

2015-09-26

Why no rapture last week? #1

Hi all,

There is a well done little movie playing in the US right now called 'Mr. Holmes'. Set in 1947, it is about detective Sherlock Holmes at age 93, trying to figure out his last case from 35 years earlier and how he got it so wrong. After he realizes the truth of the case he makes a statement that could also apply to those who were caught up in the expected rapture that didn't happen a couple weeks ago:

"I had gathered all the facts but failed to understand their meaning."

This series is about why it didn't happen 'as scheduled'

Apparently many people were worked nearly to a frenzy as they awaited the rapture, if you paid attention at all to social or Christian media. Others were awaiting a global financial meltdown on that day, or both.

But regular readers will remember my recent 'dream' series and e-newsletters, how I shared the Lord told me not to look for an event, but a larger process at work, though there will be several events within the process. But the rapture isn't yet. This series is about the larger process.

And let me say, there will be economic and political troubles in the US and world for at least the next 2 years, so don't think I am saying that all is well and there will be smooth sailing - I'm not. Times are coming in the US and world that if you don't know Him in whom you believe, and know how to walk with Him now, you could face great difficulty. But the end is not yet.

So why didn't the rapture happen?

After all, in 2001 and 2008 economic and other turmoil hit world markets in massive 'corrections/events' on Elul 29 in the Jewish calendar - yet in 2015 nothing happened in spite of it being a Shemitah year, in spite of blood moons, in spite of millions of books sold and the Internet buzzing with anticipation.

If you want to read a well written and easy to understand book on God's anniversary dates, I'd suggest the late Grant Jeffrey's, *"Armageddon; Appointment with Destiny"*, in which he details several Jewish holy days and historical events that happened through the centuries on those dates.

Why didn't anything happen when it was called for? Do we just chalk it up to God being unpredictable, or is there a larger process at work? (Yes) The answer is much more serious than most realize. That's why this series is related to the fear of God - the end of school girl giddiness about the latest and greatest fad is upon us, to be replaced by a reverence of God for the season we are in.

First: Why would a prophecy NOT come to pass as predicted? There are several answers possible.

Situation #1 - they were in the flesh

This is what most first go to as an explanation - the person who gave the prophecy was speaking out of the flesh and 'missed it'. And that is possible. You can have people who study the Word and arrive at conclusions based solely on the Word without the Holy Spirit's guidance, yet they think they are right, out of a cerebral or scientific approach to faith. An example is what didn't happen this month, and also the famous book prophesying the rapture in 1988, and its sequel, why the rapture is going to happen in 1989.

Situation #2 - people repent

Another situation a prophecy might not happen is when a people repent, such as Jonah prophesying to Nineveh they would be overthrown in 40 days but it didn't happen. Because of their repentance the Lord withheld judgment and the prophecy did not come to pass. Jonah didn't miss it, God changed His mind based on their reaction to the prophecy of their destruction.

2a is related to #2 - People not repenting, but turning away from God even though they have been given powerful prophetic words, which causes a prophecy not to come to pass. An example is Moses when he came from the burning bush to prophesy to Israel that the Lord would bring them out of Egypt and into a land of milk and honey*. Yet that prophecy didn't come to pass for the nation because the people had changed their mind from following the Lord. It came to pass only for Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord fully. (*Exodus 3:17, 4:29-31)

Situation #3 - misunderstanding the revelation of the devil's plan

Another situation is seen in Acts 27:10 when Paul perceives in his spirit if they set out on the voyage "...we will lose the ship, the cargo, and our lives". But this was a situation where the Lord showed him the devil's plan of what would happen if God didn't intervene. We are told later in the chapter, after 14 days of fasting, an angel visited Paul and told him God had spared all (276 people) but they would still lose the ship and cargo. That was a case of God revealing the devil's plan so it could be stopped through prayer.

Many well meaning Christians have rebuked the Holy Spirit because they thought a revelation of something bad that is about to happen is the devil, not realizing it is very often the Father revealing the enemy plan so that person can pray to Him that He may legally intervene to stop it from happening.

Situation #4 - 'And God turned' - which is about this series

In scripture there is another reason a prophecy doesn't happen, and it is very seldom talked about or even known about I think. It involves a larger process from heaven's perspective, that isn't easily seen from earth's vantage point.

The question before us is, how like Sherlock Holmes in the movie mentioned above, did they gather all the facts yet fail to understand their meaning?

The short answer is that multiple events happen to a people over years as a sign to them in the hopes they will change their ways, and at some point when those warnings are ignored, the people are allowed to experience what they want.

