

Bible Study

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The End-Time Warning Ministry

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“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matt 24:14)

“And the LORD answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.” (Hab 2:2)

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Associated studies

- *Just what do you mean ... "Ezekiel's Message"?* by CM White
- *Just what do you mean ... "Watch ye therefore"?* by CM White
- *Preaching the Gospel. Doctrinal Study Paper.* by United Church of God

Introductory Comments

Generally, in the Bible we find that God would normally warn someone, society or a nation prior to punishment. He does this through His prophets and today, through the Church of God. It is indeed the duty of the Church of God to undertake a mission of both warning as well as good news to the world.

For instance He warned Adam (Gen 2:16-17); the pre-flood world by Noah (Gen 6:8-9; 7:1; IIPet 2:5; Matt 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27); Sodom and Gomorrah by Lot (Gen 13:13; 19:1, 5-7, 12-15; IIPet 2:6-9) just as he was warned himself; Jonah warned Nineveh, but their repentance did not last long – only about 50 years or so (Nah 1:1; 3:1-7; Jonah 1:1-2; 3:1-5, 10).

This indicates that a warning to the world and to the House of Israel is still a requirement today.

What do the prophecies reveal about such a warning message?

NB: this is a Bible study, not an article or an academic paper.

The need for a Warning Ministry in the Last Days

During these last days God has raised up a Work to warn the world, especially to the House of Israel.

“O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.” (Hab 3:2)

Given duality, this prophecy may even refer to revived or revitalised end-time Work or warning ministry. Duality may be found throughout prophecy with reference to both ancient and end-time events as a reading of Habakkuk demonstrates.

Notice Matt 24:14:

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matt 24:14)

Given that this is one of the signs of the end-times, the indication is that there must be an awakening or revival of the Work of the Church of God as it regroups and expands. Prior to this, the full Gospel and its accompanying warning message was only proclaimed locally and not to the world for approximately 1,900 years (Rev 3:7-8).

In these last days there is certainly a greater need for a prophetic message than ever before.

Daniel 12:4, 9-10 indicates that there will be much restoration of lost knowledge to the Church of God. This is through Divine inspiration, further research, building upon the inherited doctrines from the Church of God and of course enormous research in history, archaeology, linguistics and such like. Refer also to Is 30:8; Jer 23:20; 30:24; Matt 17:11; Jude 3; IJohn 8; Rev 1:3; 2:5 where indication is that understanding will be increased in the latter days.

This would include prophecies which are more relevant in the last days than any time in history (Rev 3:10; 14:12; 12:17; 19:10; John 17:17; 16:3; IIPet 1:19; Amos 3:7; Hos 14:9; Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 2:6; 9:10; Ps 119:97-100; Is 46:10; 48:3; 42:9).

From the above we can see that those who submit to God, obey His Law, develop Godly character (including the beatitudes, fruit of the spirit, hospitality etc) will have their hearts opened to understanding.

“My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, **then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.** For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.” (Prov 2:1-6)

There is also prophesied an end-time Elijah Work as fore-typed by John the Baptist:

“And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.” (Matt 17:10-13)

“But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”” (Luke 1:13-17)

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.” (Mal 3:1)

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.” (Mal 4:5-6)

Refer also to Is 40:3, 9-10, 29-31; IKings 18:22; 19:2, 4, 10.

So, John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah as does the end-time Work of God.

Notice the Work of Elijah:

1. He took the message to Israel of old, which like Israel today, forsook the Lord
2. He took the message to leaders (Ahab) and to the people
3. He restored the knowledge of the true God to Israel
4. Apparently he tried to get families to live in a closer relationship
5. He had schools for the prophets

He was crying out as voice to Israel.

Later, John the Baptist was a voice crying out in the wilderness, preparing for Christ’s first coming to a material temple and to a physical Judah.

But the Work of God for the latter days is a voice crying out in the midst of a spiritual wilderness of religious confusion announcing the second coming of Christ to His spiritual temple and the world.

Yet even though millions hear the message, it doesn’t take root (cp Matt 13:3-5, 19-20; Gen 39:1-6).

A Warning to the Anglo-Saxon-Keltic Powers

It is imperative that the House of Israel be trumpeted a severe warning – sometimes known as a *Jeremiad* which includes a message of woe and complaint about contemporary sins and bad political and religious leadership.

But more than a *Jeremiad* – the Israelitish nations need a modern-day Ezekiel proclaiming a warning of coming invasion and slavery as punishment for national sins! This is known as the *Ezekiel Message* or *Captivity doctrine*.

Invasion and captivity **will** happen, we just do not know when.

“Son of man, **I have made you a watchman** for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.” (Ezek 3:17)

“The word of the LORD came to me:

“Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman,

and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people,

then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life.

But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.” (Ezek 33:1-6)

The Church of God which lives by and proclaims God’s Law and way of life, is thus also God’s watchman or watchtower trumpeting loudly a message of warning and also hope.

Other Scriptures to refer to: Ezek 24:24; 12: 6-11; Is 21:5-12; 44:8; Jer 6:17; 31:6; Hos 9:8; Mic 7:4.

For Scriptures on the warning trumpet, refer to: Num 10:4-9; Is 18:3; 58:1; Jer 4:5, 19-21; 6:1; Hos 5:8-9; 8:1-3; Joel 2:1, 15; Amos 3:6-8; Zeph 1:14-16. Or a loud shouting voice: Is 40:3-9; 13:2; Jer 4:15-16; 8:19; 9:13.

For warnings against Ephraim see: Jer 4:15; 31:6; Hos 5:8-9; 6:5; 7:12; 8:12; 9:8; and Judah: Is 40:9; Jer 4:6, 15-16; Hos 6:5.

