

# **THE PROPHETIC WORD IN CRISIS DAYS**

Prophetic Messages Delivered at the West Coast Prophetic Congress  
in the Los Angeles, Calif. area in mid-1961

by

Various Contributors

Copyright @ 1961

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE CRISIS OF THIS PRESENT HOUR**

#### **J. DWIGHT PENTECOST**

A great many thinking people are extremely pessimistic concerning the status of world affairs today. Recently Mr. Clement Atlee of Great Britain stated that he saw no hope whatsoever for world peace. He warned that it may be only a matter of time until some trigger-happy individual blows the whole world apart. In his opinion the only hope for the world is international law, backed by a mighty international police force. Political leaders in our time live in dread as to what a new day may bring forth, and many of them would echo the statements of Mr. Atlee.

But in contrast to the basic pessimism that pervades world capitals, the Word of God provides grounds for a wholesome optimism. The Bible teaches that all things are moving in accordance with a pre-arranged plan determined by a God of infinite wisdom. This sovereign person is working all things according to His own purpose. In due course He will reveal His Son from Heaven as the King of kings and Lord of lords, and the kingdoms of this world will be forcibly subjected to His own power and authority in order that He might reign in righteousness and in peace from sea to sea and from pole to pole.

Those who seriously concern themselves with the revelations of the Word of God today are impressed with the fact that the days in which we are living are indeed crisis days. A comparison of current events with the prophetic declarations of the Bible will provide strong basis for the conclusion that we are those upon whom the end of this age has come. We who know the Saviour are exhorted to live in the light of the blessed hope that at any moment the Lord Jesus Christ may appear in the clouds of heaven to translate believers into His presence. There is every indication that this glorious event may imminently be expected. The translation of the church is a timeless and signless event which awaits the fulfillment of no prior event. It may burst upon this world at any moment.

Several lines of prophetic teaching combine to emphasize the possibility that the Lord Jesus Christ may come at any moment. Let us consider several of these prophetic factors which combine to give substance to this assurance.

*The first significant event relates to the visible, professing church of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Several portions of the Word of God which outline for us the history of the professing church upon this earth indicate that the closing days of this age will be marked by unbelief and defection from the truth of the Scriptures. One such passage is found in the writings of the Apostle Peter:

**“There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of”** (II Peter 2:1-2).

It is interesting to compare the course of events today with the past history of the church. Heresy and unbelief manifested itself repeatedly in the earlier centuries of this era, but on each occasion it was almost immediately condemned by the church and the truth of the Word was readily espoused by those who professed the name of Christ. Today we find the converse to be true. Instead of being condemned, heresy today is being openly welcomed and promoted, while the truth of the Word of God is being rejected and despised throughout the professing church. Peter foresaw the time of the end when those who expounded damnable heresies would be regarded as very progressive in religious faith and welcomed as leaders of organized ecclesiastical groups.

The testimony of the Apostle Paul may be added to that of Peter. Writing to a young man who was entering into a ministry of preaching the Word of God, Paul declared, **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, . . .”** (I Timothy 4:1-3).

This is a picture horrible to contemplate. The religious teaching of these apostates will be marked by extreme asceticism and by demon-possession and demon-control of their minds and their lips. Little wonder that the Apostle takes so much care to urge upon young Timothy the necessity of teaching the Word.

It is necessary to emphasize the truth of God because **“. . . the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”** (II Timothy 4:3-4).

Clearly those who employ these false teachers will be motivated by their own lusts. They will have **“itching ears”** which will not be disposed to hear the truth of God, but rather the fables and falsehoods of the Devil. The truth of the Word of God will be sacrificed, and the false teaching of Satan, the father of lies, will be prominent in the presentation of these evil religious spokesmen.

The Word of God is specific in its assertion that the days prior to the translation of true believers out of the earth will witness increasing demon activity resulting in bold denial of the truth and wholesale perversion of the Scriptures.

Within the short span of the present generation the major denominations of our nation have turned from the simple, cardinal truths of the Bible and have publicly given their allegiance to prominent men who brazenly deny such basic doctrines as the virgin birth of Christ, the infallibility of the inspired Scriptures, salvation through the substitutionary death of Christ, and the return of the Lord Jesus back to this earth in power and glory.

The terrible fact of our day is that the professing church is not characterized by faith, but rather by unbelief, and those who sit in the pews are willing that this situation shall prevail. But this is not the sole basis of our belief that we are living in crisis days. Our attention is drawn to a number of other significant events, some of which are more recent than the rise of this general apostasy that characterizes organized Christianity.

*Secondly, for the first time in over two thousand years, the state of Israel has been recognized as a sovereign, independent nation. Undoubtedly this very recent development, which amazed the world with its sensational suddenness, is one of the most significant Biblical signposts which heralds the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The complete fulfillment of the prophecies of Israel's regathering to the land will take place in the tribulation period, that seven years span of time between the rapture of the church and the second advent of Jesus Christ to the earth. However, the regathering of Israel and certain other events which will come to final fulfillment during the tribulation period are casting their shadows before them. We are witnessing even today the foreshadowing of these significant events.

