. is also heavily invested in this new kind of combat. The Pentagon spent \$4.7 billion for it in 2014 and will invest an estimated \$5.1 billion in 2015.⁴⁴

Experts predict that cyber-attacks will continue to increase before there are adequate means to stop this activity.

[See the Topics: ["CyberWar"](#) and ["Economic Issues"](#) in Prophecy Central]

[U.S. Charges Five Chinese Military Officers With Spying](#)

May 20, 2014 - This article displays a photograph of FBI WANTED posters naming five Chinese military officers.

The charges, unsealed today in District Court in

Pennsylvania, allege the Chinese officers conspired to steal trade secrets and other information from U.S. companies, including Westinghouse Electric Co. and Allegheny Technologies Inc.

The indictment has the effect of accusing China and its government of mining U.S. technology through cyber-espionage. (Bloomberg)

[Iranian hackers said to use Facebook to spy on Israelis](#)

May 29, 2014 - Some 2,000 top-level Israeli politicians, diplomatic assistants and journalists have been duped during the past three years into providing secret information. There is strong evidence that the perpetrators, a group called "Newscaster," operate from Iran. The perpetrators have developed false but believable identities using social media. They claim to be journalists, defense contractors or governmental officials (not from Iran). They ask to be "friended" on Facebook, and at some point they are sent messages...

... directing them to links where they would be asked to provide personal information or enter a login and password (on the theory that most people use the same login/password for multiple sites).

The hackers were then able to load the victim's system with spyware that could stealthily collect other passwords and sensitive information. (Times of Israel)

[Why the Bash Shellshock Bug Could Be Even Worse Than](#)

Heartbleed

Sept. 25, 2014 -

Shellshock is newly discovered vulnerability in software that's in computer systems we use every day. It's kind of like Heartbleed, the Open/SSL bug . . . Shellshock could be much worse, and it's been around for decades. (Gizmodo)

China-Backed Hacking Group Axiom Said To Have Attacked 43,000 Computers

Oct. 29, 2014 - "Axiom." is a highly sophisticated cyber espionage and warfare group, which the FBI says is affiliated with the Chinese government.

In targeting over 43,000 computers, the group has infiltrated Fortune 500 companies, pro-democracy groups, academic institutions, journalists, environmental groups and a range of other areas, according to researchers. (International Business Times)

FBI warns US businesses of 'destructive' malware

Dec. 1, 2014 -

The FBI warned U.S. businesses that hackers have used malicious software to launch destructive attacks in the United States, following a devastating cyberattack last week at Sony Pictures Entertainment. . . The report said that the malware overrides data on hard drives of computers.

It is not known whether or not the malware was used on the cyberattack against Sony Films and the theft of five movies

from the company. North Korea is suspected because there is a connection between upcoming Sony movie "The Interview," and North Korea. (CNBC)

[Sony Hackers Invoke 9/11, Threaten to Attack Movie Theaters](#)

Dec. 17, 2014 - A computer hacking organization calling itself "Guardians of Peace," has invaded the computer network of Sony Pictures. It has stolen sensitive information and released some of it to the public. Their motivation is apparently anger about the movie "The Interview," a comedy about a CIA plot to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Now they have threatened movie-goers with something reminiscent of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Authorities do not know whether the intended response would be another cyber event or a physical attack, but they are taking the warning seriously. Theaters have the right to cancel the movie. The New York premiere of the film has canceled the showing.

Over the summer, North Korea warned that the film's release would be an "act of war that we will never tolerate." It said the U.S. will face "merciless" retaliation.

It remains to be seen how other theaters and citizens will respond to this cyber-terrorism. (NewsMax)

[Sony 'forced' to bow to film hackers](#) - BBC

[North Korea Denies Hack Involvement, Demands Probe](#)

Dec. 20, 2014 - North Korea responded to US accusations that it was responsible for the cyberattack and

threat that caused Sony Pictures to cancel the release of its movie, "The Interview." They demanded the right to be part of a joint investigation with the U.S. into the matter.

In its first substantive response to the accusation, the isolated North Korea said it could prove it had nothing to do with the massive hacking attack. (NewsMax)

China Buildup - The dramatic growth of China in our generation is often ignored in prophetic calculations. China is not a traditional foe of Israel, and had not been considered a major threat to the End Times world empire until recently. It is the most populous nation on Earth, and has made a huge impact on global economies. Based on its Gross National Product (GNP), it was announced just before the end of this year that it now enjoys the number one economic spot in the world.

The communist Chinese government allows a state-approved Christian presence but severely persecutes the immense house-church movement.

China is involved in a massive military build-up that threatens Taiwan, South Korea, and other Asian countries. It is apparently involved in massive cyber-attacks on the Internet. It is, therefore, a prime example of Jesus' prediction of "wars and rumors of war in the days leading up to the Tribulation (Matthew 24:6). China will also be a participant in the Battle of Armageddon, as one of the "Kings of the East" that will cross the dried-up Euphrates river to join the campaign (Revelation 16:12).

China is often in the news now. Here are some highlights

from the year.

[See the Topics: [“China”](#) and [“Economic Issues”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[China's nuclear missile drill seen as warning to US not to meddle in region](#)

Jan. 23, 2014 - China's army released 17 photos of its Dongfeng-31 intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time. It has a range of nearly 10,000 kilometers. It could deliver a nuclear warhead to the capitals of Europe or the west coast of the United States.

Military observer Antony Wong Dong thinks the publicity is a warning to the U.S. after the Pentagon's decisions to send F-22 fighter jets to Okinawa and replace the USS George Washington with the younger USS Ronald Reagan at Yokosuka Naval Base near Tokyo.

"The disclosure of the Dongfeng-31 at this time obviously aims to respond to the United States' two big military moves in Japan, which make Beijing believe it is going to meddle in the territorial disputes between China and Japan," Wong said. (South China Morning Post)

[China Named the World's Most Powerful Nation](#)

Apr. 7, 2014 - The report from the Emerging and Growth-Leading Economies (EAGLEs) research project says that China is the "most powerful nation" on its "world market power" index.

"China holds the largest share among emerging markets in the sample for 9 out of 18 industries, including all manufacturing groups except food (surpassed by Brazil). The largest industry share corresponds to textiles and leather (above 30%)." (Breitbart)

[U.S. Charges Five Chinese Military Officers With Spying](#)

May 20, 2014 - This article displays a photograph of FBI WANTED posters naming five Chinese military officers.

The charges, unsealed today in District Court in Pennsylvania, allege the Chinese officers conspired to steal trade secrets and other information from U.S. companies, including Westinghouse Electric Co. and Allegheny Technologies Inc.

The indictment has the effect of accusing China and its government of mining U.S. technology through cyber-espionage. (Bloomberg)

[China flight tests new stealth jet during Obama visit](#)

Nov. 12, 2014 - Upstaging the Asian economic summit in Beijing, China's military tested its new J-31 stealth fighter jet.

China obtained secrets from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter through cyber-attacks against a subcontractor for Lockheed Martin. The technology has shown up in China's first stealth jet, the J-20, and in the J-31.

According to White House Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes President Obama was planning to ask China President Xi Jinping to stop Chinese cyber espionage. (Fox)

[China's Tianhe-2 Still World's Fastest Supercomputer](#)

Nov. 17, 2014 - For the second year in a row China's massive Tianhe-2 supercomputer is still rated the fastest computer in the world. It appears it will hold that position until 2017 when two new supercomputers from IBM, the Summit, and the Sierra are installed in the U.S.

IBM officials said both new supercomputers will have peak

performances of more than 100 petaflops; Tianhe-2 currently has a peak performance of just under 55 petaflops. (eWeek)

[MarketWatch's Arends: China's Rise to No. 1 Economy 'A Geopolitical Earthquake'](#)

Dec. 5, 2014 - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) revealed that China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will total \$17.6 trillion this year, topping \$17.4 trillion for the United States. Harvard economist Jeff Frankel said that, on a per capita income basis, China is still a relatively poor country.

MarketWatch columnist Brett Arends explained that this is bad news for the U.S., and calls it a "geopolitical earthquake."

"Throughout history, political and military power have always depended on economic power. . .This will not change anything tomorrow or next week, but it will change almost everything longer term." (NewsMax)

[Chinese Hypersonic Strike Vehicle May Overcome US Missile Defense: Expert](#)

Dec. 8, 2014 - According to Igor Korotchenko, Director of the Center for the Analysis of the World Arms Trade, China's test of their Hypersonic Strike Vehicle (the HGV - dubbed the WU-14 by the Pentagon) will have a serious effect on US national security.

"US anxiety is centered on the fact that China is actively experimenting with weaponry that is based on hypersonic speed, which is nearly impossible to intercept using currently-available US missile defense systems," Korotchenko told Sputnik [News].

The Chinese missile is capable of carrying nuclear warheads at a speed of over Mach 10, or 12,359 kilometers per

hour, making it very difficult to intercept. (Source: Space Daily)

[China Takes Nuclear Weapons Underwater Where Prying Eyes Can't See](#)

Dec. 8, 2014 -

Fifty years after China carried out its first nuclear test, patrols by the almost impossible-to-detect JIN class submarines armed with nuclear JL-2 ballistic missiles will give President Xi Jinping greater agility to respond to an attack. (Bloomberg

[Chinese Hypersonic Strike Vehicle May Overcome US Missile Defense: Expert](#)

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Persecution

The Bible shows that there have always been persecutions, especially of those who try to live godly lives. The Jewish people were persecuted for their faith. The Early Church was also persecuted and a great number of believers were killed because of their belief in Jesus Christ. Even in more recent times persecution has been common. Most of the early colonists in the United States came here to escape persecution from their European neighbors!

Wars are usually persecution taken to its next dreadful level. Jesus said that persecution will increase, especially during the Tribulation in the future.

⁹ *“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.*

¹⁰ *And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.” – Matthew 24:9-10*

Most of the terrifying events of the Tribulation are building up during this present time, which Jesus called "The beginning of birth pains." Ethnic wars, terrorism and anti-Christian philosophies contribute to an ever-growing toll of suffering and death.

Experts estimate that that between 100 and 200 million Christians around the globe are currently suffering for their faith, especially in communistic and Islamic countries. This persecution takes many forms: imprisonment, abuse, hostilities, and even death.

A gigantic movement is taking place in the Syria-Iraq area with the spread of another aggressive terrorist movement (ISIL or

ISIS) that has declared a new Islamic caliphate (empire), and is slaughtering all opposition, virtually eliminating Christians and other religions (including Muslims who disagree with them). President Obama has reluctantly agreed that the U.S. must lend support there to prevent wholesale genocide.

Here are some of the news stories about persecution this year.

[See the Topic: ["Persecution"](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Number of Christians killed for their faith doubled in 2013](#)

Jan. 9, 2013 -

Open Doors, a non-denominational group supporting persecuted Christians worldwide, said on Wednesday it had documented 2,123 "martyr" killings, compared with 1,201 in 2012. There were 1,213 such deaths in Syria alone last year, it said.

