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Today's Headlines** |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | HEADLINES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH****TRACKING BIBLE PROPHECY****[http://www.trackingbibleprophecy.org/birthpangs.php](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZDJiApVb0qTx7aHKZqB_tNnMsZjXZk3lR4hmk6CWhpU_SKogXmAWJocom_3TyA4rZbegsKICgnxtcjCpPig2KO3sGOKpiuyCMeFMaxFwgtaqX0z5rLOW3WHERaJ7NA2QRrnAYxHL8nPjjoN5A9KjcjXf0po_Sj9Y5Q==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)  * [Germany rethinks its policy of automatic support for Israel](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_KZq-X0WzWFa0pD2gfOGy4wXiKma-We7cqSS7IH1NK3WKzCDZKhz-fnwZjxmSdqrXIesibh2Rmww8TNe6viakqE3Yu1dhF7zclHmRqYr9EJW0Sm4VhEsLLK0U3RH9iJe9JOzYlfCTnbyqKv6CXpa4qA==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Gaza pollution flows to Israel due to power shortages](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_zlh9qlKl_ipe0zZghdYUbdmV_dQcFlNUqBhtTV6i0o0L-r25_NDVOaL9PQufr8drc__fK3kSQGm2kWzofTFquyY-dkSHWcODdFVqAna87Pcd6wVrhvBgo79IQW1oOnVa3id9-dAKUicI26vp0cTxb_1Ccelqs5wQ&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Israel, Hamas and Egypt form unlikely alliance against Islamic State affiliate](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_bX7gx0O_3qRqioyp2Nt62mxphRDilO2e-vnziOqtmkiGkgXZzp1OwDfQ_RhzJJULzCHfOqEOGU5o7856GIdiQvBQT7XFr111jKrNV51sAWwtTNgywl4louDWFj6P08i-kiKYgLK3baDBEJxtxTVZsgAqcou6436jDn3fwroCy_Mwi-YBSr9iIKPkCbNVtNuvtRaZj3e_9AXgdS-PwHAvBF1uiXbtXgfWF9bB6LL5a1I8bfSFJgW2yEcdSkJnGvmo1RYMjHd45lxBiirO8pQ1kxRGxcCbth6TCJfGbXqG6xXlYECkzX9re6Ld_NaRyXRs0XK8CTxlGu3UL4TBDHIWcg==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * ['We've had massacres all week': Aleppo on fire again as Assad consigns ceasefire to history](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_TUrEELLTtlW6ioCSM59vQK3HS9rPskFk-zXo2tQ7sTeB37e1FNwCtD9dNJQrczh150dUNaTP9On-9CUcT-vCqGKVHR0rXgNbD3fYQ88F2boX82jBjPkJasjBhHz3rC06CN20SZ96zQTiH5ft_lmaI8wSigoPgzmgU0GDMNyvDZS01JRhG4WI1deNfnorYjoEA5mopO2YOn0IKgUsAexWdQ==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Baghdad state of emergency declared after protesters storm parliament](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_fLWvGCfCmwlVWXRJClSCTK7hOC9S0D0HKQFueUr878xaUT9lNzjSKGMEbEJSm59gbMny7giB8_sSGu8QcRUr3RIpo1HR_osCwE3kS9G0lCrY27jxsp5rIAs_bid_YfgPF5ZVp2hf2ekFskkxlgEVxBnC_A7-E9wWIoSDV-ZSE6t6hKKrByVrJJWe3gFu44l-i44HLQlNJpyD3J9zj2sh4IwOmr66uyTyWO9aWeowj7nZpqwBn-Vobw==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Protests in Baghdad throw Obama's Iraq plan into doubt](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_CwEU_VHt-e3hNDR5C7Arln9mBcUT9-77ZKFiMWnRDFQS8bBuTygrsu8kgpSRnaHwRJ1EKgWGvsDgBhzlSfUxHNliDZQn4UK35wKkcvj4CZPaCDVKTrPQtkiIPnGIXYZQJNpdR8O7-KFoNOLhkMGVgjHDcPbwkL-MvWL1AhTHKHITASyReXYfYNat9ACCbtZZhgy7jw1xwQSx4ecXRwqAHOSz0rOY_hRQQW-KuQQ_rteuquOgt9hJLp24KbaNA45Z_T2Eh_Qg4-4QvsQOxymjCknrJdmKGuMWYM-HB3vtscw6SgE6NYqFmA==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Pentagon: U.S. bombing of Afghanistan hospital not a 'war crime'](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_6gubiFPive80QQ5xqGmsdFsdrQlj1Iayiw6DAJssv4PULgTzGgEyUPxDl05gth6cYnvLa6BkycT50pBK7GBr1KH3GejDqNFqPnIaQuaduQZrmcJ_kBl8TiT3vOC00tpnsWPFnywJ1ASyY8wmVvpcRFP3MJ3JHJyqh6ZvSa5z-AYSbMPAvxOC2znk7pMqVlUr1m4bmAlspeMVakxFXbLRog==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Drone flights over sub bases could be 'threat to national security' Navy warns](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_RuZFpu6Ne5pWpJqw2SxmCIvh4E5a2XE-xyE8a1voRIB73KrhcCwwE62DL9MAUAo8Gw7nnaONOyKnKZu7rXgqUC65frFdUoZ33PyBt3oDcDE99Zg7LnpvDvCj-4s1wzF7HdfLEfhTmzknzuSEgO0qbB7L9NWmZbeL9musAq-PEYM92kh19wTrjg7UwfC6LCiJdaB8owluncdWOX9JrsFsxVlJODjwkfubDRUcgjgXOiCOqjMBDenDew==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [The government wants your fingerprint to unlock your phone. Should that be allowed?](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_BPz7JXAYztiE8DlepymVgOX5HUY9AxaxPqzy6YhWzR2aM1WseEBguP5LocLQfXR9qP6MEkdp1nNcnqc-VqXOczW-4C_mvQ3eN70P1gBFIQzU7ETX009KTTu3nrBnQGVXKpbjK2yf8N5hKyxN7u6IRrOPhAr1_m3vy-FcjJ7kC7mYzm6XrBDnyVxZlUoYFluSXePyI3Jmsrw=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [U.S. stands by South Korea defense talks despite China, Russia objections](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZAD4bgKW2zTrLGbhmDy1-03xu5aIU4NlGUKVuX5-KfIYvXZxUtyXC0LKatSgFOjlZ-S4zulcQhm5c8fXZS-nW4fQrtpnmkAzvI-Yr4_6t5bWZ7eO5peCtRmVpGML6gt62i0_bDoHsRGEMk52SA3_c4o6Oca8C6hWgd4E9exwa6kJodRCs7fBQkY=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [N. Korea Vows to Rapidly Advance Nuclear Attack Capabilities](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_FUQA1-hMKLDwfVYPkCMtId_mP9xQ0Ru6cESQgosmqoF-t6O8bsSrbnSfC8YIZJH-JaaIAaU_SiBwxsReNQcEs0aY3t-KE0u-gHxnaeJqRO_FZmJgR6umLU8R1C58M7-AIdWg9NQ65WUT6r094I5rZuGD5gvr5rnRfpWTNpWy7GF538aqW_hnef5Z4yKBnzubLIiVAIRsRDo9sM9L2reZ7vPhIh5rO7CiNxcRdHSgX7k=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Why the country most poisoned by Chernobyl is going nuclear](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_9r5nCtVVNAHwRoz0t3A4h0zBMlBuyEJIX-ozxxDOgnmpuGeq7HO5Perk3IhsR6FCibOVuxmUoyTeE4LpiL6Iov_EgLcTDQVWaTCMeKbUVPHnzxF5dZ66zPcDkJ78p4SIrHtNs1DIdEk=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [5.2 magnitude earthquake hits near Lakatoro, Vanuatu](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_wavmCZbcQUpYuLjNj0d46tKumd-kEywv4Cv-zjqg2UN0ukTT6sGuTR1_WsLLIYQy1zm8TxVME7-0VuNR1ufHPEb0bEERhq28l-W74EM63I8fm2e9DS3BnsMeRG6hokiG5vJVzwJ1iTShw1YIj1GtKEXsxGBVfAgLbbQ9gPdxayE=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Sakurajima volcano on Japan erupts to 17,000ft](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_eyxZ25xC9aSlTA1A8TkwWQ0q96KupI4sEthGRZ4WA5iEOKj6cdSvJb-OgSbHmGLZbyyQr8VMvXXlNGPu2g6DarvbOvBMQ0v6kyDAxEV9idLFHxpv4Sc3jrBeLA3mCFvkNeIFgRYLXK30EQebeF0x7Dm2wwvauDV3SaRBzNUP9-pK2heY0zhyMw_z-6GdjP8Ab7yV-1vjh0k=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Turrialba volcano in Costa Rica erupts to 13,000ft](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_QOFJZYccsHoysChqUMXkxL6wLgHcOEH-vufYJ5D5e--Fs9TkI1pJeboFr3Md_CPYfCFFg7R94OAjV8aZBnqf_CSMSs0rSlyBwquwGGHm8YejScn2-PSstuEk1HKhkm045SLEJBOoWvawFw_S0UiiMXWEAgWiYvWR&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Sinabung volcano in Indonesia erupts to 13,000ft](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZLyR4Cg9VXkp2fdrQOy9CZkNHBC5PBXbr3SaJcDExHo2In-RoPSBlcVu1ckZLp4Rnjz72JB0cXbGMUUmUD10EBPcEDuOlMwSWRtAisuWNnlHPgfATvm_SV7gFRFfEWFm8OhhnkTxSkmQP4sbVfNGey0=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Storms Threaten Southeast With Floods As Death Toll Rises in Texas Floods](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_BG9XsSeayHIAahPVVbpdi2bIpH1nCnc6uaLjHECc8qIPkHOxqUu4H87Z48P8Ks-4caFfLRikVkPqUReCBavYFhY0s4zQK7ZCNbCcYK5Q17BfbCwPY0LOt7xA2Ss6nRQTkknZucSK0apG2iEVBMzCn_mML3c59SMY3iyhJESAKuDsWEU_bdn0aS6aOcLB_ChlvSHpeAsQ9DbflV1rS2u2CZ7mQw-yoCY6Czenntb4vdI=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Sperm Donors, Egg Donors and Surrogacy: Why the Baby-Making Industry Is a Disaster](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_VUj--2jLqDWRVYsAADwFrs3YuRCFTHAkUFKKe_4fsrtW76KfS19o4epewnxl1hiAF3KKmsqR8oEOmRfpOn3Xw-2uucC2FPf8Q80I37N_Ho1YOTz80nLNycAt6aPrwjiRZ8Ve1UeFvidGdVj3mpxy1iIwlQtm0QlVwxMwLLSr-3DoWwoI9IwSHHFkCFtsx04RVbMCvG9CYXjfSGEHOu4c5w==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) * [Education Dept. Releases 'Shame List' of Faith-Based Colleges Seeking Title IX Exemption From Transgender Rules](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_ipr4aMWWAdVXDGPzAj_g3BWt-F4wc6QcS_znBeP6QNwDQkG-HRMRiXMKLinRMvueiaU8n3aF9zp6JmWgm_Pwyznz-HLdcHvGepW7ShvmFTaJpJ-3078bK9ZJO3zD_Uod-_wYEWLt_Gdqwh-FcDx6QaW6v2dhcBhurO3li3x8ZkuMFC_Lb9w_sfctq0xHlElcST4l4qE9X-dw89itBKN3mKAdgJqzuKJod7_idpotr6XF0p4SR2Nhfg==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **PROPHECY UPDATE NEWSLETTER**  **STAY INFORMED, GET EQUIPPED, BE ENCOURAGED**  **Pre-Millennium - Pre-Tribulation - PrePARED**  **\*If you missed an issue or did not receive your daily copy - All Newsletters are archived at:**  [**http://www.prophecyupdate.com/newsletter-archives.html**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZPIw6FjdtMm_6gle4_JusHzvxDOMEQxrBlh6EdrK3nDkBwaan5Lb6H5nA8j_y2xT5SOrTfeQNsfQp6_SJzxhOZXPzlXrBJMdmo2VlqUqPJHe9a5Axg7OgaqVElS5qKykQv8udWBDTyAIM_72ssRRtFfZ6um2raBq4tclLcO5A6TL&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **IN TODAY'S NEWSLETTER...**   * [Featured Article: Matthew 24 And The Pre-Trib Rapture](#a1) * [The "Two State Solution": Irony and Truth](#a2) * [Iran to bolster ballistic missile capabilities](#a3) * [Watchman Warning: The History of What Comes Next](#b1) * [Why The Gender Identity Debate Is Symptomatic of a Much Bigger Issue](#b2) * [Straddling The Fence](#b3) * [Prayer that hits the mark](#b4) |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | a1  **Matthew 24 And The Pre-Trib Rapture** - Jack Kelley - [https://gracethrufaith.com/end-times-prophecy/matt-24-pre-trib-rapture/](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZHqVCMmeFjgyHk4hcrXSH0YCQynkc5wiHCk8zOpahaUjM0tlqIM6rIl1Mo2-gi-o2zvroXyeSvqgLrhWB7ixhnvgnNr2bXKfWnLmiYHz72fH2jTd1argZHRM9j19eIlm78E5RXxZcdhQvTXUB80V4FX306_vW0veIsR111BPvmC4uLAYUbdRhQW7Vgk1oT7H5g==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)    Lately I've been receiving questions again about various rapture positions.  