

RAPTURE READY...OR NOT?

15 REASONS THIS IS THE GENERATION
THAT WILL BE LEFT BEHIND

TERRY
JAMES

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This book is dedicated to James Michael Hile
— a friend like no other.

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To Todd Strandberg, my partner and close associate in our www.raptureready.com website, my love and gratitude for inviting me to join him many years ago in his cyberspace mission to disseminate God's prophetic Word in these last days. Thanks, Todd, too, for writing an introduction to this book.

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To Margaret and our sons, Terry Jr. and Nathan, and daughter-in-law Kerry, to my mother, Kathleen James-Basse, my brother Robin James, and to Jeanie and John, all my love and devotion, which goes deeper than I will ever be able to express.

To the reader of *Rapture Ready . . . or Not?* my prayerful hope is that the most important matters contained between these covers will turn your spiritual attention to the Lord of heaven, who, I'm convinced, is on the very brink of calling all who believe in Him for salvation into the clouds of glory.

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FOREWORD BY JIM FLETCHER

When people ask me how I know we are living in the last days (and they often do), I answer that the intensifying pressure on Israel is the surest sign. Throughout Scripture, a final scenario is repeated: The Jewish state will be alone and defenseless . . . except. . . .

The difference of course is that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will come to the aid of His people, and with His help on the Day of Battle, the final prophetic agenda will commence and eternity will be ushered in.

There is, however, a “twin” prophetic signpost that accompanies Israel’s role: the sweeping apostasy of the worldwide Church. Never in my life until recently did I believe I’d see the American Church lead the way, but that is indeed the case. Even the evangelical community, with its leadership increasingly turning on Israel, leaves Bible-believing Christians chagrined.

One of the biggest targets for scoffers is the Rapture. Increasingly vicious attacks on this teaching are in full swing.

Added to this particular gloom is a global convergence that is marked by terrorism, economic disaster, natural catastrophes, and ineffectual leadership in the West.

For starters.

And yet, God always provides a ray of light in every generation, no matter how thick the darkness. Such a ray of light is my friend Terry James, who has for decades watched the prophetic clock and been faithful in teaching the message of the Rapture.

His latest masterpiece — and I don’t use the word often — is *Rapture Ready . . . or Not?* I cut my publishing teeth back in the day, editing Terry’s books, and each new manuscript was a big event. It has been a wonderful

thing to read his latest book, and I would urge you, the reader, to help promote it by recommending it widely. I certainly will.

In this latest effort, Terry manages to make an exhaustive list of topics absolutely fascinating, as only he can do. He lists 15 reasons why we are on the brink of that great “snatching away.”

For example, in chapter 9, Terry points to Christ’s warning in Matthew 24 that in the last days, deceivers would come, including those who claim to be Christ. Terry lists a staggering number of such people in the last several hundred years, from colonial times until now. Such depth of research, and his uncanny ability to analyze the culture in light of Bible prophecy, make Terry, I think, the premier researcher in the prophecy community today. The above-mentioned list brings Christ’s prophecy into a modern, colorful image that makes the prophecy highly relevant for our times.

In chapter 4, he spotlights how George Orwell and Aldous Huxley helped fulfill Bible prophecy (you’ll have to read this book to learn how!).

It all adds up to a new classic in the Bible prophecy field.

One last thing about Terry James and his teaching: he is one of the kindest, most Christ-like men I’ve ever known, and he fervently — *fervently* — wishes to see all people come to know the Lord. His specialty is making the Rapture understandable, logical, and perhaps most importantly, *real*.

I wholeheartedly recommend *Rapture Ready . . . or Not?* to you and anyone who means something to you. This is a book for the ages.

It has been my joy to know Terry for over 20 years. I greatly look forward to spending eternity with him.

— Jim Fletcher
Director, Prophecy Matters

INTRODUCTION BY TODD STRANDBERG

It is commonly taught that Bible prophecy is a fringe belief that only a select portion of the American population acknowledges and accepts. In actuality, a large percentage of the public attests to having a basic understanding of Bible prophecy. A recent poll by the Barna Group found that 41 percent of American adults believe that we are living in the end times.¹

To some degree, Hollywood has helped spread the knowledge of Bible prophecy. In 2013, four major movies were released that covered the subject. We have also seen a host of documentaries on prophecy; the History Channel alone normally produces a new one each year.

Most people know that the last days include wars in the Middle East, earthquakes, Armageddon, the Antichrist, the Rapture, and the number 666. But if you ask them about the details and order of events, things get fuzzy quickly.

The word “Armageddon” has wide recognition, but I doubt that 5 percent of these people would know it’s an actual location in Israel, and far fewer could point it out on a map. Since I’ve never seen the liberal media give fair coverage to prophecy, I can understand why prophecy knowledge is so thin. What makes *Rapture Ready . . . or Not?* so important is its focus on the end-time topic that matters the most — the *pre-Tribulation Rapture*.

I have long stood with those who believe the Rapture will occur before all other end-time events. The Rapture can easily be boiled down to one easy-to-understand argument: There just simply cannot be a Rapture

1. Jeff Shapiro, “Poll: 4 in 10 Americans Believe They Are Living in the End Times,” Christian Post, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/poll-4-in-10-americans-believe-they-are-living-in-the-end-times-104423/>.

surprise if you know it's coming at the midpoint, pre-wrath, or end of the Tribulation:

For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will (Matthew 24:44; NASB).

In order for the Rapture to be a surprise, it must take place before the Tribulation starts. It would be absolutely absurd to apply this premise to any other view.

During the final hours of the Tribulation, two-thirds of mankind will die from the various judgments. And those who come to faith after the Rapture will be under constant threat from the Antichrist. Keeping these things in mind, I cannot understand how any believer can be oblivious to the nearness of the Lord's return. The pre-Trib Rapture is the only position that makes sense.

One of the most common criticisms against end-time teachers is that they are too fixated on negativity. People are offended by what they perceive to be doomsayers who go around trying to scare people by saying that the Rapture is imminent and the Tribulation is about to begin. They also accuse us of saying the world is about to end — which the Bible does not claim. Nor do we.

These critics rarely go after our real reason for promoting Bible prophecy. They mostly argue that there should be a time limit on our message — that we doomsayers have been beating the last-days drum for so long, it's time for us to give it a rest. They often cite recently failed predictions as proof of our folly.

The Lord Jesus knew that there would be a two thousand-year gap between His First Coming and Second Coming. But He never once implied that we should place Bible prophecy on a back burner. Jesus said end-time watchers need to be on constant alert because He would intentionally choose a time frame when most Christians are not expecting His return.

What makes our foes all the more angry is their belief that Bible prophecy is some kind of big money-making business. I've read countless articles that whine about how men like Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye have become rich by selling millions of books, DVDs, movies, and bumper stickers.

