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A Gracious Highway through Time



To the discerning eye scanning the Christian horizon, concerns over current “happenings” in our world betray an awareness of major shifts taking place in our very foundations—forcing our thoughts into flyover of history that extends out over the horizon of time. For it almost seems that we have to bend over backwards to remember where we have come from, in Christendom, while seeking to discern where we *are* on the road leading into eternity.—And then . . . we find ourselves ratcheting forward and landing on the other side of that highway as we ponder the possibility of a final correction: with our tired planet abruptly returning from the edge of insanity and destruction to face our Creator and Lover.—So that the faithful in our bridal party may soon join with our Lord in the closeout of Heaven’s courtship with Earth.

Into this argument our story brings an audacious prospect: that the Bible itself, containing insights

into our past, and very Creation—not only reveals the dealings of God with ancient civilizations as well as the birth of the Christian Church, but also projects human advance into a new order of things—depicting a different kind of world in which *all nations* finally have a part and say. Further, that this path (or highway) is the extension of a well-known prophetic device given by an Old Testament prophet, Daniel, in his seventy weeks prophecy. Daniel: the very same prophet who was told to seal up the secrets of prophecy “until the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4).

Now, with the simple application of the times and seasons (“clocks”) that are on open display within the New Testament Apocalypse—we are able to see how *the Bible itself* makes it possible for us to discern the start of our final “week” as it escalates within that prophet’s “seventieth.”

This we may discover—not by a rigid computation (as when leading up to Christ’s first coming) but by a more appropriate and elastic numbering system that expands our understanding of this current age of grace. For it is within this framework that we remind ourselves that God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Is this a reason why Jesus said that *no one*, except the Father, knows when the day of Returning is? Is it so that the very timing of Christ’s return may include within its very structure an expression of God’s grace which is itself elastic, and forgiving?? (What an awesome God!)

Only after establishing this elastic time frame are we then able to appreciate the concept of a “free

society” as an experiment that finds some of its most profound enlightenment (and display) within the American experience. ’That the United States of America “one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all” has indeed been an experiment ordained from Heaven; looking towards, and beyond, the day wherein the experiment will fold with the plucking of its eagle’s wings and establishment of a humanist state.

Until this experiment *disappear* from the face of the earth.

It is a simple premise, we must admit . . . with awesome (sometimes frightening) implications . . . and an eternal Hope.

PART 1:

BEFORE APOCALYPSE:

Within the world in which we then lived, the term “apocalypse” was often misused and misunderstood to refer to the utter destruction of the world. This was what we thought we had encountered on that “next to the last day” when squinting at a flash of light out over the horizon . . . before closing our eyes, in the skies overlooking Japan.

Chapter 1:1

a spiritual Pearl Harbor



Future shock is the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time.

Alvin Toffler

We live in a world of broken promises and shattered dreams: a world where many suspect the future is “sneaking up on us” and we are losing ground. It is here, in that uncertain place, where men and women sometimes lose heart while fainting with fear that comfort is found in knowing there is a Book that never lies and whose dreams never fail. In it we find a safe haven, even beyond the safety net that government and personal resources may afford: resting under His wings, and within His will. Yet, we may also find ourselves spectators and witnesses to the rise of children, politicians, and even prophets droning on continually, “Peace. Peace . . .” —when there is no peace. So that we find this to be an hour to

remember that, yes Virginia, a time is coming when the nations will grind their rifles into plowshares and men will learn war, no longer (Isaiah 2:4).

But not yet. Nor will the lies and rabbit trails stop, just yet, for the Bible also foretells of a time of grand (and great) delusion wherein many who are considered the very best among us will “war *with* the saints” as we shall see, much later in our discussion.

So now Virginia (and New York, and London, and . . .) it is time once more to get out that “little Book” in order to devour it once again. We must carefully focus on its words as we first find it sweet to the taste (when discovering its secrets) and then bitter to our stomachs, as its warnings start to dawn upon us. A new world is coming, sister, and it’s not waiting for anyone.