Several of these questions have to do with the claim that in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24-25) Jesus in effect said the Church will have to endure all of the seven years of Daniel's 70th Week including the Great Tribulation. In this study I will attempt to show why He could not have done so.    This won't be a verse by verse study of the Olivet Discourse, but rather a look at the verses within the passage that people use to support something other than a pre-trib view. If you want a verse by verse study you can go to my four part series entitled "The End times According To Jesus."    It's important to begin any study of this nature with a review of the overall context of the Olivet Discourse because it's the most important factor in understanding what Jesus was really saying and to whom He was saying it. It will also help us see what was going on in the disciples' minds.    It was just a couple of days before the crucifixion. Jesus and His disciples were walking over the Mt. of Olives toward Bethany where they were staying at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. The sun was getting low in the late afternoon sky, casting a soft golden light on the white Temple and its surrounding buildings. It was such a beautiful sight the disciples called it to the Lord's attention.    In reply, Jesus said, "Do you see all these things? I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." (Matt. 24:2).    It was the second time they had heard Jesus say this. The first time was a couple of days earlier on what we now call Palm Sunday when He had told the people that because they didn't recognize the time of His coming, the city would be destroyed (Luke 19:41-44).    He was holding the nation accountable for their failure to understand Daniel 9:24-27 where nearly 6 centuries earlier the angel Gabriel had told Daniel of a 490 year period that would begin when they received permission to rebuild Jerusalem and culminate in the end of the age. Gabriel told Daniel that the Messiah would come 483 years into that period (Daniel 9:25). Sure enough, here He was standing in their midst right on time.    There's no indication from the Biblical record that Jesus ever spoke to the disciples about the fact that the coming Church Age would interrupt Daniel's prophecy and delay its completion by about 2,000 years. In fact from Acts 1:6 we learn that 40 days after the crucifixion they expected Him to restore the Kingdom to Israel at that time.    It wasn't until James explained things to them some 20 years later that they understood how Israel was being set aside while the Lord took a people for Himself from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:13-18). A word study on this passage will reveal a hint of the rapture, and shortly thereafter Paul became the first person on Earth to present a clear teaching on the doctrine of the rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-53, 1 Thes. 4:16-17), saying He was revealing a secret in doing so (1 Cor. 15:51).    Therefore, on that afternoon on the Mt. Of Olives all the disciples could have known for sure was that 483 years of the 490 year prophecy of Daniel had passed, there were only 7 years left and Jesus had just told them that the Temple, all of its buildings and indeed all of Jerusalem were going to be destroyed. It must have been quite a shock to hear this, and it prompted four of them (Peter, James, John and Andrew) to come to Him privately for clarification.    Comparing Daniel's prophecy with what the Lord Himself had repeatedly told them, they were beginning to understand that Jesus was about to die, and so the questions they asked Him had to do with when the Temple and the city would be destroyed, what would be the sign of His (second) coming, and of the end of the age, by which I believe they meant the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy (Matt. 24:3)    These were Jewish men speaking with the Jewish Messiah about the future of Israel and in His 2 chapter answer Jesus referred to Israel repeatedly, but never said a single word about the largely Gentile Church or the amount of time that would pass before the final seven years were completed.    After some general observations about things that would happen, Jesus gave them this summary of the future.    "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.  At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.  Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,  but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.  And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:9-14).    Not only is there no mention of the Church in this summary, several of the things He said are not even relevant to the church. They were intended for Israel. For example, it's Israel that has always been hated by all nations because of Him, it's Israel that has experienced many turning away from the Jewish faith, it's Israel that has to remain faithful to the end to be saved, and it's Israel that has been promised a Kingdom on Earth as a testimony to all nations.    **What Will Be The Sign Of Your Coming?**    Beginning in Matt. 24:15, Jesus gave the first specific sign of His coming and once again it concerned Israel. The abomination of desolation He spoke of requires a Temple, indicating a national presence for Israel in the promised land with people adhering to their Old Covenant relationship with God. We now know that hasn't been possible for nearly 2,000 years but the disciples had no idea.    The people Jesus told to flee when they see the abomination would be living in Judea, historically the area around Jerusalem. They were told to pray their flight won't take place in the winter, when the weather in Jerusalem can be bad, or on the Sabbath, because covenant keeping Jews are uniquely forbidden from traveling on the Sabbath (Matt. 24:15-20).    Jesus said the abomination of desolation will be the sign that the Great Tribulation is beginning (Matt. 24:21). This is a time when Jeremiah 30:1-11 tells us two things will happen; all the nations among which the Jews have been scattered will be destroyed, and Israel will be purified in preparation for the promised Kingdom (Jere. 30:11).    Jeremiah called this the time of Jacob's trouble (Jere. 30:7), which is the Old Testament name for the Great Tribulation, and said it will result in David becoming their king (Jere. 30:9) something that hasn't happened yet.    The Church is nowhere in view here and in fact both Paul (Romans 5:9, 1 Thes. 1:10) and Jesus (Rev. 3:10) promised that the Church will not be present for this.    "Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other" (Matt. 24:30-31).    Some claim this is a description of the rapture but if that's true it violates the Jewish context of the passage without any explanation or justification. It's based on the fact that the Greek word for trumpet appears both here and in 1 Cor. 15: 52.  But that is not an acceptable reason to tie these verses together, because there are other factors that make them obviously different.  One is that in 1 Thes. 4:16-17 the only angel mentioned is "the archangel" not some unknown number of angels scouring the heavens.  Another is that it turns the rapture from a signless, secret event into one that can't happen until there is a sign for all the world to see, and until the second coming is already in progress. It would mean that while all the world is standing there watching Jesus descend from heaven in power and glory, He will suddenly scoop up the Church and return to heaven without completing His trip to earth.    It would also violate His promise, made personally and through Paul, that He will keep us from the hour of trial that's coming upon the whole world, delivering us from the time and place of God's wrath.    Those who see the rapture here claim that the Church is "the elect" the Lord was talking about. But I disagree. Throughout the Old Testament, Israel was called God's elect and since Israel was the topic of their discussion, it's much more likely that's who the Lord had in mind. Also, according to Daniel 12:2-3 Israel's resurrection will take place at the Second coming making it possible that Matt. 24:31 is referring to Old Testament saints being rounded up to receive their resurrection bodies.    Finally, there's no mention of the Church being "the elect" in the gospels. In the only times the Lord mentioned the Church at all (Matt. 16:18 and Matt. 18:17) He did not use any form of the Greek word for "elect". The first clear description of the Church as the elect did not happen until Romans 8:33 which Paul wrote over 20 years later. In my opinion, to think that the disciples would have understood the Lord to be referring to the Church in Matt. 24:22 and Matt. 24:31 is an unwarranted assumption.    So far in His answer to the disciples the Lord has given us an overview of the end times (Matt. 24:3-14) and then a more detailed chronological order; abomination of desolation, the Great Tribulation, and the Second Coming (Matt. 24:15-31).    **And Of The End Of the Age?**    Beginning in Matt. 24:36 He turned His attention to things that will happen after He returns. These will signal that the end of the age has come, and they provide His  answer their final question. We know this because of the specific way in which He identified the day of His coming as "that day and hour" (Matt. 24:36) and "at the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24.36, 39). He was speaking of the day of His return.    