The field of Bible prophecy has produced some best-selling books, but I don't think it's accurate to describe it as a cash-cow industry. The largest

prophecy ministry I know of has an annual budget of less than \$3 million. Most word-of-faith organizations need to take in \$50 million a year just to qualify as a big league player.

What makes interest in Bible prophecy so vital is the constant progression of prophecy itself. If Israel had never been reborn as a nation, I might not have as much enthusiasm for prophecy as I do now. Many other predicted events have also occurred in our generation. It would be foolish for us to ignore them.

Many prophecy teachers see the time before and after the Rapture as the Great Divide. Today, we need to rely totally on faith to believe in God. Once the Rapture takes place, there will be no doubt about the reality of God's supernatural realm. What makes *Rapture Ready . . . or Not? 15 Reasons Why This Is the Generation That Will Be Left Behind* such a vital book is that it provides people with proof that they need to rearrange their priorities. Because the signs presented in this book point to the soon arrival of the Tribulation hour, we need to have an end-time mindset.

This time in our history reminds me of the 2003 fire at The Station nightclub where 100 people were killed and 200 were injured. A set of pyrotechnics for the rock band Great White had accidentally ignited flammable sound insulation foam in the walls and ceilings surrounding the stage. Once the fire started, it only took one minute before the entire club was filled with deadly black smoke. The vast majority of people initially stood around watching the fire grow for the first 40 seconds; at that point it only took 10 seconds for someone to move from the front of the stage close enough to the exit to ensure survival.

A video documenting this event can be seen on YouTube. What makes the footage remarkable is that the moment the person who is filming the event realizes he is in grave danger, he quickly moves to safety. The most striking part is when he turns the camera around as he is fleeing the building only to show a tangled mass of people piled on top of each other, desperately trying to get to safety. People perished in that fire because they didn't understand the intensity of the danger at hand.

Today there are simmering fires all around us. We don't know how everything will transpire before we reach the flashpoint, but we have enough warning signs to cause us to look for the ultimate exit — the Rapture.

I recently traveled through the Dallas, Texas, airport, and I marveled at the hordes of people busy engaging in various activities. Businessmen were

on their way to meetings to make new deals, military members were on the move to take on new assignments, and others were traveling to meet friends and family. I could only wonder how many of these people comprehended the travel destination that matters the most — the Kingdom of God.

Someday, the Rapture will become the most important topic of the time. It will be so spectacular that even the airports in America will likely shut down while people try to make sense of what happened. Since our most important destination is the Kingdom of God, everyone needs to ask himself or herself if he or she is Rapture Ready . . . or not. After reading this book, you will be able to answer that question for yourself.

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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:2–3).

— Todd Strandberg
Founder of raptureready.com

PREFACE

Instantaneously, I stood before a throng of cheering people who appeared to be in their mid-twenties. Young men and young women looked at me with expressions of absolute jubilation projecting from the most beautiful faces I've seen before or since. Their hands were thrusting at full arm's length above their heads while they looked into my eyes. I knew theirs was a cheer for some immense victory. They were bidding me to join them — or so I thought at that eternal moment.

But everything turned dark again, and I heard someone say, "I had to hit him with the paddles."

"What paddles?" I asked.

"Your heart stopped and I had to use the defib paddles," the man's voice said.

In what seemed mere moments, I heard a strange sound, the same one I had heard immediately before standing in front of that cheering throng. It was a blip sound, like that of going from one computer application to another.

I instantly stood for the second time before the same wildly cheering young men and women, their hands again thrusting upward, as if expressing victory. They laughed and jumped up and down while looking into my eyes with pure delight projecting into my core being, causing an inner warmth I had not known before that moment.

Things started darkening around me again, and I said — whether audibly or not, I don't know — that I didn't want to leave. I wanted to stay with them — wanted to join them.

But I was again on the gurney, or hospital cath-lab table. "What are you doing?" I asked the people who were working feverishly on me.

“They’re trying to save your life,” came the voice from the one who had said he had to use the defib paddles.

Then it happened again. I heard the electronic-sounding blip. Immediately, for the third time, I stood with the beautiful young men and women. This time I joined them while they continued to look into my eyes and wave their hands high above their heads.

This time we were running, and they were looking over at me while we ran. Toward what, I don’t know. We were moving swiftly, with no effort whatsoever, toward something wonderful — toward the reason for this “victory lap.”

The darkness came again, and I was again on the table. I didn’t want to be there. I wanted to be with the group I had somehow gotten to feel a visceral part of during my three trips to . . . where? I don’t know.

It was Good Friday, April 22, 2011, and I was said to be dead on arrival, and then was clinically dead — flatlined — on two other occasions. The interventional cardiologist told me that 95 percent of people with the “widow maker” never make it to the cath lab. Of those who do, he informed, only 50 percent live. Then he wanted me to look at the picture of my artery and what he had done to remove the blockage that had stopped my heart.

I told him I couldn’t see it. I’d been totally blind since a retinal disease took my eyesight almost 20 years earlier.

“You should see where I’ve just been,” I tried to tell the doctor and the others who had just pulled off a medical miracle. They were too busy to listen.

My case was so unusual, and the “miracle” of my recovery was so astounding, that the cardiologist association of my state gave me the “Cardiologist Patient of the Year Award,” which still sits on a shelf in my office.

There isn’t a day that passes that I don’t think deeply on the reason for my experience — my trip into that realm, suspended somewhere between life and death, that could only be described as being on the periphery of heaven.

Although there are reasons beyond my ability to know why I was allowed that Good Friday trip to be with those cheering, young, heavenly beings, I have been given over the months since some answers as to what the experience was about. I intend to share that knowledge here. Not only do I *want* to share what I know the experience involved, but I *must* tell you, because I am absolutely required to do so. It is my commission from God in heaven. The purpose is that important.

My commission is to tell you that there is coming — *and very soon* — one specific tick of the clock's second hand that is going to convulse every culture, every society, every individual on planet earth. God has spoken it. It will happen. That instant of time will be the event that is one of the most derided, the most mocked, of all biblical truths. It will come without any immediate forewarning. But, it will not happen without a great number of prophetic signposts that presage its occurrence.

As a matter of fact, those signals are literally pulsing all around us at this moment. The very atmosphere is electric with the heavenly siren call to be alert. Something of earth-shocking impact is about to happen.

Multiplied millions of people across the world will disappear in less than a microsecond. The aftermath of the sudden vanishing in America in particular will produce carnage that staggers the imagination. Those left behind will face problems that will make any situations they are presently experiencing seem like nothing by comparison.

Beware and be aware: believe it or not, it is going to happen. According to the signals that warn of its horror-filled aftermath, the Rapture is about to rip civilization as no other event since the Flood of Noah's day.

This is the distinct impression permanently engraved into my spirit on that Good Friday, 2011.