The prophets of old anticipated a time of chastening for Israel because of that nation's rejection of Messiah. Our Lord declared that Israel was to be set aside and that Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. He predicted the tragic destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jewish people:

**“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”** (Luke 21:24).

**“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”** (Matthew 23:37-39).

The Apostle Paul explained that blindness in part had happened to the nation Israel until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled:

**“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”** (Romans 11:25).

But that Israel would one day be restored as a nation and brought back to the land:

**“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins”** (Romans 11:26-27).

The Prophet Isaiah disclosed that Israel would be brought back to the land in unbelief (Isaiah, chapters 60-66). Isaiah clearly predicted that it would be subsequent to their return to the land that the message concerning Messiah would be brought to them. Perhaps more prophetic scripture in the Old Testament is devoted to the subject of the scattering and regathering of the nation Israel than to any other single subject of prophecy. Surely we who have lived to see that God is moving in the direction of the regathering of the nation Israel must conclude that we are living in crisis days.

Sometime ago I had a most interesting conversation with an official of the Israeli government. This man had been appointed by the Israeli government as supervisor of religious affairs, and I was privileged to meet him in the course of a good-will tour which he was conducting in America.

He stated that he was aware of the fact that the state of Israel had more friends among evangelical Christians in America than among any other group of people. For this reason he was especially interested in contacting professors of theological seminaries. In addition to being a very learned man, he was endowed with charming qualities of personality.

In the course of our conversation I referred him to the Old Testament Scriptures and asked him what significance he placed upon the present restoration of the state of Israel.

In a most straight forward manner he replied, “We in Israel are firmly convinced that we are the generation of the restoration spoken of by the Prophets.”

I then inquired regarding his attitude toward the Messiah. He replied that when the state of Israel was reborn the words “**Redeemer**” and “**Messiah**” were constantly heard in that land.

“Although the world views the restoration of the state of Israel as a political movement, we who went back as young men look upon it as a religious movement. We are looking for a Messiah who will bring redemption to the nation Israel. But so far as Jesus Christ is concerned, I must confess that I am an agnostic. I simply do not know. He may be the Messiah, but I do not know.”

Although Israel is in unbelief today and crying for a Messiah whom God has already given, yet the fact that Israel exists among the nations of the earth as an independent, sovereign nation is a significant event that marks these days in which we are living as crisis days.

*In the third place, I call your attention to the great prophecy that is recorded in chapters 38 and 39 of Ezekiel.*

This is the familiar prophecy of Gog, ruler of the land of Magog.

He is referred to as the King of the North. We believe that this King of the North, referred to by the Prophet Ezekiel, is none other than Russia and the Russian Confederacy. Ezekiel's prophecy foresees and graphically portrays a gigantic invasion of Israel by this great Northern Confederacy which is composed of Russia and certain satellites including the Arab states in the Near East.

Within the memory of those who are living in our day, communistic Russia has emerged on the horizons of the north. Beginning at the time of the First World War, the world has witnessed its phenomenal rise to a place of prominence in international affairs. Well informed people have been astounded at the scientific development achieved by a nation which was long considered to be very inferior among the nations of the earth. The affairs of Russia today are in the hands of a dictator who is determined to subject the world to his power and his authority, and the security and peace of the world to a considerable extent rests in his hands.

Not until recent years has there existed a northern power which would be capable of bringing the Near East under its influence and moving mighty military forces into the land of Palestine to threaten the peace of the world and precipitate the campaign of Armageddon.

Russia today sits in the north and looks to the south, courting the Arab states, and coveting the vast mineral wealth of the Middle East.

Ezekiel's prophecy indicates that the events leading up to Armageddon will be set in motion when this great anti-theocratic power of the North begins to move against the Holy Land. This frightful chain of events could be triggered at any moment. Thus we see that in our own time God has not only restored Israel to the land, but He has also permitted the rise of this threatening Northern Confederacy. Students of Scripture can only see in these events the setting of the stage upon which the divinely ordered events of the end time will unfold on the world scene.

The arrangement of the nations of Europe today is yet another very eloquent indication that we are living in critical days.

According to the second and seventh chapters of Daniel's prophecy, the Holy Land was to be controlled by four separate world empires during the course of its long history. Daniel foresaw the successive domination of the land by the world empires of Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. According to Daniel, these four empires alone would rule over the land that was given to God's chosen people. Daniel also predicted that the final form of Gentile world authority would be a great confederacy of nations.

Instead of a centralized form of government as represented by the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires, the Roman Empire as it prolonged itself would divide and sub-divide until it came to a stage represented by the ten shoes or ten horns of Daniel's vision — a diversity in unity.