Therefore sometimes a single event along a string of events that should have happened doesn't, because God is extending mercy yet again. But sometimes it doesn't happen **because God has moved**, and given them over to experience the ramifications of their actions, which is the most mild form of judgement.

Paul said in Galatians 6:1-8 to restore with meekness someone caught in sin, but if they insist on going their own way just let them walk it out, for God is not mocked, He gives to each of us what we have sown. In other words, you tried, they insisted on going their own way, so even though you know better, they have to be allowed to experience the ramifications of their actions - that is God's way.

That's what Israel did

In Numbers 14:2 the Israelites complain for the 10th time about God's plan for them, saying: "Would to God we had died in Egypt, or that we had died in the wilderness." Going back to Egypt was not an option, but finally, after this 10th time of complaining since leaving Egypt, the Lord said starting in verse 20 to Moses:

"I have pardoned them as you requested...but as they've spoken in my ears so I will do to them...you will all die in the wilderness (as you requested)...everyone from 20 years and upwards who came out of Egypt..."

(If a reader doesn't understand how they could be forgiven yet made to pay the price for their rebellion, I suggest any of my 'Forgiveness' series, which explains a trespass is both vertical (sin) and horizontal (injury/damage). The sin can be forgiven from heaven, but the injury/damage done on earth must be accounted for.)

If you trace those 10 times Israel murmured and complained you'll find the Lord wanted to deal with them at each point, but Moses interceded and the Lord relented. But finally, He reached a point He was willing to go no further, and allowed them to experience exactly what they said they wanted - to die in the wilderness.

As Steven gives his defense in Acts 7, in verse 42 he recounts this point in Israel's history saying it this way: **"And God turned, and gave them up** to worship the host of heaven..." There is a point with a people who insist they go their own way instead of God's, that He 'turns' and lets them do what they want. This gives us a clue as to why seemingly predictable divine appointments don't happen, so stay tuned.

I've run out of room today...continued next week...until then, blessings,

John Fenn

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2015-10-03

Why no rapture last week? #2

Hi all,

In what seems like a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, I owned 2 pizza delivery stores. At one of them I had a manager who was well liked, got along with everyone, and was polite with customers....but just couldn't understand the concept of showing up for work on time.

On numerous occasions I went to the store at 11am (opening time) and the phones were ringing wildly, drivers were standing outside wanting to be let in so they could go to work...and the manager wasn't there.

Furthermore, for example, our large (16"/40.6cm) pepperoni pizzas were to have 16 ounces of cheese (453 grams) and 52 pepperoni slices, but he put 18 ounces and 62 slices on. And, he liked talking so much to employees, that when business slowed after the lunch or dinner hour, he couldn't bring himself to have them clock out. As a result, his food and labor percentages were \$2000 too high each month.

But I was witnessing to him, so starting in January continuing through September I kept giving him warnings and talking to him. Each month or pay period that went by I would make a deadline and goal for him to meet, and when he failed he sincerely apologized and had what were to him legitimate excuses for what happened on x night to make the percentages off...so I relented.

On October 3 I was complaining to Barb yet again how he was costing us \$2000 per month in food and labor, and he had failed every goal I'd set with some excuse or another, and she said: "You love him more than you love me, because if he is costing us at least \$2000 per month like you said, that is money taken away from me and our children's mouths and you're giving it to him." She was right.

I fired him the next morning.

I had ended last week talking about how Steven told us in Acts 7:42 God reached a point when He decided He would not go on giving Israel chances to repent. He said, "...and God turned and gave them over to worship the host of heaven."

Israel refused God 10 times

Upon hearing God had turned and would not give them another chance, but would make them wander in the wilderness 40 years, a year for each day they had spied out the land and decided against going into it, the people mourned and repented - but their repentance was too late*.

To show the Lord how sincere they were they gathered an army without Moses or Joshua and entered the Promised Land and attacked the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived there, against Moses' advice. He had told them not to go for 'God is not with you'; but they attacked anyway and were soundly defeated, retreating back into their camp. *Numbers 14:39-45

Israel is the manager...

In my example above we could make Israel the manager and my position as owner, as God was to Israel. God reached a point with Israel He decided to let them experience the ramifications of their words and actions. Parents reach those points with their children. Teachers with students. At some point giving them grace becomes enabling them to continue in dysfunction or sin or laziness, and there comes a point they must experience the consequences they'd been warned about. That is what God did to Israel. Their actions caused Him (and us) to do things we don't want to do, but must.

Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter the Promised Land

Consider Joshua and Caleb's perspective for it is ours, as Christians no matter in what nation we live. Joshua and Caleb were a remnant who saw their nation falling away from God's ways.

