

Prophecy Update – January 2009

Scripture Ref: Mark 13:3-31; Gen 49:22-26 Deut 33:24; Ez 38:1-39;

Mark 13:3-31

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?" 5 Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. 7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 8 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. **These are the beginning of birth pains.**

9 "You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

12 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

14 "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong-let the reader understand-then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. 16 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 17 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 18 Pray that this will not take place in winter, 19 because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now-and never to be equaled again. 20 If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. 21 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. 22 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect-if that were possible. 23 So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

24 "But in those days, following that distress,

"the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
25 the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

26 "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

28 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 29 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. 30 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. (from New International Version)

Fig Tree and Babies on the Way

1. **The parable of the fig tree is simple, you can look at the tree and see that the leaves are starting to sprout, and you know that the season of summer is near.**
 - a. **When a woman gives birth, before the baby come she will experience labor contractions, sometimes days before the birth comes.**
 - b. **These are signs we can interpret: Summer is coming! Our baby is coming!**
2. **Jesus is using these examples to help us to understand: We cannot know the exact date and time of His return, but there will be signs.**
 - a. **And those who are wise can read what the bible says about the end times, and know the season of His return!**

Wars and Rumors of War

3. **Currently there are 26 armed conflicts**
 - a. **Is this the worst year ever? No, but what we are seeing is a year-over-year escalation of conflict between countries.**
 - b. **Where governments are more willing to resort to military action to achieve their objectives.**
 - c. **Where groups with some axe to grind are more willing to resort to armed aggression and terror for the sake of their particular cause.**
 - i. **Israeli / Palestinian conflict is currently raging again**
 - ii. **India & Pakistan on the verge of war**
 - iii. **Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, India, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Shri Lanka, Russia, Columbia...**
 - iv. **... all are involved in armed conflicts**

When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Natural Birth Pangs

4. There have been some significant events this past year:
 - a. Chile – Chaiten volcano erupts – the government saw the signs, warned the people, and no one was injured or killed.
 - b. Cyclone Nargis swept across Myanmar on May 2 and 3, triggering a huge sea surge
 - i. The government didn't heed the warnings, and as a result over 138,000 dead or missing. Over 2 million affected, 42 percent of all food stocks were also destroyed.
 - c. Sichuan, China – 7.9 mag earthquake, 87K people died
 - d. Yellowstone – 250 tremors, 25 above 2.5 mag, in 30 days – super-volcano caldera.
5. Total earthquakes: 1990 – 1999, average 16K – 20K EQ per year
 - a. 2000 – 2008: avg 22K – 30K per year.
 - b. **Let's qualify:** I am not suggesting that “the big one” is coming tomorrow, but simply looking for patterns, as Jesus noted that “*There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines*”.
 - c. And it would seem to me that there is a pattern on increased seismic activity throughout the world in the past 20 years.

Social Birth Pangs

6. Hunger, Famine, Food shortages – certainly a focus in 2008...
 - a. It's estimated that 923 million people are hungry today, and that 16K children will die of hunger-related causes – today.

More than 73 million people in 78 countries that depend on food handouts from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) are facing reduced rations this year. The increasing scarcity of food is the biggest crisis looming for the world", according to WFP officials. Food prices have fueled riots in Haiti, Cameroon, Egypt, Mexico, Philippines, Indonesia, Ivory Coast. In Thailand the army has been called in to protect food harvesters and grain sales. One UN observer warned "a hungry man is an angry man".

- b. I remember back in the '70's when there was concern about population growth, and there were dire warnings that if we didn't limit our growth, there would be worldwide food shortages.
 - i. The movie “Soylent Green” comes to mind.
- c. But the fact is our world is fully capable of producing enough food to sustain our 6.6 Billion people several times over (thanks to a great designer!)

- d. While weather can certainly cause food shortages, most famines are caused by a combination of political, economic, and biological factors.
- e. It is usually political strife, corruption, and violence that disrupt the agricultural production and food distribution.

Energy Birth Pangs

- 7. I am not a 'gloom and doom global warming' activist, but there are some sobering facts that are coming to bear on our world:
 - a. Currently 85% of the energy that is used every day come from oil, natural gas, and coal.
 - i. The United States consumes 25 percent of the world's total oil output, and 70 percent of that is imported.
 - ii. 61 percent of the world's oil reserves are in the Middle East. The United States has 2.4 percent.
 - iii. 66 percent of the world's gas reserves are in the Middle East and the Russian Federation. The United States has 3.4 percent.
 - b. There is a slow convergence that is happening:
 - i. The oil/gas/coal supply is not limitless – peak output is expected in 2025-40,
 - ii. Countries are beginning to make strategic economic and political moves that are aimed to ensure their continued supply.
 - iii. Economic and geo-political forces are converging on energy sources and distribution channels, and there are already skirmishes (Russia just cut off natural gas to Ukraine, for the second time).
 - iv. Russia, China, India, Europe, US, Japan, all need energy, lots of it, and all have the military might to back up their needs.
 - c. Brings the focus to one area of the world: The Mideast and Asia.