The list shows the 50 countries that are the worst persecutors of Christians. North Korea is at the top of its list. Radical Muslims are the main source of persecution in 36 of the countries on the list.

The persecution watchdog group estimates that last year about 100 million Christians around the world suffered persecution for their faith. (Globe and Mail)

[Top 50 list of Christian persecutors](#) - WND

[World Watch List](#) - Open Doors

[ISIS to Iraqi Christians in Mosul: Convert or Die](#)

July 18, 2014 - Leaflets were distributed to Christians in

Mosul, Iraq, requiring them to convert to Islam or pay extra taxes to the Islamic Sharia courts.

According to a message from ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, non-complying Christians were permitted to "evacuate themselves only from the caliphate state" by 12 p.m. local time on Saturday or their "only option is the sword."

Meanwhile ISIS has reportedly turned parts of Mosul over to another Sunni militant group, the Naqshbandi Army (also referred to as JRTN - led by Saddam Hussein-era Baathists). ISIS has gone on to fight Iraqi armed forces in Tikrit. (Breitbart)

[After 2,000 Years, the Last Christian is Forced to Leave Mosul](#) - Breitbart

[ISIS torches 1800 year-old church in mosul priest says city is now empty of christians](#) - Christian Post

[Vatican calls on Muslim leaders to condemn Christian persecution in Iraq](#)

Aug. 13, 2014 -

The Vatican has called on Muslim leaders to denounce unambiguously the persecution of Christians and Yazidis in Iraq – and hinted that it is considering breaking off dialogue with Islamic representatives if they fail to do so.

Some 100,000 Christians have reportedly fled their homes in Iraq because of death-threats by ISIS. The statement said that ISIS was slaughtering people solely for religious reasons and were committing "the execrable practice[s] of decapitation, crucifixion

and hanging of corpses in public places."

The Vatican's Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue said that all religious leaders, including those espousing Islam, must condemn these crimes if they want to continue dialogue with the Catholic Church. (The Guardian)

[Is This the End for Mideast Christianity?](#)

Nov. 5, 2014 -

"For Christians in the Middle East, 2014 has been a catastrophe. The most wrenching stories have come from Iraq, where the nascent Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL ...) has savagely persecuted ancient Christian communities, including Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syrian Orthodox."

Ever since the seventh century, when Islam conquered the Middle East, Christianity has been subdued, but even as late as 1914, the Christian population of the whole region from Egypt to Persia (Iran) was still 10%. The percentage has declined greatly in Iraq since the first Gulf War in 1991, but Christians still maintained a strong presence in Mosul, where the church was founded in the early days of Christianity.

Now observers say that the end of Christianity in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East is in sight. Only Egypt and Lebanon have a sizeable Christian population, and they too are being persecuted.

The article explores the history of persecution and the question about why God allows it. Examples are given of persecution resulting in Christian growth, especially in the case of China. The author concludes, "Suffering, Yes. Extinction, No." (Philip Jenkins - Christianity Today)

[Pope Francis: Christian Persecution, Prohibition of Worship Signs of the End Times](#)

Nov. 29, 2014 - Preaching on Jesus' Olivet Discourse in Luke 21, Pope Francis said that Christian persecution and the cultural fear of public expressions of faith are signs of the end times.

"Worship is prohibited – this is at the center of the end of time." Once we "reach the fullness of this pagan attitude truly the Son of Man will come in a cloud with great power and glory." (Christian Post)

Editor's Note: The Catholic Church does not believe in the Rapture or the thousand-year Millennium, but they do now believe that things will get much worse before Christ's return. See our blog: [Understanding the Future](#)

[ISIS reportedly selling Christian artifacts, turning churches into torture chambers](#)

Dec. 20, 2014 -

The Islamic State is turning Christian churches in Iraq and Syria into dungeons and torture chambers after stripping them of priceless artifacts to sell on the black market, according to reports. (Fox)

False Peace

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end

is still to come. – Matthew 24:6

At the same time that Jesus mentioned the proliferation of wars, He also implied that there would be hope for peace. In spite of these conflicts He encouraged believers to not be alarmed.

The search for peace is a major issue in End-Times Bible prophecy. The age-old tension between Israel and her Islamic neighbors will undoubtedly result in more conflict in the Middle East; including the regional war predicted in Psalm 83 (See Islamic State vs. the World earlier in this chapter). Resolution of this struggle will probably produce the temporary peace predicted by the Apostle Paul.

For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. – 1 Thessalonians 5:3

That peace agreement will presumably take place toward the end of "The Beginning of Birth Pains." A short-lived peace treaty will give occasion for the surprise attack of Israel predicted by Ezekiel (the War of Gog and Magog - Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39). This may be the same as the War of the Second Seal (Revelation 6:3-4 - See The Second Seal in Chapter Seven). God will intervene and give victory to Israel.

Israel will also be given a seven-year covenant or peace treaty by the evil end-times dictator that will be broken after three and one-half years(The "Abomination of Desolation" - Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-21; Revelation 13).

On the subject of the prospect for peace between Israel and the Palestinians, 2014 was a year-long exercise in futility. U.S.

Secretary of State John Kerry made numerous unfruitful trips to the Middle East. The Palestinians pushed for a unilateral declaration of statehood by the UN. This short-circuited the necessary peace process and inflamed tensions. At least 138 of the 19 nations in the UN have indicated support for Palestine to be recognized as a nonmember observer state.⁴⁵

Palestinians and the whole Arab world want the borders of Palestine to be virtually the same as they were before the 1967 “Six-day War.” Israel is unwilling to return to those borders because it would leave them vulnerable to attack (See the discussion on Israel vs. Palestinians earlier in this chapter).

Some of the other important-but-unsolved issues are:

- The building of Jewish settlements in disputed areas of East Jerusalem and the West Bank.
- The question of who controls the Temple Mount, and who is allowed to worship there.
- The growing desire by religious Israelis to rebuild the Jewish Temple.
- The desire by both sides to claim all, or part, of Jerusalem for their capital.
- The insistence by some of Israel’s leaders that Israel be recognized as a Jewish state.
- The demand by Palestinians for a “right of return” for refugees and their descendants.

This ongoing stalemate has caused people everywhere to hope for peace in the area, partially fulfilling the ancient prophecy: that Jerusalem would become a world-wide burden. The ultimate fulfillment will be at the Campaign of Armageddon

(See Chapter Seven).

² *“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. ³ And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. – Zechariah 12:2-3*

The following summaries show the frustration that was caused by the unsuccessful attempts at peace-making this year. The latest round of peace talks expired in April. A new war between Israel and Gaza raged in July and August.

[See the Topic: [“Peace”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Palestinian leader heads to Moscow. Abbas wants Russia to play “bigger role” in epicenter.](#)

Jan. 22, 2014 - Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will arrive in Russia today, and plans to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. They will discuss bilateral relations and the progress of the United States-mediated talks between the Palestinians and Israel. Nabil Shaath, Fatah’s Commissioner of International Relations, says the talks are deadlocked.

“Russia has played a huge role in reaching agreement with Iran and we are also seeing progress [in talks] on Syria. This brings us hope that the visit [of Abbas] will ensure progress in settling the Palestinian-Israeli issue,” Shaath said. (Joel Rosenberg)

[Quartet to meet in Munich over stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace talks](#)

Jan. 31, 2013 - After six months of trying to get Israel and the Palestinians together for peace talks, the "Quartet" (representatives from United Nations, United States, Russia and European Union) will meet in Munich on Saturday. They will discuss how to keep the process going.

But, with both sides far apart on many core issues including borders, security, the right of return for Palestinian refugees and the future status of Jerusalem, many Palestinians and Israelis believe the talks are going nowhere. (Jerusalem Post)

[Israeli official suggests Palestinians celebrating failure of peace talks](#)

Mar. 21, 2014 -

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas returned from Washington on Thursday to a hero's welcome in Ramallah, where he pledged not to give up the Palestinians' rights or betray their trust.

Abbas said he had resisted making concessions, "especially on the issue of recognizing Israel as a "Jewish state." Some observers said it was reminiscent of Yasser Arafat's return from Camp David in 2000. At that time Palestinians were actually celebrating the failure of peace talks. Soon after that time the second intifada broke out. (Jerusalem Post)

[Netanyahu to Palestinians: When you want peace, let us know](#)

Apr. 22, 2014 - As the April 29 deadline for the end of the peace talks approaches President Mahmoud Abbas threatens to dismantle the Palestinian Authority.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu criticized the Palestinian Authority on Monday, saying that its threat to dissolve and the ruling Fatah faction's efforts to forge unity with Hamas indicate a lack of desire for peace.

He said, "When they want peace, they should let us know. Because we want a genuine peace."(Jerusalem Post)

Official: Obama blames Israel for talks failure

May 18, 2014 -

For the first time since the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks halted, US President Barack Obama has directly blamed Israel for the failure of negotiations, the New York Times reported Thursday.

President Obama complained that, "At every juncture, there was a settlement announcement." These announcements, according to Obama, "kept throwing a wrench in the gears."

The president reportedly said that future talks between Israel and the Palestinians are still possible, and the U.S. would help them achieve peace if they want to try again.

Source: i24 News

Germany 'very worried' about Israel's plans to advance settlement building

Jun. 6, 2014 - Because of the unilateral action by the

Palestinians to form a unity government including Hamas, Israel announced plans for an additional 1,800 new buildings in settlement areas. Germany is especially concerned about the move. German government spokeswoman Christiane Wirtz said that it will make efforts to continue the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians harder.

The European Union also expressed unhappiness:

"We are deeply disappointed that the Israeli Land Administration has published new tenders for 1,466 housing units in settlements in east Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank," the EU said in a statement. "This move is unhelpful to peace efforts." (Jerusalem Post)

New Israeli President Opposes Palestinian State

Jun. 11, 2014 - Reuven Rivlin, a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, has been elected by Israel's parliament as their 10th president. He is known to be opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Rivlin subscribes to the more popular of the one-state solutions, which proposes granting the Palestinians a form of extended autonomy. Under the proposal, the Palestinians would be granted Israeli citizenship, but would vote for their own parliament. (Israel Today)

'Unilateral UN moves will lead to instability'

Dec. 16, 2014 - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry had a meeting in Rome to discuss the fact that the Palestinians plan to ask the UN to

recognize Palestine as an independent state.

In the meeting with Kerry on Monday, Netanyahu requested that the U.S. use its Security Council veto against a Palestinian resolution (which could be proposed on Wednesday) to set a two-year deadline for the establishment of a Palestinian state."

