MY TESTIMONY: HOW I DISCOVERED AND DEVELOPED MY BIBLE PROPHECY VIEW The Importance and Impact of Having the Correct Biblical View

by John M. Stephenson February 8, 2007

THE BEGINNING: I came to believe Christ as my Savior by asking questions concerning God's Plan for history, how the endtimes would unfold, and where we would be in eternity. At the time, I was working as a trained systems engineer designing complete satellite communication systems. An engineer came to work for me from another state who was an expert in part of our work. He told me about Christ. So I spent two Sunday afternoons with him barraging him with questions. He showed me every answer in the Bible. This man and his wife stayed in our area for two years and them moved away. His wife told me that we were the best thing that happened to them while they were here. I believe that God brought this man and his wife across country just for me and my wife to receive Christ as Savior and to answer my questions about Bible prophecy.

THE NEXT STEPS: From my God-given interest in Bible prophecy, I began to collect books on prophecy and learn as much as I could. I began to study 20-30 hours per week for many weeks. My pastor preached the view, that in his understanding, we should believe. This was the Pre-Tribulation Rapture View with a Jewish Golden-Age Millennium. But as I read the Bible and these many books on prophecy, the Bible taught me a different view than my pastor presented. The Bible taught me that the Rapture occurs at the time of Christ's Second Coming after the endtimes Tribulation that is presented in Revelation. In reading the many books, I discovered that Christians have over 6 different views on how the endtimes unfold. They are called by different names. These views have stood side by side for many years without resolution. The views held by the most people were to have a Rapture before the Tribulation comes and alternatively at the time of Christ's Second Coming after the Tribulation. There were many combinations. The major doctrines considered were Daniel's Seventieth Week, the Olivet Discourse, the Rapture timing doctrines, the Tribulation, Revelation's 1000 years, and the promises to Old Testament Israel. But these books in their views did not appear to take sufficiently into account what the Cross accomplished in its effect on Bible Prophecy.

SORTING THINGS OUT: I began to read more and more books (more than 50 - they and others are referenced in my book: *Watchman Warning*) about all the views that I could find, even many books that were out of print. I began to collect all the doctrines, points, and things that interpreters deemed important to consider. I added my own to the list. Oddly enough, I found no book that stated what the Bible taught what must first be completed or have occurred that causes God by His own plan to bring the Tribulation and the Rapture. As an engineer, these are fundamental issues, that no one seemed to address. It seems to me until one can answer these questions, one cannot know for sure the timing and sequence of the Tribulation and Rapture. (I can now answer both questions with answers why.) (To me, the published literature reports what will happen in the author's view without also sharing why things happen and how events lead to God's objective for us becoming mature in Christ so that we can know and relate to God.)

So I collected over 40 doctrines that involve Bible prophecy and God's Plan for us people. With my system engineering capability to which God trained me, I began to examine them essentially simultaneously attempting to find harmony among them. Then I discovered that many did not harmonize. Some were declared without Bible support. Many were declared without finding out does the rest of the Bible harmonize with them - to which it did not. Doing this is detail, I discovered there were major interpretative errors being made, and why we had over 6 different views.

THE APPROACH AND DOCTRINES THAT BRING ANSWERS: Prophecy books take a direct

approach to studying Bible prophecy. But because of the interpretative errors and because of the lack of resolution between the views, this approach appears inadequate. So I took a different approach that I could, being a systems engineer, that does systematic thinking.

I began to study God's Plan from Genesis to Revelation for history and His plan and objectives for man being on the earth - the how and why of history. Then I placed prophecy in as His Plan's end phase. So I took a system engineering approach to discover God's system so to speak. In doing this, I first found God's purpose for man and then how and why biblical history's events go together allowing His this plan to be fulfilled. Then many of the hard questions either went away or we found other approaches that helped us find the actual fulfillment of prophecy doctrines. We discovered as much as we could of the reasons why God does things. When we did this, even though we do not know all the details, the endtimes sequence, in our view, becomes clear without ambiguity. We found that the many prophetic and related doctrines (over 40) completely harmonize when the recognized interpretive errors were removed.

So why are we on the earth amidst spiritual warfare? We are here to gain a mature high-skill spiritual ability in Christ likeness in relationship living. We are told to walk as our Lord Jesus walked. He only did what came from the Father as a source. So when people saw Him, they saw God the Father instead of Him because He, from Himself, was doing nothing. We are to train to live this way. Apart from living in this relationship to God, there is nothing. We are to recognize and appreciate God's Greatness and let Him direct all parts of our lives.

