

# Your QUESTIONS About Prophecy ANSWERED Part I

By Larry G. Jaffrey

Originally published in *Jacob's Ladder*, the newsletter and a publication of Middle East Ministries

Editor's note: The cover of the May/June issue of Foreign Policy magazine shows a nuclear mushroom cloud exploding over a wheat field. The words over the cloud read "Apocalypse Soon" by Robert McNamara. The subtitle of the article is "Why American nukes are immoral, illegal and dreadfully dangerous." Any talk about an apocalypse seems to always include America. Larry Jaffrey hears a great deal of discussion and will answer some of the questions he gets in churches. We hope you enjoy this series.

## THE UNITED STATES AND PROPHECY



Teaching on prophecy as I do, I have come to realize that listeners fall into two basic groups. The first group is made up of those who have studied, heard and read much on 'the last days.' They are listening to see if I agree with their positions or interpretations. Invariably, someone from this group will come up after the service or Bible study with a question which begins, "What do you think...?" Immediately I know they are asking why I don't agree with them on a particular prophetic interpretation.

The second group is made up of those individuals who want to know how close we are to the rapture or of Jesus' Second Coming. They want to know the future. They want to hear how God is going to wrap things up and judge the evil in the world.

These two groups may differ on why they want to hear about prophecy but both have one burning question: "Where does the United States fit into prophecy?" The secondary question is, "If Jesus is coming soon, how can the super power of the day not be mentioned in prophecy?" The first group wants to know if your position agrees with theirs while the second group wants to know if they have to worry about their future.

While the question on the United States in prophecy is a legitimate question, it may not be the most important question for us to ask today. The more important question would be, "Does the Bible have anything to say about when God will judge a nation?"

God has richly blessed our nation. The

reasons are many: the biblical principles upon which our nation was founded, our freedom of religion, and our nation's willingness to be a blessing to the children of Abraham. (Gen. 12:3) This does not mean God will continue to bless us with prosperity and freedom. While we may or may not find the United States in prophecy, we can still find scriptures which will outline our future as a nation.

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans gives us the progression of an individual or a nation as they go from being blessed of God to falling under His judgment. Interestingly, this progression from blessing to judgment falls between the two times "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," is expressed. (First in Romans 1:16 and then in Romans 2:10)

*Continued*

Paul begins by stating that man will be judged and then states why: "...for since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." (1:20)

With this declaration of fact, Paul now describes the progression to judgment:

**STEP 1: Failure to give God the honor due Him** (...although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful... - 1:21a) One is thankful only when he or she realizes what they have received is a gift. Watch children open gifts. If they feel they deserve the gift, they are not as thankful or appreciative as when the gift was undeserved or unexpected.

The decline of a people spiritually begins when they start thinking their blessed life is deserved because of the hard work that they have done.

**STEP 2: Rationalization over truth and faith** (...but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools... 1:21b-22) The next step to individual and national depravity is that so-called reason takes over faith, which leads to the conclusion there is no God. (Psalm 14:1) In this view religion is the opiate for the uneducated or unintellectual. All vestiges of this sign of weakness need to be removed because there really is no God. Isn't it interesting how those who want Christianity removed from the public arena say they are "offended." Are they offended by the religious symbol or are they offended because the symbol reminds them that there is a God and He deserves to be worshiped?

**STEP 3: Rationalization leads to worshipping other gods** (...and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four footed animals and creeping things. - Rom. 1:23) It is human nature to worship. We either worship God or we worship a god we have made. While today we do not make figurines of men or animals to worship, we do worship men and animals. Consider, for instance, the lady who sold her home and quit her job so she could go and support a rock star who was on trial. She literally worships this celebrity. There is also the example of people who believe animal rights are equal to or more important than human rights.

**STEP 4: Worshipping other gods leads to moral corruption** (Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. - Rom 1 :24,25) At this point God removes His hand of constraint and allows people to go their own way. The

following verses detail what "uncleanness," "lust," and "dishonor their bodies" mean. Sexual immorality is simply the progression of idolatry. Society becomes more and more depraved.

Recently a man in my walking group asked me why I thought we were seeing and hearing so much about pedophilia in the news. Here is the answer. We as a nation forgot God, rationalized we didn't need God, and then began worshiping other gods at which point God allowed us to go our own way into perversions like pedophilia.

**STEP 5: Judgment** (...who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. - Rom 1:32) God will judge because the evidence of Him is all around us and we are accountable for that knowledge. Judgment may include natural catastrophes or war, or the judgement may simply be the consequences of our evil choices. Imagine the torment of living in a nation "filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful." (Rom 1:29-31)

**THE WARNING: The self-righteous will be judged also** (Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. - Rom 2:1) While this passage is most likely referring the Jewish people who are condemning the Gentiles for their immoral lives, it should be a warning to us about our "righteous indignation" to what is happening in our country today.

- ♦ We should be certain we are not doing the very sins we are condemning others of doing. (Romans 2:3)
- ♦ We should not forget that once we were of the world. (Romans 2:4)
- ♦ We should be careful to not develop a hard and impenitent heart. (Romans 2:5)

Is the United States in prophecy? Christians can have honest differences over the answer to that question. The first question we should be asking is will God continue to bless this nation or will He judge it? Are our hearts breaking over what is happening in our nation or are we condemning with a self-righteous indignation? Are we part of the solution or are we part of the problem?

Next time we will look at various positions on the United States in prophecy.

-Larry Jaffrey