Netanyahu told Kerry that the Palestinian plan, without Israeli agreement, would have "destructive consequences." (Israel Hayom)

Plagues

⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows. – Matthew 24:7

Pestilences would include wild animals, pests, diseases and environmental hazards. These things have been problems in every age, but in these days there are major concerns about AIDS, drug-resistant strains of old diseases like tuberculosis, and newer threats like Ebola, for which there is no vaccination. Radiation from space, radio, television and cellular signals, and nuclear accidents are adding to the growing problem of cancer, which affects most families today. Terrorism and threats of war pose the additional nightmare of injury or death by nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

During this year we experienced the imminent danger of a

global Ebola pandemic that has already crippled parts of West Africa and has been labeled an “International public health emergency” by the World Health Organization (WHO). At present there is no cure for Ebola, and approximately 50% of those who contract the virus die. It could easily reach the point that hospitals will be overrun with dying patients and people will have to deal with their own family’s crisis without professional help. Books have been published on how to prepare to quarantine one’s own loved ones and care for them in an isolated portion of their home.⁴⁶

Air pollution is a major threat, killing between 350,000 and 500,000 people each year in China alone.

During the Tribulation, the Book of Revelation predicts even greater world-wide disasters, symbolized by the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (Revelation 6:1-8). These disasters are a false messiah (white horse), a great war (red horse), famine (black horse), and then rampant sickness and death (pale horse).

The following news summaries give a sense of the urgency of these problems.

[See the Topics: [“Plagues”](#) and in Prophecy Central]

[US Government Orders 14 Million Doses of Potassium Iodide](#)

Jan. 1, 2014 -

The Department of Health and Human Services has ordered 14 million doses of potassium iodide, the compound that protects the body from radioactive poisoning in the aftermath of severe nuclear accidents, to be delivered before the beginning of February.

The unprecedented purchase is apparently a precaution to

protect Americans on the West coast from radioactive debris from Japan's Fukushima disaster. It is beginning to wash up on our shores. Another major earthquake in Japan could cause an even greater nuclear accident. (InfoWars)

[China's 'airpocalypse' kills 350,000 to 500,000 each year](#)

Jan. 7, 2014 - China's former Health minister, Chen Zhu warns that air pollution is now the fourth worst health threat in China.

"Studies by the World Bank, WHO, and the Chinese Academy for Environmental Planning on the effect of air pollution on health concluded that between 350,000 and 500,000 people die prematurely each year as a result of outdoor air pollution in China."

Mr. Chen also said that his country produces the largest number of major pollutants in the world. (Telegraph – UK)

[Outbreak of 'Nightmare Bacteria' in Illinois Stirs Worry](#)

Jan. 7, 2013 - A hospital in a Chicago suburb has experienced the largest-ever outbreak of a drug-resistant "nightmare bacteria" known as carbapenem-resistant enterobacteriaceae. Some 44 people have contracted the bacteria in the hospital over the past year. It produces a rare enzyme that breaks down antibiotics.

"This is a huge cluster," said Alex Kallen, a medical officer with the CDC and supervisor for the Illinois outbreak investigation, noting that only 97 cases of the infection have been reported to

the agency since 2009. (Fox)

[Air pollution linked to seven million deaths globally](#)

Mar. 25, 2014 - According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2012 there were approximately seven million deaths caused by air pollution. Nearly six million of the deaths occurred in South East Asia and the WHO's Western Pacific region.

One in eight global deaths were linked with air pollution, making it "the world's largest single environmental health risk", the WHO said.

Source: BBC

[Guinea battles to contain Ebola as Senegal closes its border](#)

Mar. 30, 2014 - In Guinea, Africa, there have been 111 cases of hemorrhagic fever, leading to 70 deaths. This is a fatality rate of 63 percent.

The European Union pledged 500,000 euros (\$690,000) to fight the contagion, while the Senegalese interior ministry said border crossings to Guinea would be closed "until further notice". (Source: Yahoo)

[Fears For Antibiotic 'Apocalypse' Grow](#)

May 28, 2014 - Drug-resistant diseases are causing what has been described as an 'apocalyptic' problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),

At least two million Americans a year are infected with drug-resistant bugs and 23,000 die as a direct result. Even more

die from other illnesses that were made worse by infections that cannot be treated.

Another 5,000 die annually in Britain.

The population is not as responsive to antibiotics as they used to be because of over-use of the drugs. It takes a decade to develop new drugs, but no new types of antibiotics have been approved for use in a quarter of a century. (Forbes)

[Superbugs Threaten Return to Medical 'Dark Ages,' Warns British PM](#)

July 2, 2014 - Britain's British Prime Minister David Cameron has called for a review of the problem that anti-microbial drugs have not been developed while a growing number of bacteria have become drug-resistant.

"If we fail to act, we are looking at an almost unthinkable scenario where antibiotics no longer work and we are cast back into the dark ages of medicine where treatable infections and injuries will kill once again," he said. (NewsMax)

[Smallpox vials, decades old, found in storage room at NIH campus in Bethesda](#)

July 9, 2014 -

A government scientist cleaning out a storage room last week at a lab on the National Institutes of Health's Bethesda campus found decades-old vials of smallpox.

Last month, three CDC labs were involved in the accidental

release of live anthrax bacteria. (Washington Post)

[Three More Cases of Deadly Plague Found in Colorado](#)

July 18, 2014 - One man in Colorado has been hospitalized with pneumonic plague and two others have contracted mild cases of the disease (from a bacterium named *Yersinia pestis*). They were treated with antibiotics, recovered, and are no longer contagious.

The difference between the pneumonic and bubonic varieties is that the bacteria takes hold in the lungs in the first case, rather than underneath the skin through insect bites.

Source: NewsMax

[Ebola outbreak declared a public health emergency by World Health Organization](#)

Aug. 8, 2014 - The World Health Organization has declared West Africa's outbreak of Ebola an international public health emergency.

It is the largest and longest outbreak ever recorded of Ebola, which has a death rate of about 50 percent and has so far killed at least 932 people. WHO declared similar emergencies for the swine flu pandemic in 2009 and for polio in May. (Fox)

[The Ebola Outbreak Shows Why the Global Health System Is Broken](#)

Aug. 12, 2014 - Even though the World Health Organization declared the West African Ebola outbreak an international health emergency, there are other diseases like malaria and tuberculosis that are killing Africans at higher rates.

At the same time, the Ebola outbreak is a wake-up call to

governments everywhere: The international health system is broken. Preventing a recurrence of this tragedy will require more money and attention. (Business Week)

Ebola In America: One Hospital Just Treated Three Ebola Patients -- And Already Cured Two Of Them

Oct. 1, 2014 -

Ebola is now in America. The CDC on Tuesday confirmed that a Texas hospital is treating the first case of Ebola ever diagnosed in the United States.

The good news is that a pair of missionaries who had contracted Ebola in Africa came to the U.S. almost two months ago, and both of them were cured at Emory University Hospital. Several other U.S. hospitals have also been trained to recognize and treat Ebola. (Forbes)

Ebola Scare Turns Dallas Hospital Into a 'Ghost Town'

Oct. 18, 2014 - Even though the nurses who contracted the Ebola virus have been moved from the building, people who need medical care are staying away from Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas.

People have called to cancel outpatient procedures, and some have even opted not to go to Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in emergency situations, ABC Dallas affiliate WFAA reports. (ABC)

New Volcanic Activity Near Nuclear Plant in Japan Causes Fear, Alarm

Oct. 24, 2014 - Japan's Iyama volcano has registered

increased seismic activity. It is close to the Sendai nuclear power plant [about 40 miles away].

A month earlier, the catastrophic Mount Ontake volcanic eruption killed 57 people. The disaster was not accompanied by any previous signs of seismic activity which could have warned Japanese authorities about the impending catastrophe, the Independent reported. (RIA)

[Quarantined Nurse in N.J. Can Return to Maine; Child Undergoing Tests for Ebola in NYC](#)

Oct. 27, 2014

Kaci Hickox, the nurse from Maine who recently returned from West Africa and was quarantined for the past three days at University Hospital in Newark, N.J. . . . has been cleared to return home by the state's public health officials.

New York City's Bellevue Hospital is testing a five-year-old boy for Ebola. The child recently returned to the US from Guinea. (Boston)

Oct. 25, 2014 - [Global Ebola cases pass 10,000 as Mali becomes latest nation to record a death](#) - The Guardian

[Deadly Central American mosquito found in San Diego](#)

Oct. 31, 2014 - An *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, commonly known as the yellow fever mosquito, was found this week at San Diego's 32nd Street Naval Station. This insect is capable of transmitting the deadly dengue hemorrhagic fever and other serious diseases usually found in South America, Haiti and Africa.

The same kind of mosquitoes was found Oct. 7 and Oct. 8 in the Los Angeles-area counties of Commerce and Pico Rivera. (WND)

[Next Big World Health Crisis: Drug-Resistant Malaria](#)

Dec. 16, 2014 - Thousands are being cured of Malaria, thanks to a combination therapies (ACTs) based on artemisinin, a Chinese herb derivative.

Malaria death rates dropped by 47 percent between 2000 and 2014 worldwide but it still killed some 584,000 people in 2013, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The bad news is that malaria parasites have been building up resistance to the drugs. (NewsMax)

Earthquakes, Famines and Other Natural Disasters

⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows. – Matthew 24:7

This has not been a very dramatic year for earthquake activity. The largest temblor of the year was an 8.2 magnitude event in Chile. There were 11 others in the 7.0 to 7.9 magnitude range.⁴⁷ It is interesting that most of the bigger quakes occurred in just one month (April). However, there were relatively few deaths caused by seismic action. As always, there is constant earthquake and volcanic activity in many places, and especially in the so-called “Ring of Fire” around the Pacific Ocean basin.⁴⁸

Volcanoes were in the news more this year, but experts say this is because of improved news coverage instead of increased activity.⁴⁹ According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), there are about 1500 potentially active volcanoes in the world in addition to a “continuous belt” of volcanoes on the ocean floor.⁵⁰

In spite of the relative calm this year, is safe to say that the periodic display of great destructive power by earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis during the past decade has been a strong reminder of how devastating these forces can be.

In our lifetime famine has been a serious problem. It is not because of over-population, but a result of wars, drought, and other natural disasters. Thirty-three percent of the earth's population is said to be starving. About 1.5 million children die from hunger every year.⁵¹

Here are some pertinent news summaries about this topic:

[See the Topics: [“Earthquakes”](#) and [“Volcanoes”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topics: [“Fearful Events”](#) and [“Famines”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[4.4 earthquake hits L.A.; experts were warned ahead of quake](#)

Mar. 17, 2014 - A 4.4 magnitude earthquake struck the Los Angeles area this morning about five miles from Westwood. Seismologist Robert Graves said that it was the most significant shake in this Southern California area since the magnitude 5.5 earthquake in Chino Hills in 2008. He also said that the affected area has not been seismically active recently.

Nancy King, geophysicist with the U.S. Geological Survey, said: "We live in earthquake country and we can expect

earthquakes frequently and the big one, one day. We don't know when that one's coming."