This maturity gives us the spiritual ability to know and relate to God throughout eternity. It allows us to live holy and righteously in close fellowship with God and each other where God directs all our thoughts and actions. He becomes God all in all. This is independent of where we live on the earth. We must keep our eyes on God's objective and respond to Him with excellence and commitment so that this maturity in Christ-likeness is developed in us.

DISCUSSION (there is much-much more): Before we became Christians, we were in Satan's Dominion under his eternal control. When we became Christians, we were placed into Christ where there are no ethnic divisions. We were bought out of the slave market of sin by the purchase price of Christ's blood in redemption. In Christ, there is no Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free, etc. We, as believers in Christ's Cross, are all one in Christ. Only Christ our Lord can have preeminence and first place. The Cross set aside the Jewish worship system forever of animal sacrifices and physical temples. In Christ we are to be living sacrifices and are the temple of God. When we became Christians, we were transferred from Satan's Dominion under his eternal control into God's Kingdom under Christ's eternal control. As such, we became the Body and Church of Christ. One cannot be a believer without being in the Church. Christ has only one Body.

This understanding teaches without ambiguity that there cannot be and will not be any future exclusive Jewish periods after the Cross. They have no redemptive purpose. This means there will not be a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, a Jewish Tribulation, and a Jewish Golden-Age Millennium after Christ's Second Coming. Thus, Dispensational Theology, as such, is not taught in Scripture. This conclusion is verified by seeing that Daniel's seventieth week is history at the time of the Cross (the Tribulation will most likely last longer than seven years), the abomination of desolation in the Olivet Discourse occurred in AD70, and Revelation's characteristics are all nations and not exclusively Jewish.

Daniel's seventieth week has been a stumbling block to interpreters. If one believes it is future and equal to the endtimes Tribulation, being an exclusive Jewish period, it forces a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the all-nations Church. On the other hand, if it is history at the time of our Lord, It

suggests a Post-Tribulation Rapture. When you work hard to find all the aspects that go with the prophecy and read the insights in Martin Anstey's *Chronology of the Old Testament*, It becomes clear that the seventieth week can only be history. There are many interpretive errors and wrong concepts being used to make the seventieth week be future and equal to the endtimes Tribulation. (My detailed Scriptural development of Daniel's seventy weeks is presented in an appendix in *Watchman Warning*.)

When we understand God's Plan for history with the spiritual warfare, we see that the Rapture cannot occur until after all people who are to live, have lived, and have made formal and binding decisions to accept or deny the Gospel. The wheat (believers) cannot be separated from the tares (unbelievers) until after all the tares are bundled for the fire - the Lake of Fire. Christ sits at the Father's right hand until all His enemies come under His authority and become His footstool. This happens after all people who are to live have made formal decisions to accept or deny the Gospel during the Mark-of-the-Beast Period in the Tribulation, the Great One. Christ at His Second Coming casts the persons of the Beast and the False Prophet into the Lake of Fire. These tell us there is an endtimes Tribulation and the Rapture occurs after the Tribulation at the seventh trumpet after the heavenly court awards the Kingdom off the World that becomes the Kingdom of God to Christ. This happens after the heavenly court determines He has won the spiritual warfare. The court then awards Christ the legal authority now, according to God's Plan, to bring the resurrections, final judgments, the termination of history, and placing all people into their eternal states.

Christ's Second Coming in the clouds covers the time period that includes the Rapture, the 1000 years (that can be a day of time), the resurrections of the Just and Unjust, and the Great White Throne Judgment. When Christ comes, He delivers all people into their eternal states.

WHAT ABOUT ISRAEL (there is much-much more): The understanding of Israel's role as a Covenant Nation after the Cross and the Old Testament promises to Israel have been or will be fulfilled have been a dilemma to interpreters for some time. This has brought several different prophetic views. Israel and her land had a very important role before the Cross. Israel was the land where our Lord was to be crucified. Israel brought the worship system that was to be a shadow of the Cross, She brought many Bible books and provided the genealogy for the Christ. She brought the Law that was to lead people to realize they sinned and needed a satisfied justice for her sin. But all this ended at the Cross.

