End Times Berean Watchman Report - Recognizing the Signs Part 1 - Two More Horses on the Horizon
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By Dr. Christian Widener • Issue #13 • View online

March 4th, 2022

It's been an eventful week since my last newsletter.

It's clear that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is not something that is just going to blow over, as the entire world sits on the brink of World War III. And Iranian, which was threatening before, is sure to be exacerbated by the present crisis.

In the meantime, I've been working feverishly trying to complete the edits on my book and get it ready for publication. Here's another book excerpt series for you -Recognizing the Signs.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS - Part 1

When we read about the days of the Israelites, the times of Jesus, and the following accounts of the Apostles, there are many examples of God fulfilling his prophetic word, and not significant numbers of people in that day did not recognize it. I find that surprising, and yet, is that not what Isaiah foretold?

> Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? - Isaiah 53:1 NASB

Some will be tempted to read Isaiah 53:1 solely in the context of the rest of the chapter. They will apply it only to the description of the suffering messiah, expressed as the failure of a large part of Israel to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, but I think this verse has a much broader context. Let's break down the first question, "Who has believed our message?" Another way to say that is, "Who has believed my prophecy?" In that sense, the question cannot be constrained to mean only Isaiah, as if all the other prophets were believed completely. In other words, through Isaiah, God is asking who has believed in his prophecies. The implication is that not many truly or fully believe in God's prophetic Word.

The next question is, "And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" The arm of the Lord is the action of God in the world fulfilling his promises. And another way, God is asking who has seen his hand at work in the world to fulfill his Word. Consequently, a literal and broad understanding of this verse is that God is asking who has believed his prophecies, and who has recognized it when he fulfills his Word?

It Takes Faith to Recognize Prophecy

It is one thing to read Isaiah 53:1 and apply it to the Jewish people living in the time of Jesus, but it packs a much bigger punch if we apply this to everyone living on the earth today, including ourselves. Why? Because there is a deficiency in the church today regarding understanding prophecy. First, there is biblical illiteracy regarding what has been spoken -most people have not studied it enough on their own to know all that God has prophesied.

Second, there is no overarching consensus in the church on how it should be interpreted. Without a common interpretive lens, there is no way to come to a common understanding of God's prophetic word, so each man, church, or denomination interprets the Scriptures how they see fit. Third, even when things happen that appear to fulfill Scripture, many are hesitant to proclaim that a fulfillment has occurred. This is especially difficult when the description in the prophecy is not clear or there are multiple potential interpretations of it.

The consequence of this is that people tend to be uncertain of when prophecy has been fulfilled, but at the same time, there can be very certain of how they imagine a prophecy will be fulfilled in the future. This is backwards. We should be certain when prophecy is fulfilled because it has happened. We can directly compare events to Scripture and should be able to judge if an event matches the prophecy or not. Conversely, we should reserve some uncertainty regarding exactly how God will fulfill Scripture in the future, because God may do things in a way that we can't even imagine right now. Nevertheless, when God does act to bring his Word to pass, we should recognize it as "the arm of the Lord" that has done it.

> When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it? – Amos 3:6b

The missing component to being able to recognize fulfillments of God's prophetic word is FAITH. Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). And I would say that it is similarly impossible to recognize God's hand at work. Paul tells us that prophecy is a sign for believers, not unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22). What does that mean? It means that you must believe and have faith to see and comprehend prophecy. Paul also tells us that prophecy is supposed to be revealed and made known to help people to faith in God (Romans 16:26). How can we do that as believers if we are not studying and making use of the prophetic writings? Shouldn't we be holding them up as lights and guides to the nations, believing that they are something completely reliable (2 Peter 1:19)? But some have treated the prophecies with contempt by ignoring them or downplaying their relevance (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21). Often, the reason they do that is because they don't think prophetic interpretations are reliable.

