

The Speculators of Prophecy

by Bill Crews

Did you know that if any apostasy (falling away, or departure from the truth) in religion occurs gradually so that it is spread out over a long period of time, most of the people who are involved will go along with it? They never seem to be aware of what is happening. And did you also know that most of the **religious speculators** who specialize in “unfulfilled Bible prophecies,” for a similar reason, are never found out -- at least by their supporters and followers? Such religious speculators, over a span of a few decades, will take the same passage and declare it to be a precise prophecy of entirely different historical events! These religious hustlers are continually proclaiming that Bible prophecies are being fulfilled in various news events of “today.” They are fond of talking about “the last days,” “end times,” “signs of the end,” “the man of sin,” “the mark of the beast,” “the rapture,” “tribulation,” “the Roman empire,” “the millennium,” and “Armageddon.” The end is always very near, and Christ is always about to return. It has been that way all of my life, and, according to the old books I have read, it has been that way the last several hundred years.

These religious conjecturers will pounce upon any international conflict or crisis that serves their purpose. The recent Middle East conflict occasioned by the erstwhile Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi followers is no exception. It became instant fodder for the prophetic surmisers. Since Iraq covers the territory which was “*the cradle of civilization*,” and such areas and countries as Shinar, Chaldea, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Padan-aram, Haran, Gozan, and Assyria (all mentioned in the Bible); since much of Biblical history occurred in those places; and since many Old Testament prophecies were made concerning characters, events and nations in those areas; it is easy for these preachers to mislead the people. Hussein was a cruel tyrant. He waged a long, bloody, senseless war with Iran; he put down rebellions in his own nation without mercy; he rapidly subdued Kuwait (which the U. S. afterward liberated) and appeared bent on taking the oil-rich lands of Saudi Arabia. He had already been and suddenly became much more the focus of religious books and sermons.

We began to see announcements in our local newspapers about sermons on Hussein, Iraq, and the war; what the Bible says about these, and what to expect in the future. I received a brochure from a religious book distributor. On the front page these three books were featured: ***Armageddon. Oil and the Middle East Crisis, The Rise of Babylon, and Prophecy 2000.*** Descriptions of the contents of these volumes contained such statements as these: “*What the Bible says about the future of the Middle East and the end of Western Civilization.*” “*Could we be on the brink of Armageddon?*” “*The Rise of Babylon is a look at the dreams of Saddam Hussein for an ‘Arab kingdom’ and how his role in today’s events is leading dangerously close to Bible prophetic times.*” “*Dr. Lewis says the Lord’s return is potentially imminent, but suggests contingency plans in case Jesus does not return until later.*” “*This book is a sane approach to the most sensational decade of all history.*” “*Topics include Europe 1992 -- Revival of the Roman Empire?*” Many will purchase, read, and be influenced by such books as these, but let me assure our readers that these books will not help anybody to understand the Scriptures.

Men without divine assistance have never been very good at understanding prophecy. The fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies is clearly shown in the Old Testament, and the fulfillment of other Old Testament prophecies is clearly shown in the New Testament. From the New Testament it is obvious that even Jewish scribes and rabbis did not understand many of the prophecies about the Messiah (Christ) and His kingdom. It is also obvious that some resorted to twisting and perverting Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16). Here are some things to keep in mind and that will help us not to be taken in by the speculators in prophecy today:

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