Christ was married to Israel before the Cross. After the Cross, the Church is the bride of Christ in the oriental marriage concept. By His own laws, He cannot have two wives at the same time. The Scriptures declaratively teach that Israel's Northern Kingdom was given a writ of divorce. Because of the Joel prophecy stating that God's Word is now going to all people from the Day of Pentecost, and because Christ is now marrying the Church, we know that He divorced the Southern Kingdom at the Cross when they rejected Him for all time when they declared that His blood be on them and on their children. Thus, the Covenant Nation of Israel in God's redemptive program is gone forever. However, God has not rejected the Jews as people in any manner because they can have all that God and Christ offer anyone - salvation and maturity in Christ with eternity with God forever. But Israel as a Covenant Nation has no role after the Cross. Prophecies in Joshua and other books state that all the land that God promised Israel had happened. The Bible promises that Christ will sit on David's throne. Acts 2 teaches this is happening now as Christ rules the Kingdom of God from heaven. In order to understand prophecy, one must clearly differentiate between the Covenant Nation of Israel and the believers in Israel. There are no promises to Israel as a Covenant nation that have not been fulfilled. Israel as a nation does not become the Church and the Church does not replace Israel. The believers in Israel become part of the Church with the Gentiles. Again, all are one in Christ growing together to become mature in Christ. This is God's Plan. Israel as a Covenant Nation had a very vital role before the Cross, but none now in God's Plan, though she may in Satan's Plan to deceive the Church and set up his endtimes plans. God may use Satan's plan to help terminate history. God did not bring the current Israel back into the land. The Jews are in the land in apostasy. In my view, as long as interpreters wrongly hang on to a future return of Israel as a Covenant Nation to the land and do not see that God's only plan is to mature His people in Christ in order to know and relate to Him, they will never really understand Bible Prophecy and God's Plan for people. And further, they will generally not prepare their people for the endtimes.

SEQUENCE CONCLUSIONS: The above approach and investigation discovers that there is an endtimes Tribulation, the Rapture comes after the Tribulation at Christ's Second Coming. It teaches that the 1000 years come during the time of His Coming. And all of history is to train responding people to become mature in Christ so that in eternity they have the mature spiritual ability to fellowship with and know and relate to the infinite perfect God in His depth-breadth throughout eternity. Apart from this, there is nothing. Can you imagine living in absolute perfection in holiness and righteousness without sin, sorrow, or slickness of any kind under the leading and guiding of a most perfect God in the midst of His Great Glory? Study His attributes and character qualities to see His infinite Greatness and Perfection.

HOW DO REVELATION'S EVENTS UNFOLD: The next step was to study Revelation's sequence and how its events unfold. Revelation's evens unfold in a sequence and manner as revealed in the seven-sealed scroll. The Bible uses scrolls to describe how people won back their lost property. Thus, Revelation's events unfold in a manner that allows Christ to win back the Earth's Title Deed that was lost to Satan in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned. Christ must win back the Title Deed in order to have the authority, according to God's Plan, to bring the Rapture, resurrections, and final judgments. In order to understand Revelation, I began to take the vocabulary, events, entities, etc. as used in Revelation and make a Bible search for their use elsewhere in the Bible for insights. I discovered that Revelation's sequence is the same or similar sequence that God used with Old Testament Israel in her relationship to God. In each sequence. there was a favored nation. Was Israel and is now the United States. The United States being a favored nation was discovered by noting that her general characteristics match those of Israel. When the favored nation has general obedience, God greatly blesses the nation. God has blessed the United States far greater in orders of magnitude than He has blessed any other nation in history including Israel and England (in her heyday). The United States is a most favored nation. Then when the believers followed by the people in this favored nation turn away from God, going their own way, in disobedience, God brings warning by His watchmen that disciplinary action is coming by being placed under world government. Today, many persons in the underground movement in books, internet, and radio programs have been warning for some time that a socialistic world government is soon coming. It will come as the result of a most severe world calamity. I have written two books and many reports. When the degree of disobedience crosses God's allowable threshold, He uses Satan to bring world government or empire that places the favored nation and world under its servitude in bondage for a number of years in divine discipline. For example, Israel's Southern Kingdom was in bondage discipline for seventy years, When the discipline period is over, He delivers His people to Himself - was to Israel's land now is to Christ in the Rapture. He then destroys the world empire. Revelation's events include those of the calamity that brings world government and under the discipline period. It then shows the deliverance of God's people based on the principles previously mentioned. Now signs and conditions in the United States as a favored nation and in the world signal that the calamity bringing world government and discipline are on our doorstep, coming at any time. The time is only known to God. We should clearly understand that the falling away of the Church carries the prime responsibility to bring the disciplinary endtimes Tribulation period. The Church will definitely go through the Tribulation. My book: Watchman Warning develops the pattern sequence of Revelation's events in detail. My book: Watchman How