*

As we now prepare to open the Scriptures themselves and begin our focus on its pages, a sudden awareness begins to overtake us: of One other than ourselves. Different, above us, and yes: holy. At first, this may seem frightening. So frightening that some have sought to describe our ultimate day of reckoning in terms that are almost amusing. Some consider the Apocalypse an event that will merely encompass the economy: and for them it is no laughing matter, when considering the loss of Medicare and Social Security as an event equal to the ending of the world. For others, a more global disaster seems appropriate. Consider, for example, one example of how the high

priests of cellophane have portrayed “Armageddon” –imagining a day of judgment wherein humankind is confronted by a mere asteroid. Pardon the critique (for such is no worst than other attempts at created gods)—but are we really *thinking*? How can one imagine such a confrontation with Him who just happened to “make the stars also” (Genesis 1:16)?? Can judgment be reduced to a mere confrontation between us and a pebble in the universe being tossed at our planet?? Should any, upon earth, even imagine escaping from Him who made the *stars*??

Better to leave Armageddon alone.

Yet, for the rest of us, the Holy Bible (the Judeo-Christian Scriptures) speaks of a grand design wherein the whole world and indeed universe itself is increasingly brought into a crisis of belief, as all creation is forced to a point of decision. “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.”

Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. . . .

For our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 12:26, 27, 29

Having referred to the high priests of cellophane, the text above may also challenge (even frighten) plastic believers: people who depend upon pop Christianity to define their view of this great and awesome God.

For Christ informs us that His kingdom is not of this world¹—not yet.

And many wish for it to remain so. For beyond resisting Intelligent Design they wish to resist the Designer; hoping that He is not Intelligent (at least, no so intelligent as ourselves!). Even more awesome is an internal correction that demands another shaking. A concern originating with the suspicion that, since the text (above) refers to an earlier shaking at Mt. Sinai with its smoking mountain—so also, the Scriptures now call upon the God of the Bible to “awaken” a sleeping church, and call us to account.

How else may we interpret such a “shaking”?

How might anyone “escape” such an event—taking place in earth *and* heaven?

Apocalypse, indeed. Whatever can it really mean???

One thing it *does not* mean is that hiding our heads in the sand will gain us deliverance. For only the truth can set us free, at last.

So we must return to that sublime hope of the little child and pray that He who is Divine will meet us right here, in the world in which we now live.—And if possible, we wish to avoid . . . what shall we call it? We wish to avoid a *spiritual* Pearl Harbor.

* * *

In the movie *Tora, Tora, Tora*, we witness a Japanese Ambassador struggling to type out a declaration of war addressed to the US government. His message will warn of an impending attack

on Pearl Harbor. The message was actually intercepted and decoded by US intelligence teams, as with earlier messages, but was understood too late to effectively warn our military personnel stationed in harms way, at our Pacific naval base. As a result, instead of giving a “warning” Japan was successful only in awakening a sleeping nation that discovers herself in the throes of a devastating war. It was at the conclusion of this war that we went nuclear and our world awoke to the idea that things will never again be the same. We will never again return to the “normalcy” of hand-to-hand combat (or tank-to-tank, or simple aircraft . . .) when considering a supreme international conflict. The prospect of entire cities/countries being eliminated “in one hour” as the Scriptures have foretold, had suddenly become a reality (Revelation 18:19).

Consider parallels in the above story to the information we are about to peruse:

The information to avoid (or reduce) pending devastation was available but not properly understood, or accepted.

The result . . . was a “sneak attack” on US interests, in Hawaii.

In a similar manner the onset of “future shock” may cause our palms to sweat and hearts to pound as we detect some sudden disaster rolling down the street without our detecting any way around it. I have often considered the material in this book in a similar manner except that Jesus Christ, the world’s number one authority on prophetic events, has

already forewarned us that “in such an hour that you think not, the Son of Man is returning” (Matthew’s gospel: 24:44).