Some people say that no one will be eating and drinking, or marrying and giving in marriage before the Second Coming like they were in the days of Noah. They say the terrible effects of the Great Tribulation will have made that impossible. Therefore Matt. 24:36-39 has to be referring to the rapture. But I think they're missing the point. First of all, people have found a way to socialize and get married in the worst of times. But more importantly I think the Lord's point here was that just as people had no idea the world was about to end in the days leading up to the flood, no one will know the world is about to end in the days leading up to the second coming.    And notice how the Lord compared "the days before the flood" in Noah's time to "at the coming" of the Son of Man rather than the days before His coming. The worst time ever to come upon mankind will have just ended. Man's natural tendency after any catastrophe is to believe things will return to normal, but when they actually see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with power and great glory they will finally know things will never be the same again. That's why they will mourn when they see him coming (Matt. 24:30).    Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left (Matt. 24:40-41).    These verses are often used to support a rapture after the Great Tribulation. Aside from the fact that seeing them this way violates the context and chronology of the Lord's message, as well as His promise to the Church, there's a translation problem here. The Greek word translated "taken" means to "receive unto oneself" and a form of this word provides the clue of the rapture I mentioned in Acts 15:13-18 where it's translated "take for himself" (Acts 15:14). It literally means "to take for the purpose of carrying away." Before the Lord turns back to Israel to fulfill the missing 7 years of Daniel's prophecy, He will take for Himself a people from among the Gentiles and carry us away.    So the word "taken" in Matt. 24:40-41 is not a problem, but the word translated "left" means to "put away" and was often used in the context of a divorce.    Rather than being a description of the rapture, where Paul's definitive teachings never even mention unbelievers, let alone their disposition, these two verses are a summary of the Sheep and Goat judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). Both take place after the Second Coming and both involve the final destiny of believers and unbelievers who will survive the Great Tribulation and live to see the Lord's return.  Believers will be received into the kingdom but unbelievers will be put away into a place of eternal punishment.    The Lord finished his explanation of things that will mark the end of the age with several parables that describe the judgments He will conduct after He returns. I devoted an entire study to the subject of these parables that you can read in my two part posting, "Understanding the Olivet discourse Parables." For the purpose of this study let's just review the clues as to their timing to help you see they cannot be meant for the church.    Matt. 24:29 begins "Immediately after the distress of those days" and refers to the end of the Great Tribulation. Matt. 24:30 signals the Second Coming, with more detail contained in Matt. 24:36-44 including the first warnings that people on Earth will not know the exact day or hour of the Second Coming in advance. I believe this is due to the fact that both the Sun and Moon will have gone dark (Matt. 24:29) and it will be difficult to keep track of time.    Matt. 24:45-51 contains the parable of the faithful and wicked servants and describes how the Lord will deal with them "when He returns". It ends with another warning that people won't know the day or hour of His return in advance (Matt. 24:50).    Matt. 25:1-13 is the parable of the Ten virgins (bridesmaids). The opening sentence begins with "at that time". Everything from Matt. 24:30 forward has been about the Second Coming, so the phrase "at that time" refers to the time following the Second Coming. There are many other reasons why this parable can not be about the Church that are detailed in the study I referenced above. Like the others, this parable ends with a similar warning about the unknown day and hour of the Second Coming (Matt. 25:13).    Matt. 25:14-30 is the Parable of the Talents. By the opening word "again" we know that the Lord was referring to the same time as the previous ones.    And in Matt. 25:31-46  the Parable of the Sheep and Goats gives us the clearest indication of timing yet. It begins with, "When the son of Man comes in all His glory, and all the angels with Him ...". As I pointed out earlier it's the judgment of tribulation survivors, some of whom will be believers and will be welcomed into the Millennial Kingdom, while the others will be taken away to eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46).    The Church is the Bride of Christ, the most highly regarded group in the history of humankind, and the one with whom Jesus is closest. Failing to mention us even once in His signature discussion of the end times can only be explained by the fact that throughout the Olivet Discourse the Lord was focused on Israel and not the Church.  Therefore any attempt to use this passage in reference to the rapture of the Church requires taking  portions of it out of context, and in some cases a reinterpretation of the text is necessary as well.  The Pre-Trib Rapture of the Church remains the only position that is consistent with a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. You can almost hear the footsteps of the Messiah. |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | a2  **The "Two State Solution": Irony and Truth** - By Louis Rene Beres -  [http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/66724/the-two-state-solution-irony-and-truth-opinion/#DfiZI8fE6rFAbg8j.97](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_GCpEFEotKH18-RJwyicascQteeyKbANgK07b56r7-VMgyq8hp6TJaxE0XsdaSfzDp1lAtC2KkgYF9d2TkZfJFfl_5eGcqeVgaeMk4CLOMWO4j0TzC34gXsaAzciIMs3MSZZBEjqQ9VPLmNqYh7h5cl2TBBQE9DyX68BmKMYPu7AWJSLyAiwvKqUqOQfIbtncP1LmGikIJibVpCUiD0YkBEhwWqGJxMW6&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)    "The establishment of such a [Palestinian] state means the inflow of combat-ready Palestinian forces into Judea and Samaria ... In time of war, the frontiers of the Palestinian state will constitute an excellent staging point for mobile forces to mount attacks on infrastructure installations vital for Israel's existence..." - Shimon Peres, Nobel Laureate and Former Prime Minister of Israel, in 1978.    The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed in 1964; three years before there were any "occupied territories." Exactly what, then was the PLO planning to "liberate"?    Both Fatah and Hamas have always considered, and still consider, Israel as simply part of "Palestine." On their current official maps, all of Israel is identified as "Occupied Palestine."    "You understand that we plan to eliminate the State of Israel, and establish a purely Palestinian state. ... I have no use for Jews; they are and remain, Jews." - PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, January 30, 1996 (2.5 years after signing the Oslo Peace Accords).    In view of these repeatedly intolerant Arab views on Israel's existence, international law should not expect Palestinian compliance with any agreements, including those concerning use of armed force - even if these agreements were to include explicit U.S. security guarantees to Israel.    There is no lack of irony in the endless discussions of Israel and a Palestinian state.    One oddly neglected example is the complete turnaround of former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres. Recognized today as perhaps the proudest Israeli champion of a "Two State Solution" - sometimes also referred to as a "Road Map to Peace in the Middle East" - Peres had originally considered Palestinian sovereignty to be an intolerable existential threat to Israel. More precisely, in his book, Tomorrow is Now (1978), Mr. Peres unambiguously warned:    "The establishment of such a (Palestinian) state means the inflow of combat-ready Palestinian forces into Judea and Samaria this force, together with the local youth, will double itself in a short time. It will not be short of weapons or other military equipment, and in a short space of time, an infrastructure for waging war will be set up in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. ... In time of war, the frontiers of the Palestinian state will constitute an excellent staging point for mobile forces to mount attacks on infrastructure installations vital for Israel's existence..."    Now, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in apparent agreement with this original position of Peres on Palestine, is nonetheless willing to go along with some form or another of a Palestinian state, but only so long as its prospective leaders should first agree to "demilitarization." Netanyahu, the "hawk," is now in agreement with the early, original warning of Peres, the "dove." Peres's assessment has been Netanyahu's firm quid pro quo.    