The crowd's cheering, my spirit-impression tells me, is for the message I have been disseminating for many years through books, speaking engagements, broadcasts, and articles on our website, www.raptureready.com. However, the young, heavenly cheerleaders were mostly praising. They weren't praising me, or the others who present the message of the Rapture in all its truth — although that was part of the reason they cheered. They were praising God that this astonishing event is on the very brink of bringing the vast body of believers into the Father's house, just as God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, promised. Their jubilation was heaven's validation of the view of the Rapture that proclaims that believers in Jesus Christ — alone — for salvation will be brought instantaneously into His blessed presence *before* the most horrendous time of human history breaks upon a world ripe for judgment. Be assured: Rapture ready or not, these things are about to take place!

(My book, *HeavenVision: Glimpses into Glory*, is the entire account of my Good Friday 2011 meeting with the cheering, heavenly beings.)

THE END ISN'T NEAR ... IT'S *HERE!*

Reason #1: A sure reason that this is the generation that will be left behind is the many scoffers who ask in derisive, scathing tone: "Where is the promise of Jesus' coming?"

We have all seen a cartoon of the little, balding, bearded prophet in a long robe, holding a sign that says "The end is near!" His message, I'm absolutely convinced, is passé — out of date.

A sure signal that the end is not near, but that it is already here, bombards my email inbox constantly. Hardly a day passes that I don't get at least one message from which I receive scriptural assurance that the last of the last days are upon this generation.

It is not the emails from Christian-haters mocking us for believing in something as foolish as Christ's return and other prophecies that are the most cutting. The emails that scoff most are from professing fellow believers in Christ. These emails are usually from those who almost without exception begin with a statement something like: "I used to believe in the pre-Trib view of the Rapture, but I've since stopped listening to what men (prophecy teachers like you) say, and read for myself that the Bible teaches believers will go through the Tribulation."

These then berate me for teaching that the Rapture will save Christians from the horrific things prophetically scheduled to precede Christ's Second Advent. They then most often say I'm leading people to hell with my false teaching. I've never figured out just what they mean in saying I'm leading people to that terrible, eternal place by teaching the pre-Tribulational Rapture. They also charge, with hostility in their words, that we who teach the pre-Trib Rapture are causing believers in Christ to be in danger of not recognizing the Antichrist when that "beast" of Revelation chapter 13 comes onto the world scene. This accusation, I understand — on the intellectual level, at least. The indictment is, however, groundless.

In either case, the angry, mocking tone of my accusers gives me absolute confidence that we who teach, preach, write, and broadcast that Jesus will call His Church (His Bride) into heaven before that most terrible time in human history is on the biblical mark. This angry opposition also lets me know that we are in the last days for certain.

The prophecy that provides such profound assurance was given through the Apostle Peter, one of Christ's closest disciples.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after 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 the creation (2 Peter 3:3–4).

Today's mocking of and scoffing at Bible prophecy in general and of the Rapture in particular is a very strong indicator of where this generation stands on God's prophetic timeline. There are, however, much, much stronger assurances that this generation is on the very cusp of the moment when millions will vanish in less than a microsecond of time. They will then join their Savior and Lord above planet earth for the entrance into heaven where Christ has prepared their eternal homes (John 14:1–3).

The Rapture is an event that has always been imminent — that is, it could occur at any moment. There are no signals given that will announce its taking place except for the words from heaven every believer of the Church Age — living and dead — will hear when Jesus shouts, "Come up here!" (see Revelation 4:1).

Jesus spoke about this unknown moment in time. It was prophesied through the Apostle Paul. The Rapture will happen in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:52). Jesus said:

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (Matthew 24:36).

How, if Jesus said that only His Father (God) knows the time of the Rapture, can I make such an audacious statement as “There are strong assurances that the end is here, now — that the Rapture is very near”?

The following chapters will, I hope, make clear why the generation alive today will likely suffer billions left behind, as the novel series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins put it. That is, most people on earth will not go to be with Jesus Christ when He calls, “Come up here,” (again, see Revelation 4:1). Those billions will instead be left behind on a planet ripe for God’s judgment and wrath.

It gives no pleasure to inform of this coming era of horror that most alive at the time will endure when the Rapture occurs. The prophetic truth from God’s Word, nonetheless, is something I have been commissioned to forewarn. To fail to do so would bring dishonor to the Lord I serve. To do less than sound the siren would bring judgment that would adversely affect my own life, according to God’s own Word.

Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand (Ezekiel 33:2–6).

Chapters that follow present a mountain of evidence that the time of God’s judgment and wrath looms heavily above the world at this very moment. Indicators are in every direction that the wind-up of human history is very near.

It is proper to say the end is *here* — not just *near* — because of the words of God Himself. Jesus — who *is* God — had answers in addressing

His disciples' question: "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3).

He gave a list of such signs, then said, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Jesus had just given specific conditions and events that would mark the time leading up to His *Second Advent* (the moment He will return in power and great glory as given in Revelation 19:11–14).

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

The Lord Jesus Christ is called "the word" in this Revelation account and in John 1:1:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

His written Word promises all of Christ's disciples (those who are born again — John 3:3) that they will be kept out of the most terrible time of human history (see Revelation 3:10). That was the horrendous era He had just described to His immediate disciples who asked Him the question: "When shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Jesus will return in power and glory as *King of kings and Lord of lords* during man's most deadly war — Armageddon. He gave many signals or signs of what would lead up to this glorious return to put an end to war. He told His disciples — those immediately surrounding Him at the time and all of His disciples to follow down through the centuries — to look up and watch, because He will be about to gather them to Himself when the prophecies or signs He and the prophets gave for that most terrible time of history begin to become evident.

That time of horror will be the seven years leading up to His return to planet earth. It is referred to as the Tribulation. Jesus promised He would come

to rescue believers when the signals or signs of that soon-to-come seven-year period began to become obvious.

There is misunderstanding and confusion because of erroneous teachings about Christ's promise to keep those who have been born again out of the time of Tribulation.

Much of the error revolves around the teachers' claim that Christians (all born-again believers in Christ) will be kept "through" that time of Tribulation. The Christians alive at the time the Tribulation begins, these teachers say, will go through those seven years of horror, but God will supernaturally protect many of them. Exactly which of these believers God will protect and which He will allow to become martyrs — and why — the errant teachers fail to make clear.

The resurrected and ascended Christ spoke to John the Revelator, telling the prophet to write the following to all believers of the Church Age (Age of Grace):

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth (Revelation 3:10).

This is referring to the time of *Tribulation*. God's prophetic word uses the Greek word *ek* (the verb meaning "out of") in indicating that believers will be kept "from" the time of the last seven years of history immediately preceding Christ's Second Coming. All will be kept "out of" the very hour of Tribulation. Believers who live during the Age of Grace will not go through even one second of that time of "testing" (Tribulation).

Jesus Christ gave that promise to John, who recorded Revelation while exiled on Patmos in the Aegean Sea. Jesus was in His resurrected, ascended form when He gave the promise. That God-given guarantee that believers of the Church Age will be kept out of the very time of God's judgment and wrath was given by the same Jesus decades earlier, while He was still alive in human flesh — before His crucifixion.

