

Prophecy: Fact or Fiction?

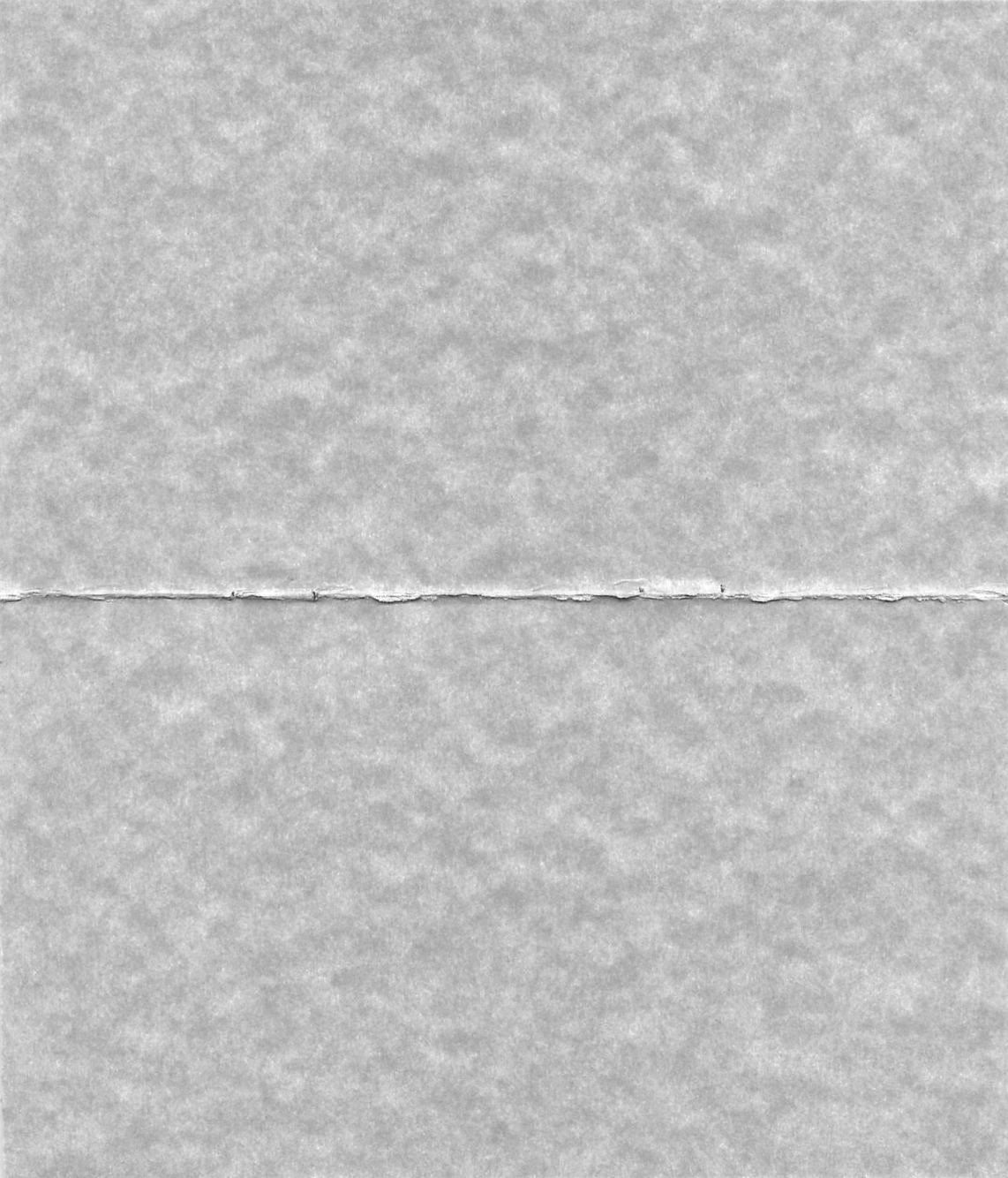
The U.S. in Prophecy

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Prophetic FAST Facts

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Memo:

Greetings once again, and welcome back to *FAST Facts!* Wasn't that last study a shocker? But the evidence is irrefutable, and we hope *inescapable*. This lesson is also likely to give you a jolt--for it looks at the role of the United States in endtime Bible prophecy. Once again, *the facts* are clear--and they argue convincingly that the Bible can predict the future!

This booklet will also give you a brief history of prophetic interpretation. You will discover that every major reformer made unequivocal statements as to the identity of the Antichrist--and warned men to break from its fellowship. You will also discover why it is so rare today, to find someone laying out the prophetic evidence exposing the Man of Sin. Surprising as it sounds, Protestantism's failure to warn the world was itself foretold. Keep this thought in mind as you explore the identity of the False Prophet! May God bless you richly as you study His Word.

**The Editor,
Hid in Christ**

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The U.S. in Prophecy

So far we have studied prophecies covering the rise and fall of many ancient kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. We have also looked at the rise of the Papal system in the midst of the divided nations of Western Europe, its deadly wound in 1798, and its restoration as a political power over one hundred years later. All of these are remarkable fulfillments of prophecy. But what about the world today?