Far Gone is the Night? has a good summary. Because the sequence in Israel repeats in Revelation's time, by studying what happened to Israel, we gain insight to what can happen in Revelation's endtimes and know the signs that signal the endtimes calamity is coming. They are happening now. These expected events are published in *Watchman Warning*, in my Endtimes Scenario Report, and in my other reports. Because the sequence repeats, I call it a Pattern Sequence and my prophecy view, The Pattern View.

RESOLUTION: I believe that my prophetic view can brings resolution to the many views held over history. I can still have mistakes, but the view's tenets, in my understanding, harmonize together and with all the Bible as far as I can tell. It is founded on the harmonization of over 40 doctrines and after examining the many doctrines that others deem important. They fit God's plan to mature His people and His method to terminate history and taking into account the objectives and result of spiritual warfare. I pray that readers will adopt my view (which I believe is the correct biblical view) and teach it to others and list my web site on theirs.

IMPACT FROM PROPHECY - SO WHAT DO WE DO?: We have at least two jobs.

One, from the understanding of the endtimes sequence, is to warn, alert, and brief our church people of what is coming, why it is coming, and what they will experience. Part of this warning should be to the United States' public people so they might change to become Christians and then when the world government comes, they will know what is happening. But few are expected to take heed to the warning to change and prepare. They will be caught unprepared and blind sided.

The other as God's Plan for all periods is to mature our people, especially our children and youth, in Christ-likeness and now with a sense of urgency using a version of God's Whole Counsel. We should also put in some provisions to get through the calamity. We should place all our people into small home mutual support groups. We should do these now before we understand everything. If we wait to act until we know and understand more, we will lose time and can be caught blind-sided by the calamity. We do not know when exactly it is coming. Based on what happened to Israel, most churches are not expected to act and prepare. They will be caught blind-sided.

IMPACT FROM ENDTIMES UNDERSTANDING, NOW TAKE WARNING AND PREPARE: Signs signal the calamity, Tribulation, and endtimes world government can come at any time now or in the next few to many years. Again, only God knows the time. Prepare and train your children and youth to stand strong in Christ for when they will be taken from you and be satanically educated by the state. This is partly happening now by the dumbing down of our public school and church youth. This dumbing down is creating an immature church, with a loss of biblical intellect and with a low plateau of biblical knowledge. Few will be able to know and teach the Bible in any depth as the future unfolds.

Thus, we should now, with urgency, train our people, including our children and youth, to become mature in Christ and to stand strong in Christ with the coming persecution and satanic indoctrination. Realize our country will be taken from us and never again to return with the freedoms and free enterprise we now enjoy. By our disobedience to God, we have given away our freedoms. We have not learned to obey God in freedom. We will now soon get another opportunity, but this time under world government, persecution, shortages of food and goods, and in incarceration.

(Under great prosperity, as has happened in Israel and in these endtimes in the United States, people tend to depend upon the prosperity instead of upon God. They enjoy what prosperity brings and go much of their own way. Without fear of having life's needs, the people go their own way.

This combined with people from behind the scenes working to bring world government, brings a nation that is falling away from God. This is happening to the United States. The people attempting to bring world government are allowed more power commensurate with the Church falling away. Because the sin in the nation is now greatly increasing, we now without doubt our churches are falling away from God's best. They are helping to bring the endtimes Tribulation.)

Use my web site to learn all you can. I have gained much information from the works of others. There is much explanation and help. Send us suggestions. We are regularly adding to it.

BOOKS AND REPORTS: As stated, I have documented and published my prophecy view in its Scriptural detailed development in my book *Watchman Warning* (1994). I summarized it in *Watchman, How Far Gone is the Night?* (1995). I have written it in many reports in the last few years on my web site.

APPENDIX ONE: PLEASE READ MY BOOKS AND REPORTS FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH: If you will take the time to read my web site prophecy reports and books, you, in my view, will come to believe as I do. My work, from being a systems engineer, using works from many others, presents more doctrines and shows how they fit into God's Plan more than any or most books I have read. My books and reports present additional insights generally not now in the published literature. I realize that many have studied much to establish their views. But please read my reports and books and review the doctrines. You will need to handle them in some way, even if initially you have a different view than I have. I am attempting to get my view known through my web site. We need a platform to get our information to the public.