For Israel, as Mr. Netanyahu understands, legal mistakes and misunderstandings could quickly give rise to potentially irreversible harms. With reference to the particular matter of "Palestine," the underlying hazards are complex, longstanding, and possibly global. These hazards would also only be exacerbated by any newly mandated (by the U.S., Russia, and/or United Nations) Israeli return of the Golan Heights to Syria. Then, armed militants could once again start shooting down at the farmers below, laboring on the Israeli plain.    History can help us better to understand the real outcome of any "Two-State Solution." From the beginnings of the state system, in 1648, following the Thirty Years' War, and the Peace of Westphalia, states have routinely negotiated treaties to provide security. To the extent that they have been executed in good faith, these agreements are fashioned and tested according to international law. Often, of course, disputes arise when signatories have determined that continued compliance is no longer in their presumed national interest.    For Israel, its 1979 Peace Treaty with Egypt remains fundamental and important. Still, any oscillating regime change or Islamist ascendancy in Cairo could easily signal an abrogation of this agreement. These same risks of deliberate nullification could apply to an openly secular Egyptian government, should its leaders (today, this would mean President el-Sisi) decide, for absolutely any reason, that the historic treaty with Israel should now be terminated.    Any post-Sisi regime that would extend some governing authority to the Muslim Brotherhood, to its proxies, or to its jihadist successors (such as ISIS), could produce a sudden Egyptian abrogation. Although the cessation of treaty obligations by the Egyptian side would almost certainly represent a serious violation of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the governing "treaty on treaties," there is little if anything that Israel or the so-called "international community" could do in response. In the still-insightful words of seventeenth-century English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes: "Covenants, without the sword, are but words...." (Leviathan).    Back to Palestine. As recently as last Friday, Palestinian Authority (PA) television, not Hamas,threatened the Jews, not just Israelis, with genocide:    PA TV Preacher: "Allah, punish Your enemies, the enemies of religion, count their numbers and kill them to the last one, and bring them a black day. Allah, punish the wicked Jews, and those among the atheists who help them. Allah, we ask that You bestow upon us respect and honor by enabling us to repel them, and we ask You to save us from their evil." [Official PA TV, April 22, 2016]    That is just part of a wider security problem. Under law, Israel has a "peremptory" (irrefutable, not open to challenge or appeal) right to remain "alive." It was, therefore, entirely proper for Mr. Netanyahu to have previously opposed a Palestinian state in any form. After all, both Fatah and Hamas have always considered, and still consider, Israel as simply part of "Palestine." On their current official maps, all of Israel - not just West Bank, Judea and Samaria - is prominently identified as "Occupied Palestine." As for Jerusalem, an April 15, 2016, UNESCO resolution was expressly dismissive of "so-called" Jewish sites, including the Western Wall.    Palestine, while not yet a fully sovereign state, is still a "nonmember observer state" of the United Nations. In that more limited capacity, "Palestine" had already been admitted into UNESCO, and, unsurprisingly, joined enthusiastically in the April 15, 2016 resolution calling into question all "Jewish sites."    In the strict Islamic view, and not merely in narrowly jihadi or Islamist perspectives, Israel is described as the individual Jew writ large. The Jewish State, in this doctrinal view, must be despised and uprooted on account of the allegedly innate and irremediable "evil" that purportedly lurks within each and every individual Jew. This insidiously murderous viewpoint is a far cry from the more fashionable idea that Israel is somehow despised in the region "only" for legitimate political reasons, that it is supposedly an "occupier." In reality, the Israeli is routinely despised in the Islamic world because its people do not submit to Islam. This alleged Jewish infirmity can never hope to be "healed."    A current Egyptian textbook of "Arab Islamic History," used widely in teacher training colleges, expresses these basic and crudely determinative sentiments:    "The Jews are always the same, every time and everywhere. They will not live save in darkness. They contrive their evils clandestinely. They fight only when they are hidden; because they are cowards. ... The Prophet enlightened us about the right way to treat them, and succeeded finally in crushing the plots they had planned. We today must follow this way, and purify Palestine from their filth."[1]    In an earlier article in Al-Ahram by Dr. Lutfi Abd al-Azim, the famous commentator urged, with complete seriousness:    "The first thing that we have to make clear is that no distinction must be made between the Jew and the Israeli....The Jew is a Jew, through the millennia ... in spurning all moral values, devouring the living, and drinking his blood for the sake of a few coins. The Jew, the Merchant of Venice, does not differ from the killer of Deir Yasin or the killer of the camps. They are equal examples of human degradation. Let us therefore put aside such distinctions, and talk only about Jews."[2]    Writing also on the "Zionist Problem," Dr. Yaha al-Rakhawi remarked openly in Al-Ahram      "We are all once again face to face with the Jewish Problem, not just the Zionist Problem; and we must reassess all those studies which make a distinction between "The Jew" and "The Israeli." And we must redefine the meaning of the word "Jew" so that we do not imagine that we are speaking of a divinely revealed religion, or a minority persecuted by mankind ... we cannot help but see before us the figure of the great man Hitler, may God have mercy on him, who was the wisest of those who confronted this problem ... and who out of compassion for humanity tried to exterminate every Jew, but despaired of curing this cancerous growth on the body of mankind."[3]    Finally, consider what Israel's original Oslo Accords "peace partner," Yasser Arafat, said on January 30, 1996, while addressing forty Arab diplomats at the Grand Hotel in Stockholm. Speaking under the title, "The Impending Total Collapse of Israel," Arafat remarked unapologetically, and without any hesitation:    "We Palestinians will take over everything; including all of Jerusalem. ... All the rich Jews who will get compensation will travel to America. ... We of the PLO will now concentrate all our efforts on splitting Israel psychologically into two camps. Within five years, we will have six to seven million Arabs living in the West Bank, and in Jerusalem. ... You understand that we plan to eliminate the State of Israel, and establish a purely Palestinian state. ... I have no use for Jews; they are and remain, Jews."    In view of these repeatedly intolerant Arab views on Israel's existence, international law should not expect Palestinian compliance with any pre-state agreements, including those concerning use of armed force. This is true even if these agreements were to include certain explicit U.S. security guarantees to Israel. Also, authentic treaties can be binding only upon states, therefore any inherently non-treaty agreement between a pre-state "Palestine" and Israel could quickly prove to be of little or no real standing or effectiveness.    What if the government of a new Palestinian state were somehow willing to consider itself bound by the pre-state, non-treaty agreement? Even in these very improbable circumstances, the functioning Palestinian government could still have ample pretext, and opportunity, to lawfully terminate the agreement. Palestine, for example, could withdraw from the "treaty" because of what it would regard as a "material breach" - a purported violation by Israel that had allegedly undermined the "object or purpose" of the agreement. It could also point toward what international law calls Rebus sic stantibus ("fundamental change of circumstances").    Here, if Palestine might decide to declare itself vulnerable to previously unforeseen dangers - perhaps even not from Israel but from other Arab armies or their sub-state proxies - it could lawfully end its previous commitment to remain demilitarized.    There is another factor that explains why Prime Minister Netanyahu's conditioned hope for Palestinian demilitarization remains misconceived, and why Prime Minister Peres's earlier pessimism remains well-founded. After declaring independence, a new Palestinian government, one possibly displaying the same openly genocidal sentiments, could point to particular pre-independence "errors of fact," or "duress," as appropriate grounds to terminate the agreement. Significantly, the usual grounds that may be invoked under domestic law to invalidate contracts can apply equally under international law, both to actual treaties, and to less authoritative agreements.    