*Therefore, fourthly, the nations of Europe today represent the projection and continuation of the sovereign authority that once resided in ancient Rome.*

The European states are clearly the outgrowth of the old Roman Empire.

In turning over his office as Prime Minister of Great Britain to his successor, Winston Churchill pledged to devote his talents and abilities to the formation of a European community of states. He said that the only hope for peace in the world was to federate the states of Europe under one government as a protection against the power of Russia. Many statesmen around the world continue to cry for the formation of a federation of European states, or a United States of Europe. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization represents a movement toward this end.

In the economic realm we have witnessed a very significant development, widely referred to as the "*Common Market*."

Under the terms of this arrangement there is an attempt to break down ancient trade barriers and to provide for a free and unhindered flow of goods from one European nation to another. Leaders of Europe appear to have been possessed by a new interest in overcoming the social, cultural, and military barriers which have for many centuries hindered cooperation between them.

The top leaders of Germany and France have entered into conference in an attempt to find some solution to the enmity that has existed between those two powerful nations from time immemorial. More and more it is recognized that there can be no effective protection against the military might of Russia unless and until the states of Western Europe become united in the common cause.

This very development was predicted by the Prophet Daniel who predicted a coming day in which the nations that once had been within the Roman Empire would be federated together under one head.

In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation the Apostle John has described the ultimate development of this movement when the final form of the Roman Empire will come under the leadership of the Beast. In due course these European states will give their power and authority to one man, thus inviting Satan's great masterpiece, the Beast, to rule over them (Revelation 17:13).

Frequently a question is raised as to where the United States will fit into these latter-day developments. The United States today clearly belongs to the western block of nations. As to its language, culture, customs, legal system, and its people, America represents essentially the progression of the European form of government. It springs from the European sector of the world.

It is suggested that the United States will be so closely allied with this European Federation that it may actually become a part of it. It is not difficult to imagine such a prospect, inasmuch as the United States is already bound to Western Europe by certain mutual pacts and economic and commercial agreements. Everywhere those who are in control of international affairs today are speaking more and more about this union of European states under one head. Although this trend will not reach its culmination until after the translation of the Church, yet the coming confederacy is ominously foreshadowed by the events of our time.

*The rise to power and authority of the Roman Church as a political institution is a fifth significant event today.*

The Word of God makes it very clear that one great world religion will become predominant in the future. Subsequent to the translation of the true church, there will occur an amalgamation of all groups existing within professing Christendom. This universal religious movement will eventually come under the headship of one to whom the Apostle John referred as “**The Great Harlot**” (Revelation 17).

This harlot professes to be the Bride of Christ, but Christ disavows her as such and refers to her as the “**Harlot**.” This harlot system will bear world-wide authority in the religious realm, and will possess mighty political powers as well. The Popes of Rome today are by no means reluctant to remind the world that they themselves occupy the place of Almighty God on this earth. By this they mean that the Roman Church has the sole right to rule in the political realm as well as in the religious realm.

Powerful Protestant leaders today are advocating the union of several major denominations into one church in the United States.

These leaders are advocating what is known as the “*ecumenical movement*,” and those who apply this term to the religious realm have in mind the development of a great ecclesiastical body which will one day be world-wide in scope. Some outstanding Protestant leaders have already gone so far as to admit that their goal is the ultimate reunion of Protestantism and Romanism and the establishment of a universal church.

After the rapture of the church the apostate religious systems of the world will join hands. Rome will come into the ascendancy as the leader of this religious octopus, and the entire system will come under the judgment of God in the tribulation.

We have reason to be deeply concerned about the increasing influence of Romanism in our country today. Throughout the entire nation the alert observer will notice the influence of this system which calls itself the bride of Christ, but which in reality is a harlot because it denies the truth of the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ and the efficacy of the blood of Christ alone to save man from sin.

An impartial examination of the world situation today can only lead to the conclusion that we are living in a crisis hour.

- The apostasy of the professing church,
- The re-establishment of the State of Israel,
- The rise of Russia as a world power,
- The movement toward the federation of European states, and
- The increasing political and religious influence of Rome.

These trends point to the fact that God has prepared the stage for the imminent translation of His true church and the ushering in of the world-shaking events of the tribulation era.

The Saviour warned lest we should be as the men of Noah's day who ignored the warning of judgment and followed the normal pursuits of life.

God has permitted us to see the portents of coming judgment that will take place upon this earth after the church has been translated. The Word of God exhorts us to lift up our eyes, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. Even in these crisis days we have a glorious hope — a hope that is bound up in the promise of the Saviour that he will snatch his own from this scene of woe prior to the outpouring of his wrath. At any moment there may be the sound of the trumpet and the gathering of all the redeemed unto the Lord in the air.

May we say with the Apostle John, “**Even so, Come, Lord Jesus.**”

~ end of chapter 2 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

\*\*\*