A remnant is a small piece of cloth that remains when the rest of the cloth has been sold or used - it is a left-over piece. That word 'remnant' is used 540 times in the Bible and often means 'that which is left over after a community or nation undergoes a disaster or catastrophe'.

It was used to describe left over food or oil, and 'leftover' people. That is the position of believers in the midst of a nation and culture that doesn't serve God. It describes Joshua and Caleb who were remnants of their generation, and it describes the 7,000 knees that refused to bow to Baal in Elijah's time.

Think about what the remnant saw going on around them when Israel as a whole started following other gods and goddesses. How they must have mourned and prayed, and even feared what might happen to them and their nation. Are we any different today no matter what nation is your home?

There is always a remnant who watch in horror the things befalling their country due to the evil practices of the ungodly - but it happens to their nations anyway.

Troublemakers?

When Ahab first met Elijah he asked in I Kings 18:17, "Are you the one troubling all Israel?" To the evil, it is the followers of God, the remnant, who appear to be the troublemakers, and to them, they must be stamped out.

That spirit giving evil people that perspective has been seen throughout history - from the rulers of Babylon who were against Daniel and friends, to Hitler thinking the Jews and Christians were troubling Germany, to in the US and other nations in a continually increasing boldness among liberals who blame conservatives, Christians and Jews for the troubles of their nation.

From their perspective, we are causing their agenda from being implemented so we are the troublemakers, and if only they could be allowed to do what they want, the country would be at peace.

People have asked me...

I often get asked when I travel if I feel evil spirits over a city. And if I turn my attention to it I can often sense areas of particular demonic activity or what 'big' spirits rule an area, but to tell you the truth, I am so aware of Christ in me and God's presence in and around and with me, and look for what He is doing in an area, that I only see and feel and sense Him. I just don't naturally look for what the devil is doing.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:14 "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the world with a witness (signs/wonders), and **then** the end will come", THAT is my measuring stick for where we are in world events - what God is doing - not what the devil is doing.

I find it fascinating how the Ezekiel 38 alliance between Russia, Turkey, Iran (Persia in OT times so could easily include Iraq) is taking shape daily right before our eyes, even as I write this we see news of Russia, Iran and Iraq forming Russian bases in Iraq and Syria - amazing days!

BUT...on a personal level my focus is to listen to the One voice: Christ in me, the hope of glory.

Many, many Christian voices are actually spirit of fear driven - from conspiracy theories to world economic collapse, many Christians have reached a point they don't care anymore because they are just plain tired of all the voices. Many are mere breakfast cereal: Fruits, nuts, and flakes.

When Jesus said in John 10:3 that His sheep know His voice and He calls each by name, that was only the first part of His statement. He concludes saying in v5: "And a stranger they will not follow for they don't know the voice of strangers."

Too many believers are listening to other voices than the Good Shepherd who is in them. We need to hear His voice in us, for we are in the days God when God has turned, and is allowing all nations to walk in their own ways while we as remnants watch with fascinated horror the world dissolve around us. And as has happened before, we will get the blame...

I've run out of room - next week - tying it all together, why the rapture didn't happen, what God is doing.

Blessings,

John Fenn

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2015-10-10

Why no rapture last week, #3 Urgent/import

Hi all,

It was budget time at the Bible school where I was Executive Director, and that meant about 2 million dollars had to be worked through in detail, especially since the pastor and financial officer had asked all Department heads to cut 10% - I was determined to do that without eliminating jobs.

Being a Bible school there were always students rushing into the office between classes wanting to see John. But my Assistant wasn't someone to be tangled with. She viewed herself as a Doberman Pinscher watch dog and me the thing she was guarding. She confronted everyone, and from the way some students put it, with a bark, bared teeth, and a snarl.

I wanted to see each student because it was more fun and fulfilling to help students than it was to crunch budget numbers. But then, it is always more fun to operate in your gifts, but I had learned it is those who learn to do what does not come naturally in business who are successful.

My Assistant told me, "John, your heart is as big as all outdoors, and all these students think they have something urgent only you can solve. But the budget is important and if you don't get that done Pastor will really be angry, so I'm going to turn these students over to other staff." I realized wisdom when I saw it.

I learned that day to discern between the urgent and the important

There are times we have to deal with the *urgent* don't get me wrong, because sometimes the urgent is also the important. If you cut your toe off with a chain saw that is both urgent AND important.

But very often we can choose to deal with the *urgent* later so we can stay focused on the larger, *important* thing because it is the important that charts our course for the next year or more. The students were *urgent*, but the budget was *important*. Without a budget there would be no students!

The *urgent* is the thing that is screaming at you for attention. The *important* determines your future, lies quietly in the background, and is often not fun to deal with. It requires purposeful attention.