Any treaty or treaty-like agreement is void if, at the time of entry, it is in conflict with a "peremptory" rule of international law, a rule accepted by the community of states as one from which no deviation is permitted. Because the right of sovereign states to maintain military forces for self-defense is always such a rule, "Palestine" could be well within its lawful rights to abrogate any agreement that had, before its independence, compelled demilitarization.    In short, Benjamin Netanyahu should take no comfort from any legal promises of Palestinian demilitarization. Should the government of a future Palestinian state choose to invite foreign armies or terrorists on to its territory, possibly after the original government had been overthrown by more militantly jihadist or other Islamic forces, it could do so not only without practical difficulties, but also without necessarily violating pertinent international rules.    The core danger to Israel of any presumed Palestinian demilitarization is always far more practical than legal. The "Road Map" to "Palestine" still favored by U.S. President Barack Obama and most European leaders, stems from a persistent misunderstanding of Palestinian history, and, simultaneously, of the long legal history of Jewish life and title to disputed areas in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and Jerusalem. At a minimum, President Obama and, even more importantly, his successor, should finally recognize that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed in 1964; three years before there were any "occupied territories." Exactly what, then was the PLO planning to "liberate"? This is a primary question that still cries out for a reasonable response.    A Palestinian state, any Palestinian state, would represent a mortal danger to Israel. This danger could not be relieved, even by the stipulated requirements of Israel's current prime minister, or by any pre-independence Palestinian commitments to "demilitarize."    Ironically, if by chance, a new state of Palestine would actually choose to abide by such pre-state commitments, it could then become more susceptible to a takeover by a jihadist organization such as ISIS.    In a staggeringly complicated region, filled with ironies, there are legal truths that should assist Israeli leaders to choose a more promising remedy to war and terror than an illusory "Two-State Solution." Shimon Peres's early warnings about "Palestine" were on-the-mark and should be heeded today. |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | a3  **Iran to bolster ballistic missile capabilities** - [http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/211574#.VyYW8I-cE2x](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_hN__73e8sEFbEF9ytoE6OoPg_xjZdX8IXwRLQ3DA2dhz7PVHXpOUFGiJB8U7u_mxzdMXemt123xqGqARlNxXa2pBsa2IGtxZNEHu_8Iqm0W9AQZXsDRcFbIH5BsvBPFxmF958SdidBQiBw1XH7H_XR9FuYB01ayw7aMyINHZA3XoM92KrejF9Q==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)    Islamic regime once again defies US and UN, looks to pursue even greater ballistic missile capabilities.    Defying calls by the US and United Nations to halt the development of ballistic missile systems, Iran's outgoing parliament approved a motion Sunday to increase the capabilities of the country's ballistic missiles, a military program that has been ruled dangerous by the United Nations.    Tehran considers the missile program an essential deterrent, citing the unprovoked attacks on its cities by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in the nations' 1980-1988 war.    However the United States and other Western countries has said the Islamic republic's missiles threaten the Middle East, particularly Israel. Tehran's clerical rulers do not recognize the Jewish state.    The motion was passed by the lame duck conservative-dominated parliament one day after election results showed that reformists had beaten them in polls.    Lawmakers said measures must be taken "to develop and increase ballistic missile capability" and "short, medium and long range anti-aircraft capabilities."    The new parliament will be sworn in later this month.    The ballistic missile program was not covered by the controversial nuclear deal last summer between Iran and the United States and other leading powers under which economic sanctions were lifted in January.    Under that agreement, Tehran agreed to place curbs on its atomic program which the West accused Iran of using to develop a bomb.    However, the testing of ballistic missiles just months after the nuclear agreement was struck last year has shown the limited reach of the accord as well as highlighting that Iran and the United States remain foes.    The United States hit Iran with fresh sanctions on the missile program on January 17, just 24 hours after nuclear-related sanctions had been lifted under the deal with world powers.    Ballistic missile tests are considered a means for Iran's military to demonstrate that the nuclear agreement will have no impact on its domestic defense plans.    But a UN panel said in December that tests conducted two months earlier breached previous resolutions aimed at stopping Tehran from developing missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.    Iran, citing fatwas by the Islamic republic's clerical rulers against pursuing atomic weapons, argues that its missiles would never be designed to carry the bomb. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | http://files.ctctcdn.com/61c7cfcb201/0a09eb12-b45a-4d46-8d3b-e8839bc098a6.jpg  We are not endorsing extreme prepping, but we do believe that we should always be prepared! We believe that the Bible teaches that the Church will be removed before the Tribulation begins! We also believe that until that day, we are not exempt from difficult times, and will experience times of trials and tribulations. We never know when our lives might be disrupted by an earthquake, flood, tornado, hurricane, power outage, or any other number of natural disasters, or even in these times, an act of terror!    As an Eagle Scout and a former scoutmaster, the Boy Scout motto of "Be Prepared," has never been more important than in these times in which we live. We believe that every family should be prepared, and have at least a good first-aid kit, food and water for three or four weeks, and other basic supplies necessary for any emergency or disruption that we might incur. We have affiliated ourselves with some of the biggest vendors in the industry to provide you the best preparedness supplies. Please use the link below, thank you!!!    [BE PREPARED - CLICK HERE](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZE9fBCElrAEze8Jjk2aZvSY4Od9HBaV_PbsTiDI9Lau8MZ2Mlmqm2o_rZgDRX3tU3k4aXSQ5fZSFsNp18W34K-b_rFPFkoE4AgecmVzqYbojourhs4JWJy8p_lCD8_pyxbHmgwOmZ6qcIyKpmn2Jewc=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | http://files.ctctcdn.com/61c7cfcb201/961a548c-130e-432f-8e39-b637e821d6e3.jpg   |  | | --- | | [The Rapture is in the Air - Preview](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZMWyqVjZI4w0pu5zaidrcoXLkuBj3Az5Zzcx9cD2sqE8vMg81pA8iuirCr47iE1wXinTxREyxT6fOV3VyfiduDymlg-pPjWDG6nAuP0oCFVvBTtXjO_XihHZ8ZEUH8_HPA==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) | | The Rapture is in the Air - Preview |   **New DVD - Coming Soon! -**  **The Rapture is in the Air**    This exciting new DVD covers why, we believe that the Rapture will happen before the Tribulation and that the Church will not go through the Tribulation. Never before has the pre-trib Rapture view been under such attack as it has been in the last few years. Attackers and naysayers of the pre-trib Rapture have become downright hateful in their attempt to mock and disavow the pre-trib Rapture. Surprisingly much of this hatred, is coming from within the Church itself!    In this DVD, we will show why we believe that the Bible teaches that the Tribulation cannot even start until the Church has been removed. We will also explain what God's wrath is and to whom it is directed at, who's who in the Tribulation, the identity of the Restrainer, and the doctrine of Imminence. All this, and much, much, more!    "The Rapture is in the Air," is based on the recent article written by Pete Garcia of the Omega Letter - [www.omegaletter.com](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZC-xk_3CZaYBxPUWvpLbdzHMvLCvvwqrAsepDk9BtJO-gI-RAeZ_FZqnFYdKYbtfTxJFD8C6UnWjP1pC0U3rJAm1QUTeM37Ky5fQzkhhniSYYgYCzOHgiSE=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)  Pete was kind and generous enough to give us permission to do a DVD based on his article. This DVD will be released on 4/29/16\* (\*subject to change). You can pre-order this exciting new DVD right now, when you pre-order one of our DVD's not only are you making sure that you get your copy when it is first released, you are also helping us to finance the production and off-set some of the expenses that are involved in bringing the DVD to completion.    To pre-order your copy or copies, please visit our store, thank you!    [**CLICK HERE**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZK3sfGcS6WsDJh0jSWjHZnkmfq3KIAM3nA9k0SARr5HrRKsTkyEyB1WDU61LOQrLjBVyk2zY-ZOyFgUZYJTekhs1xm5_Tby_GIe88PQ4KsX45Xn9s54I7MS0cxFwSnyhpknYvYTl1tZ2OxuO_f6ne8MZSZlzmak2qMUOMMQu3Zx7&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | b1  **Watchman Warning: The History of What Comes Next** - by Hal Lindsey - [http://www.hallindsey.com/ww-4-29-2016/](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_INJjSh6sGehPhhYOhxxJ-ARYZbSYLQg6EihcICx4bBdexbgUW7KXysXJsf6GGDFlCEiWMlIU7yhFDRzzzfZr2fGtSR3qGFeZEzC6bIADjFUpcbh7N1qwIHR-gCS_x2d1&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)    Everyone wants to know what happens next.  