Matthew recorded the words Jesus spoke while He and the disciples sat overlooking the Temple Mount from atop the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Jesus first made the statement about the time of His coming to again intervene in the affairs of mankind. These words by the Son of God are most important in considering the fact that believers will be kept from the seven years of Tribulation.

Jesus, in answering the question about the time of His coming again, first said:

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (Matthew 24:36).

He was saying that His coming will be at an unknown moment. At the time He made the statement, He was yet in human flesh, and had not yet died, arisen, and ascended into heaven. He chose to become a man, and, for the time He was within human history's time constraints, He chose to put aside some aspects of foreknowledge. Only His Father knew the time Jesus will again intervene at the end of days. Now ascended to the Father's right hand, He certainly knows the time when he will come to call His Church — all believers — to Himself (see Revelation 4:1; John 14:1–3).

Immediately after telling His disciples that only the Father knew the time of Christ's return, the Lord said:

But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come (Matthew 24:37–42).

Jesus followed up the exhortation to be watchful with a second exhortation, reinforcing the first:

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Matthew 24:44).

Seminaries have long taught that Jesus' words here refer to His *Second Advent*, the time of His return at Armageddon, when He will then destroy God's enemies and set up His thousand-year reign in Jerusalem. This prophecy by the Lord, however, cannot allude to that time of Christ's return with His Church and the armies of heaven. His prophecy here refers to His coming at least seven years earlier, to call His Church into the air to be with Him as

given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:52–55 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. More about this in due course.

The Gospel account of Luke further enlightens this most important prophecy by Jesus while He sat, teaching His disciples, looking down on the soon-to-be-destroyed Jewish Temple.

Jesus said further about the time of His next major intervention into human history:

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke 17:28–30).

This foretelling by the Creator of all things is stunningly clear. Jesus was telling His disciples — those immediately surrounding Him and all believers who would follow down through the centuries — that He is coming at an unknown time when things will be exactly like they were during the days of Noah and of Lot. Everything will be going along pretty much as normal in societies and cultures of the day, just like things were going along normally up until the very day judgment began falling, destroying the antediluvian world by water and Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone.

This is a profoundly precise prophecy by God Himself, giving very strong indication of when He will begin to bring human history to a conclusion. Remember what He later says as recorded by Luke:

When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28).

In both cases — that of Noah's day, and that of Lot's day — the cultures and societies had reached certain tipping points that made God say "enough is enough." Of course, God is omniscient — that is, He knows all things from beginning to end — so He wasn't taken by surprise. But His cup of wrath was filled to the brim with the wickedness and violence of His creation called "man." The tipping point happened at the end of Noah's preaching of coming judgment for 120 years while he built the big boat, the ark. He no doubt underwent much ridicule for his project and his message. The time came when Noah went into the safety of the ark, and God's deadly judgment fell.

Lot must have spent years trying to bring some degree of lawfulness and even godliness to the people of Sodom. He was no doubt mocked, ridiculed, and despised, even though God had him in a place of prominence, because the Scripture says he sat in the city gate — a reference to leadership in the city's governance. The tipping point was reached in the Lord's holy balance of things, and Lot was taken out of Sodom. Fire and brimstone wiped every vestige of the wicked cities from the area.

The thing to consider is, Jesus said it will be just like this when He next intervenes. People will be going about business as usual, yet the wickedness, the vileness, and violence will have reached God's tipping point. His cup of wrath will begin overflowing. Judgment will fall the very day the "Son of Man" — a reference to Jesus' humanity (fully man and at the same time fully God) — is revealed (His intervention known, worldwide).

The removal of Noah and Lot from the judgment-bound planet's surface was at an unknown time to Noah and Lot and to the people who were about to experience God's judgment. It came like a "thief in the night," as is written about the Rapture in other passages, for example in 1 Thessalonians 5:1–2.

Again, this unknown time to which Jesus referred, as given in Matthew 24:36, does not fit the Second Advent when Christ returns at Armageddon. People of that terrible era can know almost to the hour when Christ will return. The number of days, particularly from the midpoint to the end of the Tribulation era, is specified in Scripture. Those who have become believers during the Tribulation will be counting down the days until Jesus appears in the sky to rescue them.

How Near the Tipping Point?

Again, seminaries — even those who teach about the Rapture from a pre-Tribulational point of view — most always come against any notion that Jesus was talking about the Rapture of His Church when giving the prophecy about the days of Noah and of Lot. Most of these believe that Jesus was speaking almost exclusively to the Jews, because He had not yet died, resurrected, and ascended when He gave the prophecy during what has become known as the Olivet Discourse. Having a theological doctorate behind their names almost guarantees the seminary graduates don't see the days of Noah and days of Lot as having anything to do with the time of the Rapture.

Yet such marvelous Bible expositors as Dr. Adrian Rodgers and Dave Hunt spoke and wrote strongly for this prophecy. They saw it as being about

Christ taking His Church home to heaven, as given in John 14:1–3, when the Lord was sitting that day atop the Mount of Olives.

However, it is the Holy Spirit-given understanding, based upon what is taught in God's Word, not man's opinion, that we should depend upon in rightly dividing the word of truth (the Bible).

Keeping that in mind, without intending to take unto myself any glory — for it all belongs to the Lord — I believe that holding this view of Jesus' words about the days of Noah and days of Lot was confirmed to my spirit as absolute truth Good Friday, April 22, 2011, as the preface to this book explains.

And, I want to say here that I'm aware that many Bible students have their own views on the exact day Jesus was crucified and many don't agree that Friday was the day. However, the Christian world for the most part holds that it was Friday — thus, the term "Good Friday." I am absolutely certain that the experience taking place on that day is significant in validating that my trip to the periphery of the heavenly realm was a vision given by the Lord.

Fears That the End Is Near

Not long before that clinical death experience and vision of those jubilant, cheering young people who met me in that heavenly place, I completed a series of articles for our website, www.raptureready.com.

I began that series, which I gave the title "Scanning a Fearful Future," upon receiving many emails from those who expressed their anxieties over what some well-known people were saying about the immediate future. The predictions were dire, and our website's readers were obviously filled with fear that the nation and world would collapse around them within days. I was, I believe, prompted by the Holy Spirit to address their fears in the article series, which ultimately amounted to ten commentaries.

I have presented in-depth excerpts of those commentaries here to give a flavor of the anxiety spawned during that time by the fearful predictions of imminent national and worldwide collapse.

Commentators, secular and religious, weigh in incessantly on all aspects of the issues of greatest concern for these angst-ridden times. Those issues of most profound worry are collapsing economy, loss of personal liberty, and what is going to happen in the immediate and long-term future.

