

Interest in Prophecy

H.A. Ironside
(1876-1951)

*I*t is noticeable that every major conflict between nations for many centuries past has resulted in a greatly increased interest in the study of the prophetic Scriptures. When men see everything shaking to pieces which they have supposed to be firm and stable, it is not to be wondered at that they begin to inquire concerning those things which cannot be shaken, as set forth in God's Holy Word.

Unfortunately, we are all creatures of limitations, and our thinking and our outlook are very likely to be bounded in great measure by the circumstances of the times in which our lot is cast. Thus there has ever been an inclination on the part of many students of prophecy to try to fit the events of which they themselves have cognizance into the prophetic picture as given in the Word. Ever since the Napoleonic wars, for instance, how many efforts have been made to identify certain outstanding characters as the Beast or the Antichrist, and how often have predictions been confidently made that events going on at a particular time were heading up to Armageddon and would bring within a very few months or years the end of the present age, the return of Christ, and the setting up of His Millennial Kingdom! ...

Yet time and again prophetic teachers have attempted to work out various systems of chronology drawn partially or wholly from Scripture, or in other cases drawn from some fanciful interpretation of the Great Pyramid in Egypt, the stars in their courses, or even the predictions of charlatans like Nostradamus, Mother Shipton and others. Most of these systems prove popular for a time, but as a rule their overconfident exploiters set the dates for the fulfillment of their hopes so close at hand that they themselves live to see their prophecies proved utterly false. Others pass away before their predictions are shown to be wrong, and yet in many instances these attempted efforts to set the time for Messiah's Second Advent are worked over by others and added to in such a way as to modernize them and apply them to new and changed conditions, but all at last are proved to be false.

The Great Parenthesis

MORE INTEREST IN ANTICHRIST THAN CHRIST

When I first came to California, the late Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein wintered out here in Pasadena, and I went to visit him. He asked me how I liked California, and I replied, "I love it here, but it's very interesting that if I teach the Book of Revelation, I can fill the church (even during midweek service), but if I begin teaching the Epistle to the Romans, I can practically empty the church. I find there are people who will run all the way across this area to find out from a speaker just how many hairs are in the horse's tail in Revelation." He then made a statement to me that I shall never forget, "Dr. McGee, you're going to find out in your ministry that there are a great many people more interested in Antichrist than they are in Christ."

J. Vernon McGee (1904-1988)
Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee
Volume V, page 476

PROPHETIC SPECULATION

The folly of interpreters has been to foretell times and things by this prophecy, as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt. The design of God was much otherwise. He gave this, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but that, after that they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event; and His own providence, not the interpreter's, be then manifested thereby to the world. For the event of things, predicted many ages before, will then be a convincing argument that the world is governed by providence.

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)
Observations on Daniel and the Apocalypse of John

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