That makes predicting the future big business.  Huge corporations spend millions on consulting firms to tell them what's around the corner.  Many of these consultants create computer models that take known facts and attempt to extrapolate from them an understanding of the unknown future.    But even in our modern era, many approach the future much as their pagan forebears did.  Astrologists, spiritualists, psychics, mystics, palm readers, and other occult practitioners rake in huge amounts of money, especially in times of uncertainty.    In our everyday lives, we make sense of the future by looking at the past.  The sun has been rising for a long time.  We assume it will rise again tomorrow.  None of us have seen tomorrow yet, so we use our brains the way scientists use their supercomputers.  We extrapolate - make educated guesses.    But God doesn't have to guess.  For human beings, time passes sequentially.  We're like people along the street watching a parade.  A helicopter pilot flying above the parade can see it all at once.  On the ground, we see what's right in front of us.  From on high, he sees the whole parade at once, from beginning to end.    That's a small picture of the way God sees time.  Isaiah 57:15 calls Him, "the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity." (NKJV) In other words, He's already an eyewitness to the future.    God can and does reveal certain things about the future to us.  Through the prophet Daniel, He correctly laid out a detailed outline of world history from Daniel's time forward, covering the next 600 years.  In our time, we see the nations of the world aligning themselves in ways predicted by Daniel and the other prophets.    But to really understand the future, we have to see the context of prophecy. To do that, look at two things - the fundamental nature of God and the series of promises He has made.  Assurance of the latter depends on our certainty of the former.    A promise is only as good as the one making the promise.  Does a lifetime money-back guarantee mean you're covered until the end of your days?  Not necessarily.  A company can go belly-up.  Bankrupt owners might not have the ability to keep their warranty. Other businesses are scams from the beginning.    So, before we look at God's promises, we have to look at His attributes.  Does He have the ability to fulfill His promises?  If so, does He have the good character needed to keep His word?    Theologians often use the word "omnipotent" to describe God's ability.  "Omni" means all, and "potent" means power.  In Genesis 17:1, God said to Abraham, "I am God Almighty."  Almighty is another word meaning all powerful.    Revelation 19:6 says, "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."    Our imaginations fall short when trying to grasp the power and magnificence of a single star - our sun.  Yet scientists say a typical galaxy contains a hundred billion stars of which the sun is merely average.  Our Milky Way contains up to 400 billion stars.  And the universe contains at least a hundred billion galaxies.  Think of that, and then think of Genesis 1:1 - "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth."    Isaiah 40 says, "'To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?' says the Holy One.  Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power." (Isaiah 40:25-26 NKJV)    Yes.  The Almighty Creator of all things has the ability to keep His promises.  But what about His character?  His capabilities wouldn't matter if His honesty couldn't be trusted.    Remember the vast universe I just described?  In Mark 13:31, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."  Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that He should lie."  Isaiah 40:8 says, "The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."  Titus 1:2 says "God . . .  cannot lie." (NASB)    God cannot lie!  That's not a limitation on His omnipotence; it's an expression of it.  2 Timothy 2:13 says, "He cannot deny Himself." (NASB)  He remains forever true to Who He is, and He is truth. (John 14:6)    Because of His power and His character, His promises cannot fail.  The moment He makes a promise, it is as good as done.    To gain an understanding of the future, then, we need to examine His promises.  Some of them were conditional, such as the covenant of the law given through Moses.  Other promises were unconditional.  He promised to Abraham that He would give the Promised Land to Abraham's offspring through Isaac and Jacob.  God would reiterate this promise many times in many ways.  So it must happen.    God promised King David, "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." [2 Samuel 7:10-11,16 NASB]  That promise can be fulfilled only in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.    What's going to happen?  All the things God promised. |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | b2  **Why The Gender Identity Debate Is Symptomatic of a Much Bigger Issue** - By Natasha Crain/ChristianMomThoughts.com - [http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/article.cfm?recent\_news\_id=289](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_-Rh7JuvHIE3jkkSp5EQb_WZ5rc6VsbyDnFkof6zk2EgMg5dEnMknW83EgceWS3kSKPvc5rz_Zn8cJsOXFWVcWefL7j9GbD1U634d7-61DVfypwvEkxiwvB4Y84Dxjo7JkEWOA5qJ8Eg3YnCbxsNwg09ezn6SkfZCLtE8toJSOC8=&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)    Joseph Backholm, of the Family Policy Institute, is a short, Caucasian male. But he went to the University of Washington campus recently to see if students would affirm or reject his newly chosen identity: a 6'5" Chinese woman.    Here's the 4-minute video he produced with the interviews (you REALLY need to watch this, but I'll also summarize some key points below):    **WATCH**: [https://youtu.be/xfO1veFs6Ho](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_scQBPvKTqrW4JF2xgd60P_AEPMovfg5Sk4Tn9YIp3wbORTxcW5Kg6rksxyct856JqMOnQmL9S_IeDmcwvh1wCXCCMs_pfl4Oex9uvvzNkuUjPDPxADO_qg==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)    Backholm starts by asking the students what they think of allowing transgender people into the restroom of their chosen identity. Everyone is supportive.    Then he asks what they would say if he told them he was a woman. The students get a little more uncomfortable, but, as one girl said, "I'd say good for you. Yeah!"    Backholm then presses them to say what they would think if he said he was Chinese. Again, a student says, "I might be a little surprised but I would say, 'Good for you. Yeah, be who you are.'"    He then goes on to ask what they would think if he said he was a 7-year-old. One student went silent, realizing she didn't know what to say that would be consistent with what she had already been saying.    Another sheepishly said, "I wouldn't believe that immediately". And one said, "I probably wouldn't believe it but it really wouldn't bother me that much to go out of my way to tell you, 'No, you're wrong.' I'd just be like, 'Oh, OK, he wants to be 7 years old.'"    Finally, Backholm asked, "If I told you I was 6 feet 5 inches, what would you say?"    One student replied, "If you truly believe you're 6 feet 5, I don't think it's harmful. I think it's fine if you believe that. It doesn't matter to me if you think you're taller than you are...I wouldn't tell you you're wrong." And another said, "I feel like that's not my place as another human to say someone is wrong or to draw lines or boundaries."    Wow.    **What should we make of this kind of thinking? A lot.**    **What's Really Driving the Culture Wars**    Christian apologists (people who make a case for and defend the truth of Christianity) often emphasize the need to understand the difference between objective and subjective truth. Objective truth is a proposition which is true for all people, regardless of our opinions ("It's snowing outside").    Subjective truth is a proposition which can be true for some but not others ("Snow is beautiful"). Apologists have focused on this distinction because many people today claim that nothing is objectively true.    Such a claim is important when discussing Christianity because Christianity assumes objective truth exists--that Jesus is the one and only truth for everyone and it's not up to individuals to find whatever path to God they want.    While the distinction between objective and subjective truth is vital for everyone to understand, it really struck me while watching this video that this is not where most of our culture wars are being fought.    It was clear from these students' responses that they would agree many objective truths do exist--things like height and age. Not one of these students believed that Backholm was actually 7 years old or 6 feet 5 inches tall.    But every one of these students prioritized Backholm's right to comfortably believe whatever he wanted about himself over telling him what was objectively true. What this pointedly demonstrates is that debates over issues like gender identity are really just symptomatic of a more wide-spread disease:    That society has overwhelmingly abandoned the primacy of love-driven truth telling.    