We have been forewarned.

However when Jesus Himself was asked what, exactly, to *look for* just prior to His return He gave a strange answer. “Take heed, that no man deceive you.” Why this warning? He explains (?) “Many will say in that day, I am Christ” (Matthew 24:4,5 21 kjv) –so then, since Christ was aware of the coming popularity of His message—why would it become so difficult to detect the end of the age? Put another way . . .

Since Christ knew that many (even most) would finally acknowledge the greatness of His message, why would it become so difficult to be on the right side of the issue on that day of reckoning for the nations? There are doctrinal reasons (concerning divine justice) and prophetic reasons (interpretation) that answer this question. For now, suffice it to say that when the *church* has largely gone to sleep just prior to the witching hour—darkness is allowed to prevail for a short time (Matt. 25:5,6, 2 Thes. 2:1-3). To this end it is certainly advantageous to be among those who are able to properly “decode” God’s special message to His people. For they are the ones best equipped to face the issues now arising to confront us within our changing world (Daniel 11:32, Matt. 25:8,9).

It *is* possible to be on the alert and *not* surprised (or dismayed) by world events.

All we need are the proper signposts and timers...
Signposts & Timers:

Bible prophecy often appears an impossible maze unless we are given some signpost, or time reference, to act as a bookmark guiding us through the unlocking of its message and visions. This is true even when admitting that the biblical Apocalypse is *not* sequential (a simple series of stories as in a novel) but *overlapping* as is most common with biblical visions. For very often we find that a biblical prophet's visions overlap to retell the same story—over and over, from differing viewpoints. The prophet Daniel's explanation of the king's dream in chapter two (2) for example, is overlapped by his later visions explaining more fully that first image of gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay—in chapters 7-12.

OK, so you never really understood those funny images (and “beasts”) mentioned in Daniel's later visions. We won't need to dig into them all, within this discussion—only one particular chapter that links to John's Revelation. That's the seventh chapter (to which we will return later).

For it is within the biblical Apocalypse at the close of the Book that a timing mechanism *does* emerge within John's letter to the churches. It is actually, as we consider the matter, a description of biblical “times and seasons” (1 Thessalonians 5:1)—a somewhat indefinite pattern, that has the curious attribute of leaving the reader with the feeling that we have been given an incredibly detailed insight, into our past *and* future. It consists of a simple set of “clocks.” This elemental numbering system—is outlined within the 11th chapter of his letter to the churches whose official title is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:1). As we

shall see, these “clocks” serve as both signposts *and* timers: dividing the church age into three distinct eras:

Impartation
Restoration
Glorification

It is Providential that earlier students of Scripture have outlined the chapter divisions of the Apocalypse (John’s Revelation) in such a way that these “book-marking” characteristics have landed the clocks in the middle chapter (there are 22 chapters). These “clocks” are then doubled (repeated) in chapters 12 & 13. Again, they *overlap* to reveal secrets from differing perspectives.

It is these clocks (and particularly, the second one, containing a symbolism relating to the US) that we will focus upon in our discussion. Without these clocks, even the most astute student of Bible prophecy may become confused when seeking to sort out the volumes of information available to us in prophecy and, particularly, when reading through the Revelation of the apostle John. This is true, even when we do realize that John’s visions are overlapping. The specific line up of the visions (*where* they overlap exactly) is difficult to discern without the broad outline of the clocks. But then....

WHY BOTHER TO INTERPRET BIBLE PROPHECY?

Why bother to attempt such a serious decoding effort? Are we in danger of another “Pearl Harbor”? We are.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower is credited with saying that when preparing for battle, “plans are worthless, but planning is indispensable.”² His point was that he could never know exactly how a battle would turn out on the actual battlefield, but when one makes every effort to be prepared, a victory is much more probable. As we shall see later in our study, Jesus foretold that just prior to His returning many would simply go to sleep: giving up on the notion that preparation is necessary: “Don’t worry, be happy!”