The Cup of Trembling – Israel and the Mid-East

- 8. World Oil Reserves
- 9. When you look at the fact that 5 of the top countries with the greatest oil reserves are Arab, who have a hatred for Israel, and at best a general disdain for the US, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to see where things are heading.
 - a. A situation where several large countries are coming on line with huge needs for energy: China, India, adding to the existing nations that require large amounts of energy already.

- b. There are no new energy sources coming on line to fill this need
 - c. So power and wealth are being consolidated in a few distinct areas:
 - d. Take a look at these countries – think about how they behave in the social, political, and religious space.
 - e. These are the countries that control the one thing that the world needs, and it aint love! Its ENERGY.
10. As oil and energy prices spiked this year, we saw firsthand how great of an impact this precious commodity has on our world.
- a. Not many of us remember the oil embargo of 1973, but we certainly felt it when gas went to \$4.50 a gallon.
 - b. By the way, the oil embargo was instituted by OPEC because of our support of Israel in the Yom Kipper war, when Israel was attacked without provocation, and then soundly defeated the Arab attackers.

Oil – Latter Day Wealth

11. Oil deposits are formed from the decomposition of plant and animal life buried under the ground, under extreme pressure, for long periods of time.
- a. It's found all over the world, even under arctic ice. That means that at some point, the entire world was covered by vast vegetation.
 - b. The worlds richest and largest deposits are found beneath the sands of the countries just to the east of Israel, a location noted in the bible as the Garden of Eden, a teeming expanse of forests, plant and animal life.
 - c. It's almost as if some great cataclysmic event, thousands of years ago, buried huge amounts of plant and vegetation, maybe like a worldwide flood or something... (!)
 - d. It's interesting to think that the gas you pump into your car today may contain the ruins of the rich, vast foliage of the Garden of Eden!
 - e. It's also interesting the think that Satan many one day finance the greatest battle of all time, Armageddon, with the revenues generated from the Garden he spoiled at the beginning of human history.
12. Another interesting thing this year, an oil exploration company, Zion Oil & Gas has been moving forward with exploration operations in the ancient tribal land of Asher, based on several biblical references:

Gen 49:22-26

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a well; By the God of your father who will help you, And by the Almighty who will bless you With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,

Deuteronomy 33:24: *"Let Asher be blessed ... and let him dip his foot in oil."* –

- a. **Think of how that might change the political and economic status in that part of the world!**
- b. **It also helps us to understand why a great army will one day come against Israel...**

Ezekiel's War

13. On January 29, 2002, President Bush made a statement in his State of the Union address, identifying an "Axis of Evil", Iran, Iraq, North Korea, regimes that posed a "grave threat and growing danger".

- a. **In May of that year he added Libya, Syria, and Cuba to that list.**
- b. **Well, God has an Axis of Evil as well, and it was given over 2500 years ago, by a prophet named Ezekiel:**

Ezek 38:1-39

38:1 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. 4 I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. 5 Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; 6 Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops -- many people are with you.

...16 You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes."

14. Basically what Ezekiel is describing is a time in the "latter days" when a coalition of countries come together to attack Israel.

- a. **This details of this prophecy would take 4-6 sessions to fully explore, but in a nutshell:**
 - i. **A group of nations gather their armies and prepare to attack Israel**
 - ii. **Israel is in a state of "peace"**
 - iii. **As these countries go into battle, God miraculously destroys their armies through a series of natural disasters:**

- a) Earthquakes, flooding rain, great hail, fire and brimstone
- b) And a state of confusion where the armies begin attacking each other.
- iv. The armies are destroyed, and Israel recognizes that it is the hand of God that saved them
- v. It takes seven months to bury all the dead.

15. The identity of the nations: Gog, Rosh, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, Togarmah, Persia, Ethiopia, Put

16. MAP

- a. **Gog:** Unique in the list as a “prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal”. Identified with Scythians, lived north of Israel, migrated to the Asiatic circle, Indo-Aryan.
 - i. Likely nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, possibly Afghanistan.
 - b. **Rosh:** Rosh is further north, which is Russia.
 - i. Interesting: Since the breakup of USSR, mother Russia is on a mission to reassert her influence over the region, as noted in her invasion of Georgia this year.
 - c. **Meshech & Tubal:** Always noted together, probably Turkey
 - d. **Gomer:** Gomer is Japheth, again the area of Modern Turkey
 - e. **Togarmah:** The region of modern Turkey
 - f. **Persia:** no guessing here, Iran, formerly Persia, name it held throughout history until 1935.
 - i. Iran is presently at war with Israel, through it’s surrogate Hezbollah.
 - ii. Declared goal – destruction of Israel, has military and nuclear ties to Russia
 - g. **Ethiopia:** Not present day, Cushites were sons of Ham, who occupied the territory of modern Sudan, hotbed of Islamic militancy.
 - h. **Put:** Same geographic area as Libya, another nation with declared desire to destroy Israel, and has military ties to Russia.
 - i. **ABSENT:** Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia
- 17. Ok – but where does this fit today? There are several alliances that are beginning to form:**

The EP Alliance

18. Russia & Iran: No secret here, Russia is one of two main backers of Iran in the UN when it comes protecting Iran against sanctions for their intent to develop nuclear weapons.