An early earthquake warning system being tested by scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey in Pasadena was successful in giving an alert a few seconds before the quake. (Los Angeles Times)

[Earthquake: 5.1 quake shakes Los Angeles, Southern California](#)

Mar. 28, 2014 - A magnitude 5.1 earthquake was reported Friday evening one mile from La Habra, California, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The temblor occurred at 9:09 p.m. Pacific time at a depth of 0.6 miles. (Los Angeles Times)

[7.5 quake on California fault could be disastrous](#)

Mar. 31, 2014 - The Puente Hills thrust fault stretches from northern Orange County, under downtown Los Angeles, into Hollywood. It could prove more catastrophic than one along the San Andreas. (Associated Press)

[Powerful earthquake strikes off Chile, triggers tsunami](#)

Apr. 1, 2014 - An 8.2-magnitude earthquake has occurred approximately 60 miles northwest of Iquique, Chile. The depth of the quake was 12.5 miles.

Tsunami waves of more than 6 feet generated by the earthquake washed ashore on the coast. Iquique, with a population of more than 200,000, saw waves 7 feet high. (CNN)

[April Had a Record Number of Big Earthquakes](#)

May 1, 2014 - Instead of the typical one or two medium-to-large earthquakes per month, April records showed an incredible 13 quakes of magnitudes 6.5 or higher. Five of them were powerful enough to generate tsunami warnings. See an animation that shows the pattern of earthquakes during the month. (The Atlantic Cities)

Prediction: 2/3 of U.S. could be devastated

July 22, 2014 - Yellowstone National Park is actually a supervolcano. Most scientists think that a major eruption is unlikely in the near future, but there are some signs that activity is increasing.

It could blast 240 cubic miles of ash, rocks and lava into the atmosphere, rendering about two-thirds of the nation immediately uninhabitable, according to some estimates, and plunge the world into a “nuclear winter.”(WND)

Study: Half of Americans, Majority of White Evangelicals Believe Natural Disasters Are Rising Due to 'End Times' Not Climate Change

Nov. 28, 2014 - According to a new poll by the Public Religion Research Institute, 49 percent of Americans now believe that the recent surge in natural disasters is the result of biblical "End Times."

Especially white evangelical Protestants are more likely — 77 percent — to attribute the severity of recent natural disasters to the End Times than to climate change, added the poll on religion and the environment. (Christian Post)

Signs/Terrors in the Heavens

There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. – Luke 21:11

Jesus included “great signs from heaven” in His description of the Beginning of Birth Pains. When one reads the Revelation, it is obvious that signs in the skies and objects falling from the sky will be major factors during the coming Tribulation. But evidently, even in our current time, there will be astronomical events that will draw our attention to the End Times.

So much is known now about the apparent movement of stars and planets, eclipses and unusual conjunctions, and the periodic appearance of comets. Nevertheless, people are fascinated even by these predictable occurrences.

Still, there are unexpected events and threats like asteroids that we have never seen before, solar flares from the Sun, and even reports of possible UFO appearances. It is possible that some of these events have spiritual meaning.

As noted at the beginning of this report, Jesus used the well-known “sign” of red skies—a trusted predictor of the weather—as an object lesson that we should be aware of the “Signs of the Times” (Matthew 16:1-3).

Here are some news summaries that related to this topic during the year.

[See the Topics: [“Fearful”](#) and [“Signs in the Heavens”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[See the Topic: [“UFOs”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Huge asteroid to fly safely by Earth Monday](#)

Feb. 17, 2014 - Near-Earth asteroid 2000 EM26 is flying by Earth tonight. It is the size of three football fields but does not pose a danger to us because it will be about 9 times as far away as the Moon. (Fox)

[Solar Flares Came Close to Wreaking Havoc on Earth's Technology](#)

Mar. 19, 2014 - University of California, Berkeley research physicist Janet Luhmann revealed that the fierce solar storm that erupted on July 23, 2012 could have caused an estimated \$2.6 trillion worth of damage to the Earth's electrical grids and modern technologies such as global positioning system satellites.

The bursts from the sun, called coronal mass ejections, carried southward magnetic fields and would have clashed with Earth's northward field, causing a shift in electrical currents that could have caused electrical transformers to burst into flames.

If the storm had occurred nine days earlier it would have aimed directly at Earth.

Source: NewsMax

[NASA: Asteroid Will Pass 'Very Close' To Earth On Sunday](#)

Sept. 4, 2014 - An asteroid, designated 2014 RC, was only discovered a few days ago. On Sunday it will safely pass over New Zealand at a distance of about 25,000 miles.

On the night of Aug. 31, the asteroid was first discovered by the Catalina Sky Survey near Tucson, Ariz., and was detected independently the next night by the Pan-STARRS 1 telescope that is located in Hawaii. (CBS Tampa)

[Huge Solar Flare Erupts from Biggest Sunspot in 24 Years \(Photos\)](#)

Oct. 26, 2014 - The biggest sunspot on the face of the sun in more than two decades unleashed a major flare on Friday (Oct. 24), the fourth intense solar storm from the active star in less than a week. (Space.com)

[Top UFO Videos of 2014](#)

Dec. 23, 2014 - Watch these videos to understand why so many people believe in Unidentified Flying Objects. Most of them have still not been identified. (Open Minds)

Blood Moons

... and fearful events and great signs from heaven. – Luke 21:11b

This section is a special treatment of one series of “signs from the heavens” that has received a great deal of attention for the past couple of years. This was our commentary on the issue from April 15, 2014.

[Do the Blood Moons Really Mean Anything?](#)

The great interest in the rare phenomenon of a series of blood-red moons raises a couple of important questions that need to be answered.

Does the Bible teach that events in the heavens may have spiritual meaning?

The first chapter of the Bible declares that the lights in the sky will serve as “signs and seasons” (Genesis 1:14), and Revelation, the last book gives several prophecies of changes in the sun and the moon, and falling stars (asteroids) during the Tribulation (Revelation 6:12-17; 8:10-12). In between these books there are many other examples of the spiritual importance of the heavenly bodies.

The Hebrews had their own ancient understanding of the meaning of the constellations (Job 9:9; 38:31-33). This concept has been called [“The Gospel in the Stars”](#) describing the spiritual battle between good and evil, and the promised coming of a heroic virgin-born Savior who would destroy the power of the dragon.

One of the prophecies about Messiah was that He would be “a star out of Jacob” (Numbers 24:17). In the days of the Babylonian Empire, Daniel was the only one who could interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. The king rewarded Daniel by making him the head of his Wise Men, the Magi. Hundreds of years later, descendants of those Wise Men, recognized an unusual series of events in the sky that they interpreted to be a fulfillment of the passage in Numbers, so they went to Israel and were directed to the place where the infant Jesus was (Matthew 2:1-2, 9-10).

Another prophet, Joel, wrote:

The sun shall be turned into darkness,

And the moon into blood,

Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.- Joel 2:31

Jesus, teaching about the future, corroborated this

prophecy:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. – Matthew 24:29-30 (See also Luke 21:11, 25-28)

The same prediction was mentioned by Peter (Acts 2:20). It was also described in John's vision (Revelation 6:12-14).

However, these passages are clearly referring to a yet-future time at the end of the dreadful Tribulation Period, just before the Glorious return of Christ to the earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:11-16).

If the current series of blood moons are not a fulfillment of that still-future day just before the Lord returns to reign, what significance do they have? John Hagee in his book, *Four Blood Moons: Something Is about to Change*, correctly demonstrated that there is an uncanny connection between the past occurrences of this phenomenon and major developments in the history of the Chosen People at the very times when their enemies were dedicated to their destruction. They especially point to the time-frame of 1493-1494, when Jews were being exterminated and driven out of Spain. But at the same time Columbus discovered America (1492), which would become a haven for Jewish people. Hagee also noted that this tetrad of blood-moons occurred in 1949-1950, just after Israel had become

a nation (1948), and were attacked by their neighbors from all sides. The tetrad also occurred in 1967-1968, when Israel had to fight the “Six-Day War” and gained much additional property from its enemies.

This current tetrad of blood moons comes at a time when Israel’s very existence is being threatened by Iran’s nuclear program. Iranian leaders have repeatedly expressed the desire to annihilate Israel. This particular series has an additional aspect that makes it even more significant. These eclipses all occur during the celebration of the Jewish festivals of Passover and Tabernacles. Hagee says that all of this means something big is about to happen, but he wisely does not claim to know what that development will be.

Do we have to choose between spreading the Gospel or teaching prophecy?

In recent years it has become increasingly popular for pastors and Bible teachers to minimize the importance of prophecy. A CNN article about the Blood Moons quoted a professor at a Bible College, saying, “But instead of looking to the heavens for signs of the future, Christians should focus on the hope and promise of the gospel message and seek to reflect Christ in word and deed.”⁵²

Have they forgotten that during the major revivals of our generation, such as the Jesus People movement, the Gospel spread like wildfire, and the leaders of the movement were excited about Bible prophecy? The proper teaching of prophecy does not stifle hope, but it does stimulate evangelism.

The alternative, being chosen by too many spiritual leaders today, is to ignore prophecy, which represents more than a fourth

of the Bible! The solution is not a question of “either/or” but of “both/and.” Let us proclaim both the Gospel and Prophecy.

The following summaries reflect various points of view about the subject.

[See the Topic: ["Signs in the Heavens"](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Blood-moons fallout: NASA goes hiding](#)

Feb. 17, 2014 - The first of a tetrad of "blood moons," is due April 15th. Surprisingly, the NASA website that had provided detailed information about the upcoming events has removed the data. Their explanation was that it was out of date, and might be posted again when it has been updated. (WND)

Update 2/25/14 - [NASA Eclipse page available again](#)

[Divine Sign for Israel? Hagee Explains Blood Moons](#)

Feb. 19, 2014 - Well-known pastor and author John Hagee explains the possible importance of the upcoming series of four blood-red moons over the course of the next two years. This series of four eclipses of the moon in this sequence is rare, and has amazingly occurred at the time of several major historical events for the people and nation of Israel. (CBN)

[The Blood Moons and Joel 2:31](#)

Mar. 25, 2014 - "The sun will be given over to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and terrifying Day of the Lord." — Joel 2:31

Dr. William Welty, a Greek and Hebrew scholar, gives an impressive "minority report" on the coming tetrad of red moons. These are indeed the end times, but Joel's prophecy wouldn't apply to this time before the Tribulation even begins. He explains.

It's to serve as the final harbinger of the end of days, as Jesus pointed out:

“Now immediately after the troubles of those days, ‘The sun will be darkened, the moon will not reflect its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers from the heavens will be disrupted.’” — Matthew 24:29

He also gives detailed information to show that the change of the sun and moon should be one event, not several.

Source: Koinonia House

[Just a matter of time: End of history upon us?](#)

Apr. 1, 2014 - In his book, “Blood Moons: Decoding the Imminent Heavenly Signs,” pastor Mark Biltz contends that signs in the heavens are signals of important milestones in Israel's past history and may point to new developments in the Holy Land.