One can almost physically feel the fear in the emails I receive daily. Worries over what the future holds fill the articles and, more to the point for this commentary, dominate the personal missives that search for answers that might provide some degree of comfort.

One of the more mildly fearful emails I received this week says in part, “I watched the Hal Lindsey Report yesterday in which he said that he believes before the Rapture that Christians were going to be persecuted. After reading your nearing midnight article today I can see that Christians becoming more and more isolated for their support of Israel is just another sign that he is right. If Hal is right, with the Rapture being as close as it is, then persecution for Christians has to be very close. What is your take on this?”

I listened to what Hal Lindsey had to say in that particular program, and he did paint a bleak picture for the immediate future of planet earth. He correctly pointed to even more terrible times for the world a bit further out — during the Tribulation. I had so many urging me to watch Glenn Beck’s program that I tuned in to that show on the several days he painted a frightening picture of what he says he believes George Soros and the New World Order minions have in mind for the world — particularly for the citizens of the United States.

Mr. Beck, like Hal Lindsey, gave as part of his view of things the prescription he thinks necessary to help with curing the sickness from which the United States and the world suffer. It is interesting that both Lindsey and Beck — one Christian, the other secular (in that he has been a Fox News pundit) — give faith turned toward God as a major part of any such remedy.¹

Terrible times like no other in American history lurk somewhere in the future, according to former Fox News Channel’s Glenn Beck. He is joined in his stated apprehension for what is coming by thousands of American citizens. Many of these are fear-filled Christians who look to Beck and others to inform them of the proposed terrors to come, and to tell them what to do about it. I continue to hear from some of these through email on a weekly, even daily, basis.

1. Terry James, “Scanning a Fearful Future: Part 1,” www.raptureready.com, November 22, 2010.

I would like us to look briefly at developments across today's socioeconomic landscape, thus to examine as analytically and as fairly as possible the portentous matters that give Beck and others fodder for their doomsday scenarios.

Economics-minded forecasters great and small watched the stock market bubble build during the days preceding the Lehman Brothers collapse of 2008, speculating wildly what the bubble's burst might bring. That financial aneurysm, they determined, would certainly rupture — and, of course, it did. Governmental insanity created by ultra-liberal politicians saw to it that people with champagne tastes and beer drinkers' budgets for years received home loans they didn't have much more than a prayer of ever repaying.

We are now familiar with the terms “Freddie Mac” and “Fannie Mae.” We are equally acquainted with names such as Barney Frank, Charles Schumer, and others, who — in the name of “fairness” to those who couldn't afford housing like the more affluent — demanded these be given the loans anyway, despite the fact the recipients didn't have the income or collateral to support that level of debt.

Rather than govern the housing industry responsibly, the elected officials invested with the responsibility to oversee things, in concert with their Wall Street cohorts, foolishly threw caution to the fiscal winds. A banking crisis of unprecedented magnitude was thus created, with the housing bubble rupture setting in motion bank failures and threats of even greater crises.

Calls for massive bailouts to avert what the president of the United States and others in government and media speciously screamed would otherwise be world-rending calamity brought about the most devastating crisis of all. Trillions of dollars were, in effect, created out of thin air by the Federal Reserve Bank to save entities “too big to fail.”

The totally irresponsible sleight-of-hand accomplished only the creation of an exploding national debt that most likely can never be repaid. Decisions made by some of the same people who help create the problems strapped on the back of American citizens financial burdens with which generations far into the future will have to deal.

The resulting economic uncertainty deepened an abyss-like recession that more soundly thought-out measures would have

surely lessened in severity. Jobs, as we know, are being lost; businesses are closing their doors; deflation or hyper-inflation — the experts can't figure which — might collapse the American economy within a near time frame (which the experts can't predict, either).

The stability of the global economy hangs in the balance, with the other nations and their monetary gurus wondering about the financial fate of the U.S. and its all-important dollar. And, make no mistake: under present world economic structures, the fate of the American dollar is absolutely critical.

Enter Glenn Beck at the tip of the gloom iceberg. And “iceberg” is a viable term here because the things he and others are forewarning are indeed chilling. Statements the TV and radio show host make almost daily send shivers down the spine of many of his viewers and listeners. He says things like (I paraphrase), “Change is coming, and when it happens, you won't recognize your country. You will wake up next day, and it will no longer be America as you've known it. And, it will happen just that fast. I can't tell you when that transformation is coming, but it's coming.”²

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has internment compounds placed strategically around the United States. These will be used as concentration camps when anarchy reaches a critical point in America and the world. This sort of warning has been at the heart of fear-filled emails I've been receiving for the past seven years, at least.

Today, the trepidation concerning the likelihood of the collapse of America and the world issues daily from a populist mouthpiece. There are others, but Glenn Beck fills the role as chief forecaster of impending doom. He says frequently that we will awaken one morning and find that America has changed. We won't recognize the nation. It will happen just that swiftly, and the transformation will involve, among other things, probable hyper-inflation that will make money valueless for most people in America. This means that the entire world will follow suit. Global depression, we infer, will

2. Ibid., Part 2, November 29, 2010.

be the plight of all but the ultra rich of the world — the George Soros, etc.

Based upon Beck's dire suppositions, we consider things to come. Just how far into the future all of this evil lurks, Beck doesn't know. However, based upon the rapid movement in economic uncertainties, it is likely, he implies, that it will happen sooner rather than later. That new dawning — or perhaps “nightfall” is the more apropos term — will be bleak, he predicts. The dollar will have fallen as the reserve currency for most of the world's economies. Entire bank accounts will be wiped out, in that their contents likely won't be sufficient to feed a family for a day, much less for longer. Governments will be forced to cut social programs of every sort — completely eliminating them in most cases. Rioting will explode while those on welfare roll and others used to government largess will turn violent. The big inner cities will be particularly hard hit.³

To this point, Hal Lindsey's view of Bible prophecy and Glenn Beck's analyses and forecast for America's destiny have run relatively parallel. Both Lindsey and Beck see a time coming in the near term when America will suffer financial collapse. It will be, they each predict, a time of national and worldwide societal darkness worse than the bleakest years of the Great Depression. Based upon the staggering debt of the U.S. and of most every other major nation on earth, theirs is the only conclusion that can reasonably be reached using informed rationale.

Lindsey and Beck also envision a singular moment when America and the world will change forever. It will be an instant so calamitous that it will, in effect, eventuate in a totally transformed global order for every facet of human interaction.

This, however, is where similarities in their view of the future end. Now the views diverge as dramatically as the difference between the eternal places called heaven and hell. . . .