> And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. - Hebrews 11:6
>
> Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. – 1 Corinthians 14:22
>
> [the mystery hidden for long ages past…but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith. - Romans 16:26
>
> Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good. – 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

Look at those scriptural testimonies regarding the importance of embracing prophecy by faith. They are a light for us in a dark place. We must use wisdom to understand them and test everything, but we cannot forsake them. We must be willing to exercise our faith in the recognition of God fulfilling his Word. To see world events that match prophetic pronouncements -and yet remain in unbelief- could seem to be the result of a lack of faith, or otherwise a lack of diligence to investigate the matter.

> We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. - Hebrews 6:11-12

In the News… Two More Horses on the Horizon

Last week, I wrote that the red horse had begun to ride. I have a lot more reasons to believe that, which I will talk about in the book, but another week of news about the Russian invasion is only adding support for the case. First of all, the conflict is threatening to pull in other European nations, which could trigger NATO's Article 5. This would demand a response from the U.S., because the article states that an attack on one NATO member is an attack on all.

The NATO nations closest to Ukraine may get drawn into the conflict. If the nations NATO nations let Ukraine fall, and then have to face Russia without Ukraine (rather than helping Ukraine fight Russia right now), they would be much more vulnerable. And there is some uncertainty about whether or not the U.S. would be willing and prepared for all-out war against Russia, meaning that we may not commit sufficient resources to defending our Eastern European NATO partners. Therefore, their best option may be to throw in with Ukraine right now, rather than take the chance that Russia would come after them next.

Ukraine has the largest army in Eastern Europe (420,000) with which to stand up against Russia. The next largest would be Poland, at one third of their size (150,000). Most of the other European nations (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Czechia) are in the 15,000-45,000 range. Romania has more at 120,000, but basically, not until Western Europe (France, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany), would Putin find any credible resistance, without triggering a NATO response and essentially a full world war. Even then, without major support from the U.S. the situation would look very dire.

And again, no one is really sure how the current U.S. administration would even respond. It's not unthinkable that we would avoid full engagement with Russia, and instead just send weapons and supplies to Ukraine. Or we could do nothing.

A part of the NATO treaty could turn Russia's invasion of Ukraine into a wider war

Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty means that an attack on one member state is determined to be an attack on all. Ukraine is not part of the alliance – but some of its neighbors are.

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Russian Foreign Minister Warns: World War III 'Will Be Nuclear'

Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, warned Wednesday that a third world war would be "nuclear and destructive" amid ...

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Why Should Russia's Ukraine Invasion Concern All Nations? Could It Be The Start of World War III? | HNGN - Headlines & Global News

Amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, media are scrambling to report what's happening. Why is this a big deal and should a concern for us? Here are the global effects that you might want to ask if the crisis might start World War III.

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Support for a Black Horse on the Way

The other reason I don't think this is going to stop is because it is also clearly setting up the black horse. Ukraine and Russia together supply a quarter of the earth's wheat production, along with many other grains and food items, so there is no way that this present conflict doesn't result in increased prices for all and even a lack of supply for many. Especially, when we add that to the global disruptions that were already there due to ever-mounting pandemic responses worldwide.

Ukraine Invasion Threatens Global Wheat Supply - The New York Times

Russia and Ukraine together produce nearly a quarter of the world's wheat, and coming disruptions could feel higher food prices and social unrest.

www.nytimes.com • Share

Putin's Invasion Will Raise Food Prices Worldwide

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, a major grain exporter, will raise food prices worldwide and worsen unrest in ...

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In particular, the Middle East is highly dependent on wheat supplies from Ukraine. If food supplies run short, civil unrest will certainly follow, and that could spark another jihadist attack on Israel.

Ukraine crisis worries Lebanon over its wheat reserves | AP News

BEIRUT (AP) – Lebanon has wheat reserves sufficient for one month at the most, with Ukraine accounting for up to 60 percent of the crisis-hit country's wheat market, the economy minister said on Friday.