It is the *important* that leads us to maturity as human beings and in Christ. The *urgent* is that desire to yell and scream at the person who wronged you. The *important* is that you grow in Christ and handle it as He would. The *urgent* is the knee-jerk reaction the *important* is seeing the larger perspective.

The *urgent* is all the voices screaming there may be a rapture and aren't we all excited; the *important* is growing in the areas Christ is asking of you today. The important is the internal voice of the Shepherd. The *urgent* are all the other voices vying for our attention.

The *important* that is happening all over the earth

Paul said in Acts 14:16 and 17:29-31 of God, "...in times past He allowed all nations to walk in their own ways..." and "...the times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent because He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has ordained. And He gives assurance to all people in that He raised Him from the dead."

He is still allowing nations to walk in their own ways, the difference now being He "commands all men everywhere to repent". And herein is the difficulty: Individuals and nations don't want to repent and follow God and His ways. The *urgent* is the commotion and activities involved with nations walking in their own ways, continually at war with Christ. The *urgent* is also believers running around looking for the latest sign of His coming, when the *important* is the spread of the gospel which is THE sign the end of the age is near.

At the same time the nations are walking in their own ways the gospel is advancing from within these nations, causing one person after another to repent and come to God, in a grass roots ground swell across the world. In the same way the Roman Empire was changed from the bottom up over the course of 300 years by Christianity - meeting in homes, one home at a time upward and outward to their culture - so too is God moving in individuals, homes and families in a relationship based faith (not a program or building based faith), all over the globe.

That is why Jesus said in Matthew 24:14 this gospel will be preached in all the world with a witness and THEN the end will come. As the gospel is preached throughout the world all people and all nations

must decide to follow Him - or not. He is letting nations go their own way, but He is advancing in the hearts of millions anyway.

Revival?

If you attend an auditorium church you've heard for years about the 'revival' that is coming to the world. In an auditorium pastor's mind that means more services, a larger sanctuary, and growing budget as these people come to his church.

But the reality is that the 'revival' is already happening, it is just that most pastors are outside the loop of what God is doing outside their 4 walls so they are only vaguely aware, if at all. Check your sources, but several say that China and India are vying for the title of the largest predominantly Christian nation. China by 2025, India by 2030 at current levels of growth. I heard a house church leader in China say 1,000,000 (1 million) Chinese come to the Lord every month. Here is just one article in secular media from last year: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/22/china-largest-christian-country_n_5191910.html

Here we go

A clash of cultures is therefore inevitable - Christians and conservatives rising from within nations to embrace the things of God, while the political system which has rejected God's rule does all it can to suppress the Spirit of God in citizen believers and its culture.

The mildest form of judgement is to allow a person or nation to experience the ramifications of their decisions and actions. As with Israel in the wilderness who insisted 10 times God was only making their life miserable and they wished they could die in the wilderness, He finally let them have what they said they wanted.

THAT is what is happening in the earth. If anyone missed it predicting the rapture, it is because God is allowing all nations to walk in their own ways, for they have rejected Him at every step. For nations who refuse God's ways politically, economically, socially, culturally, it means eventual collapse because God's ways work and men's ways if allowed to their final end, don't.

And yet within the nations are a remnant who ARE following God and His ways, watching with horror what is happening around them. For those who walk with Him, there is always grace and provision and purpose.

Consider this on a small scale

What if you have a family in your neighborhood and they make it clear they don't want your God. You observe them sink into greater levels of dysfunction over time; Maybe substance abuse, marital affairs, children who are unruly and in trouble at school, maybe he can't hold a job, and so on. Those are *urgent* needs in their lives, but they haven't a clue what is *important*, of how to chart their larger course. That family is a snapshot of a larger national dysfunction.

If they were a nation some Christians would say God is judging them, or maybe the black cat that ran across the street in front of their car last night was a sign of a collapse to come. But they are just a family walking in their own ways, and because they don't want God, He allows them to experience the consequences of their decision - He isn't doing it to them, it was their choice. Technically He isn't judging them, He is just letting them be accountable to their actions, which is fair and right.

At some point that family comes to the end of its ways, and one of them, let us say the wife, opens up to you seeking answers, and you share the Lord with her. She and you begin praying for her family, and over the course of time her husband comes to the Lord, then the kids, and the family is transformed.

THAT is our hope for our nations. The government of man is going its own way while the answers are in their midst. At some point things will collapse under their own weight of dysfunction as the family in my example. Can we get our eyes off the skies (urgent) to focus on the collapsing people around us, because changing families means we are changing our nation (important). The church has to get small, family size, to become large enough to change a nation.

New series next week with a story about a cheeseburger and selfishness, until then, blessings,
John Fenn

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