“I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not pay attention.'” (Jer 6:17)

"As for you, son of man, your people who talk together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, say to one another, each to his brother, 'Come, and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.'

And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and **they hear what you say but they will not do it**; for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain.

And behold, you are to them like one who sings lustful songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it.

When this comes—and come it will!—then they will know that a prophet has been among them." (Ezek 33:30-33)

While some are impressed by the Godly message, others scoff:

"... knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." (II Pet 3:3-4)

"But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

They said to you, "**In the last time there will be scoffers**, following their own ungodly passions.'" (Jude 1:17-18)

"Now therefore do not scoff, lest your bonds be made strong; for I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord GOD of hosts against the whole land. Give ear, and hear my voice; give attention, and hear my speech." (Is 28:22-23)

"And now, go, write it before them on a tablet and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever.

For they are a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the LORD;

who say to the seers, "Do not see," and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions, leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel." (Is 30:8-11)

"Son of man, what is this proverb that you have about the land of Israel, saying, 'The days grow long, and every vision comes to nothing'?

Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: I will put an end to this proverb, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel.' But say to them, **The days are near, and the fulfillment of every vision.**

For there shall be no more any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel.

For I am the LORD; I will speak the word that I will speak, and it will be performed. **It will no longer be delayed, but in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it**, declares the Lord GOD."

And the word of the LORD came to me:

"Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, 'The vision that he sees is for many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off.'

Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: None of my words will be delayed any

longer, but the word that I speak will be performed, declares the Lord GOD." (Ezek 12:22-28)

Jeremiah himself was trumpeting a warning message for decades – yet the prophecies did not come to pass:

“Behold, they say to me, “Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come!”

I have not run away from being your shepherd, nor have I desired the day of sickness.

You know what came out of my lips; it was before your face.

Be not a terror to me; you are my refuge in the day of disaster.

Let those be put to shame who persecute me, but let me not be put to shame; let them be dismayed, but let me not be dismayed; bring upon them the day of disaster; destroy them with double destruction!” (Jer 17:15-18. Cp 12:1-7; 45:1-5)

“O LORD, you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me.

For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long.

If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

For I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! “Denounce him! Let us denounce him!” say all my close friends, watching for my fall. “Perhaps he will be deceived; then we can overcome him and take our revenge on him.”

But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble; they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed.

Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten.

O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous, who sees the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.” (Jer 20:7-12)

Because nothing was happening, he felt like giving up. The stress was almost unbearable – how many of us in these end-times are similarly worn out by the length of time it is taking for the fulfillment of the prophecies?

Note that in the first century, the people of God had to exhibit patience. Patience in persecution and patience of prophecies to be fulfilled.

“And now, go, write it before them on a tablet and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever ...

therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach in a high wall, bulging out and about to collapse, whose breaking **comes suddenly**, in an instant” (Is 30:8, 13. Cp 60:22; Amos 5:18-20; Hab 2:7; IThess 5:3).

World events leading to the final prophesied outcome seem to be drawing out – yet the pieces on the board are indeed assembling in the right order. Given the right trigger (such as a severe economic depression), world events will leap forward. All we need to do is watch and wait patiently.

“For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. **If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.**” (Hab 2:3. Cp Rev 10:6)

“The former things I declared of old; they went out from my mouth, and I announced them; then **suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.**

Because I know that you are obstinate, and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead brass,

I declared them to you from of old, before they came to pass I announced them to you, lest you should say, ‘My idol did them, my carved image and my metal image commanded them.’” (Is 48:3-5)

“But the multitude of your foreign foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the ruthless like passing chaff. **And in an instant, suddenly, you will be visited by the LORD of hosts** with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire.” (Is 29:5-6. Cp 30:13; 33:14; Joel 2:9; Luke 17:34-37)

“All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, ‘Disaster shall not overtake or meet us.’” (Amos 9:10)

Yet, a few are faithful toward God: Jer 5:1; Ezek 22:30; Gen 7:1; Deut 9:18-19; Gen 18:23-33; 19:24; Mal 4:5-6; Matt 24:22.

“So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.” (IThess 5:6)

Otherwise this could be our fate:

“When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; **none had escaped**” (IIChron 20:24. Cp Jer 51:12)

Concluding Remarks

We are living in the last days and we are more in a position than ever to understand certain prophecies. Below are some of them:

- Dan 11:40 occurred in 1896 with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia (Herbert Armstrong was born in 1892. And Hitler, the 6th head of the Roman system, was born 1889). The second fulfilment was 1935 and a yet a future one is to occur.
- Rev 17:10 – the time period or setting that John the Apostle was in vision appears to have been the 1930s
- Is 2:7 – is this a prophecy of the motor car? In 1892, the British built the world’s first petrol powered car

The above provides some clues as to where we are in terms of the end times. They point toward the past few decades as a period leading into the last days.

In the meantime, prior to the climatic final and terrifying events, let us powerfully proclaim an warning message alongside the true Gospel.

“We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.” (John 9:4)

“for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.”
(Rom 9:28)

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.

They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it.” (Amos 8:11-12)

“so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, **but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”** (Is 55:11)

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that **must soon take place** [Gr =speedily]. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John” (Rev 1:1)

“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was

coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. **You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**" (Luke 12:35-40. Cf ICor 16:13-14; Col 4:2; Mark 14:38)

"Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes!

Pass over to Calneh, and see, and from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory, O you who put far away the day of disaster and bring near the seat of violence?

"Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall,

who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and like David invent for themselves instruments of music, who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils, **but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!**

Therefore they shall now be the first of those who go into exile, and the revelry of those who stretch themselves out shall pass away." (Amos 6:1-7)