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And What About China?

And remember that China is not just sitting on the sidelines, they are taking notes through this whole affair. During the Olympics, China and Russia signed a pact to back each other up, with "no limits." If that doesn't give you chills, it probably should.

China, Russia partner up against West at Olympics summit | Reuters

China and Russia on the opening day of the Winter Olympics declared a "no limits" partnership backing each other over standoffs on Ukraine and Taiwan with a promise to collaborate more against the West.

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And China is not just a threat to Taiwan, but also to Japan and Southeast Asia, particularly if they are able to take Taiwan without crippling consequences. Some analysts think that China is going to watch the Ukraine crisis closely, and if no "dire" consequences result for Russia, then China will be emboldened to make their own move on Taiwan, in the 2-3 to 6 month timeframe. Given the recent pact between Russia and China, I would say that seems very likely.

Great Newsletter: Beijing 'Taking Notes' on Russian Ukraine War As It Plans Taiwan Takeover | CPAC 2022

"If it turns out that Putin is able to take all of Ukraine or even a huge chunk ...

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And Let's Not Forget About Iran

All the while, the U.S. continues to try and force a bad nuclear deal through with Iran. The deal being pushed is so bad that three of the U.S. negotiators actually resigned, accusing us further part in the debacle. If it does go through, it will drop sanctions on Iran and free up its finances, which would in turn be a help to Russia. This really is the most dangerous time in most people's lifetime and there is no sign that the Biden administration is coming to their senses and changing course.

GOP lawmaker slams Biden after three of his team negotiating with Iran on nuclear deal step back | Daily Mail Online

A top member of the U.S. team negotiating with Iran has left the role after urging a tougher stance on nuclear talks. Richard Stephen is known as the architect of sanctions on Tehran.

www.dailymail.co.uk • Share

US, EU diplomats warn that Iran nuclear deal could be signed as early as next week while Moscow – at war with Ukraine – negotiates the terms | All Israel News

Report: Biden's top negotiator offers to remove dozens of terror-related individuals and entities from terror list to sign a new nuclear deal, including the Revolutionary Guard

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The Great Apostasy

I watched a shocking documentary this week that I want to encourage you to get a copy of. I'm known for a long time that an apostasy was growing in Christianity, but after watching this film, I have to say that the enemy is no longer even at the gates, he has broken through the walls and is ravaging the city.

Enemies Within The Church

Enemies Within The Church is an educational, historical, and evidence-based movie exposition that provokes a passionate return to orthodox Christian faithfulness across the western world. The movie encourages the Church to cleanse itself from contamination imposed by cultural Marxism and a heretical teaching known as "The Social Justice Gospel."

enemieswithinthechurch.com • Share

Paul goes two major signs before the "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him." The first is the Apostasy, and the second is the determination of desolation by the Antichrist.

> Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. – 2 Thessalonians 2:3 ISCSB

I now feel confident fully checking the first box. If you watch *Enemies Within the Church*, I think you will too. See if you find strongly ahead a pre-tribulation rapture position, and don't see the Apostasy a direct sign for the return of the Lord, you might like to read my post about why I think the church must endure until at least after the midpoint of the tribulation.

Connecting the Dots Regarding the Rapture

This article explores the passages about the gathering of the saints by Jesus in the Last Days, commonly referred to as the Rapture, and discusses its connection to the six seals of Revelation.

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Next Week…

This was a lot of material. Thank you for reading my newsletter. I don't let it stir my apprehension, though. All these things

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should be an encouragement to you that our redemption is truly drawing very near…

> But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near!" – Luke 21:28

Next week, we'll continue this new series on recognizing prophecy, and I'll talk about anything new that might come up in the news next week.

Maranatha!

Christian Widener

Did you enjoy this issue?

By Dr. Christian Widener

Keep up-to-date on specific trends and events which help us know where we are in the Bible's last days timeline.

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