



ANXIETY MERCHANTS & FALSE PROPHETS

— PART III

By Wilfred Hahn



We continue with this last part of our series dealing with “Christian” fear-mongering and anxiety merchandizing.

To this point, we have established four main conclusions. Firstly, that the Great Commission does not include the responsibility (nor sanctified ability) to warn Christians and the world of near-term financial and economic calamities. Financial forecasts are not the purview of the Church. All those who attempt to do so (though they may be well-meaning) are likely to be “false prophets,” for the reason that their forecasts are almost sure to be false or inaccurate.

We indeed know that economic crises have been a normal feature of mankind’s systems, and will continue as such until the Lord comes. We also know, according to the Bible, that judgment and wrath will come upon the world, and that “total breakdown” and collapse of mankind’s financial systems will then occur. Exactly

when this will unfold, we cannot know today other than to conclude that this will happen sometime in the second half of the Tribulation period. Until then, mankind (under the aegis of Mammon) will continue to build a humanistic world apart from God, increasing its insurrection and violence as in the time of Noah (Genesis 6:13).

There will be no total collapse before that time—economic, financial or otherwise. We can express these predictions because they are supported in the prophecies of the Bible. This underlined our second conclusion: We can rely on the foreknowledge (prophecy) written in the Bible, that it is all true and that all will be fulfilled. It is these long-term “forecasts” of the realm of God’s actions and prophecies that can be employed to warn the world, but taking care not to go be-

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yond what the Scripture says (1 Corinthians 4:6). We cannot consider forecasts of the short-term machinations of the “realm of mankind” as having the same reliability or value.

The third conclusion effectively is a derivative of the first two: That the only “systemic crises” that Christ and the Apostles concerned themselves with were spiritual in nature ... i.e. the falsification of the Gospel, doctrines of demons... etc. The temporal ebb and flow of commerce, the possible eruption of a credit crisis and such matters did not merit their comment nor instruction.

A fourth conclusion is derived from the fact that saving grace is a free gift. It comes without monetary price (Isaiah 55:1-2). As such, to conclude that deliverance from the wrath of God during the Tribulation is dependent upon affordability couldn't be more wrong. Could it be that only those Spirit-filled Christians that can afford a large portfolio of gold bullion or a 7-year supply of nitrogen-packed food, will be protected from last day crisis and wickedness? Could it be that poor Christians will have no access to such deliverance?

We concluded that this could never be true. Christ offers salvation and deliverance to all who would come. In the same way, Christ's deliverance from God's wrath does not (should not) have any monetary cost. We may indeed suffer monetary loss in a world prone to immoral monetarism and which is increasingly inhospitable to Christians. However, salvation and deliverance from a wicked world is available to all without a monetary price. While some may peddle survival supplies for the future Tribulation period, only to those that can afford them, God has a much more equitable plan—not that we should deserve it. It is the great “snatching away” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18) ... the Rapture.

Preying on the Faithful

There are plenty of Christian pundits and forecasters that focus upon the worrisome issues in the world today. If a recent November 2015 issue of *Charisma* magazine is any guide, it reveals how deep the seam of hysteria and fear runs in the North American evangelical community. In that particular issue, experts and non-experts alike, book promoters,



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pastors and gold peddlers engaged in mass histrionics by interlacing their fear-mongering with black and imagined endtime scenarios.

Few will deny that global man is on a perilous descent—certainly not this writer. There are plenty of trends and developments (many of which have been discussed in this column) over the past centuries that could be considered “prophetic stage setting,” some of these already validating Bible prophecies. One is not likely to err making such statements cautiously.

The greater danger lies in the response to the following questions: What should one do in response to a forecast of impending crisis? Can one prepare?

Merchandizing Solutions to Christians

In this consumer weary world, every promoter knows that one needs an emotionally charged sales pitch to “move the merchandise.” Among the most effective strategies is to appeal to vanity, greed or fear. Without a doubt, fear and greed drive the most urgent human responses and behaviors. However, fear generates the biggest reactions. For example, emotionally-driven financial markets always fall quicker than they rise in value.

Fear sells. I have sat through more than a few presentations of so-called “financial prophets” at Bible or prophecy conferences. All of them engaged in some measure of fear-mongering. Some made outrageous claims — for instance, even stating that they were in touch with “inside high contacts” who confirm that a financial collapse is planned to occur “within a month.” Others who were financial advisers took advantage of their perceived legitimacy (they spoke at the conference, didn’t they?) and had staff ready on site with account opening forms.

Indeed, some Christians are fixated with economic and financial concerns. They may be anguished by the prospect of an economic collapse decimating their wealth before the Rapture comes. They are then happy to learn that a final and complete financial collapse will only occur later in the Tribulation period ... a time after the Rapture.

According to the Bible, what are the chances that one can survive the Tribulation period ... especially so, the last three and a half years (the Great Tribulation)? To begin, it must be remembered that the Great Tribulation is a period of God's wrath in response to the free-will choices and deliberations of mankind. These are not manmade calamities.

However, that perspective provides no near-term assurances, as financial crises are a normal part of the current dispensation. Nevertheless, the latest financial warnings of a well-known or perhaps highly publicized analyst or Christian "prophet" will have these people searching for validation. I therefore receive many inquiries on whether an economic collapse is imminent. It is no surprise that the "survival supplies" business appears to be prospering in this time of perplexity.

Who Can Survive the Tribulation Period?

Does it make sense to stock up supplies, weaponry and/or a bomb shelter to be able to survive the Tribulation period? Some do think so. There exist "survival supply" vendors that indeed think that survival is achievable.

