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NEWSLETTER FROM MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING
Under the Oversight of the ELDERS
FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST
Bobby Liddell, Editor

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YOKEFELLOW

Vol. 37, No. 12

December 2010

Widely Acclaimed—But False— Predictions Of The “Last Days”

Bobby Liddell

We continue our study of “False Prophets of the Last Days,” by looking at the predictions of Hal Lindsey, author of books that have sold more than 40 million copies, and self-styled “prophecy freak.” In *The World’s Final Hour* (“A Summary of The Late Great Planet Earth”), Lindsey wrote (in 1970):

There are events today which, because they are happening all at once, are different from any other time in history. We are seeing the final fitting together of all the prophetic signs that Jesus said would come (p. 15).

Forty years later, it is evident that Lindsey and all date-setters like him, are still wrong. As a well known representative of this group, Lindsey lists seven signs of the return of Christ. A study of Lindsey’s “Seven Signs” will help us to understand how so many have reached the erroneous conclusion that “the end is near.” **The First Sign.** Lindsey points to the establishment of the geographically bounded nation of Israel as the first and key sign. “When the Jews became a nation again in 1948, that was the most important sign that any generation could see, because now they had returned to their land. It was the first sign” (*Hour*, pp. 22-23). Israel became a nation on May 14, 1948. Lindsey says, “On that day, the prophetic countdown began!” (*The 1980’s: Countdown To Armageddon*, p. 12). Remember, the events which were to take place within “this generation” (Mat. 25:34) have, as their starting date, according to Lindsey, 1948. Most agree a generation is equivalent to a period of forty years; thus, 1948 plus forty years equals 1988—the date when the “prophetic countdown” should end. Not surprisingly, since time proved him to be a false prophet, Lindsey has changed his date; first, to 2007; then, to 2040, and 2047.

The Second Sign. Lindsey cites the Jews’ possession of Jerusalem as the second sign, and states,

That was the second great sign that the world stage was being set for the second coming of Jesus the Messiah. Now, since those two things are true, every other sign I am going to give you has great significance. If those two things were not true, the other signs would not have any more significance than they had in 1940 or any other time before that. But you see, there has never been a time when the Jew has been returned from a world-wide dispersion or been in total possession of old Jerusalem (*Hour*, p. 26).

(Continued on Page 2)

END-OF-YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

Ever since the Memphis School of Preaching began in 1966, contributions made at the close of the calendar year have been vital to its work. MSOP receives no federal or state grants, or other governmental support, and charges no tuition or fees. Instead, the School is supported by the Forest Hill congregation, and by other faithful brothers and sisters, individually and congregationally, who are convinced of the need to train men to preach the Gospel (2 Tim. 2:2).

Your end-of-year gifts are very helpful in a number of ways: supplying living expenses for current students, as well as for those who will begin their studies in January, assisting with the anticipated lectureship expenses in March, funding scholarships, and for helping us to catch up with unanticipated expenses involved in the day-to-day operation of the School.

Forty-five years of faithful service to the Lord, and to the Cause of Christ, have shown the School is worthy of the support of brethren. Your donations are needed, dear brethren, are fully tax deductible, of course, and they are a Godsend to the work of MSOP. Please help if you can.

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In 1967, after the Six-Day War, Israel had possession of most of Jerusalem; however, the control of some areas remained with the Arabs. From Jim Searcy's *Great Joy In Great Tribulation*, comes this:

If Israel again took possession of Jerusalem in 1967, and a Bible generation is 40 years, everything including the tribulation and the Lord's return should be done by 2007. Please note that we are not telling anyone the day or the hour. We could be several years into the 7 years of final great tribulation and very few of us would know it. We have reason to expect the end to be before the end of 2007.

Obviously, since 1988 has passed and the Rapture/Tribulation/Armageddon events, so confidently proclaimed by premillennialists, have not come to pass, there had to be a new date set for the last days—2007, per Lindsey and Searcy. Again, they missed it.

The Third Sign. Lindsey claims, "The third sign has not yet happened yet, but it will soon." Remember, Lindsey wrote this in 1970. He reasons,

For the Antichrist to desecrate the temple, there first has to be a temple. I've learned that since 1948 certain Jewish societies have been collecting what they call temple bonds. They already have a tremendous amount of money gathered for the construction of the temple. There were some documents discovered a few years ago, after the repossession of the temple area, which gave the exact methodology of cutting stone for the temple and so forth. They had been buried for centuries near the Wailing Wall. And now the temple can be prefabricated in about six months—the third sign (*Hour*, p. 28).