The apostles also warned of a similar malaise among believers, in this hour. Said Peter: “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

The issue here is not that they are mistaken on minute details—they simply do not take God seriously enough *to bother staying on the alert*. Others become so discouraged by false alarms that they shrug their shoulders and give up. Yet Scripture warns that there is a point in history where a final count down begins, and “sleeping” turns deadly[†]

Of those who sleep, Jesus said, half will be so unprepared at midnight *that they simply won’t make it* (Matthew 25:1-10). Remember, we are talking about shaking earth *and heaven*. As we shall see much later

in our discussion: Simply claiming a heavenly position will not guarantee safety, any more than having a fire alarm will save us from fire . . . if we sleep through its warning signals.³ Therefore, the apostle Paul says, urgently: “Let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:6). So then, we are forced to ask:

What is it to “watch”?

Watching is enjoined when we awaken “with our antenna up:” detecting late breaking news events that seem particularly disturbing. We then become aware of new forecasts that present new dangers in a world that seems to be suddenly lurching forward, towards another series of “birth pangs.”⁴ We may then awaken to espy tsunamis, floods, hurricanes and earthquakes that are to be found (hopefully) on some far off shore. Changing the channel, we next discover a new flood of events pouring out from a newscast that makes it impossible to tear ourselves from the screen.

We find our eyes riveted to new scenes of terror or devastation—causing us to question what on earth is happening: arousing more than a mere interest as the news washes over our minds.

† The point at which “watching” becomes critical, is in the terminal generation, marked by the “budding of the fig tree” (the return of the nation of Israel – Matthew 24:32-34, see also Dan. 12:4). This also has a distinct connection to the second “clock” which we will be discussing in detail. . . .

Changes are coming from the middle east, Afghanistan and Iraq, or even from around the next corner. Sometimes, they land on shores much closer than we choose to acknowledge. Nine-eleven (9-11) brought the Jihad to the US mainland and we responded with a “War on Terror.” No one wants to even think about what would happen should terrorists be able to activate a nuclear device within these borders

At present the shock waves emanating from the media never seem to last for very long, however . . . for, as if to calm the drum beat of the natives, our media moguls seem tap into the pulse of society’s heartbeat to tranquilize the effects of future shock by mediating, moderating, or simply refusing to report (when possible) recent events that might disturb us. For example: On one morning, after hearing that China had just witnessed a magnitude 7.0 earthquake, in April of 2010, I went online to be updated on current events—only to be surprised to find that nothing was noted on the regular news sites (maybe it wasn’t considered fit to print). What I did find was a note that it was actually a normal year for earthquakes.⁵ This, after having witnessed a 7.0 magnitude quake in January that hit Haiti (with a mere 200,000 killed –by little fault of the quake. It was third world damage . . .) and another the next month in February (Chile –an 8.8 magnitude quake that only shortened the day by a few microseconds, yet sent tsunami warnings across the Pacific to Japan, killing over 700).⁶ So, of course, when a major quake occurred *again* in April, of the same year, it was starting to become accepted as “normal”!

Or, perhaps, we were just closing our eyes

One wonders if this might be connected to the next natural disaster: the eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano later, that same month. Of course, with that event, we were *forced* to pay attention since we were caught completely by surprise; for it bottlenecked (and stopped outright) airline traffic on the European continent and cost the airline industry over \$1 billion in revenue until finding a way “around” the problem.⁷

I am still waiting for environmentalists to protest the production of so much pollution! (Oh, almost forgot, you can't “cap and trade” volcanic emissions . . .).