Hal Lindsey, like me and those who believe that Bible prophecy clearly speaks of what conditions will be like at the very end of the age, also sees America and the world headed into an economic

3. *Ibid.*, Part 3, December 6, 2010.

morass. Unlike Glenn Beck, however, we are of the conviction that if indeed we are at the end of this dispensation — the Age of Grace (Church Age) as we believe is the case — this nation is beyond anything human intervention can do to save it.⁴

We began looking into prospects for the near future by considering an email I received from one such concerned Christian. Again, he wrote the following, in part:

I watched the Hal Lindsey Report yesterday in which he said that he believes before the Rapture that Christians were going to be persecuted. After reading your “Nearing Midnight” article today, I can see that Christians becoming more and more isolated for their support of Israel is just another sign that he is right. If Hal is right, with the Rapture being as close as it is, then persecution for Christians has to be very close. What is your take on this?

This writer’s perspectives carry much weight. It is Dr. Lindsey’s view of things that impressed the emailer to write. Since I am asked for my “take” on Hal’s position regarding severe persecution for believers being imminent, I must be true to my study of prophecy and risk going somewhat counter to his stated belief that Christians in America are necessarily going to suffer such intensive, satanically engendered travail.

I mean no disrespect for this man, certainly a special servant chosen for the Lord’s prophetic ministry for these closing hours of the age. However, my assessment differs from his forecast to an extent that I sense it needs to be presented here.

We have spent time thus far looking into the eerie, troubling changes taking place across the socioeconomic landscape of America and the world. Mostly, we have tried to get our brains around the apparent insanity of our leaders and why they have created crises and then printed trillions of dollars to throw at those crises — all of this sleight-of-hand chicanery done to stave off supposed national and world cataclysm those leaders warned would otherwise destroy civilization as it has been known. Their supposed attempts

4. *Ibid.*, Part 4, December 13, 2010.

to preempt economic Armageddon now threaten to bring about the collapse of every economy on the planet.

The foundation had to be laid thusly in order to begin answering the question so many people want to know. Our emailer framed well the fears of many who worry what the near future might hold. Since world conditions are in configuration that includes issues and events much like those for the Tribulation given in Bible prophecy, will Christians in America face severe persecution before Christ returns to this desperately wicked planet?⁵

The emailer, after prefacing his question by saying that Lindsey stated persecution is coming for Christians, asked: “Persecution for Christians has to be very close. What is your take on this?”

First, I must rephrase his question to get to the heart of what he and so many others are asking. The question they mean to ask is: “Persecution for the Church in America has to be very close. What is your take on this?”

Believers in Jesus Christ — the born again (John 3:3) — are being persecuted around the globe at this very moment. Many are suffering torture and martyrdom. Members of the true Church of Jesus Christ have always suffered and died, and will do so right up until Christ’s call, “Come up hither!” (Revelation 4:1). So, what American Christians are concerned about in regard to this question is whether Christians in the United States will suffer the level of persecution endured by believers like those in, for example, the Sudan. For that matter, the question implies asking whether American believers will suffer to a major extent in any way whatsoever. Hal Lindsey expressed in several of his TV programs that he believed Christians in America will suffer persecutions, and, I infer, he was speaking of persecutions of the fearful sort — those that might include loss of life in martyrdom. This fearful future, again I infer, will likely be part of a severe societal/cultural breakdown brought about by economic cataclysm. This, as pointed out previously, is much like Glenn Beck’s forecast for Americans in general.

My answer to the emailer and others who continue to ask similar questions is that I don’t believe Christians in America are

5. *Ibid.*, Part 5, December 20, 2010.

prophetically scheduled for severe persecution like that being experienced by those in Sudan, China, and other such places around the globe.

Now I can almost hear the clicking of emails being typed. Some are already conjuring the questioning flames of retort. “Do you think American Christians are too good to suffer persecution?” “Do you think America is God’s pet nation? — That the U.S. doesn’t deserve judgment?!” Please . . . save your fingers the pain from the white-hot irritation shooting from your keyboard. I agree completely with you. American Christians are NOT too good to be persecuted. The U.S. does deserve judgment. There is no argument there. Now, please allow me to give my scripturally based reasoning in disagreeing with Dr. Lindsey on these matters.

I begin by inserting this caveat about my assertion that American Christians won’t suffer persecution of the most heinous sort. My belief in this regard is predicated upon my prayerfully studied understanding that the world as we know it would have to first come tumbling down, then rearrange to be configured exactly as it is now in order to accommodate American Christians going into such persecution as feared by my emailer.

That world crash, then turn-around, just isn’t going to happen. Everything is in place for Bible prophecy to unfold. Based upon this reality, my case follows in presenting why I’m so sure that what I believe about things to come in the very near future correctly diverges from what Dr. Lindsey and Mr. Beck say they believe is about to happen.

Each is certain that the United States is facing economic catastrophe that will bring about food and other shortages, thus will engender rioting that will bring anarchy and collapse. Lindsey’s fears are less adamantly presented than Beck’s, but the implication that such is in the very near future is there in Hal’s TV program narratives. While Beck doesn’t consider anything regarding true Bible prophecy at all, Hal Lindsey believes that severe persecution for Christians is also in that bleak future.

To briefly state my “take” in answer to my emailer, I believe that America will not suffer catastrophic collapse while Christians (true believers in Jesus Christ) remain on planet earth. You and

I — whether believer or nonbeliever — are, I'm firmly convinced, members of the most privileged generation in history. We are alive at the very end of this fascinating moment in human advancement. For believers, however, the privilege is magnified beyond imagination.

Believers in Jesus Christ are alive during this end of the Church Age for a divinely appointed purpose. We are witnesses to and participants in the very time the Lord Jesus Christ Himself prophesied would see Him revealed in spectacular fashion. The prospect for those who name the name of Christ is truly glorious.

While “Scanning a Fearful Future” is an accurate title for purposes of this examination of things to come, an equally appropriate title for those who are born again would have been “Scanning a Fabulous Future.”⁶

Now, here's where things can get quite confusing, if careful attention isn't paid to the thoughts I'm trying to convey. I am of the conviction that America and the world will suffer Lindsey and Beck's predicted economic, thus societal, catastrophe. Persecution and martyrdom will coalesce to make life for believers even in the U.S. region hell on earth as a result of that immense calamity.

I am at the same time equally convinced that there will neither be national and worldwide economic and societal collapse nor severe persecution and martyrdom for American Christians. Lunacy? Not if one views things to come through Bible prophecy as it is truly given for us to understand.

God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8). Believe it or not, like it or not, God's Word demonstrates that He deals with mankind in dispensations — distinctive eras that He alone determines. This generation is part of the dispensation of grace — the Church Age. This dispensation will morph into the Tribulation, a period of seven years of God's judgment and wrath also known as Daniel's 70th week.

My seemingly irrational claims, viewed in light of dispensational truth, are on sound biblical footing. Please consider slowly and carefully. Putting forth that I believe America and the world both

6. Ibid., Part 6, December 27, 2010.

will experience and will not experience apocalyptic socio-economic collapse makes sense from dispensational perspective. Holding that American believers in Jesus Christ will not go through such persecution that includes martyrdom, all the while proclaiming that believers living in this nation will suffer persecution and martyrdom, is a biblically correct dispensational pronouncement.