Nothing in Scripture is trivial, and so Biltz shows readers that the feasts of the Lord and the calendar of the Lord are hand-in-glove with eclipses and other signs in the heavens, signaling major events in history. (Source: WND)

[Total lunar eclipse: Many ways to watch 'blood moon' live](#)

April 14, 2014 - You don't need to go to Griffith Park to see tonight's eclipse. If you live in North America you should be able to see it in the sky. This article lists several websites that will be streaming information and live pictures of the event. (Los Angeles Times)

[Blood moon: Sky gazers mesmerized as red hue lights up night sky](#)

Apr. 15, 2014 - Crowds of people went to the Griffith Park Observatory in Los Angeles last night to see a rare "blood moon" event.

In Los Angeles, the chance to view the total lunar eclipse lured thousands to the Griffith Observatory. Families spread out blankets on the grass to take in views from dozens of telescopes set up like a stand of small trees. (CNN/ Griffith Observatory)

[Blood Moon Returns on Oct. 8 for 2014's Second Lunar Eclipse](#)

Oct. 5, 2014 - The second of four blood moons in slightly more than one year will occur on Oct. 8. This one will appear to be bigger and brighter than the first one of the series. (NewsMax)

['Blood Moon' lunar eclipse seen in Americas and E Asia](#)

Oct. 8, 2014 – (BBC)

Chapter Five – Revival

Because God is all-powerful and all-loving, He will make sure that anyone who would respond to the Gospel will have an opportunity to hear it. That is why it is likely that a great End-Times revival would occur during these difficult days, especially for the sake of those who have not heard the truth.

Admittedly, much of this report has been bad news about a weak and worldly church and a world in turmoil.

*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! –*

Isaiah 5:20

The good news is that these very factors could lead to a much-needed spiritual revival. As a pastor I have always taught, “*As the night gets darker, the light shines brighter.*” In our recent study of Church history, and especially the Period of the Missionary Church (Mid-1700’s – 1900’s)⁵³, we saw that the great revivals grew out of a sense of spiritual need. The most recent one, the so-called “Jesus People Movement,” came on the

heels of the sexual revolution and drug culture of the '60's and '70's. When a godless life style leaves its victims empty, there is a golden opportunity for the Bible's message of salvation to be welcomed and received.

In the Bible, The Lord always gave believers an opportunity to repent, and he often allowed the worst of pagans the opportunity to believe in Him.

He gave opportunity to Noah's family, Lot's family, and the believers in Jericho and Nineveh to repent and be spared. Why wouldn't He do the same for the young people of our generation who have never really understood the Gospel?

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. – 2 Peter 3:9

Revival must come through God's Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4). Furthermore, His people must really want it!

We will consider some of the outstanding methods and events of our generation that are providing Bible truth in ways that will make sense, especially to young people. Most of this section is adapted from our

book, *The Church in Prophecy and History: Commentary on Revelation chapters 1 to 3.*⁵⁴

Visualizing what could happen, and imagining how each of us could be involved in this “Next Great Awakening” may be the best contribution of this book.

Prayer Movements

Our generation is complex. There are places like Central and South America, Korea, and parts of Africa where there are revivals going on now with amazing numbers of believers winning others to Christ. In China the underground church has grown exponentially and is spiritually strong in spite of persecution. Europe and North America, the bastions of the truth during the Missionary Age, have slowly grown apathetic. It is worse in Europe, where many of the churches have become taverns or mosques, but it seems that the United States is following in their footsteps.

How does God see our present world? We can be sure He still loves all of His creatures. Through His Son He has already provided salvation for all who will receive it.

Like the Laodicean Church, there is still an opportunity for lukewarm Christians to be revived. But will we?

We cannot schedule a revival, nor do anything great to make it happen. But we can repent of our worldliness and pray:

Revival is not the same as a great evangelistic harvest of conversions to Christ. Revival or “awakening” comes to those who are already believers, but who have been lulled into spiritual lethargy. Revival is for those who already belong to Christ but have become lukewarm.

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. – 2 Chronicles 7:14

But when revival takes place, these revived Christians become mighty missionaries to their own generation. They take the Gospel to the multitudes who have not yet been born again.

Critics might point out the fact that this verse was given in Solomon's days to the Chosen People. But can anyone doubt that God would treat His adopted children in the Church the same way (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5)? Writing to the Corinthians, Paul made it clear that the things that happened to Israel are examples to us (1 Corinthians 10:6-11).

If we care about the souls of people—including our own relatives and friends—how can we not earnestly desire for them to come to know the Lord? How could we not pray for the right circumstances in their lives to point them to Christ? Why would we not pray for another mighty spiritual awakening for their sake?

There are many prayer movements today, such as Houses of Prayer, Lou Engle's TheCall, and the National Day of Prayer. Some of them are led by young people. This is especially significant since bright young adults have been leaders in past revivals, and it is primarily for their sake that we desire to experience such a renewal. Historically, major revivals have often come from college youth movements.

Here are some news summaries about revival:

[See the Topic: [“Revival”](#) in Prophecy Central]

National Day of Prayer: Unity of 'one mind, one voice'

May 1, 2014 - Today Christians recognize the 63rd annual National Day of Prayer. This year's theme is "One Voice, United in Prayer."(OneNewsNow)

National Day of Prayer

Southern Baptist president calls 46,000 churches to "extraordinary prayer" for Great Awakening.

Nov. 13, 2014 - Dr. Ronnie Floyd, The new president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has issued a call to intense prayer for revival in all Southern Baptist churches, devoting an entire month of messages on the subject in each church and providing extraordinary prayer gatherings. His message is available as a short free book that can be downloaded directly. He says,

The time is now for us to come together before God in clear agreement, visible union, and in extraordinary prayer for the next Great Awakening, and for the world to be reached for Christ. (Joel Rosenberg)

Intercessors, Will You Respond to This Call From God?

Dec. 19, 2014 - At the Governor's mansion in Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal met with more than 70 pastors and prayer leaders to make plans for a prayer event in Baton Rouge in January, 2015. The rally will be called "The Response: a Call to Prayer for a nation in Crisis."

There are many earnest prayer ministries that are waiting to see a great spiritual breakthrough. They include Houses of Prayer all over the world. Lou Engle's TheCall, Faytene Grasseschi's TheCry, OneCry, Cry Out America, Broken Before the Throne and the National Day of Prayer.

The Response will be held on Jan. 24, 2015, at the Pete Maravich Assembly Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It will also be available on streaming video at theresponsela.com.

Source: Charisma News

Missions

Even though missionary work has declined in our generation, there are tens of thousands of highly-trained, incredibly-devoted missionaries still taking the Gospel to the masses using all the methods that have been produced in the past, and utilizing advanced technology to finish the task of providing Scriptures to people everywhere. Most of the best results in our generation are the work of indigenous leaders in nearly every country of the world. Who knows when something very powerful might begin in some inconspicuous place that would lead to a wildfire of revival and evangelism?

Just before He ascended into Heaven the Lord Jesus gave His disciples a reminder of His "Great Commission" to take the Gospel to the whole world! (Acts 1:8; see also: Matthew 28:18-20) Then an angel told the disciples that Jesus would return the same way He left the earth (Acts 1:9-11). Christians are not supposed to abandon this missions mandate and retire to a mountaintop to wait for His return. Instead, they should "occupy," or "do business" until He returns (Luke 19:13 - in a parable about faithful stewardship).

We are living at the end of the greatest period of missionary activity in history. This was foretold in the message to the Church at Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13). During this time

missionaries have followed Jesus' own example of meeting people's needs in order to earn the right to be heard. They have improved the living conditions of people around the world, fed the hungry, built hospitals, and established schools. Then they have given the Gospel, the best of all gifts.

One of the most encouraging recent developments is the dramatic come-back of a missionary enterprise for children. Child Evangelism Fellowship was encouraged to start hundreds of "Good News Clubs" on school campuses after school hours. A Supreme Court decision in 2001 declared that "the school could not deny equal access to the Club for any time that is generally available for public use."⁵⁵ Matt Staver, President of Liberty Counsel, used this ruling to encourage many Christian organizations to stand up for their First Amendment rights.⁵⁶

For children, "**Good News Clubs**" made a dramatic come-back, not so much in people's homes, but rather on school property during non-instructional time. This was the result of an encouraging Supreme Court decision in 2001 that

Ultimately, there will be representatives in Heaven of "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9). Jesus said,

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. - Matthew 24:14

So far, the missionary enterprise has only been the privilege of human disciples of the Lord, but at a certain time, during the Tribulation period, God will allow angels to finish the work (Revelation 14:6-7).

Check out these sample headlines about missions:

[See the Topics: [“Missions”](#) and [“Revival”](#) in Prophecy Central]

One of the great questions of our time is, “What if Missionaries can’t reach people in Muslim or Buddhist countries?” The following reprint of one of our blogs gives encouragement about this issue:

[Muslims Have Dreams and Visions of Jesus](#)

October 27, 2014 - It comes as a shock to many Christians to hear that Muslims, in places where they cannot be reached by missionaries, are sometimes experiencing dreams or visions of Jesus. I was surprised myself when I first heard it several years ago at a “Defending the Faith” conference we hosted at our church. Dr. J.P. Moreland, the Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, and Biola University in La Mirada, California mentioned this phenomenon in his message. I questioned him afterward, and he said he had actually received several credible reports that Jesus was appearing to some Muslims.

I was a little skeptical at first, but I respect Dr. Moreland, so I started checking it out. Some theologians claim that the Gospel must come from a human messenger. They cite Paul’s writings in Romans:

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” – Romans 10:14-15

However, Paul himself was converted by a vision of Jesus (Acts 9), and Cornelius was convinced in a vision to invite Peter (who had a corresponding vision) to give him the Gospel (Acts 10).

We have included a section in our extensive [“Islam Links”](#) on Prophecy Central about this growing phenomenon. You will find that this is a serious topic on Google and YouTube.

[Millions of former Muslims will celebrate Easter this year. Meet one, Hormoz Shariat, the “Billy Graham of Iran.”](#)

Apr. 19, 2014 - In Joel Rosenberg's 2009 non-fiction book, *Inside the Revolution*, he told of “MBBs,” Muslim Background Believers in Jesus. One example of the movement was Dr. Hormoz Shariat, who in 1979 had been a Shia Muslim shouting “Death to America!” on the streets of Tehran. He later became a Christian, along with his wife, and they started planting churches of Iranian believers. Eventually they founded a satellite TV ministry. Today, there are over one million Iranians who love Jesus Christ, and millions of other former Muslims throughout the Middle East, North Africa and central Asia who are celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Joel Rosenberg - Flashttraffic)

[35 Years of the Jesus Film has changed millions of lives](#)

Nov. 23, 2014 -

The Jesus Film Project says that since the film debuted in 1979, it has been translated into about 1,200 languages with a

viewership of more than 6 billion.

According to the Guinness Book of World Records it is “the most-translated film in history.” It is estimated that over 200 million people worldwide have decided to follow Christ after viewing it. (WND)

[Is America more religious than we think?](#)

Dec. 4, 2014 - A new Gallup Poll and other surveys show that Christianity continues to be an essential ingredient of Americans private and public lives.