While most people wouldn't claim that speaking the truth is never important, it's taken a giant back seat to the primacy of making others feel good about believing whatever they want. Society has bought into the notion that leaving people alone with their beliefs is the loving choice, as long as they don't harm others with those beliefs.    Oh the irony! Could anything be more insidiously unloving than knowing someone has wrong beliefs that could be personally harmful, yet prioritizing silence as long as no one else gets hurt?    As Christian parents, we have the responsibility of raising a generation that understands what loving others really means. Genuine love is willing the best for someone else, even when that means sharing objective truths they may not want to hear.    **What That Means for the Gospel...and for Christian Parents**    This, of course, has direct implications for our ability to share the gospel today--a far greater concern than any individual issue. In an increasingly secular society, fewer and fewer people feel it's acceptable for people to share their faith (see the comments in response to my post last week as an example).    People of faith are expected to privatize their beliefs so everyone can be comfortable thinking whatever they want.    But this misses the most obvious point of all: What if Christianity is true? What if there really are eternal consequences for whether or not you accept Jesus as your Savior? Does it make any sense at all, if Christians are acting consistently within their worldview, that we would keep silent about what we believe to be objective truth for all?    At least one non-believer gets this. Atheist Penn Jillette (of the magician duo, Penn & Teller) has famously said:    "I've always said that I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there's a heaven and a hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward--and atheists who think people shouldn't proselytize and who say just leave me alone and keep your religion to yourself--how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?"    Exactly.    To engage confidently and faithfully with a society which overwhelmingly no longer gets that, our kids need to be equipped with three things:    1. **Knowledge of the truth**. This is making sure that our kids have a clear understanding of the gospel and the overarching narrative of salvation history as given to us in the Bible. These are simply the facts of Christianity. Without a clear understanding of what the truth actually is, our kids won't be in a position to share it.    2. **Conviction of the truth**. Knowledge alone isn't enough when the basis of that knowledge is being constantly challenged. Our kids must have a deep conviction of why there is such good reason to believe that Christianity is true. This is why teaching our kids apologetics--the case for and defense of the Christian faith--is so critical today. Without giving them the deep conviction that what they believe is really true, we'll raise a generation content to stay silent...unsure of whether the risk to speak up is worth the likely hostility they'll encounter.    3. **Courage to share the truth**. Courage requires both knowledge and conviction, but there's one more ingredient: love. When we teach our kids what true love is--the genuine concern for the well-being of others--they'll understand there's no Godly choice but to speak up and speak truth...even when society has utterly abandoned love-driven truth telling as a cherished value.    If you need help explaining to your kids why there's good reason to believe Christianity is true--giving them the conviction they need--check out my new book: Keeping Your Kids on God's Side: 40 Conversations to Help Them Build a Lasting Faith. |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | b3  **Straddling The Fence** - By Grant Phillips -  [http://raptureready.com/featured/phillips/phillips305.html](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld__p6Hk234dtFc_SEBfR-iSHaxLnKEjgZ_xNgNfPGBwldZZXzYAxUwWpXEk8IhcAUriYbhoLUvYFP-18rIyGL37aCb_Idhlb6KWoxs2dl4_HzQp7_bOvcXmUYtaTTV0-X2azDisALmWTKKn2fArrhlWZMcgq3wAJMr&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)     I've heard several sermons preached fifty to sixty years ago about 'straddling the fence.' It seemed appropriate at the time, but nowhere near as much as it is today.     Now fifty and sixty years seem like a very long time, but to those of us in our waning years, it was only yesterday. (Whoever said 'the older you get, the faster time flies' was dead on.)     I recall vividly that in that era many, many things were so much different than they are today. There were still plenty of sinning and wrecked lives to go around back then, but today's society has put on public display, in the bright light of day, what used to be hidden back then in the shadows of the night.     In those days the 'un-churched' had respect for God's house and His ministers. The vilest of sins were anathema. Women were treated as ladies, and they reciprocated by acting like ladies. Men were gentlemen. Families were honored. Children were respectful to all adults. Work was honored and laziness was looked down upon. I could give a hundred comparisons if I chose, but this is plenty to get the point for now.     Let me repeat that the world back then had plenty of problems with sin, just as we do today. The difference is that those sins once kept in check or hidden in the dark are now on open display for any-and-all to see, and there is little to no shame.  Another difference is that there were by far fewer participants of rebellion against God and all He stands for in those days.    **For example**: homosexuality is like a cancer that started out as a small spot back then, barely visible, but today has metastasized throughout the entire body.    **Another example**: the pulpit was revered and respected as a special place to proclaim the Word of God. Today, the Word of God has been diluted and blasphemed by false prophets and charlatans. Most 'church' services are a sham that mocks the holiness of a righteous God.     Today, mass murder of unborn babies is legal; divorce is rampant; pornography is a cancerous fungus on society; lying and cheating is considered the norm; laziness is rewarded; respect for others has flown out the window; and there is no fear of God.     Now let us consider but a few Scripture verses.     "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings 18:21)     "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." (Matthew 12:30)     "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24)     "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." (Exodus 32:26)     "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua (24:15)     "And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil." (Zephaniah 1:12)     Also consider the entire sixth chapter of the book of Romans.     Of just these few verses I have selected, we can readily see that we as Christians need to stop straddling the fence. We have an even greater opportunity today than yesteryear to stand up with God and be counted. You might say that God is like the marine slogan circa 1970, He's looking for "a few good men." (I mean no disrespect to our Lord by the way.) How many of us are ready to climb down off the fence and serve the Lord?     We are certainly in the last days of the Church age. The next event on God's schedule is for Jesus Christ to come for His bride (the Rapture). He is already preparing the way for the Tribulation which follows the Rapture.     How many of us are letting others know that our Lord could come at any time? How many of us are sharing the Gospel of salvation to those who are lost? How many of us are standing against the tide of Satan's destruction upon our families and our society?     I know there are many of God's people who have separated themselves from the world, but there are many others, who call themselves 'Christian' who are serving Baal and not God. Most in our churches have their legs dangling on both sides of the fence, playing both ends against the middle. Are they even saved? I don't know, but they certainly need to find out.     Our country is in a horrible mess, and it seems especially at this particular time that most people think a new President will solve all our problems. The general election will be this year, and all our problems will be solved. Right? Wrong! Our problem is a 'sin' problem that only Jesus Christ can fix. All the other 'stuff' is just the result of our sinful hearts. Until we get our hearts lined up with Almighty God, nothing will be solved.     We have gone so far in our open rebellion against God that judgment is definitely coming. Will Jesus remove His church before our downfall? I don't know. I do know this. Whether in blessing or judgment, I would prefer to be on God's side at all times. Many of you feel the same, and many of you could care less.     Millions of people have left this world via death not worrying about anything but their own desires while upon this earth, only to be shocked at what they face on the other side of the grave. They straddled the fence one moment too long.     Jesus is coming for His church and afterwards millions will be catapulted into the horrors of the Tribulation because they too straddled the fence one moment too long.     