

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

The End of the World

Lisa wrote us the following note with a request for our thoughts. We replied and include segments of those replies in this series. Here is her letter:

Good Afternoon Paul and Victor,

I have enjoyed reading the words of wisdom and find your views very captivating. I have thought a great deal on the subject matter of where does one's faith really lie. You are right, one must live faith... There is a book I read some 25 years ago by Hal Lindsey, "The Late Great Planet Earth." It would be of great value to hear your views on the subject matter and how it pertains to the world now especially when you mention the antichrist.

Have a great day,
Lisa

Here is part of Paul's reply:

Sensationalistic interpretations of the Bible featuring worldwide catastrophic events come as the result of an inner lack and need. God, in His wisdom, ordains an inner and personal apocalypse for every one of us, each in his or her own time, to deal with the problem. For some, such as Lindsey, these events are considered strictly as external, as ends unto themselves, and not as what they are truly about.

I know this from experience. At one time I also focused on the outward issues, not as a follower of Lindsey or others like him, but as one looking at the wretchedness of a world I perceived as going to hell while I languished in my own hell and wretchedness. It was not profitable for me to do so. I did not escape my hell by looking for the end of the world. I escaped my hell when, by the grace of God, my world was ended.

The Lord tells us to strive to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. He says to remove the beam from your own eye before trying to judge others. Jesus Christ does not come to focus on men's works or plots for dominion, nor does He teach His followers to do so, because those are not the things that really matter. He is over them all anyway, because everything serves His greater purposes according to His will. We know this because He has judged us in all things, by all things, and has delivered us from within to have peace even in a hellish world.

The question to ask is this: "Is Hal Lindsey sent by God to preach the message he is preaching?" When you know the answer to that question, then you will know whether you should pay attention to him or not.

If Hal does not claim to be sent by God, then he is only another of the billions of persons in this world who has an opinion. The difference between Mr. Lindsey and most other people is that he is writing books for all to hear his opinion of what God says and means. This implies that his opinion has some special merit or value. Is that not presumptuous? As one man said:

"A thing that strikes one who browses around in the vast literature that has grown up about the book of Revelation is the **UTTER DOGMATISM** with which so many put forth their opinions, not as opinions, but in categorical statements, as to the meaning of the most mysterious passages, as if they know all about it, and their say so settles the matter." Henry Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook* (24th ed., p.684)

If, on the other hand, Hal would say that he was sent of God, then he must be held to the criterion given by God for us to know whether he is a true messenger or not.

"When a prophet speaks in the name of Jehovah, if the thing does not happen or come about, that is the thing which Jehovah has not spoken; that prophet has spoken it proudly; you shall not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22).

Many, if not all, of the predictions or interpretations of Scripture given by Mr. Lindsey have not come to pass. They have been shown to be unfounded speculations, which goes to prove that he is not a messenger of God, and is therefore not to be feared (respected). That means we ought not to pay attention to the things that he is declaring, as though those things were from God.

Another fruit of Mr. Lindsey, by which we know that God has not sent him to preach these things, is that he makes a commercial enterprise out of Bible interpretation. That is not the way of God. Jesus said to His disciples, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). A man of God will not charge for those things God has given him. The problem for Lindsey, and his hearers, is that God has given him nothing. So they occupy themselves with junk food that promotes sickness, rather than with the Bread from Heaven that brings wholeness.

How different from the Lord Jesus Christ the ways of men are! He came to save sinners, putting His own body on the line, sparing nothing, walking boldly into the den of lions. He did not "feather His own nest," establishing any kind of worldly empire, even a religious one. He came to lay down the life, and taught His followers to do the same. He came to bring us into a new creation from within. That is the mark of the faith that is in Him, regeneration into the Kingdom of Heaven in the midst of a corrupt world, while yet subject to the frailties of the flesh. As seed is planted in dirt and manure, so is the Heavenly seed grown in an earthly vessel and medium.

People consuming a diet of Lindsey's (or any other's) sensationalistic and escapist fodder are not at all prepared to hear the counsel of the living God, though they often profess to love Him. Why should you hear correction when you are told that everything is alright with you, and all the wrong is "out there," that you are "saved," and those responsible for all the mess will shortly be dealt with because they are not saved, and they will face tribulation, but you will be "beamed up" and taken out of harm's way? Such thinking is utterly opposed to the fact that Jesus Christ is presently judging everyone, and delivering those who trust in Him from death, here and now!

Lindsey represents a false gospel that comforts people based on false premises, which will not, and do not, stand the fires of truth and light. One must give up sitting on his or her throne to believe and follow the truth. The doctrines and exercises in prophetic contemplation that Mr. Lindsey teaches (for example, who is the anti-Christ? when will the world end? etc...) deny the present coming of the Lord here and now, wherein He deals with us as we need it. They teach that you are saved without tribulation. They deny the very means that the Lord employs to save us - tribulation - which we must endure. Salvation is not a declarative event. It does not happen by saying it has happened.