“In an average week, one-in-five Americans share their religious faith online, about the same percentage that tune in to religious talk radio, watch religious TV programs or listen to Christian rock music,” Pew researchers declare. (OneNewsNow)

The Internet

The Internet has become the preferred source of information for many people. Web based videos now rival television’s viewing audience. An almost unfathomable number of videos are now available via YouTube, God Tube and other providers using smart phone service and the Internet. Some of these “go viral” and can suddenly and unexpectedly be seen by millions of viewers. Many of these spontaneous successes have been Christian stories or messages.

Books– Solomon said “Of making many books there is no end” (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Printed books are less popular at the moment, but Amazon.com had started a new free book publishing service to stimulate the production of new literature. This upsurge

will not just appear on paper, but will be electronically transmitted instantly and inexpensively to computers and smart phones all over the world.

Websites like our own "Prophecy Central" provide detailed, up-to-date information about major Bible study themes. Valuable information is available in seconds via the ubiquitous cell phone.

[See the Topics: ["Missions"](#) and ["Revival"](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Report: Jesus More Popular on China's Twitter Than Chairman Mao](#)

Apr. 9, 2014 - Chinese censors are allowing more Christian terminology to be talked about on Weibo, China's version of Twitter. A study last week revealed:

- "Jesus," received more than 18 million mentions while Chinese President Xi Jinping received 4 million mentions.
- "Bible" received 17 million mentions while Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung's "The Little Red Book," received fewer than 60,000.
- "Christian congregation" was mentioned more than 41 million times, while "Communist Party" yielded just 5.3 million mentions.

China's 100,000 censors evidently continued to ban the term "underground church." (Source: NewsMax)

Christian Music and Media

Just as most of the great hymns of yesteryear were the

product of revival movements, so inspiring new music, performed by exceptional young artists, are making an incredible impact on people today.

People love heroes, especially in music, sports and entertainment. There are many dedicated, courageous Christians in the media. Some of them will have the platform to influence great numbers of young people for Christ.

In October the Dove Awards for Christian music was more like a beautiful worship service than a display of human achievement. It was truly a night of glorious praise and worship of our Great God and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Before announcing the award for “Best Artist of the Year”—Amy Grant said:

I heard a lot of artists whose music was new to me, and I feel a kind of energy in the music of the Church that I have not felt in all the years of making music. It comes as no surprise that in Bible times, when wars were to be fought, the musicians were sent out in front. It’s a powerful place to be. [2 Chronicles 20:20-23]

The winner was Hillsong United for the album that includes the incredible worship song, “Oceans.”

Near the end of the event they announced the “Best Praise and Worship Album of the Year.” It went to Kari Jobe, a vibrant young worship leader who is known for encouraging huge audiences to praise the Lord and experience His presence.⁵⁷

Movies and videos are a major influence. The Jesus Film Project, mentioned above, which has been seen by more than 6 billion viewers, is still being shown to approximately 3.8 million people per year in more than a thousand languages.

Actually some of the highest-grossing movies on the big screen have been Bible epics or faith-based stories. In 2004 Mel Gibson shocked the movie industry by making the blockbuster “The Passion of the Christ.” It became the highest grossing R-rated film in the United States. (It was rated R because of the violence Our Lord suffered.) The most popular 2013 TV series was “The Bible,” with more than a million viewers. Mark Burnett and Roma Downey, the producers of that series have now released the biblically-accurate and moving “Son of God.” And they are planning on a follow-up series in 2015 on NBC called “A.D.: After the Bible.” An independent film, “God’s Not Dead,” had surprising success at the box office and delivered a powerful Gospel message for young people and young adults. Several other Bible or faith-based movies are in process, and the trend is seen as a surprise movement from Hollywood.

Television and Radio keep improving with new applications and technological advancements. TBN, CBN, Sky Angel, Daystar and other TV satellite networks reach most of the planet with Christian programming.

Trans World Radio (TWR) is the largest media ministry, and it is still expanding. They project that by 2015 they will be able to deliver Christian content to nearly 60 percent of the people in the world in their own language.

Salem Broadcasting is another extensive provider of Christian content, but there are hundreds of smaller networks and Christian stations that also feed the mind and spirit of Christians. Some of these programs are Christian talk radio. These informative broadcasts help inform Christians of important events that could lead to revival, and mobilize the Christian community for action when necessary.

[See the Topic: [“Revival”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Carrie Underwood's Christian-themed song 'Something in the Water' sets record](#)

Oct. 8, 2014 - Carrie Underwood is raising the bar for herself with her new single "Something in the Water." The song marked the best-selling first week of her entire career!

The song is about her Christian faith and it ends with her singing a portion of "Amazing Grace." (Fox)

['Son of God': Church Leaders Buying Out Theaters For Screenings](#)

Feb. 16, 2014 - Thousands of people will attend viewings of Son of God on Feb. 28, the night before the film's official release. Churches and groups are buying out screens, or even whole theaters all over the country.

Son of God is a version of the hit miniseries, “The Bible”, featuring new and used footage, focused just on the story of Jesus Christ. “The Bible” averaged 11.4 million viewers during its five-week run on the History channel.

"The Bible" was the top-selling miniseries on DVD of all time. (Hollywood Reporter)

[The religious drama 'God's Not Dead' surprises at box office](#)

Mar. 22, 2014 - "God's Not Dead" was shown on only 780 screens nationwide, but it took in more than \$2.8 million Friday. It may be the No. 3 movie for the weekend.

The film, which opened on just 780 screens nationwide, took in more than \$2.8 million Friday. It's likely to be the No. 3 movie for the weekend.

Meanwhile, "Son of God" is still drawing crowds and staying in the top ten this weekend. It is showing on 2,129 screens and has garnered \$53.6 million so far.

The article says this looks like the year that "Hollywood finds religion." "Noah," the controversial big budget film will be released next Friday, "Heaven Is for Real," will begin showing on April 16, and others are coming later this year including Ridley Scott's "Exodus," "Last Days in the Desert" and "Mary." (Susan King - Los Angeles Times)

['The Bible' sequel makes Christmas splash](#)

Dec. 21, 2014 - Following up the year's top cable TV sensation, "The Bible," with 100 million views, Executive Producer Roma Downey plans to bring a welcome sequel that covers the events of the Book of Acts. The new miniseries, "A.D.," will air on Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015. Watch this video, featuring...

...stirring music video from Christian pop sensation For King & Country that powerfully illustrates Jesus' words to the young church, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). (WND)

[God's forgiveness stars in WWII hero's story](#)

Dec. 24, 2014 - "Unbroken," Angelina Jolie's movie about Olympic star, WWII war hero, amazing survivor of Japanese prison camps, and evangelist Louis Zamperini, includes several

references to his conversion and Christian faith. Later in life he attended a Billy Graham Crusade...

... where an internal struggle eventually broke him and brought him to his knees at the cross of Christ. Through his relationship with Christ, he was able to forgive his captors and tormentors. (Ted Baehr – WND)

Preaching

Even with the employment of advanced technologies that make the task of spreading the Gospel so much easier and more effective than ever, there is still a need for godly, Holy Spirit-anointed preaching of God's Word.

²⁰ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. – 1 Corinthians 1:10-21

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? – Romans 10:14

Powerful, Spirit-led preaching in churches and evangelistic settings

In our own generation we have been blessed with the Billy Graham Crusades and Greg Laurie's Harvest Crusades. In the '90's a

men's movement called "Promise Keepers" was able to attract more than a million men to the Washington Mall to pray for revival.

Today we have the earnest hope of one more great revival to reach this generation of young people with the Gospel. Too many of them do not know what the Bible teaches. They don't know what they need to do in order to have a right relationship with Christ. In what he characterized as his last message to the world, Billy Graham, who has spoken to more people about Christ than any other person in history, and who is now 95 years old, just delivered a world-wide challenge calling on people everywhere to renewed hope, based on the Cross--the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on our behalf.⁵⁸

Outstanding churches, led by anointed, Bible-believing pastors kept evangelical Christianity viable during the difficult second half of the 20th Century. Here are just a few of them: J. Vernon McGee, Jack Hayford, Lloyd Ogilvie, Jerry Falwell, John Maxwell, John MacArthur, Adrian Rogers, Haddon Robinson, Chuck Swindoll, D. James Kennedy, John Piper, Charles Stanley, David Jeremiah, John Hagee, Tim Keller and Max Lucado. These all pastored large churches, wrote books, and used radio and/or television to reach a large audience.

One whole new family of churches grew out of the "Jesus People" revival: The Calvary Chapel movement. Chuck Smith, Greg Laurie, Raul Ries and Jack Hibbs are examples of their excellent pastors, but there are many other strong voices in this new fellowship of over 1000 churches worldwide.⁵⁹

We must pray that our new generation of bright young pastors will commit themselves to the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and be used in a remarkable way to focus on the Bible, the salvation message, and openness to another great awakening before the Lord returns!

[See the Topic: "[Revival](#)" in Prophecy Central]

[Where is America in end times prophecy?](#)

Sept. 7, 2014 - Evangelist Greg Laurie answers why

America does not seem to be mentioned in End Times prophecy. He admits that no one can say for sure, but even though many modern countries can be identified in prophecies, there are two possible reasons that our country may not be mentioned. One of these reasons would be that we have been reduced in power and importance by God's **judgment** on the nation for straying from our historically biblical roots, and the other possibility would be that we have experienced another much-needed revival.

In the judgment scenario, it is possible that the U.S. will have been crippled by a nuclear attack before the final End Times conflicts begin. It is also possible that the nation will have just lost its importance on the world scene, and will have declined like all the former empires in history.

Laurie's preferred theory is that there could be another great revival. He says,

In some ways, things have never been worse morally. Yet there is great opportunity for the gospel. There is an open door for believers to go through to reach out to other people.

If there is a great End Times revival the number of born-again Christians will increase. Then, when the Rapture takes place, the nation will suddenly be left without many of its best citizens, and could become less relevant on the world stage. (WND)

[Rev. Graham: 'As I Read the News, I Can't Help But Wonder if We're in Last Hours'](#)

Sept. 5, 2014 - Franklin Graham writes that with all the bad news about wars, persecution, diseases, etc., he "Can't help but wonder if we're in last hours." He said that Jesus gave this answer when His disciples asked about the end of the age:

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill

you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" (Matthew 24:9, KJV).

At the same time, he stressed that this is an opportune time for evangelism. In addition to stadium crusades, he says the Good News will be proclaimed to thousands and broadcast over the Internet to reach even more. In addition, a powerful new My Hope film will soon be released with a never-before-seen message from his father, Billy Graham about Heaven. This will give Christians a reason to invite friends and loved ones to their homes and churches to hear the Gospel. (CSN News)

A "New Thing"

A "new thing"—something we have not yet considered—might be the most likely form that the Lord, the ultimate creative genius of the Universe, will use to launch an End Time revival. The Bible story is a continuous progression of new things from God's own hand. The Creation, the Flood, the call of Abraham, the birth of Isaac when Abraham was 100, Joseph's rise to power in Egypt, the burning bush, the Exodus, manna in the wilderness, supernatural conquests, the prophets dreams and visions, the star that led the Magi, the human birth of the Son of God, Jesus miracles, the apostle's miraculous ability to speak in other languages on the Day of Pentecost, and so many other innovations demonstrate the endless variety of God's dealing with mankind.

