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Commentary — From the Margins

“Let’s Play the *Prophecy Game*”

Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the Lord’s house, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon, declares the Lord, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.”

Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the Lord, and the prophet Jeremiah said, “... The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the Lord has truly sent the prophet.” (Jer 28:1-9)

The end of the age is near: a person can smell it in the winds of change. So as American industries downsize, sending good jobs overseas, the time to retrain is here—and the need for prophets is greater now than it has been for the past two millennia, for disaster and turmoil loom on every horizon.

The good news is that anyone can be a prophet ... the rules of The Prophecy Game are simple: a person who would be a prophet qualifies by simply saying, “I have a word of knowledge from the Lord.” If this word of knowledge is about a specific nation or about war between specific nations, the person only has to make sure that he or she doesn’t set any dates for this new God-driven crusade against Islam, or against the decadence of Western cultures, or against the United States and the English speaking nations of this world. And to the person who declares him or herself a prophet will come acclaim, respect, wealth, and the gratitude of Israel as long as the person’s word of knowledge promises personal prosperity to those who sow seed into his (or more rarely, her) ministry. The prophet will get to host semiannual tours to Jerusalem, with side trips to Petra and to the Golan Heights. One prophet will be rewarded with a nationally syndicated television program; another three or four will shill for small denominations that publish slick magazines. It is, truly, a career with a future, the career of

choice for every born again Christian. On-line Bible courses are offered by some of the most prestigious universities in the nation. Student loans are available for the person who wants to study prophecy fulltime. Degrees are awarded, with doctorates handed out as if they were invitations to dinner parties. And across a shrunken world in far-away New Zealand, one student wrestles with unbelief as he writes an assigned essay about the Trinity.

However, since the Body of Christ, crucified with Christ, died on the cross as the physical body of the Lord died, God's need for prophets has been small, but for that rare person called by God into an office he did not seek, being a prophet will mean poverty, persecution, and theological marginalization. Luckily for the vocation, God calls far fewer into the office of prophet than there now are prophets actively engaged in proclaiming the oracles of God.

The prophet Jeremiah notes that from old, prophets did not declare good news—good news needs no herald—but announced the evil that God would bring upon a nation because of the nation's idolatry and lawlessness.

The Prophecy Game would be a bad joke if there were not now so many identifying themselves as prophets of God, with even more to make the claim once the seven endtime years of tribulation begin. Each has a message, a special revelation, knowledge of who the man of perdition is, of who the beast is, of what the mark of the beast is (with some consensus that it will be an implanted computer chip), of who the great Whore of Babylon is, of which nations are the ten horns on the head of Rome, of which Islamic nations will be the king of the South—and there is agreement among them that the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven is Rome or the Roman Church, with the little horn that speaks blasphemies against God being the last Pope.

The many false prophets of today bet their lives that God won't remember that He hasn't called them to be prophets. Each bets that God will back up the words the person speaks in the name of the Lord. All have need for contributions. Some have a thin little book, or several skinny little books to sell. Some have stapled booklets and slick magazines to give away. One even has a silver communion set to sell so that the disciple can take the sacraments whenever he or she has a mind to. And every one of these "prophets" is sensitive about being called false for such labeling is bad for business.

You have seen them, heard them, maybe even have a few cassette tapes by one of these prophets explaining how the EEC will bring nuclear destruction upon the United States because of the lawlessness of this "Christian" nation; explaining how God will send Americans into physical captivity from which Christ will liberate this northern house of Israel that will, when Christ returns, enter the holy land on a highway that stretches from Assyria (Germany, of course) to Egypt; explaining why the temple must again be built at Jerusalem before Christ can return ... if only God understood Scripture as well as each of these prophets understand Scripture, America could be saved. Great Britain could return to greatness. Even Australia would see prosperity and economic greatness.

But alas, since the days of old, false prophets have been with Israel; so false prophets are not a new phenomenon. Solomon wrote long ago that there was nothing new under the sun, and

that still remains true. Jesus warned against false prophets, as did Peter, Paul, and John. But Israel's need to know the secret things of God far exceeded God's need to reveal these things except in metaphorical language, not understandable until the time of the end. Therefore, false prophets satisfy a need Israel has to know physical things, such as whether there will be war between Iran and a United Europe over the modern state of Israel—maybe someone ought to ask the state of Israel whether it will use nuclear weapons against Iran or against Europe in preemptive strikes should the occasion warrant.