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must **through much tribulation** enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Eventually all must and will be dealt with, not with destruction as the end, but for the salvation of all, which is the expressed will of God in Christ. Mr. Lindsey teaches a false gospel of destruction without salvation, and of salvation without destruction.

"Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; **And all flesh shall see the salvation of God**" (Luke 3:5-6).

Here is a portion of Victor's response:

You ask about the anti-Christ. John writes:

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but try the spirits to see if they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. **And this is the antichrist** you heard is coming, and even now is already in the world" (1 John 4:1-3 MKJV).

Lisa, the anti-Christ dwells in you, and in me, and in every human being that ever lived, save One. He is within. The whole universe is within. The battle must be fought and won within. The Bible is a spiritual, is a spiritual, is a spiritual book. The Kingdom of Heaven is within and so are hell and death. All must be recognized and addressed

within. There comes a time when reconciliation with God comes, and when it does, the anti-Christ is dethroned and banished from independent rulership for good. Then we have rest and freedom from our own tyranny.

The Late Great Planet Earth is full of interpretations of prophecies yet to be fulfilled. I have learned this about prophecy: One does not know the meaning until it is fulfilled. Hal Lindsey has, along with countless others, presumed to know the form and much detail of the fulfilment of eschatological (last days) prophecies. He has occupied the time and energies of many thousands who have faithfully tried to know the future and brace or prepare themselves for it. He has fed the nominal Christian world with sensationalism. He has read his interpretations into current events, yet they never seem to come to fruition the way he expects or predicts. All you need to do is to pick up his book and read it again, and you will see that nothing of what he has said has come to pass.

Again, the issue is not on the outside but on the inside of each one of us. To look to the outside is folly. Tell me, what good does it do if I, in my wisdom, can identify a world leader who will represent the anti-Christ (and there may be one) if the anti-Christ within me (the real one for all intents and purposes) is not dealt with? If the one within is not dealt with, then the one that comes to rule the earth will subdue me. I will be his terrified subject and helpless victim. However, if we yield to the cross of Christ, embracing His death, identifying with Him, we will gain the resurrection beyond the grave, which also occurs within. Then we have the greatest power of all creation, the resurrection power against which nothing can stand. When that happens, the outward anti-Christ can throw anything he chooses at us, and it won't matter; he will not prevail; he will only make us stronger and more glorious in Christ! Isn't that wonderful? I speak of a reality available to all those who believe.

But do people prepare or brace themselves for the future when they hear Lindsey's message? Most don't, and there are two reasons for that. One, they instinctively know the folly and fruitlessness of it all, and two, because Hal Lindsey devoutly preaches the "rapture," which means that no matter what evil is coming, one will not have to face or endure it, seeing he will be caught up out of it all.

If you believe in the rapture as he teaches it, just go to Matthew 24 or Luke 17, read the discourse Jesus gives on the happenings of the last days, line by line, and verse by verse, and then tell me where you see the "pre-tribulation" rapture as Hal describes and espouses it. You will easily find that it isn't there. The "rapture" doctrine is nothing more than vain escapism, yet many false teachers proclaim it because it is desirable.

Don't we all wish we could take wings and fly away every time trouble comes! It doesn't happen. That is not the way things are set up. That is not the way God has ordered our existence. What He does do is take us through, not around or away from, our troubles. The troubles are there for our good, and they are there so that we will

learn to overcome. Read Revelation 2 and 3 and you will find that the whole idea of our trials is that we will become overcomers in Him.

Peter also advises us not to be surprised when fiery trials come to try our faith and to perfect it, as a furnace refines gold:

"...so that the trial of your faith (being much more precious than that of gold that perishes, but being proven through fire) might be found to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ..." (1 Peter 1:7 MKJV)

"Beloved, do not be astonished at the fiery trial which is to try you, as though a strange thing happened to you, but rejoice according as you are partakers of Christ's suffering, so that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13 MKJV).

There is a wonderful promise. Though they that believe will not escape tribulation, they will be saved! David received that revelation when he was in great tribulation:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4 MKJV).

Who yet has overcome by escaping the challenges and trials? Nobody. There has not been one military battle, or any other kind of battle, won by running from it. God has ordained victory for those who will face the worst with faith in Him. There is no escape for anyone. Trials hit many of us every day. Where is the escape?

Pray that God will give you the honor and blessing of an inner right standing with Him. Then, though your troubles will not be over, the victory will be sure. Forget about world events. They will unfold no matter who is elected, and we will not be able to forestall them. However, the terrain/immune system is the key, as Pasteur concluded and declared on his deathbed. The answer is a personal one, and within. The answer is Jesus Christ, and not the rapture.

The **rapture** is not the hope of glory, as many think. **Christ in you** is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). And He is ever faithful!

Victor

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