All of the above is taking place against a moral backdrop that threatens to take our breath away—and certainly our virtue as the American Dream (and a world-wide vision for truth) goes over the edge in a moral landslide. Consider, for example, how far we've come from 1965 when Billy Graham was in the midst of completing his book “World Aflame.” At that time his wife (Ruth) commented, “Billy, if God doesn't come soon and bring judgment upon the United States, He's going to have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah!”⁸ And that was 1965! What of today?

We shall see His answer later in our discussion.

and . . . WHAT OF THE UNITED STATES?

The question then begs to be asked: *Are* we in the midst of an apocalyptic scenario and on the verge

of divine judgment? If so, how will this impact our nation, world . . . and the church? Where should we begin our quest??? How about, with Evangelicals?

To the man on the street, the “evangelical” position on what the Bible teaches concerning end time events is next to listening to a “fundamentalist.” That is, we find ourselves in the company of men such as Billy Graham (or the more conservative Jerry Fallwell, and Dr. D. James Kennedy recently passed). Such persons were generally recognized as both committed and clear-headed on matters of personal belief. However, on matters of Bible prophecy there has been a great deal of reluctance to commit to just where American society figures in, when considering the full scope of end time events.

Thomas Ice, for example, a close associate of Tim LaHaye who co-authored the blockbuster “*Left Behind*” series is recognized as one of the foremost scholars in the prevailing position that insists Christians will not have to face the “hot part” of apocalyptic events forecast within Scripture (this is commonly identified as the “pre-tribulation rapture” position: placing Christ’s promised return *secretly* at a position prior to the effective rise of Antichrist).⁹ He states on his web site, regarding the place of America in Bible prophecy:

Dr. Tim LaHaye writes, “One of the hardest things for American prophecy students to accept is that the United States is not clearly mentioned in Bible prophecy, yet our nation is the only superpower in the world today.”¹⁰

Dr. LaHaye has put his finger upon the source that likely generates the often ask[ed] question, “ How does America fit into Bible prophecy?” Rarely, if ever, does anyone ask, “ How does Mexico, or Canada, or Chile fit into Bible prophecy?” The United States has a strong Christian heritage and is currently the world’s only superpower. Since many Christians believe that we are near the end of the age, it is hard to envision a prophetic scenario which excludes America—the world’s most influential nation. Yet, other nations are the focus of biblical prophecy.¹¹

It is not the purpose of this short study to parse words with such learned men, only to present the reader with a simple and awesome possibility: that when we are willing to discard the comfortable (and quite popular) notion that we will escape what the Bible outlines for all who are alive just prior to Christ’s return (considering that the “shaking” takes place in earth *and* heaven) we open ourselves up to a new awareness of future and *past* events that have indeed been forecast for us within the scriptural writings. These Scriptures show that the Lord has, indeed, left open to us a revelation of where this great country fits into the framework of end time events.

How deep and serious will the apocalyptic shaking be? Let us pause and consider, the next time reviewing the events in Haiti or Japan, that at the close of the age Scripture forecasts a day in which “every wall shall fall to the ground,” and the face of the planet will wrinkle like a prune . . . and every

island will ~ “disappear.” (Isaiah 2, 24:1, Ezekiel 38:20, Revelation 16:20).

Yes, this *is* a true *Apocalypse*.

However, such simple acknowledgments are far from enough to complete our preparation for the vision that now lies before us. Much more insight is needed: For there are immediate signposts that must be taken into account, directly affecting our nation’s future.

For example: the position the US takes towards the nation of Israel.

Israel? What has Israel got to do with our future? Quite simply: everything. It is a key player in God’s “Plan B.”

Chapter 1:2

the Jewish Question & God's "Plan B" (to keep us from "disappearing")



Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; . . ."

God, speaking, in the beginning: Genesis 1:26

"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."

God's word to Abraham: Genesis 12:3

Israel is an intimate part of God's "Plan B" for our planet.

