

The Real Reason Satan Is Raging Against Christians Right Now

In my recent book, *End Times and the Secret of the Mahdi: Unlocking the Mystery of Revelation and the Antichrist*, I offer an action plan for living confidently in today's turbulent times.

During the next several posts, I will draw from this book to examine current events in light of end-times prophecies. Today's post follows part one of the book *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

God has used the book of Revelation as the capstone of the entire Bible. It reveals the ultimate fulfillment of prophecies going back to the beginning of Genesis. And through that, we can discover how to apply those insights to our lives today.

Atheist philosophers tell us that human life is meaningless. But Revelation assures us that God cares greatly about our individual lives—and about the future of planet Earth. Although things seem to be spinning out of control, God has a triumphant conclusion planned.

But are we ready? Are we ready *today* for that conclusion?

Though Jesus could return at any time, the signs seem to be aligning for His return sooner rather than later.

Every day, there is more terrible news from the Middle East – the very region where history began and where it will all end.

Today, the nation of Israel, the holy land, seems all but isolated, including from its old ally, the United States.

Today, more Christians are martyred than ever before.

Today, the rapid and ruthless rise of ISIS has resulted in an actual state that controls large regions of Iraq and Syria, plus parts of Nigeria, Libya and Southeast Asia.

The ISIS reign of terror crosses national borders, enforcing its rule with beheadings and mass slaughter. But although it is brutal, ISIS provides stability, and many who live under ISIS control welcome the stability of oppression.

I'm not saying that ISIS is the precursor to the Antichrist. But as we look at the horror coming out of the Middle East, it is impossible not to compare those scenes with the Antichrist's reign of terror, as described in Daniel, Revelation and other prophetic passages of Scripture.

Daniel tells us that during the time of the Antichrist "there will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then" (Dan. 12:1).

But the signs go far beyond Middle East conflict and much closer to home.

Today, the United States federal debt stands at \$18.6 trillion, 74 percent of the GDP. And entitlement spending will soon explode the debt sky-high. Those who pay attention to the global debt crisis can easily envision the global economic collapse described in Revelation 18.

Also today, we see U.S. government officials trampling our First Amendment rights in ways unthinkable a few years ago.

Today, religious liberty is endangered as it takes a backseat to political correctness.

Today, fundamental truths about gender and sexual behavior are cast aside by secular and religious authorities alike.

Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 that in the church there

would be a great “falling away” from the faith before the Day of the Lord. We already see a great “falling away” in the evangelical church. Many churches that once preached the pure gospel of Jesus Christ have defected.

Why is all this happening now? The Bible doesn't tell us, but here's my opinion:

I believe Satan is intensifying his actions against Christians because he senses that time is growing short. He is desperate to do as much damage as he can, to cause as much suffering as he can, to take as many souls with him as he can.

Although the headlines are filled with evidence that society is on a collision course with the book of Revelation, don't be alarmed.

God did not give us the book of Revelation to frighten us, or certainly to let us predict the future. God alone knows the future. But He did give us the book of Revelation to motivate and encourage us.

Between the bookends of Genesis and Revelation, the Bible spans the history of the human race. Genesis tells the story of humanity's creation and fall. Revelation describes the redemption and eternal destiny of all believers.

The book of Revelation is indispensable. If we did not have Revelation, we would have an incomplete picture of Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

The Old Testament presents a picture of Jesus, the promised Messiah. The Gospels present a picture of Jesus, the Teacher, Leader, Servant, the Crucified and Risen One. The Book of Acts gives us Jesus as the Ascended One. In the epistles, we see Jesus as Savior and Lord.

But only in Revelation do we see Jesus fully glorified, King of kings, Lord of lords and Judge of all.

In Revelation 1:8, the Lord says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." But the Alpha-Omega statement also appears at the end of Revelation. In Revelation 22:13, the Lord says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

Jesus is saying: "I was here at the beginning, I am here now, and I will be here at the end. I was here at Creation, and I will be here when heaven and Earth are made new." Jesus is the King of Glory, worthy of honor and praise—the Lord of the beginning and the end.

John, who was probably closest to Jesus of the Twelve, looked at the glorified Jesus and didn't say, "I saw my good friend Jesus." He said, "I saw someone like a Son of Man."

Then he proceeded to describe the Lord's appearance. The Lord was "clothed with a garment down to the feet and with a golden sash wrapped around the chest. The hair on His head was white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters. He had in His right hand seven stars, and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. His appearance was like the sun shining brightly" (Rev. 1:13b-16).

The sight of the glorified Jesus was so awesome that John "fell at his feet as though dead."

Certainly we must long for the day when we will see Jesus fully magnified and ruling over all. But as readers of Revelation know, there will be a Great Tribulation too. But when will that happen? And will the Lord take His church out of the world before the Great Tribulation begins? Only God knows the answers.

But let's not get sidetracked by minor details, because then we might miss the big picture. The "big picture" themes of the

book of Revelation are:

First, all who welcome Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will be welcomed into heaven when He returns.

Second, Jesus will return as He promised.

Third, Jesus will sit in righteous judgment over all who have refused to accept Him as Lord and Savior during their earthly lives.

Fourth, when Jesus appears, all who love Him will be with Him forever.

Christians of good will may debate the details of this prophecy, but those four principles are beyond debate.

So we must be ready. As Jesus tells us:

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him (Matt. 24:42-44).

If we study the book of Revelation, it will not merely increase our knowledge. *It will change our lives.* Because of its life-changing truths, you and I can live each day with eternity in our hearts.

Are we ready for the Lord's return? {eo}

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