Galatians 6:7-9 says, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.  Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.  Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."     How many true Christians are intimidated by 'what society thinks?' "What would my family think?" "What would my friends think?" Maybe we should ask, "Am I any better than Peter when he denied our Lord three times?" Maybe we should be ashamed and ask His forgiveness, then firmly decide to stand with Jesus even though it may not be politically correct. Read the Gospels and honestly answer this question, "Was Jesus ever politically correct?" Don't stand for what is popular, but stand for what is right, and only God knows what is right, which can be found in His Word, the Bible.     Wouldn't it be great if God could see thousands of people getting down off the fence and coming to His side? None would be disappointed.     Grant Phillips     Email:  [grantphillips@windstream.net](mailto:grantphillips@windstream.net)     Pre-Rapture Commentary:  [http://grant-phillips.blogspot.com](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZOQLxhFGECBeHydfAmIHkQ8GCEvGveqfMukJYbtsZtszkqjNVTnv1rdT5Y2TcrANZH3GPhVx4bfBoggRX0pA32Ln3vD_nuDcyXtoWg9heThwBvgMpKwwZPEPdKilXbinZg==&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)  Rapture Ready  [http://www.raptureready.com/featured/phillips/phillips.html](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZBjgc4QR3CYYvgUuWEajV3uGZAAIR0gO0y1nNV112T_PCqJ8bX0ssRNrYB-owBIhVIWRthgZ0sOfZX4PbGEYUm60EShJxeLxe9a8-DZupe6oWUFLHwYHYKlH_tqJ3jLsLcvJPNM2aCvWKJB6aTG1bIBHOxs99gv3DYbfTDGAN4Ju&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==) |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | b4  **Prayer that hits the mark** - Greg Laurie -  [http://www.wnd.com/2016/04/prayer-that-hits-the-mark/](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001D3Y1qeLA9BEFHoKh-WPm0nIKuRSxF3SLW4eD-zgJZgseBfKkMJcqZCDexHAqQld_bnusMclDJQHjhPogFmyiUYt5_2AQGNzcqcVnMXInnpx7g8yOqXkf-oFdOEiXFWK_5q_dk2z_q3nyUxPs9UGtbEFWU-KKOKjREAulXRAKV_co7IQUMupxc65VxM7qp1klV1ZF_wL5BE7pNvohW3Vm60YiknWEwNWe&c=6m8-gN-CEZ_H58C93X83J_SbM4PZf04yaqhOimUqC7WoozGHef1igQ==&ch=qMfNYWl7HcdOGCx6YxOdabDsSL7VDKpK_xT88PuQS9c1PMmMhJ_LuA==)    Pastor Greg Laurie on the key to having 'open access to the throne of God'    Have you ever been betrayed by someone you loved? Have you ever faced seemingly insurmountable odds? Has it ever seemed as though there was no way out of your particular dilemma?    If so, then you have a good idea of how David felt when he penned the words of Psalm 5. David had made a number of mistakes in his life. He committed many sins that haunted him in his later years. Because of his multiple marriages, he had children who were partially related to each another. But it wasn't the Brady Bunch. There was a great deal of conflict and problems in his household as a result.    One of David's sons was named Absalom, whose full sister was Tamar. David had another son named Amnon, who took advantage of his half-sister Tamar and raped her. Absalom, her full brother, was outraged by what Amnon had done. He also was angry that David hadn't taken stronger measures to deal with his son. So Absalom arranged to have Amnon killed. The result was that Absalom was banished from the kingdom. But after a period of time, Absalom was allowed to return. In the process, however, he turned the hearts of the people away from his father, the king.    The chickens were coming home to roost, as the old saying goes. David was reaping the consequences of what he had sowed many years earlier. After David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan told him, "Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own" (2 Samuel 12:10 NIV).    Out of his own household, David was reaping the results of his sin. But that shouldn't surprise us too much. In reality, David simply was seeing his own behavior reflected in his children. Amnon treated Tamar as David treated Bathsheba. He forced himself upon Tamar sexually, just as David misused his position as king to sexually take advantage of Bathsheba.    And Absalom, in murdering Amnon, was only treating his half-brother the way David treated Uriah in sending him to the front lines with the full intention of having him killed. Then David took Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, to be his wife. Like father, like son.    It's sad when we see our own character reflected in our children - that is, when they reflect the bad aspects of our character. We want to say to them, "Listen to me! Do as I say, not do as I do." But our children are going to watch us, and they will emulate our behavior.    So there was David, in his older years, fleeing for his life because Absalom had devised a plot to overthrow him. He actually was leading a coup, causing a very aged King David to desert his throne and escape into the wilderness. If ever there was a time David needed to be sure that God was listening to his prayers, it was this time.    David had traversed that rugged terrain before. As a young man he had been an outlaw, hunted by the paranoid King Saul. The prophet Samuel had anointed David and said he would be the next king of Israel. And then he killed Goliath in the Valley of Elah. Everyone loved David. But Saul, paranoid and angry that someone would try to take his position, drove David into exile.    But David no longer was the sprightly young boy who could leap from rock to rock with no real effort. He moved more slowly. And he wasn't being sought by a paranoid king but by his own son, who wanted to hunt him down and put him to death.    David really needed to know that God was with him. It was during this time he penned three psalms, including Psalm 5, where he wrote, "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up" (verses 1-3 NKJV).    What stands out to me about David's prayer is there was a holy boldness: "Give ear to my words, O Lord. ..." In the original Hebrew, "give ear" literally means "to broaden the ear, as with the hand." It's the idea of someone who is a bit hard of hearing cupping their hand around his or her ear to hear. David was saying, "Lord, I want you to cup your hand around your ear and listen to what I am about to say."    Where did David get the audacity to speak to God this way? How did he dare to stand before God and say, "Cup your hand around your ear and really listen carefully"? It was because David had a relationship with God. The reason David could say, "Give ear to my words, O Lord" is because he went on to say, "My King and my God." David had a relationship with God that gave him the freedom of access.    That is why David could speak that way to the Lord. It gave him a boldness. And we can have that boldness, too. We can have that same relationship. The writer of Hebrews said, "And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place" (10:19-20 NLT).    Another passage in Hebrews says, "So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most" (4:16 NLT). We can have open access to the throne of God.    How did things turn out for old King David? I would say quite well. Things started out pretty bleak, with David as an aged man who lost his throne. The hearts of the people were turned against him, and Absalom was on the rise. But through a quick chain of events, David was returned to his throne, and Absalom ended up hanging by a tree as he fled for his life. God turned things around and put David back where he belonged. And it all happened through prayer as David cast his problems upon the Lord.    What a difference prayer can make. But let's not wait until the last minute to do it. Let's take our problems and burdens and cast them upon the Lord, and he ultimately will have his way. |  |  | | --- | | **FROM THE HEART**  **http://files.ctctcdn.com/61c7cfcb201/1966c7fd-05e4-4647-8075-0a43806d1b6d.jpg**  **IF YOU HAVE BEEN BLESSED THROUGH THIS MINISTRY, THEN WE ASK THAT YOU WOULD PLEASE REMEMBER PROPHECY UPDATE IN YOUR GIVING - WE ARE TRULY, TRULY, THANKFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT**   Prophecy Update has no corporate sponsors. This ministry is paid for and prayed for by readers and supporters. 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We still have time to reap a great harvest of souls for God's kingdom!" - Hal Lindsey  **1) We need your prayers!**- We proclaim the Truth of the Word of God and we are under constant spiritual and sometimes even physical attack.  **2) We need your encouragement!**- We need to hear from you, let us know how the Lord is blessing you through this ministry so that we can share it with others.  **3) We need your input! -** If you have a prophetic article or story or if there is a news related item we missed, let us know.  **4) We need your financial support!**- To put it quite simply, without your support, there would be no Prophecy Update.  I ask that you would prayerfully consider partnering with us to get the Word out and keep the world informed. Remember, your gift, no matter how small, does make a difference! You will be helping to touch lives, around the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, thanks to the internet your generosity carries a global impact! - Thanks!  **Our Prayer for You**- "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 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