

LIVING WATERS NEWSLETTER

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LET'S SEW UP THIS VEIL

When Jesus died on the cross “behold the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom...” (Matt. 27:51). This was a clear message to the Jews that their system had ended. All types and shadows were being fulfilled and their long awaited Messiah had come. Did they get the message? Of course not. After the death and resurrection of Christ the temple services, sacrifices and rituals continued as usual. The tearing of the veil meant nothing to them. It was as if they had sewed the veil back together and gone on as if nothing had happened.

Comparable to this is the actions and attitudes of the soothsayers of the second advent, the date-setters, the prophets of doom, the writers of million dollar best seller books warning of an eminent rapture and end of the world and those who have presented failed apocalyptic outbursts of doomsday predictions. They see what the media says about the problems in the Middle East (where “the end” always begins), then they make their doomsday predictions, flood the “Christian” bookstores with their latest books, draw the crowds eager to be tantalized with the latest word concerning the end of these perilous times, then nothing happens. The problem is these endsayers never explain or apologize when they’re proven wrong (and they always are). They back off, wait awhile, update their predictions, adjust their scenarios, and start all over again, write another book and make another million. Their devotees don’t seem to mind and never hold their leaders accountable for what they say or write. And bookstores continue to stock their shelves with this religious trash, and Christians continue to buy them.

Too often it is only after the fact that prophecy teachers become eloquent on a given subject. It was after the six day war in 1967 when Israel gained possession of the old city western wall in Jerusalem for the first time in 2000 years, that prophecy preachers flooded the air waves and printing presses with the assumption that this war was the fulfillment of Bible prophecies that would hasten the end and the coming of the Lord. In late 1979 the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. A popular prophecy preacher on T.V. held his congregation spellbound explaining how this was a fulfillment of the end-time prophecies which would lead to Israel being invaded by Russia and set the stage for the battle of Armageddon. By chance ten years later he was explaining to his congregation how the Soviet withdrawal in 1988 was a fulfillment of prophecy. He didn’t explain how it could have been both ways, but his congregation didn’t seem to mind. In 1991 Desert Storm came along and again the airwaves, pulpits and bookstores were flooded with a rash of material warning that this was exactly what the Bible predicted and the end had to be near.

To sum up some of the failed prophecies in the decade of the nineties, a decade important to prophecy adherents climaxing in the year 2000: The war in the Gulf did not turn into the battle of Armageddon; neither Saddam Hussein nor Mikhail Gorbachev proved to be the Anti-Christ; there was no “rapture” of the

church in 1991; the Soviet Union did not invade Israel and Israel did not rebuild the temple in Jerusalem; the mark of the beast did not appear and none of this affected the fundamentalist prophecy preachers. They just changed their charts (sewed up the veil) and continued to spellbind their deceived flocks. A book entitled *One World Under Anti-Christ* published in 1991 and quoted by Walter Klaassen in his book *Armageddon and the Peaceable kingdom* stated: “We stand at the edge of history. Dramatic changes in Europe, the Middle East, and the Soviet Union make this inevitable. The world as we know it is being changed forever. Even more exciting is the fact that today’s news was actually foretold thousands of years ago in the Bible.” This quote is true except for the last sentence. The fact that the Bible predicts today’s news is typical of the end time forecasters. The soothsayers of the second advent have a field day whenever the news of the day concerns a Middle East crisis. In the September 1995 issue of *Decision Magazine* Billy Graham wrote: “each day as we read the newspapers or watch the news on television, we are reminded of the signs Jesus told us to look for. We are seeing them today...every indication is that it will be sooner than we think.” This is nothing new. The church Fathers (men who were Bishops that lived soon after the death of the Apostles) wrote about the end times. In *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* we read the following quotes from some of the church Fathers in the years from 70 A.D. to 250 A.D. Irenaeus: “But now since the last times are upon us evil is spread abroad among men.” Tertullian: “Evil is on the increase which is the evidence of the last times.” Cyprian: “Since now the end of the world is at hand, turn your minds upon God...The ending and completion of the world, the hateful time of the Antichrist, is already beginning to draw near.” Lactantius: “Who can doubt that the end has now arrived to the affairs of men and the whole world.” History is littered with those who have tried to fit the times in which they were living with the Biblical teaching on “the last days.”

The following list of past failed prophecies from the year A.D. 170 through A.D. 1874, is taken from John Noe’s book: *Beyond The End Times*:

A.D. 500. Church Father Hippolytus (A.D. 170-236) predicted the world would end in A.D. 500, based upon his analysis of the dimensions of Noah’s Ark.

A.D. 999. In Europe signs and warnings were eagerly sought in the final months leading up to A.D. 1000.

A.D. 1033. When the end did not come in A.D. 1000 a quick recalculation put it in A.D. 1033.

A.D. 1100. Joachim of Fiore, an Italian monk, predicted the end would come between A.D. 1200 and 1260.

A.D. 1501. Christopher Columbus allowed 155 years for all mankind to be converted, after which the world would end.

A.D. 1835. Joseph Smith, the father of Mormonism predicted the world would end within 56 years.

A.D. 1818. William Miller, founder of the Millerite movement in America: the end was sometime between 1843 and 1844.

A.D. 1874. Claiming to be the sole possessors of God's revealed truth, the Jehovah Witnesses began a string of prophecies for the end of the world which continued through the years 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1918, 1925, 1975, and 1984.

