

Your QUESTIONS About Prophecy ANSWERED Part 2

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THE UNITED STATES AND PROPHECY part 2

A number of years ago I was participating in a prophecy conference in Canada. One of the participating speakers had been born and raised in Ireland. During a question and answer time someone asked if North America (remember this was in Canada) was in prophecy. This speaker responded by saying everyone is trying to find their nation in prophecy, even the Irish.

Even in this country, we want to know if America is in prophecy. Hal Lindsey, the well known author and speaker on prophecy, on the inauguration of his radio talk show in Los Angeles in 2001 wrote, "When we opened the phones for questions, the first three callers asked the same question: 'Where is America in Bible prophecy?'"

An amplification of that question would be: If we are truly in the last days and the United States is the undisputed super power in the world, it must surely be mentioned in last days prophecy. If so, where? One well-known preacher of a generation ago found it inconceivable that God would not mention America in Scripture.

Beginning with the assumption that America must be in last days prophecy, Bible students have tried to find verses that they believe refer to this country.

The Powerful Nation of Isaiah 18

Some try to find the United States in Isaiah 18. The key verses for those holding this view are verses 2 and 7, "*Which sends ambassadors by sea, Even in vessels of reed on the waters, saying, 'Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth of skin, To a people terrible from their beginning onward, A nation powerful and treading down, Whose land the rivers divide.....In that time a present will be brought to the LORD of hosts From a people tall and smooth of skin, And from a people terrible from their beginning onward, A nation powerful and treading down, Whose land the rivers divide- To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, To Mount Zion.'*"

The defenders of this interpretation say this passage refers to America because she is a nation divided by a river (Mississippi) and her people are tall and smooth skinned.

However, the first verse of this chapter says the prophecy is against the land of Ethiopia (Cush). Also, chapters 18-20 list the judgments and blessings that would come upon Ethiopia and Egypt which were one nation in the days of Isaiah.

The Tarshish of Ezekiel 38 Another popular view holds that the prophet Ezekiel is referring to America in

Ezekiel 38:13 when he mentions "the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions." According to this position, Tarshish refers to Britain and the young lions refers to the British colonies including the United States. While the exact location of Tarshish is not known, the usage of the name in the Old Testament implies a location in the Mediterranean area and not Britain. The most commonly held view is that Tarshish was in the area of Spain.

The Babylon of the Revelation and Jeremiah

Probably the most popular and reasoned view of America in prophecy is that we are the Babylon of Revelation 18. The Babylon of the last days will be a great commerce center which influences the whole world. "*For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.*" (Rev. 18:3) America has and is continuing to influence the nations of the world through her technology, music, and economic power. Several scholars who hold this position list twenty similarities that our country has with apocalyptic Babylon.

This position is relatively new in prophetic studies. Since the early church fathers, the most common interpretation of the Babylon spoken of in the book of Revelation has been it was Rome.

The similarities between America or Rome and the last days Babylon are an interesting study. However, before either of these positions can be considered, one must determine whether the Babylon spoken of is actually the original Babylon. The key to determining this is one's interpretation of Isaiah 13:19-22, "***And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches will dwell there, And wild goats will caper there. The hyenas will howl in their citadels, And jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time is near to come, And her days will not be prolonged.***"

If you believe this passage has been fulfilled as described, then the "Babylon" of Revelation can refer a contemporary city or country that is the commerce center in the Tribulation. On the other hand, if you believe this passage is not yet fulfilled

because Babylon was never destroyed in one day as Sodom and Gomorrah, then the Babylon of Revelation is not Rome or America but the revived Babylon of old which will then be destroyed as described.

America not found in Bible Prophecy

The above discussed positions on America in prophecy start with several assumptions. The first is a great nation like America, which was founded on biblical principles and was used to spread the Gospel around the world, must have been prophesied somewhere in the Bible. Why? Couldn't someone say that about the British Empire? What about an evil empire like the Third Reich which killed over one third of the Jewish people? You would think that nation would be specifically prophesied as coming on the world scene.

One might respond by saying America is different because we are the super power of the last days. Just because America is a super power today does not mean it will be in the center of events in the future even if the Tribulation would begin relatively soon. We always have to remember that Israel and Jerusalem are the focal points of the last day events. Assuming the rapture of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation are near in time, there are two possible explanations for the silence on America in scriptures. The first explanation is that as the prophesied events of the Tribulation unfold America is still a close ally of Israel or at least not an enemy.

Since Israel is the focus during "Jacob's Trouble," only her enemies would be mentioned. According to the scriptures, there will be supporters of Israel during this time. When Jesus returns as King Messiah at the end of the Tribulation, the first thing he will do after destroying the nations which come against Jerusalem will be to judge the remaining nations of the world. Those nations will be judged on how they responded to the Jewish people (*my brethren*) in time of need during this awful time. (Matthew 25:31-46) Maybe America will be among the sheep at Jesus' right hand.

The second explanation is that when the events in the book of Revelation begin to unfold America will be a weakened nation, no longer shaping world history. You ask how a super power could become weak so quickly. If you believe in the Rapture of the Church before the Tribulation begins, you have the answer. Imagine what would happen if suddenly all Christians were removed from our society. Contrary to the anti-religious thinking in our country, the impact would be devastating. In an instant, a great nation would become aimless and weak.

While America may or may not be found in prophetic scriptures, the fact we all can agree on is that Jesus is coming again for His own. Can we with the Apostle John say, "Even so, come Lord Jesus!"

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