A quick survey of popular news magazines makes it obvious that the United States is the world's most powerful nation today. Its incredible political, economic, and cultural influence can be seen by simply reflecting on the location of the United Nations, Wall Street, and Hollywood. Its military might has been demonstrated in stunning victories in such recent conflicts as the Gulf War, Kosovo, and the war in Afghanistan. Wouldn't one expect the Bible to say something about earth's last great "superpower"? Indeed it does! Study on with an open mind.

Fact #1. The beast known as the False Prophet is described in the second half of Revelation 13.

The first part of Revelation 13, as you recall, describes the Antichrist "beast." The second part (vs 11-17), tells of another beast with some unique identifying characteristics. Revelation 19:20 (and elsewhere) calls this beast the "False Prophet."

the Jewish nation and the overthrow of pagan Rome, and in this way limited their range to the first six centuries of the Christian Era."⁸ The Antichrist, thus, belonged to the distant past.

Another Jesuit scholar, by the name of Ribera, argued that the vast majority of Revelation was restricted to "a literal three and a half year's reign of an infidel Antichrist, who would bitterly oppose and blaspheme the saints just before the second advent. He taught that the Antichrist would be a single individual, who would rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, abolish the Christian religion, deny Christ, be received by the Jews, pretend to be God and conquer the world."⁹ The Antichrist here, was shifted to the distant future.

Neither system (referred to as *Preterism* and *Futurism*, respectively) were ever accepted into Catholicism. The Augustinian approach, with its emphasis on world conquest never came into question. Rather, these theories were invented to be injected into Protestantism. And the most amazing thing has been their success! Today, nearly every major Protestant denomination holds to one or the other of these two Jesuit systems with relatively little modification. The great prophetic warning of the reformation leaders has nearly been silenced.

All quotes are from the four volume work: *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, vol II, by Leroy Froom. 1948. 1) p. 52,55, 2) p. 117, 3) p. 257, 4) p. 334-335, 5) p. 437, 6) p. 288, 7) p. 452, 8) p. 506-507, 9) p. 489-490

“I for my part will set free my own mind and deliver my conscience, by declaring aloud to the Pope and to all papists, that . . . the Papacy is in truth nothing else than the kingdom of Babylon and of very Antichrist.” Luther³

“I know that in [the Papacy] works the might and power of the Devil, that is of the Antichrist.” Zwingli⁴

“Daniel and Paul had predicted that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God. The head of that cursed and abominable kingdom, in the Western church, we affirm to be the Pope.” Calvin⁵

“It is most manifest, and true without any doubt that the Roman Pontiff, with his whole order and kingdom is very Antichrist.” Melancthon⁶

“As for your Roman church . . . I no more doubt but that it is the synagogue of Satan; and the head thereof called the Pope, to be that man of sin of whom the apostle speaketh.” Knox⁷

Catholicism responded to the Protestant system of interpretation by developing two new approaches to prophecy--both taking the spotlight off Rome. The Jesuit scholar Alcazar proposed that “the prophecies of Revelation were descriptive of the early church, as fulfilled in the downfall of

Fact #2. The description of the False Prophet in Revelation 13 enables us to easily identify it.

- The False Prophet is a sovereign political state. Just as the Antichrist beast, and all the beasts in Daniel 7 represent “kingdoms”, so does the False Prophet beast. See Daniel 7:23.
- The False Prophet rises out of the “earth” rather than the sea--like the other beasts we have studied so far (vs 11). According to Revelation 17:15, water represents “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” As expected, the kingdoms of Daniel 7 and the Antichrist were all located in roughly the same, heavily populated part of the world. The False Prophet, by contrast, must be located in a very different part of the world, perhaps one only sparsely populated.
- The False Prophet is seen beginning to rise just as the Antichrist beast is receiving its deadly wound. See Revelation 13:10-11. Recall that it was in 1798 that Napoleon’s troops captured the head of the Antichrist system, and dissolved it as a political state. Look for a nation beginning to rise about this time.
- The False Prophet has two horns (vs 11). Medo-Persia, described in Daniel 8 as a ram with two horns, was ruled jointly by two “parties”--the Medes and the Persians (vs 20). Today however, most countries are either totalitarian (with only one political party) or parliamentary (with representation from many

political parties). The False Prophet, in contrast, seems to be governed by some type of two-party system.

- The False Prophet has no wings. Babylon, you recall, was described as a lion with eagle wings, and Greece as a leopard with four wings--meaning they rose to power with great swiftness. See Jeremiah 4:13. The False Prophet, in contrast, must rise to power slowly, almost unnoticed--only gradually coming to world preeminence.
- The False Prophet is lamblike (vs 11). John 1:29 tells us that the lamb is a symbol of Christ, suggesting the False Prophet would outwardly be a Christian nation, promoting Christian values and ideals. But since it is distinct from the Antichrist system, it is reasonable to look for a non-Catholic nation: i.e. a Protestant one.
- The False Prophet would exercise “all the power of the first beast before him,” that is, the Antichrist (vs 12). Just as the Catholic system dominated the politics, economics and culture of Europe during its reign, so the False Prophet would become the leading world power at the end of time--exerting tremendous influence over “all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”

Only one nation matches all the clues listed above. For a hint, see the cover of this booklet.

monk, and theologian in Europe. For centuries it was accepted without question, and only gradually did the Protestant system of interpretation rise to combat it.