These paradoxical proclamations are made understandable by the words of the greatest of all prophets — the Lord Jesus Christ. His astonishing prophecy about the end of this dispensation in which you and I are living addresses the two questions for which we seek answers.

Bible prophecy's answers to these are as follows, I'm firmly convinced:

1) Neither America nor the world will suffer societal and monetary catastrophe that will bring about apocalyptic collapse due to man-made accidental bungling or contrived manipulation. However, there will be a crash of the world's socio-economic system, which will cause chaos of unfathomable scope, brought about by the God of heaven in an instant of time.

2) Christians in America today will not face persecution of the sort suffered by martyrs in past ages and by believers in parts of the world at present. But, following God's next catastrophic intervention into earth's history, believers in North America — as well as all other believers in Jesus Christ — will suffer persecution even worse than that inflicted upon believers of previous times.

Most Relevant Prophecy

When thinking on prophecies that are stage-setting for the windup of history, we most often point to prophecies involving Israel being back in the land of promise as most key to where we stand on God's end-of-the-age timeline. The peace process and Jerusalem being at the center of the world's spotlight show precisely the lateness of the hour.

That said, I believe no prophecy is more relevant for this moment in history than that given by Jesus Christ Himself, which encompasses not just the future of Israel and Jerusalem, but of the entire world:

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke 17:26–30).

This prophetic declaration by the Creator of all things is about the generation that will be alive at the dénouement of the age. Specifically, it refers to one catastrophic moment in the present dispensation when all of this world system will come crashing down.⁷

We will now try to answer the questions about world collapse, whether persecution for American Christians is imminent, and how it might all be tied together prophetically. We will do so by looking in-depth at the details wrapped up in Jesus' forecast for earth's near future.

Jesus gave what I am convinced is the premiere end-of-the-Church-Age prophecy in Luke 17:26–30. He describes in considerable detail world conditions and activities at the moment He breaks in on things of this present age.

He tells in His prophecy just the opposite of what Glenn Beck says is on the brink of happening to the people of America and the world. That is, the Lord's description of how the worldwide catastrophe will happen differs greatly from the Fox host's prediction of the cause of the calamity he says is just around the corner.

Remember, Mr. Beck is predicting for the near future the direst of socio-economic collapses. He recommends that we prepare for, quite likely, hyper-inflated times to come, at the very least. He indicates that he fears that from the collapse will spin draconian governmental measures to quell the rioting that will occur when those millions who are given government hand-outs no longer receive the

7. *Ibid.*, Part 7, January 3, 2011.

largess. There is more than enough evidence of unchecked government today to prove Beck's fears are well founded. The phenomenal growth of federal intrusion into practically every facet of the citizen's life today portends grave consequences for liberty in the months and years just ahead. For example, bureaucratic regulation such as the move of the unelected FCC apparatchiks to invoke "net neutrality" — a Big Brother-like regulatory process that could eventuate in establishing dictatorial power over Internet usage — threatens anyone who would express opinions that run counter to state-approved language. The current administration intends to implement this despite the fact that a federal appeals court has ruled that the administration doesn't have the authority to do so.

Hal Lindsey sees the same cataclysm approaching, basically for the same reasons. He also recommends that we prepare for possible food shortages, and he says he believes Christians in this country will face severe persecution, which I infer to mean persecution of the sort suffered by martyrs for the cause of Christ. I must add here that I agree with both of these gentlemen — to some degree. And I disagree, also, with both — for differing reasons. But I reserve my thoughts in that regard for the biblically based logic I hope will make itself manifest as I analyze the words of the greatest of all prophets. . . .

Let's dissect carefully what Jesus predicts for the times just ahead. I say with confidence that Jesus tells the future from this moment forward, based upon what I'm convinced His words are speaking to this generation at this very hour. He prophesied in the Luke 17:26–30 passages that in the "days" He, the "Son of man," is about to break into earth's history, mankind will be doing certain things. It will be a time like the days of Noah before the Flood and the days of Lot while he was still in Sodom.

People, the Lord said, will be eating, drinking, marrying, building, buying, selling, and planting. Things will be going along pretty much as normal for the time. The Lord indicates no catastrophic, worldwide socio-economic breakdown of any sort in this time immediately before "the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:30) — the time He breaks into human history.

This time cannot be the Second Advent of Revelation 19:11. At the time the Lord of lords and King of kings breaks through

the planetary darkness of death and destruction at Armageddon, perhaps as many as three-fourths of all people on earth will have died as a result of wars, pestilence, and geophysical disasters brought about by God's judgment and wrath upon an incorrigibly wicked, unrepentant world of earth-dwellers.

In other words, planet earth's living conditions at the time of Christ's return in power and glory at Armageddon will not be anything like living conditions at the time of His intervention into human affairs as He describes in the days of Noah, days of Lot prophecy. At the end of the seven-year Tribulation period, it will be anything but business as usual. It will truly be hell on earth when Jesus comes to destroy all human government and the soul-rending carnage it has produced.

So, Jesus, in the Luke 17 account, was foretelling the days leading up to the time when He calls His Church to Himself — "His Church" meaning all born-again believers who have lived and died during the Church Age (Age of Grace). This is known as the Rapture. To learn more about this stupendous event, read 1 Corinthians 15:51–55, 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, John 14:1–3, and Revelation 4:1–2.

To repeat, Jesus was not describing His coming back to earth in the Luke 17:26–30 prophecy. He was telling about His coming to the planet to receive His people — Christians — to Himself. Christians — the Church — then will accompany Him back to the heavenly places He has prepared for them in the Father's house — heaven.⁸

Two statements are necessary at this point. First, it is God's staying hand that prevents the impending calamities outlined in this essay from collapsing America and the world into the worst times in history. Second, if things continue on their present course geopolitically and socio-economically — and if God takes His hand of control off developments — the collapse feared by Beck, Lindsey, and many others will certainly come at some point. The longer the rebellion-engendered crises build, the more devastating will be the crash when it comes.

8. *Ibid.*, Part 8, January 10, 2011.

I begin my analysis of what lies just ahead in that fearful future about which Beck, Lindsey, and others have conjectured, and over which so many emailers have fretted. Again, I believe that the answers reside cocooned within Jesus' "days of Noah, days of Lot" prophecy. Now, we apply His analogy to the present generation.

Jesus foretold that human activity will be going along in a business-as-usual manner. God, in one day, will take His family — believers — out of harm's way. That very day, His judgment and wrath will begin falling on those not taken. To reiterate, because the point can't be overemphasized: if one accepts Christ's words as true and as literal, as I do, one must agree that things must be going along as normal for the time when the sudden intervention happens. Jesus plainly says that the generation alive at the time of that divine intervention will be removed to safety before the devastating events of judgment take place.