This brings us into the 20th Century during which time there was a rash of prophesy preachers who stamped deep impressions on the hopes and fears of sincere people with their presentation of myths, lies and idiocy regarding the so-called rapture, the anti-Christ, the great tribulation, rebuilding the temple, the Middle East wars, the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, the birth of a red heifer in Israel, (an event that excited many modern prophecy preachers and was reported at length in *Newsweek*), the Y2K scare, and a host of tantalizing tales of the terrestrial. Two of the most famous prophets of doom in the 20th century, with a host of soothsayers in between, were Hal Lindsay (1970) and Tim LaHaye (1995). Jonathan Kirsch in his book *A History of the End of the World* describes Lindsay as "the self-made apocalyptic seer who literally put the apocalyptic idea on the best-seller list of America." He describes Tim LaHaye as "another hard-preaching doomsayer who urgently sought to persuade his readers that the end of the world was nigh."

Hal Lindsay made his soothsaying advent in 1970 when he published *The Late Great Planet Earth* that became the best-selling book of the 1970s (and is still in print) selling over 25 million copies and published in 54 languages. It was made into a popular movie in the late 1970s, co-written by Lindsey and Orson Wells. It was in this, his first prophetic prediction that he avowed the "rapture" would take place in 1981, followed by seven years of the Antichrist reign and then in 1988 the battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ. When this didn't happen he simply "sewed up the veil" and revised his predictions in another book: *The 1980s: Count Down to Armageddon*.

Following "The "Late Great Planet Earth" Lindsey wrote, over 20 bestsellers including: "Satan is Alive and Well on the Planet Earth" (1972), "The Liberation of the Planet Earth" (1973), "There's a New World Coming" (1972), "Planet Earth 2000 A.D." (1994). Some other books by Lindsey are: "The Terminal Generation" "The Apocalyptic Code" "Planet Earth: The Final Chapter" "Vanished into Thin Air: The Hope of Every Believer" "The Everlasting Hatred: The Roots of Jihad". Most of the subjects in Lindsey's books are typical of what the majority of the soothsayers of the second Advent have to offer. Their main subjects are: the beginning of the Jewish State in 1948 is a sign that we are now living in the last generation; the coming dictator, the anti-Christ; the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, the "rapture" (the church taken out of the world) and the final battle of Armageddon.

The second best known end-time prophet is Dr. Tim LaHaye, author of more than 60 non-fiction books, making his debut as a soothsayer of the second advent in 1995 when he co-authored with Jerry Jenkins the "Left Behind" series, breaking all publishing records with a total of 80 million in print. This work of fiction, (most prophecy books today are books of fiction), is based basically upon the book of Revelation and Daniel. This

series follows the same dispensationalist interpretation of prophecies Lindsey and most prophets of doom have so eloquently written. The scenario is believers in Christ are said to be "raptured" (i.e. taken into heaven instantly) leaving unbelievers in the world to suffer seven years of the chaos in "the great tribulation" under the antichrist. Because these are fictitious novels LaHaye does not set a date for all this to happen, but indicates we are living in the last times and the "rapture" and "tribulation" could occur in our generation. In 1973 LaHaye declared in *The Beginning of the End*, an apocalyptic tract that predates the Left Behind series, he wrote: "The hands on Israel's prophecy clock leaped forward on June 8, 1967 when the Israeli troops marched into the Old City of Jerusalem."

Paul Boyer, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, estimates there are some eight million biblical prophecy buffs today. We will list only a few of the recent doomsday tantalizing tales of the terrestrial that have either stamped deep impressions on the hopes and fears of many sincere people or given the skeptics good reason to scorn and belittle the church..

In 1926 Oswald J Smith, a Canadian pastor who founded the People's Church in Toronto, a leading missionary statesman of his day, in his book published in 1927 *Is The Antichrist at Hand?* set the date of the coming of the end and the Anti-Christ and Armageddon as 1933.

John F. Walvoord, former president of Dallas Theological Seminary authored the book *Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crises* in 1974 but revised it in 1990 to correct some false prophecies in the light of later news from the Middle East. He states in the book: "The most significant prophetic event in the twentieth century has been the restoration of the people of Israel in their land." He predicted that a ten-nation Mediterranean confederacy was about to arise whose leader would force Israel to make peace with the Arabs and this would "mark the end of the times of the Gentiles and the beginning of the final years of history." The book sold a million copies during the Gulf war.

Chuck Smith, noted pastor of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, predicted in his book *End Times* that the Lord would come and the world would end in 1981.

Edgar C Wisenart retired NASA Engineer presented the world with two end-time books entitled: *88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will be in 1988* and *On Borrowed Time* stating that "Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong."

Harold Camping, a "Christian Radio Broadcaster" predicted the rapture and the end of the world on May 21, 2011, later revising his claim to October 21, 2011. *Time* magazine's website listed Camping's prophecies as *Time's Top 10 Failed Prophecies*.

Jack Van Impe, popular Bible prophecy teacher said the world would end between "2001 and 2012."

When these prophecies fail there is not a word of apology...they just "sew up the veil" and continue as before. Yet Christians continue to buy the books and listen to the sermons. The world not only laughs at such prophecies but assumes if the church is not right on these things it is not right on anything else.