There had to be a Plan B for short of annihilating all creatures acquiring a free will there must be a "Plan B" waiting in the wings if He would save us. Think about it, for a moment. Free will means nothing, at all, if it cannot be exercised in both a positive and negative manner. It is like saying that I have

freedom of speech and then jailing me when I say something that offends you (like “hate speech” . . . ?). Freedom brings consequences to the one granting the freedom, as well as the one daring to step out.

Consequences to God? Yes: Man is made in God’s image. What does this mean? Have you ever thought about it? In daring to create such a creature God makes a statement . . . about Himself, as well. Eternal God, creating a creature that He can relate to and love. For the day would come when He would say that He was married to the nation of Israel (Jer. 3:14). And later (gasp) . . . offer His love to individuals, so that whoever would *believe* in Him (trust Him, implicitly, and voluntarily take His Word, over our own) –might live with Him forever (John. 3:16). But we are ahead of ourselves.

Our main concern, for the moment, is in answering the question: “What does God’s creation of man in His own image say about *Himself*??” OK. We’ll pass on that, for the moment, to find the answer from a different perspective by asking:

“What would eternal God’s *annihilating* such a creation say about Himself?” For if such a creature merely *ceased to exist* in every sense of the word . . . does that mean that God will one day do so, as well? God forbid!!

We begin to see, therefore, that from more perspectives than one God’s creating man in His image militates an incredible commitment, on His part. The original plan offered by God included the opportunity for us to live with Him forever, in peace, within the Garden. Although this first offer took all of creation

and the entire universe to set up, we begin to suspect that “Plan B” will be far more laborious. Instituting “Plan A” required only (*only??*) the ability to speak the universe into being: God said, “Let there be . . .”—and there was light, earth, vegetation, and animal life. Yet when Adam disobeyed the Lord, and went his own way, it became necessary for Adam to leave Eden, “lest he eat the fruit of the tree of life, and live forever (corrupting Paradise)”—so God’s love immediately went into action to set up “Plan B.”

“Plan B” however, now takes a different kind of work: involving the inner workings of human hearts, minds, and even the development of a nation, that would one day open the way for God to bring about the resurrection of the second Adam:¹² God’s only Son. It is within this wider sense that Israel is “Exhibit A” within God’s “Plan B.” For, it was through the nation of Israel that the Messiah was able to begin bursting through the barrier that separates us from God on that first Christmas morn, as all of Heaven rejoiced and broke into singing.¹³

Stick with me now. For God’s original offer was for life unending, given to creatures (human-kind) made in His own image—and it did involve a *free will*. Of course He knew that man would explore his options and then discover that, when God says something, He means it. Adam (and all the human race) would soon grasp the terrible truth of sin’s payback:

Death.

But God's desire for us is *Life*.

So, He had a plan (“Plan B”) already waiting in the wings for our deliverance. Setting up “Plan A” within Paradise required the creative power of God. Now, setting up “Plan B” would require more of Him. It required pain and sweat: Holy sweat from a bleeding heart: His own.

Seen in this light, bringing forth the Messiah and Deliverer into our world was God's ultimate Plan B. For even before man's fall in the Garden this “secondary” plan was designed to have preeminence.¹⁴ Indeed, it almost seems that for anything significant to succeed in this present age the first stage must be preempted (or fail) first. Consider, for example, a casual roll call of Bible greats: they all seem to have a great propensity to be “second” in line, if they are to succeed.

μ###Abel was born after Cain—yet he was accepted, and Cain was not.

μ###Joseph, undoubtedly the greatest of Jacob's sons—was one of the youngest.

μ###Jacob, also, was actually the younger brother (“Jacob have I loved, . . . Esau I have hated . . .” Malachi 1:2,3)

μ###Moses was sent forth, as Israel's deliverer—only after *failing* in his own political plans (Exodus 1 – 3, Acts 7:21-34)

μ###The Lord, himself, seems to have been born *after* John the Baptist to fulfill this requirement (Jn. 1:15) and, truth be told;