Both Beck and Lindsey say they believe a world-rending socio-economic collapse is imminent. Beck, at least, believes the crash and totally changed America and world will be brought about by the diabolical efforts of New World Order types like George Soros. Both Beck and Lindsey are recommending that we make preparations to survive that coming time of devastating collapse.

Yet Jesus tells us that it will be business as usual right up until the moment He removes believers from the planet. There is no man-made, worldwide catastrophe in Christ's prophecy. As a matter of fact, Jesus says all will be relatively normal, in terms of human activity, until that removal. Then He will be revealed by way of His cataclysmic judgment that begins to devastate planet earth. It is God who causes the cataclysm, not George Soros or any other human or other entity. Mankind's involvement in the whole matter is that of displaying total rebellion and refusing to repent of sin, thus bringing on God's righteous judgment. One era — the Church Age — comes to an end with the removal of believers. The next era then begins at some point with the confirming of the covenant with Israel, as given in Daniel 9:26–27. That period will be the seven years of Tribulation, the last three and one-half years about which Jesus said: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since

the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21).⁹

Every signal across the geopolitical, socio-economic, and religious spectrum — even signals involving the geophysical and astrophysical — scream through the sirens of forewarning. We are at the very end of the Church Age — on the brink of the Tribulation. Yet most in America — including most believers in Jesus Christ — are going about business as usual. Except for the relatively few voices forewarning of the impending cataclysm, there is no recognition of or interest in the end-times storm warnings.

Jesus, as we have seen, said human activity will be like it is at present when He next breaks into earth's history like a thief in the night. Again, we look at the Lord's words in the book of Matthew:

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come (Matthew 24:36–42).

As we have examined, this break-in upon mankind's history cannot be describing the Second Advent. It will not be business as usual at that time, when the planet is decimated by wars and God's judgment and wrath. Jesus is here speaking of the Rapture — His imminent, catastrophic break-in upon earth's history.

So we come to our present hour. America is the apex nation of the world. That is, it is the most materially blessed nation and one of the most spiritually blessed nations ever to exist. This, despite the fact that it has degenerated in many ways to become perhaps the

9. *Ibid.*, Part 9, January 17, 2011.

most wicked in human history. The United States is so blessed with material wealth that every nation on earth is inextricably linked to its economy in one way or another.

It is true that its dominance is under threat and is eroding quickly. The economic meltdown and unavoidable implosion of America's monetary hegemony is imminent. But everything of global financial significance still hinges on the health and fate of the American dollar. This is to the great consternation of the people Glenn Beck rails against as wanting to bring the dollar down so that a new monetary regime can be brought to bear on the hapless citizens of what they envision as a Babel-like, one-world order.

Despite incessant assaults, the American economy hasn't collapsed. It should have by now, but it hasn't. It is, despite ominous signs ahead, business as usual — just as Jesus said it would be at the end of the age. If America's economy crashes — as Beck says it will very shortly — the entire world will collapse to rubble. The business-as-usual element of Christ's prophecy about it being like the days of Noah and Lot would be out the proverbial window.

If the U.S. economy collapsed, taking the world's buying and selling capability into the darkest times in history, it would take years — if ever — for everything to recover so that things would again come into business-as-usual configuration. Yet the devastating, world-rending collapse is coming. It cannot be stopped. I completely agree with Glenn Beck and Hal Lindsey in seeing that coming economic catastrophe in the immediate future. However, I disagree that the folly of man or the deliberate manipulations of human diabolists will bring the fearful disaster. And the disaster will not happen until God's prophetic timing allows. It will continue to be business as usual despite increasing harbingers of economic calamity. Perhaps conditions will even look like they are improving. But if so, it will be smoke and mirrors — a sham "recovery." The damage is done. Recovery is impossible.

This all means that Jesus Christ is poised to do exactly what He foretold. The prophetic signals and conditions prevalent in America and the world should have the attention of every believer. Jesus is about to fulfill His glorious promise as recorded in John 14:1–3.

The Rapture, I believe Jesus is telling us, will be the sword of judgment that pierces the building, festering boil of humanistic rebellion. When the Church is taken to heaven, the minds of those left behind who want to control will no longer have restraint on their thoughts and ambitions. There will cease to be a governor on man's conscience, according to 2 Thessalonians 2:7–8, because the Holy Spirit will allow the evil within mankind to do its dastardly work.

This will be the time — during the chaos of the days immediately after the Rapture — that all of Mr. Beck's fears will come to fruition. Neither patriots nor anyone else will be able to save America and the world.

Now to try to answer my emailer concerning whether Christians in America will suffer severe, even deadly, persecution, as I infer Hal Lindsey believes. Christians of America in this pre-Rapture time certainly are not immune from persecution — even from the persecution like that suffered by the Christian martyrs of history. However, it would take a horrendous catastrophe — such as the one Beck predicts — for American society to totally turn its back on Christianity, thus to begin physically attacking Christians in the way Lindsey fears might happen.

The Church, with the Restrainer resident within each believer, will continue to be salt and light — to exert influence over America's societal and cultural conditions. That influence, although observably becoming less and less effective, will be sufficient to prevent all-out, Nazi-like persecution against Christians in this nation.

When the Church Age saints go to Christ upon His call to them (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Revelation 4:1–2), America and the world will be devoid of the Church's buffering influence. Those who accept Christ during the Tribulation will undergo the most horrific persecution of human history.

Again, if a calamity like the one Beck forecasts were to befall this nation before Christ's foretold intervention into earth's history, such a collapse would take the U.S. and the world out of the time of "business as usual" that Jesus said will be in place when He pays the earth that surprise visit.

Jesus was telling us in Luke 17:26–30 and Matthew 24:36–42 specifically about His coming for the Church, and the general time

frame of that event. With all that is in alignment precisely as Jesus and the prophets described, I am convicted in my spirit that now is that time.

Those who haven't become part of God's family — believing in Jesus Christ for their personal salvation — face a fearful future indeed. They will be left behind in an instantly changed world gone mad with chaos infinitely worse than even Glenn Beck predicts.

There is still opportunity in this Church Age for the person who hasn't accepted the Lord Jesus as personal Savior to do so. But time is fleeting. The Rapture could take place at any moment.

Here is what God's Holy Word, the Bible, has to say to you, if you want to escape from this world that is soon to suffer God's righteous judgment. Truly follow these instructions from the heart of the God who loves you and wants you to be safe with Him forever. You will then be assured not of a fearful future, but of a future that is fabulous beyond description.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:9–10).¹⁰

Heavenly Confirmation

I remain convinced in my spirit that the three times I visited that heavenly realm on suffering clinical death due to the widow-maker heart attack on Good Friday, April 22, 2011, validates that the cheering by the beautiful beings had much to do with this series of articles.

The many issues and events that have continued to unfold since the writing of those articles and the clinical dying and reviving are proof — to me, at least — that the end isn't just near . . . *the end is here!*

10. Ibid., Conclusion, January 24, 2011.