As early as the 9th and 10th centuries, isolated individuals began to identify the Antichrist as the Roman Catholic church. Through the 11th and 12th centuries, the teaching was more widely circulated, largely through the efforts of Christians known as the Vaudois--“missionary” peddlers, risking their lives to expose the Antichrist wherever possible. This prophetic “seed,” often watered with their blood, produced a great harvest in the Reformation. Every major reformer picked up the prophetic identification, arguing forcefully for the need to break from Rome. The invention of the printing press added even greater impetus to the movement, enabling thousands to hear the prophetic truths for themselves. Below is just a sampling of quotes from reformation leaders to give an idea what they taught:

“The Pope is Antichrist here in earth.” “Why is it necessary in unbelief to look for another?” Wyclif¹

“The Pope and his prophets, masters, doctors, priests . . . under the false pretext of sanctity conceal the abomination of the beast . . . Woe be to me, then, if I shall not preach, weep, and write against such an abomination!” Huss²

A Brief History of Prophetic Interpretation

In the sixteenth century, one of the most incredible religious movements in history occurred: the Protestant Reformation. An entire continent that for centuries had shared a common faith, suddenly exploded into religious war. Whole nations rose up to shake off Catholic authority and establish religious independence. A revolution took place unlike anything before it in history. And the cause? In large part, Bible prophecy!

The earliest church fathers all held to a literal and historical unfolding of prophecy. They correctly identified the four kingdoms of Daniel 7, believed Rome would break up into ten nations, and that immediately thereafter, the Antichrist would appear. Only then would Christ return.

Amazingly, just as Rome was beginning to collapse, and the Papal system was rising--a new view of prophetic interpretation became popular. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) argued that prophecy was allegorical, that there was no literal fulfillment, and that its meaning had to be spiritualized away. He did suggest however, that the stone of Daniel 2 represented the arrival of the Catholic church (rather than the second coming of Christ)--and that she was thus destined to conquer the earth. The millenium referred to in Revelation, was 1000 years of Catholic dominion, to precede the return of Christ. This system of interpretation focused the church's attention on temporal power, politics, and property. Eventually it was taught to every priest,

Fact #3. Jesus described the characteristics that mark the religious side of false prophets. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus spoke of "false prophets" as those "which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Outwardly, there is a pretense of piety--but inwardly they are fueled by greed.

A few verses later, Jesus quotes these false prophets: "have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?" (vs 21-23). Similarly in Matthew 24, Jesus warned of false prophets performing endtime "signs and wonders", so great, that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24). The sudden explosion of "signs and wonders" churches within Christianity over the last fifty years fulfils these prophecies perfectly. And though this movement has spread around the world, it was clearly *launched* from the country symbolized by the False Prophet beast. Note: Revelation 13:4 warns us that the False Prophet "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles." Expect such things to become increasingly common.

Fact #4. The False Prophet is guilty of failing to proclaim the prophetic warnings God has given in His Word. True prophets are "watchman unto the house of Israel" and are called to "give them warning from [God]" (Ezekiel 3:17-18). They must "lift up [their] voice like a trumpet" (Isaiah 58:1).

Paul understood this, and for “the space of three years [he] ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” that “grievous wolves” would arise from within the church to lead God’s people astray (Acts 20:29-31). Following in his steps, untold thousands throughout the reformation risked their lives to warn others about the Antichrist. Faithful watchmen indeed!

But where are the people giving God’s warning today? False prophets, we are told, “speak a vision out of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.” (Jeremiah 23:16). In other words, they distort and misrepresent God’s prophetic message. “Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD . . . and cause my people to err by their lies” (vs 32). The final crisis is soon to break, and the false teachings about prophecy so prevalent today will leave many of God’s people unprepared. Few have any clue what lies just ahead! Perhaps no better name could be given to American Protestantism than the name found in the Bible: *False Prophet*.

Is God calling you to give the warning today? Why not find someone around you and begin sharing these booklets. One or two at a time. It could be a friend, a family member, a co-worker, a classmate. Help get out *the facts*!

Review Information

Prophetic marks which enable us to identify the False Prophet include:

- It is a country, that begins its rise to power shortly before 1798.
- It would rise up in a sparsely populated part of the world, away from Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.
- It would be governed by a two-party political system.
- It would rise to power slowly, almost unnoticed.
- It would be professedly Protestant.
- It would become the dominant world power politically, economically, and culturally at the end of time.
- It would launch a world-wide movement marked by miracles, signs, and wonders.
- It would promote unbiblical prophetic teachings, and fail to give God’s warning about the Antichrist.

Commitment Question

Prophecy predicts Protestantism’s failure to give the Bible’s endtime warning about the Antichrist. Are you willing to resist the religious compromises of the False Prophet, and find ways to share *the facts* as God gives you opportunity?

For a brief history of prophetic interpretation, please turn the page . . .