APPENDIX TWO: NEEDED TRAINING - TAKE URGENT ACTION: We should train our people especially our children and youth, to have God's best and maturity with some version of God's Whole Counsel in depth-breadth academically and practically life oriented so we are at least with commitment and excellence: (1) worshiping, glorifying, pleasing, honoring, and obeying God; (2) living godly lives in head-subordinate relationships patterned after our Lord's walk with the Father by strong faith and with sacrificial love; (3) helping to accomplish God's work of evangelizing complete areas (especially the children and youth); discipling converts to maturity in Christ, building godly families, planting churches, and reaching out to help the needy; and (4) learning to believe, and stand strong on the Christian-Faith Doctrines, including God's attributes. We should work for God's best and to be a living example and testimony of all that God wants us to be. When people see and observe us, they should see and observe Christ in us, not us. From ourselves we should be doing nothing. Such testimony will attract others to God and the Cross - a life that is lived.

We should train with some urgency because when the calamity comes, our training time will be essentially over. We must ensure to train our children and youth because under world government, they do not stand a chance with the coming satanic indoctrination. Much of our youth in our public schools and churches are being dumbed down. They will not know what is happening remaining in this condition.

When we train, we should ensure we are teaching both what to do, but also very importantly, how we do things and then with testimony for how we lived it out. We must begin by teaching content and what to do, but we do not become mature until we live it out. We need to know how we do this. So this should be taught. The problem we have is that many teachers and pastors teach what to do without also training with how to do things. So many

people appreciate the whats, but they may not get to the hows to live out what they are being taught. Thus, our training should have a worship, life, and ministry with hands on emphasis.

In my view, we should train with at least the following followed by a study of *The Harmony of the Gospels* regarding the life and ministry of Christ and selected New Testament Epistles:

- * **BELIEVE STRONG: The Christian-Faith Doctrines with the Attributes of God** (See my doctrinal statement with the Scriptures and the paper on *God's Attributes*.)
- * WALK STRONG: Christian-Life Relationship Principles covering 1-3 above. (See my charts on Christian-Life Relationship Principles Becoming Mature in Christ-Likeness By Learning to Live God's Best In Biblical Head-Subordinate Relationships, and regularly read my publication Living by God's Righteousness. (More to come.))

The following is key to becoming mature in Christ. We must appreciate God's Greatness, such that we obey Him so that He directs everything and all guidance for life comes from Him (His Holy Bible). We should walk as Christ walked taking all thoughts and actions for life's direction from God, not from ourselves, as a source. This allows God to work all things together for our eternal good. For this to be successful, we must die to self, not doing anything from ourselves for direction as a source. When we do things for direction, we should believe by faith, that what we are doing for direction came from God, not ourselves, as a source. And even then, what we are doing must be in the Bible. As Christ said to Satan: "It is written." Then God will act and lead. When we lead and take action without God's direction, or believe it came from God (not finding it in the Bible), we tend to work all things together for good ourselves. This is acting wrongly like the Most High God. We may not want or intend this result, but this is what happens.

- * UNDERSTAND GOD'S PLAN: God's Plan for History with the Spiritual Warfare and Endtimes Prophecy (Read the many reports on my web site)
- * PREPARE TO SUFFER: Prepare to Be the Underground Church. We should read the Voice of the Martyrs's materials to know: (1) what to do and not to do as the underground church in and out of prison, and (2) how to prepare for suffering that will come while in prison. It is too late to prepare after being in prison. (Read *Preparing for the Underground Church* by Richard Wurmbrand.)
- * MANAGE TIME WISELY AND DO RIGHT THINGS: I suggest reading Proverbs, the Psalms, and the New Testament regularly. Read a few pages of my publication: *Living by God's Righteousness* daily. Be involved somewhere in God's work.

APPENDIX THREE: YOU CAN HELP: I am attempting to get my views more widely known and accepted by means of my website. From our love of God and people, we want people to become Christians, matured in Christ, know how the endtimes will come, and provisionally prepared before the calamity comes. You can help by referencing our web site on your web site. You can recommend our web site and its documents to others. Please send us positive suggestions for how we can improve our web site. We want God's best. Thanks.