Of course, for pre-tribulationists, this is a moot question. We rely upon God's grace and the "salvation that does not require money" to ensure our survival and eternal citizenship. We are looking up, awaiting the blessed hope, all the while urgently seeking to snatch many from the fire (Jude 1:23). However, let us pursue answers here to our posed questions for the sake of those who would believe that they have to endure the Tribulation ... or at least a part of it.

Again, we ask the question: Does it make sense to prepare for the possibility of a soon Tribulation?

For Christians, absolutely not. This applies to Christians no matter their eschatological persuasion ... pre-, mid-, or end-trib. (Amillennialists, of course, do not anticipate a time of wrath that is yet future, some thinking that heaven already exists on earth.) Why? The Bible's answer is clear, as we will show.

Firstly then, let us address this question: According to the Bible, what are the chances that one can survive the Tribulation period ... especially so, the last three and a half years (the Great Tribulation)? To begin, it must be remembered that the Great Tribulation is a period of God's wrath in response to the free-will choices and deliberations of mankind. These are not manmade calamities.

It will be a terrible time for humanity beyond imagination. Jesus Christ describes the extent of mayhem that will unfold. "[...] On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken" (Luke 21:25-26). The greatest crisis and tectonic shakings of all time will occur. For example, the greatest earthquake of all time will occur. "No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake" (Revelation 16:18).

Christ warns that those times will bring "[...] distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world,



Those very few non-Christians that survive the Great Tribulation will have a great surprise. At the end of all the suffering and denial of Christ (having taken the sign of the Beast), they will still face the Messiah. As the Bible says, “Look, he is coming with the clouds,’ and ‘every eye will see him, even those who pierced him’; and all peoples on earth ‘will mourn because of him.’ So shall it be! Amen” (Revelation 1:7).

until now—and never to be equaled again” (Mark 13:19). Moreover, the number of deaths during this period is unimaginable. Interpretation of the extent of human deaths varies from two-thirds to 98% (yes ... as much as 98%!) of the world’s population. Earth dwellers during that time will have a low chance of surviving.

But what of those who are Christians (or become Christians during the Tribulation period)? They will have even slimmer odds of surviving than non-Christians... actually, no odds at all. Those that become (or are) Christians during the Tribulation period are specifically the target of much persecution.

While they unavoidably experience the supernatural wrath of God upon earth, they are also persecuted by the Beast and the Antichrist. According to the Bible, all those who do not worship the image of the beast are killed (Revelation 13:15). It is clear that all who become “Christians” during the Tribulation will be slaughtered.

For Christians, therefore, whether of pre-, post- or intra-Tribulation persuasion, it would not make sense to prepare to physically survive the Tribulation period. Those who do not believe in the Rapture also have no incentive to prepare for the Great Tribulation. After all, it is sure that they will not survive. Why then even attempt to delay this outcome

with nitrogen-packed food, gold bullion and a 3 1/2 year supply of dried ramen noodles?

All slain Tribulational Christians are shown to be in a waiting place under the altar in heaven (Revelation 6:11). Some arrive there earlier; others later. Wonderfully, they receive a white robe as they wait for God to complete His judgment upon the world. It is these same slain believers who are then given eternal life for their choice (Revelation 20:4). Why then would a Tribulational Christian want to delay entering this waiting place and to receive a white robe? Surely, prolonging one’s suffering during this period and subsisting on survival goods is the least attractive option. Therefore, no preparations are warranted.

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It is at this point that the Bible says that every knee shall bow. “Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me

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every tongue will swear. They will say of me, ‘In the LORD alone are deliverance and strength.’ All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame” (Isaiah 45:22-24).

Thoughts to Ponder

Professional money management today is a very large business: Some \$100-plus trillion is managed in the form of pensions, mutual funds, sovereign wealth funds ... etc. It is an industry defined by two perspectives: 1. The identification of risk (this being the unknowns of the future that could cause the loss of capital); and 2. A secular faith that the world will continue to “improve and progress” over time, this manifesting itself in ever-expanding wealth. In other words, “[...] tomorrow will be like today, or even far better” (Isaiah 56:12).

This system is a part of the world’s final manipulated response to perpetuating its “earth bound” system of prosperity and materialism. As witnessed throughout modern financial history (for instance, recurring financial and economic crises born of mankind’s periodic impulses of greed and fear), these repeated instabilities prove to be catalysts for human intervention. A series of crises, increasing in scope and global embrace, lead to higher levels of intervention and global cooperation. As financial fragility and instability increases, new solutions and interventions will achieve higher levels of “wealth” (as false and immoral as it may be) until ... until? We cannot know in advance.

However, this we do know: The final and total collapse of mankind’s financial

system will then take place in the Tribulation period (likely, just before the 7 bowl judgments, these being part of the 7th seal and seven trumpet judgments). This would place this event in the second half of the Tribulation. If a collapse were to occur any earlier, then it would not be possible for the False Prophet to bring in a controlled global system that is associated with the number 666.

What attitude and response do our considerations encourage here ... especially so for the weak and true, endtime church flock (Revelation 3:8)? Those that are obedient to the Lord’s commands are preserved from what is to happen to the earth dwellers. “Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth” (Revelation 3:10).

What takes more discipline, sacrifice, faith and love for the Lord? 1. Being condemned to a terrible physical death during the Tribulation Period; or 2. waiting and watching for the return of the Lord, even as the world becomes more wicked and a great falling away occurs? To be a candidate for the Rapture is not for cowards but for those who take heart!

What was the goal of Christ’s revelations of the events of the endtimes? He told us: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27). (MC)