The whole chapter of Isaiah 43 reminds believers of God's creativity. Here are just two verses from that chapter:

*“Do not remember the former things,
Nor consider the things of old.
Behold, I will do a new thing,
Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
I will even make a road in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert. – Isaiah 43:18-19*

What will the Lord do in our times to bring about a revival?
Will we be part of it? Please join me in asking the Lord to allow us
to be involved in whatever He is going to do!

Chapter Six – The Rapture

The concept of the “Rapture” or “catching up” of Christians before the beginning of the Tribulation is a prevalent view of American Christians, fortified by the best-selling novel series, “Left Behind,” and a whole genre of other books and movies about the subject.

The Rapture of the Church (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:50-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11) is not the same thing as the Glorious Return of Christ at the end of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:27-31 Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16).

Unfortunately there is much confusion about the Rapture because leaders of some branches of Christianity do not take the biblical teaching about this event literally. Various views about the End Times have developed over time as theologians interpreted world events of their times as symbolic fulfillments of the prophecies.

In this chapter we explore reasons for believing in the pre-Tribulation Rapture position.

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place

for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. – John 14:1-3

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words. – 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

As Jesus entered Jerusalem on what we call “Palm Sunday,” His many followers acknowledged Him as the promised King. They cried out, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Luke 19:38) The entrenched theologians of His day didn’t believe Jesus could be the prophesied Messiah. In fact they had given up hope that the prophecies were even true. They asked Jesus to set His disciples straight. Jesus had already criticized the Pharisees and their forefathers for not believing the prophets, and of even putting them to death (Matthew 23:29-36).

So Jesus said to the Pharisees, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.”- Luke 19:14

Today, while Jesus’ predictions about the future (Matthew 24:4-8) are coming to pass right before our eyes, and the majority of evangelical believers wonder if the promised return of Jesus to take His believers away might be near, many churches are neglecting this subject.

Peter warned that this would happen:

Knowing this first: that 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

This is fascinating. While many churches have stopped looking for the “blessed hope” of the Rapture, Hollywood has adopted the message. Two major movies this year were powerful reminders of this biblical teaching.

“The Remaining,” a Sony release portrayed the Rapture as a sudden event followed immediately by the various judgments of the 7-year Tribulation period (Revelation chapters 6-9). It is described on its website as,

“...an action-packed supernatural thriller that addresses questions of life, love and belief against an apocalyptic backdrop. A group of close friends gather for a wedding, but the celebration is shattered by a series of cataclysmic events and enemies foretold by biblical end-times prophecies.”⁶⁰

In October, a remake of “Left Behind,” starring Nicholas Cage, dramatized the theme of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkin’s record-setting novel series once again. The movie’s website describes the story:

“The most important event in the history of mankind is happening right now. In the blink of an eye, the biblical Rapture strikes the world. Millions of people disappear without a trace. All that remains are their clothes and belongings, and in an instant, terror and chaos spread

around the world. The vanishings cause unmanned vehicles to crash and burn. Planes fall from the sky. Emergency forces everywhere are devastated. Gridlock, riots and looting overrun the cities. There is no one to help or provide answers. In a moment, the entire planet is plunged into darkness.”⁶¹

See more detail about the Rapture in Appendix B—
Handout for study of the Rapture.

[See the Topics: [“Rapture”](#) and [“Revival”](#) in Prophecy Central]

[Cloudy with a Chance of Trumpets](#)

Aug. 5, 2014 - Read this excellent article about why it is later than many modern preachers think!

Peter wrote his second epistle in order to warn us that, "scoffers" would come, "saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" and denying the reality of the prophetic word. Check again, scoffers . . . we're at the door. (Wendy Wippel - Omega Letter)

['Left Behind' Author Tim LaHaye Fires Back at Anti-Rapture Apologist](#)

Aug. 11, 2014 - In a recent article Christian apologist William Lane Craig claimed that belief in the Rapture began in the 1800's and is not really biblical. Tim LaHaye, co-author of the extremely popular "Left Behind" series of novels explains Craig's orientation:

"Craig is an a-Millennialist, who, like Augustine in the 5th century, taught that the Word of God was inspired and to be taken literally, except for prophecies, and they were to be taken

spiritually, allegorically or symbolically."

LaHaye says the problem with this view is that it keeps us from understanding the 28 percent of the Bible that is prophetic. Furthermore, it removes the 'blessed hope of Christ's return' for His church (Titus 2:12-14).

LaHaye's book, *A Quick Look at the Rapture and the Second Coming*, gives 15 differences between the rapture and the Second Coming.

LaHaye says there is good news for Craig and other Amillennialists who have truly accepted Christ as their Savior. "They will go up in the Rapture with the rest of us."

Source: Charisma News

[Is the Rapture a Biblical Concept?](#)

Oct. 5, 2014 - With the release of "Left Behind," based on Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins' best-selling novel series, Joel Rosenberg addresses the question: "Does the Bible really teach that Christians will suddenly be 'caught up' by Christ when He returns for us?" Liberal theologians try to make the case that the concept of the Rapture was invented in the 1800's, but this article shows that the belief is firmly established in the Bible itself. Rosenberg answers basic questions:

- What exactly is "The Rapture"?
- Is "The Rapture" a Biblical concept, or merely a fictional plot device?
- What does the term mean?
- What are the implications of "The Rapture"?

Source: Joel Rosenberg

Check back soon for the book version of this report:
[“Red Skies”](#)

Appendix A

Understanding the Future

An excerpt from our book, *The Church in Prophecy and History*,
pp.183-186

Ron Graff

One of the worst mistakes of the Reformers was the failure of most of them to correct the erroneous interpretation of Bible prophecies that had developed during the Middle Ages about Israel, the Second Coming of Christ and the other aspects of the future that were given by the Old Testament prophets, the Lord Jesus Himself, the apostles, and the Book of Revelation.

As we mentioned above, the best guiding principle of the Reformation was expressed by the concept called *Sola Scriptura*, meaning “only Scripture,” or “by Scripture alone.” This was understood to mean that the Bible is the only inspired—and therefore the most authoritative--source of truth. There is value in exposition (explanation) of the Word, as is done in preaching, and in the writing of theological books, commentaries, and devotional literature, but all of these are subordinate to, and are to be corrected by, the written Word of God.

Jesus, the “living Word” (John 1:1, 14), declared Himself to be “the way, the truth, and the life,” (John 14:5), but even this great fact is revealed by the “written Word,” The Bible:

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. – John
17:17

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. – Matthew 24:35

The Reformers meant well, but there were just so many misunderstandings about the plain teaching of the Bible that it was virtually impossible to correct everything at once. Therefore eschatology (the study of “last things”—from the Greek word *eschatos*) was not revised, and was made even more confusing during the Reformation period.

Near the beginning of this commentary (Chapter 1, verse 10) we discussed various ways that people have interpreted Bible prophecy through the years.

The main question about the prophecies of the Bible is whether or not they will be fulfilled literally. This is especially true about the many places in the New Testament where we are told that Jesus is returning and that His coming could take place at any time.

The Early Church interpreted these passages literally, and lived in the anticipation of Christ’s any-moment return. Knowing this had a purifying and motivating effect on believers. They wanted to be living holy lives when Jesus would return. And, if He might return at any time, there was always an urgency to share the Gospel with those who had not yet received Him as Savior and Lord:

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and

godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God. . . – 2 Peter 3:11-12a.

The other kind of interpretation is the allegorical method. An allegory is a story that is meant to teach a moral lesson. Of course the Bible does contain allegories and many other kinds of symbolic language, but the literal approach to interpretation accepts the idea that once the figure of speech is understood; there is a literal fulfillment for any prophetic utterance. This allegorical approach does not look for a future historical event, but is satisfied with the idea that the story teaches a general moral principle. From this point of view, the promises to Israel might be mistakenly transferred to the church, and the numerous Bible promises of a glorious messianic kingdom and a literal thousand-year reign of Christ can be wrongly interpreted as a gradual transformation of the culture from a pagan civilization to a Christian kingdom.

Now we need to look at the predominant beliefs about the future over the course of history.

- Early Church Eschatology

The first three of the churches in this prophecy would all be part of the Early Church. They were: Ephesus (Apostolic), Smyrna (Persecution), and Pergamum (Compromise). These churches took the simple, biblical “futurist” method of interpretation, which resulted in a “premillennial” view of eschatology. These are pretty technical expressions, so let us break these terms down a little bit.

The “futurist” interpretation accepts what the Bible says about future events literally.

The “premillennial” eschatology was built on this literal futurist approach. It was the belief that Jesus will return to Earth to reign for a thousand years. The Early Christians expected that, at any time, Christ might “catch up” His church at the Rapture (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 4:1). Then, after the Tribulation period (Jeremiah 30:1-7; Daniel 11:20-45; Ezekiel Chapters 38 and 39; Matthew 24:9-28; Revelation Chapters 6 through 19), they believed that Jesus will return to establish the Messianic Kingdom that Isaiah and most of the Old Testament prophets promised extensively in the Old Testament. According to this Book of Revelation, the Kingdom will be a thousand-year reign of righteousness over a peaceful and prosperous world (Matthew 24:29-32; Revelation 20:1-8). After the millennium there will be a judgment of non-believers (Revelation 20:11-15). This will be followed by the creation of a New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation Chapters 21 and 22).

- Catholic Eschatology

The Catholic Church is defined by the fourth church of this prophecy: Thyatira (Middle Ages). The leaders of the church felt that they were establishing the Kingdom of Heaven. They employed the historicist (allegorical) method of interpretation, believing that the events in their generations were gradually fulfilling the prophecies.

Since the theologians of the Middle Ages thought that they were building the kingdom they didn’t feel a need for a literal

thousand-year reign of Christ in the future. Using the allegorical method of interpretation, they taught that the Old Testament prophecies of a messianic millennium referred to the kingdom they were creating themselves, that would last forever. They believed that Jesus would come back to reign once they had finished preparing for His return. And from their point of view, Israel had been replaced by the church, so they did not look for literal fulfillments of the Old Testament promises. Therefore their eschatology (teaching about “last things” or the end time) was “amillennial.”

- Reformation Eschatology

The Reformation is represented by Sardis, the fifth church of this prophecy. As we noted above, it failed to live up to its own standard of “Scripture only,” and continued to hold the amillennial view of the future which they thought would result in a godly church/state union to which Christ could eventually return as King.

John Calvin did introduce a variation to the eschatology the Reformers had inherited from the Catholic Church. He called it “Covenant Theology.” This viewpoint considers all of history as the development of three overarching theological covenants--the covenants of redemption, of works, and of grace. In their system, the covenants include the return of Christ, resurrection of the dead, and the Great White Throne Judgment, but no literal 1000 year Millennium.