- a. **Energy – Russia has committed to complete the Bushehr power plant in 2009.**
- b. **Military – providing weapon systems, recently Russia defended its sales to Iran, calling them “defensive only.”**

19. A new Alliance: Russia, Turkey, Iran, Syria

- a. **HISTORY: In 1955 the CENTO pact, or Middle East treaty, was put into place to protect Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey from Russian expansion.**
- b. **Iraq withdrew in 1959, in 1979 Iran dropped out, and the treaty was dissolved, and both countries moved away from Western relationships.**
- c. **Now the same fate is on the horizon for Turkey.**
 - i. **The support given by the US to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and to Massoud Barzani, the former tribal leader of the Iraqi Kurds and now the leader of the Iraqi Kurdish region**
 - ii. **Also, the ongoing assaults by the PKK terrorists in the southeastern regions of Turkey (just last week Turkey struck PKK bases in Northern Iraq.)**
 - iii. **All of this has put us at odds with Turkey.**
- d. **Turkey has now drawn up a new strategic alliance policy that weakens ties with the US and strengthens relations with Iran and Syria, their millennium-long neighbors.**
- e. **This is an alliance of Put, Persia, Gomer, Rosh, Meshech, Togarmah**

The Rise of the EU

20. I have spoken before about the EU – the re-building of the old Roman Empire.

- a. **Daniel 2 gives us the account, a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, and Daniel interpreted**
- b. **A great statue, that God revealed to Daniel represented the four great kingdoms of the earth:**
 - i. **Head of gold: Babylon**
 - ii. **Chest & arms of silver: Medes and Persians**
 - iii. **Belly & thigh of bronze: Greece**
 - iv. **Iron legs: Rome**
 - v. **Feet of iron & clay: Restored Rome**
- c. **Many see the EU as the final kingdom that will be in existence before the True King of Kings arrives and reigns (see map)**
 - i. **1930: United States of Europe**

- ii. 1951: Treaty of Paris
 - iii. 1957: treaty of Rome
 - iv. 1973 - 95: UK, Ireland, Denmark Greece, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Finland, Sweden joined,
 - v. 1992: Economic borders removed, single passport
 - vi. 2002 Euro introduced
 - vii. Since 2004 twelve Eastern European countries added
 - d. Today: Europa - Euro Commission, Court of Justice, Court of Auditors, Central Bank, Euro Investment Bank
 - i. Current financial crisis, EU worked together to inject capitol, like the US Fed Reserve.
21. The ten toes of Daniels dream were iron mixed with clay, things that do not mix well
- a. Looks like the diverse racial, religious, and political elements of the EU – constant culture clashes!

EU - What's new?

22. The EU currently has a DRAFT Reform treaty in the process of ratification, with two major changes:
- a. Reduce the counsel from 26 to 17 members
 - b. Change the presidency from rotating six month term to full-time 2.5 year.
 - c. Tony Blair is rumored to be likely candidate.
 - d. READ: Consolidation of power.
23. As the world experiences new challenges, the need for strong, global, leadership becomes more clear. The frame-work is in place, now all that is needed is the leader! *a great leader to lead a great Europe*

American – the Great

24. Political crisis – things are just ...broke!
25. Financial Crisis – stock market, banks, manufacturing, housing
26. Debt Crisis - We are a country in debt – deep debt – not only our population, but our government.
- a. We consume more than we produce – not a good trend!
27. Energy Crisis - We are dependant on foreign energy suppliers – most of whom are not our friends.
28. Dollar Crisis - Until 1971, the US dollar was backed by gold, the gold standard. When the gold standard was dropped, the dollar began a freefall in value, threatening our economy.
- a. In 1973, after the oil embargo, the US entered into an agreement with Saudi Arabia that we would back them as an ally, protecting

- the rule of the Kingdom, if they would demand that all oil purchases be made in US dollars.
- b. That one agreement set up the US dollar as being backed by oil, foreign oil.
 - c. In this year, Iran, the country with the second largest reserves behind Saudi Arabia, opened it's own trading exchange, and set the Euro as the currency of trade.
 - d. Because of decline interest rates, and the printing of new money (they now call it "injecting capitol), the dollar continues to fall against the Euro,
 - e. China, European banks, and oil producing nations hold huge amounts of US dollars, weakening US dollars.
 - f. **READ: We are extremely vulnerable. Not saying we will collapse (although that is a possibility), but that we are now open to influence from foreign interests, who can threaten us with energy and financial ruin.**

What do We do?

Mark 13:32-37

32 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back-whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!"

29. What do we do? Watch – Wait – Pray – Preach!

Copyright © 2009 Pastor Clay Ritter. This data file is the sole property of Pastor Clay Ritter. It may be copied only in its entirety for circulation freely without charge. All copies of this data file must contain this copyright notice. This data file may not be copied in part, edited, revised, copied for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale, without the written permission of Pastor Clay Ritter. Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Pastor Clay Ritter, c/o Calvary Chapel of Wilmington, 2831 Carolina Beach Rd, Wilmington NC, 28412.