As of this day (2010), there has not been one stone laid, nor shall there be another temple, in which God shall dwell, built in Jerusalem (Acts 17:24-25; I Cor. 3:16-17; John 4:21-24; Mat. 23:37-24:2).

The Fourth Sign. Lindsey refers to a rising of a "fantastic power from their [Israel's] uttermost north," as the fourth sign, and concludes,

But we see in our day these prophecies taking place exactly as they were predicted, because, you see, Russia is the only nation to the uttermost north of Israel. If you take a globe and go directly north, you will end right in the middle of Russia. If you want to read the future of Russia, I can tell you exactly what is going to happen to Russia and its Communist confederacies, because all of its confederates are given here, too. The Arabs are also mentioned (*Hour*, pp. 31-32).

In 1970, when Lindsey wrote, Russia was a fearsome world power; but the Soviet Union has crumbled, and Russia's once powerful status is no more. I remember well the many premillennialists who, in the 1960s and 1970s, were preaching the mighty Russian state's conquests were leading to the imminently impending "battle of Armageddon."

In December of 1991, as the world watched in amazement, the Soviet Union disintegrated into fifteen separate countries. Its collapse was hailed by the west as a victory for freedom, a triumph of democracy over totalitarianism, and evidence of the superiority of capitalism over socialism. The United States rejoiced as its formidable enemy was brought to its knees, thereby ending the Cold War which had hovered over these two superpowers since the end of World War II. Indeed, the breakup of the Soviet Union

transformed the entire world political situation, leading to a complete reformulation of political, economic and military alliances all over the globe (*Cold War Museum*).

What will premillennial predictors do since Russia no longer fits their imaginative plans? We know, from their wild speculations of the past, they will seek a way to make current events, present day politics, and modern leaders seem to fit their last days' prophecies.

The Fifth Sign. Lindsey says,

The fifth sign is that at the same time this northern power will arise, there will come up a confederacy of Arabs who will unite over their common hatred of the nation. Finally, they will actually launch the attack against the nation of Israel, bringing about the last war of the world...Russia is going to make a lightninglike thrust, with its confederates, through the Middle East and conquer the whole African continent... While the Russian army is down in Egypt and Africa, news from the north and from the east will trouble them. If you look to the north of Africa, what do you see? Europe. And as you look to the east, you see Asia (*Hour*, pp. 33-36).

While some radical Muslims, and Muslim controlled countries have displayed their hatred for Israel (and America), Russia's ability to do as Lindsey predicted, as noted earlier, has certainly diminished.

The Sixth Sign. Lindsey asserts,

While all of this is going on, there will be a great confederacy of Asians formed, and they are going to come into this battle once the Arabs and the Russians start a war... China, right now, is boasting an army, a militia, of 200,000,000 soldiers. I could never see how China could get an army that size to the subcontinent. Then some years ago I read some news releases and learned that India was taking Pakistan to the UN General Assembly because Pakistan was cooperating with the Red Chinese to build a road over the mountains which separate them, a road connecting the Red Chinese with the subcontinent—a straight shot to the Euphrates River. So this would make it possible to march a vast army from China [to engage in the Battle of Armageddon according to Lindsey, BL] to the subcontinent through the Euphrates River. Perhaps the reason Russia could get away with this lightninglike thrust without drawing a counterattack is that the army would have to march a long way. Up to this time, they haven't had the industrial complex to produce a fully mechanized army (*Hour*, pp. 37-38).

Can you imagine 200 million Chinese **marching** from China to fight in the Middle East?

The Seventh Sign. Finally, Lindsey conjectures,

The Bible predicts that ancient Rome will be revived again just shortly before the coming of Christ... In the last days ten nations will rise up out of ruins of the Old Roman Empire. These ten nations, who will have descendants of the old Roman Empire in them, will join together in a confederacy. They will become a vast economic and industrial power. But the real power will come when out of these ten nations, or this Roman culture, will suddenly arise an electrifying leader: I call him the future Fuehrer; some call him the Antichrist... At the same time that this person rises, there is one who comes up in the Middle East—a great religious leader who is called "the false prophet." He will join forces with this Roman dictator... I believe we are

seeing the stage set for all of this to happen (*Hour*, pp. 39-40).