It was common for the Reformers to consider the Catholic Church, with its church/state alliances, the evil last world empire

of the Book of Revelation, and to claim that the Pope was the Antichrist.

A completely new view of the future was invented during the Reformation period by the Jesuits, a new Catholic order that we will explore next. It was called Preterism (from the Latin *praeter*—meaning “past.”) Versions of this theory relate most, or even all, of the Book of Revelation to the events of the 1st Century, revolving around the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and/or the persecutions of the Roman Empire. It was presented as an alternative to the growing belief that the Pope was Antichrist. Preterism was later adopted by some Protestants.

- Later Developments in Eschatology

When we study the next church [Philadelphia] in Revelation 3 we will see that there was a strong return to the literal interpretation of prophecy, resulting in a renewed interest in the Rapture of the church and the development of end time events. It was also a boon to evangelism and the missionary movement.

For a Catholic explanation of their view of the End Times, see: [Are We Living in the Last Days?](#)

Appendix B – Handout for study of the Rapture

Introduction

Biblical Interpretation – Hermeneutics

Inspired – Meant to be taken literally

Symbolic language is used – Parables, allegories, similes

Even when symbolism is used, there is a literal meaning.

Meaning is found by comparing Scripture with Scripture

The Second Coming of Christ – Gr. *Parousia* – “appearance, presence”

The Rapture of the Church – John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:50-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 (A Biblical word – *harpazo* – Meaning “catch away”); 2 Thessalonians 2:3

The Glorious Return of Christ – Matthew 24:27-31; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16

Differences between the Rapture and the Glorious Return of Christ

The Rapture	The 2nd Coming
Christ comes for His own 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Christ returns with His own Revelation 19:11-16
Believers taken to Father's House John 14:1-3	Believers gathered from the Earth Matthew 24:31
Seen only by believers 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18	Every eye will see Him Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:30
No reference to Satan	Satan bound Revelation 20:1-3
Earth not judged	Earth judged Revelation 20:4-5
A Mystery 1 Corinthians 15:51 ff.	Foretold in Old Testament Dan. 2:44; 12:1-3; Zech. 12:1-14; 14:3-4

Various Teachings about the Return of Christ

No literal return

Full Preterists – Say all of the Book of Revelation fulfilled in 70 AD, including the spiritual return of Christ.

Spiritual/Idealists – Say prophecy is motivational – calling believers to heroic living, endurance, and showing that good triumphs over evil in the end.

No Rapture of the Church, but a literal Return of Christ

Historicists – Say the Book of Revelation is a symbolic presentation of the entire church age.

Partial Preterists – Say most of Revelation was fulfilled in 70 AD, or at least by the Roman Empire, but the final chapters still look forward to a future second coming of Christ.

The Rapture of the Church and the literal Return of Christ (Futurists)

Pre-Tribulation Rapture – Say Jesus will return for the Church at (or before) the beginning of the Tribulation period.

Mid-Tribulation Rapture – Say Jesus will return for the Church at the mid-point of the Tribulation, just before the “Great Tribulation” begins.

Partial Rapture – Say Jesus will return before the Tribulation to

receive those who are “waiting” for His return. Other believers may be taken during or at the end of the Tribulation.

Pre-Wrath Rapture – Say the Rapture will take place just before the Battle of Armageddon, the ultimate expression of God’s wrath.

Post-Tribulation Rapture – Say Christians have to suffer the trials of the Tribulation, but those who remain will be caught up by Jesus just before He returns to the Earth at the end of the Battle of Armageddon.

Pan-Tribulation Rapture – Say, “We don’t have a clue about the timing, but believe it will all pan out in the end.”

Evidence for a Pre-Trib Rapture of the Church

Any-moment expectation (Imminence)

In every age Christians have been expecting the return of Our Lord. Twice in the last chapter of Revelation He tells us, "I am coming quickly" (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20).

Paul referred to this ever-present possibility of Christ's return as "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). He also taught that His coming will be like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6).

Absence of the Church during the Tribulation

Revelation, Chapters 4 through 21

There are constant references to the church and the seven

churches in Revelation chapters 1-3. In Revelation 4:1 John hears a trumpet and is told to “come up here.” The church is not mentioned during the whole Tribulation period. (Revelation 4:1-19:21).

The Centrality of Israel and Jewish People during the Tribulation

There are many "Saints" during the Tribulation. They are believers in Christ--Jews and Gentiles alike, but they are not referred to as the church, nor are any of the usual descriptions of the church attached to them. The apostate church of the period will be corrupt, and will give its influence to Antichrist (Revelation 18), so these Tribulation Saints will not be associated with this apostate church, the great harlot of Revelation 17.

Israel has a preeminent place during the tribulation period.

The tribulation is synonymous with Daniel's 70th Week (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 13).

The 144,000 are sealed from the 12 tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:1-8).

The Two Witnesses are probably Old Testament leaders - Moses and Elijah (or, as some think, Enoch and Elijah) (Revelation 11:1-12).

The flight of Israel –(Revelation 12)

The treaty with Israel and defilement of the Temple (Revelation 13)

Deliverance of the Saints from Wrath

Note: Believers are *not* delivered from trials or persecution (1 Peter 4:12-19; Acts 5:40-41; Philippians 3:10; 2 Timothy 3:12) but they are delivered from God's *wrath* See below:

“Christians are not delivered *from* trials, but through them.”

Keep on the alert...praying... that you may have strength to escape all these things ... (Luke 21:36).

For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation (adversity) (2 Peter 2:6-9).

I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world (Revelation 3:10— Church of Philadelphia [Missionary]).

Antichrist not revealed until hindering force is removed

The Day of the Lord] will not come unless the apostasy [“departure”- reference to the Rapture] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction... And you know what restrains him now... For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:1-8).

The Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning sin (John 16:7-8).

Events between the Rapture and the Return

Saints in the presence of the Lord (Revelation 5)

24 Elders represent the redeemed saints (Revelation 5:8-10).

The Bema-seat judgment of Christians (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:2-5)

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9)

Population of the Millennium by mortal believers

The pre-Tribulation Rapture interpretation best explains this important feature of God's future plan. According to Jesus' teaching on the Mount of Olives, there will be a judgment of the nations (Sheep and Goats - Matthew 25:31-46) just before the Millennium, just prior to the commencement of the thousand-year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:1-6). This taking of some and leaving of others is not the Rapture, but it corresponds to the Parable of The Wheat and The Tares (Matthew 13:24-30). In that parable, the tares are collected FIRST, and tied into bundles to be burned (later - The Great White Throne judgment), then the wheat is gathered into the barn. The wheat represents true believers who have survived the Tribulation period, and are thus permitted to enter the Millennial Age.

If the Rapture took place at, or near the end of the Tribulation, all believers would have glorified bodies, and there would be no righteous mortals left to enter the Millennium!

Objections to Pre-Trib Rapture of the Church

“The Rapture is not mentioned in the Olivet Discourse.”

The Church was a mystery, announced by Christ (Matthew 16:13-18), but not described until Paul's writings.

The "mystery" of the church was revealed to the Apostle Paul, and described by Him in numerous passages of Scripture. In Romans 11:25 he used the word to describe the temporary "hardening" of Israel: "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in."

The word "mystery" (Greek *musterion*) meant a "secret," or something formerly hidden, but now revealed.

In Romans 16:25, Paul calls the Gospel, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, a mystery.

In Corinthians 15:51-58, he uses "mystery" to describe the resurrection and the glorified body that believers will receive.

Paul taught that it was a mystery (formerly hidden, but now revealed) that all things will eventually be brought together under the headship of Christ (Ephesians 1:9-10).

In Ephesians 3 the Apostle explained in greater detail that the mystery of the church was part of God's purpose all along to make Gentiles heirs together with Israel.

“Christians are not delivered *from* trials, but *through* them.”

Believers are allowed to suffer trials and persecution (Book of Job; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 3:12), **but are delivered from God's wrath** – such as the flood, (Genesis 7:1) Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:15-17); Nineveh (Jonah chapter 3), and the 10th plague in Exodus (death of the firstborn—Exodus 12:12-13).

“The Last Trump should be identified with the seventh trumpet in the Book of Revelation.”

This trumpet should be related to the last trumpet blown at the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), The Jewish New Year festival (Leviticus 23:32-32),

Differences between the two trumpets:

Rapture - 1 Thessalonians 4:16 - The trump of God / Revelation 10:7 – Trumpet blown by an angel.

Events at the Rapture – “In the twinkling of an eye” / Events at 7th trumpet take several days

Result at the Rapture – joy and transformation / Result of 7th trumpet – “the third woe” (Revelation 11:14)

“The Church of Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29) was in danger of going into the Great Tribulation.”

This represents the period of the Dark Ages of the Catholic Church. Representatives of all church ages still exist today. The idolatrous, unfaithful church will indeed exist during the Tribulation, and will give its power to Antichrist. Contrast this with the promise to the Philadelphia church – deliverance of the saints from wrath.

“The Pre-Trib view was not developed until recently.”

Justin Martyr was pre-trib (about AD 100)

Irenaeus and Lactantius of the second and third centuries made apparently or explicitly premillennial statements (Paul Thigpin, “The Second Coming,” Charisma, Feb. 1989, p. 44)

Ephraem of Nisibis, the most important and prolific of the Syrian Church fathers (306-373) taught the pre-trib position in a sermon entitled, “On the Last Times, The Antichrist, and The End of the World.” He wrote, “For all the saints and Elect of God are gathered prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overtake the world because of our sins.” (Chuck Missler, Personal Update, June 1995, p. 12)

Appendix C – Psalm 83

¹ Do not keep silent, O God!

Do not hold Your peace,

And do not be still, O God!

² For behold, Your enemies make a tumult;

And those who hate You have lifted up their head.

³ They have taken crafty counsel against Your people,

And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.

⁴ They have said, “Come, and let us cut them off from *being* a nation,

That the name of Israel may be remembered no more.”

⁵ For they have consulted together with one consent;

They form a confederacy against You:

⁶ The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites;

Moab and the Hagrites;

⁷ Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek;

Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;

⁸ Assyria also has joined with them;

They have helped the children of Lot. Selah

⁹ Deal with them as *with* Midian,

As *with* Sisera,

As *with* Jabin at the Brook Kishon,

¹⁰ Who perished at En Dor,

Who became *as* refuse on the earth.

¹¹ Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb,

Yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,

¹² Who said, “Let us take for ourselves

The pastures of God for a possession.”

¹³ O my God, make them like the whirling dust,

Like the chaff before the wind!

¹⁴ As the fire burns the woods,

And as the flame sets the mountains on fire,

¹⁵ So pursue them with Your tempest,

And frighten them with Your storm.

¹⁶ Fill their faces with shame,

That they may seek Your name, O LORD.

¹⁷ Let them be confounded and dismayed forever;

Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,

¹⁸ That they may know that You, whose name alone *is* the LORD,

Are the Most High over all the earth.

Endnotes:

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