There are characteristics common to all false prophets, and it is by these characteristics that false prophets can be identified. Rome, the Roman Empire, the Roman Church, and the Roman See are not mentioned in biblical prophecies, whereas Babylon, Greece, and Persia are mentioned. The prophet or prophecy pundit who finds Rome in biblical prophecies automatically identifies him or herself as false, for he or she has added to Scripture. The prophet or prophecy pundit who identifies the ten horns on the head of the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven as ten revivals of the Roman Empire has doubly condemned him or herself, for this fourth beast is not Rome or the Roman Empire but Death, the king of the North, the spiritual king of Assyria from whose hand Israel, a nation circumcised of heart, will be recovered when Christ returns (Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8; Isa 11:11, 16 et al).

A horn on the head of the king of Greece is also a king, but not a king in this world: Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world or from this world (John 18:36). The kingdom He will receive is presently ruled by the prince of this world, and this kingdom is taken from the four beasts or kings of Daniel chapter seven when the court of the Ancient of Days sits in judgment (vv. 9-14). The kingdom of this world is given only once to the Son of Man, and this kingdom is not of this world or from this world. It is a heavenly kingdom, and biblical prophecies about the transference of this kingdom to the Son of Man are about what occurs in heaven, where no human being can go to take measurements or make observations.

The endtime temple of God is measured in heaven for it is there where “the nations” will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

Note well: the prince [sar] of the kingdom of Persia withstood the angel bringing Daniel knowledge of what is inscribed in the book of truth for twenty-one days. This angel, left with the kings of Persia, could not get through to Daniel until Michael, a chief prince [an archangel], came to his rescue (Dan 10:13). And when this angel returned to the heavenly realm, he would have to return to fight with the prince of Persia and after that, with the prince of Greece (v. 20) ... the kings of Persia and the king or prince [sar can be translated as either king or prince] of Greece are not human beings, but demonic angels. As a human being who has been born of Spirit does not see the new self or new creature born within the person, but only “sees” how this new self is reflected in the conscious thoughts of the person, a human being does not see demons or angels with few exceptions, even when they have entertained an angel unaware of the angel's true identity.

Biblical prophecies are ultimately about what happens in the heavenly realm and in heavenly Jerusalem, for Israel does not need prophecies to know that in this world Iran is an adversary of the modern state of Israel. And Rome does not belong in biblical prophecies for there is no

demonic king of Rome. Rather, the king of Greece is a coalition of at least five kings, with its first king or great king being the horn that stands as an erect penis on the humanoid figure King Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision. When this horn is broken, four horns spring forth from around its stump, with the third and fourth of these four horns being the two legs of iron of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw. The entirety of the image the king saw takes its identity from its head, the king of Babylon, the fallen Day Star, Lucifer (Isa 14:4-20). And God sealed Nebuchadnezzar's vision by having Daniel identify the king of Babylon as the image's head of gold.

Jesus said that disciples are not to be alarmed by war and rumors of wars in this world (Matt 24:6), for these things must take place but they are not signs of the end of the age or of Jesus' return ... no physical event, whether a natural disaster or a holy war fought with Muslim fundamentalists, is a sign of the end of the age. The event that determines the end of the age occurs in the heavenly realm, and pertains to the war fought between the demonic kings of Persia and king of Greece, with this war described in Daniel chapter eight.

When the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man, the fourth beast or king of Daniel chapter seven is dealt a deadly wound and has his body taken to be burned (Dan 7:11-12). When this beast is again seen in Revelation chapter 13, the deadly wound has healed and the whole earth marveled. This king is like the old dragon, Satan the devil, in that from his mouth—as with the dragon and the false prophet—came an unclean spirit (three spirits, one from each) that was like a frog in that these unclean spirits inhabit two realms as frogs (amphibians) dwell in two worlds. The spirits are demons (Rev 16:13-14). The beasts of Daniel chapter seven are demonic kings that command demons who go aboard, performing miracles, to deceive the kings of this world. The beast, the false prophet, the dragon are not nations or leagues of nations in this world. They are not of this physical realm. But that has never stopped the many prophets of endtime Israel—each with a word of knowledge taken directly from an uninspired history book—from declaring that the last Roman pontiff will be a demon, or at least will command demons.

What can be said? Unemployed or maybe you have a Christian school that is just not getting off the ground—play The Prophecy Game and take your chances. Ignore that Jesus told His disciples not to be alarmed about wars and rumors of wars, or by any physical disasters that occur in this world. Advertise, instead, the number of books you have read about The Illuminati. Slap a Ron Paul bumper sticker on your car. Seek tax exempt status for your home (after all, a house church meets in your living room). Just remember, the Apostle Paul said that if you ask for money, for tithes and donations, you are false, a deceitful workman disguised as a minister of Christ but you are truly a minister of Satan so try to keep your hands in your own pockets ... if you try to reach into my pockets, you'll find that they are empty—and that I'll slap you down hard.

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