Later, the false prophet would write:

When I wrote that in Late Great, the only possible successor to the Roman Empire (in my opinion) was the European Common Market. But a decade ago, that organization had just six member nations, not the 10 the Bible forecast. In 1979, Greece became the 10th member of the Common Market (*Countdown*, p. 15).

As is the case with date-setters, subsequent history refutes their speculations. Historically, the six original countries making up the European Common Market were Luxembourg, Netherlands, France, Italy, West Germany, and Belgium. In 1973, Denmark, The United Kingdom, and Ireland joined. In 1981, Greece became a member, making a total of ten nations as Lindsey had "prophesied," and fulfilling the "seventh sign." However, in 1986, Lindsey's prophetic theory was upset when Portugal and Spain were added (making a total of 12). In 1995, Austria, Sweden, and Finland became members (for a total of 15). Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Poland joined, what is now the European Union, in 2004. Romania and Bulgaria joined in 2007.

Today, there are 27 nations in the European Union—17 too many for Lindsey's theory.

Lindsey's false signs culminate in the unbelievable scenario he describes next.

As soon as these ten nations form the confederacy, the Roman dictator and the false prophet will appear. That means that somewhere in Europe, right now, lives the greatest leader this world will ever know—outside of Jesus the Messiah. Somewhere in Europe there is a man who will make Hitler look like a choir boy. But, this man, according to the profile the Scripture gives him, is going to appear to be the savior of the world. People are going to accept him as a deity and even as a god. He is going to come with an electrifying program; we are even told what the main thrust of his promises will be. The first promise will be to free the world of war: He will bring universal peace. The second promise has to do with providing an answer to the economic problems plaguing the earth... He will have genuine answers. But worship of himself will be the price tag. He will force every person in the world to swear allegiance to him as god or they can't receive a number; and if they don't get that number, they can't buy or sell or hold a job (*Hour*, p. 41).

Lindsey's predictions continue:

I can see how the stage is being set for that already, because I have read many articles predicting we will have a moneyless and paperless society by the 1980s. I read a report showing how eventually all money and every transaction will be put on computers, and everyone will receive a number. The writers were debating about the best way to keep a person from losing this number, because if anyone found that number, he could wipe you out; he could get everything you had. So they were thinking of tattooing on some prominent place, like the hand or forehead, in ultraviolet letters, a number which would be a lifetime number. Now if that were done, it would fulfill exactly the prophecy about how the Roman dictator will have universal control (*Hour*, p. 42).

Then, he states,

The climax of all I am talking about, when all of these movements of history will converge, will occur during a seven-year period immediately prior to the return of the Messiah, and Bible students call this period the great tribulation...my own personal convictions are that if you are a true Christian right now, you will not be here during those seven years (for, Lindsey speculates Christians will be raptured to be spiritual ministers for "some beings" to God, "So this tells me that maybe God is going to redeem many races or worlds of people on other planets.") (*Hour*, pp. 42-44).

Did you notice that he said the end would come soon after the tenth nation joined the European Common Market (which happened in 1979), and that Christians would be Raptured to minister to aliens on other planets? Finally, Lindsey wrote,

Do you realize that Jesus said that the generation that would see all of these things begin to happen would not pass away until all was fulfilled? You are the generation seeing these things; you are the generation which is not going to see physical death (*Hour*, p. 44).

In *The Late Great Planet Earth*, written in 1970, he defines the generation as follows:

What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs—chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place. Many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives believe that this is so (p. 54).

So, the time of the generation which would see Jesus' return would be bounded by 1948 and 1988. 1988 was twenty-two years ago.

Lindsey, and the "many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives," missed completely their predictions of the "last days," as date setters always have, and as they always will.

ALUMNUS BILL STEVENS ENTERS ETERNITY

Bill Stevens (1990 alumnus of MSOP) was born October 13, 1927 in Little Rock, Arkansas. He passed peacefully in his home Friday, October 1, 2010 in Bandera, Texas. Brother Stevens preached in Texas, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama. At the time of his death, he was serving as an elder in Bandera, Texas.

Bill was a dedicated minister, husband, father, grandfather, uncle, brother, and friend, and will be dearly missed. He was preceded in death by his wife of twenty-five years, Harriet, and is survived by his wife of twenty-eight years, Shirley. Bill has two sons, three step-children, and eight grandchildren.

We extend our deepest sympathy to brother Stevens' family in their loss.

Memorial contributions may be made, in honor of brother Bill Stevens, to Memphis School of Preaching, 3950 Forest Hill Irene Road, Memphis, TN 38125.