

“Desperate” for the End

Introduction

As a child, Dina Nayeri lived in Iran. At school she wore hijabs and half-heartedly chanted the slogans of the new Islamic Republic. After school, she routinely met with men and women (with uncovered heads) in a residential basement used as an underground Protestant church.

- They sang hymns quietly, knowing of the immense danger if discovered.
- They “desperately” believed in Christ’s imminent rescue!

Dina noted: “After the Iranian revolution in 1979, Christian converts like my mother and her friends persisted in a constant state of danger. At any moment they could be rounded up by the Shia revolutionary guard for apostasy, held for months without charge, perhaps taken to Tehran’s notorious Evin prison to be tortured – burned, beaten, cut, sexually exploited, starved of food and sleep – then executed by firing squad or suffocated in a town square, a crane lifting them slowly as they hung by the neck. One beloved preacher in Tehran was shot in the street.”¹

- To this Christian group, the coming of Christ wasn’t just “sometime” or “soon”, it could be any day. That was their intense hope.
- “We are citizens of heaven. We want to leave!” Though partially driven by the ever-present threats, the **reality of hope** was their serene certitude.

The pain of waiting for Christ, when everything would be unimaginably good, often seared that hope. Why is it taking so long?

- To many, the allurements of earth are greater than any future imagination.
- Not with Dina. Her hope also included escaping all that was wrong with this world and starting over in a heavenly realm.

The eschaton promises closure to **all** the heartaches of mankind with its morass of evil and uncertainty.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people” (Titus 2:13-14a).

- The basis of our hope is in that Scriptural promise.
- The affirmation of our hope is discovering its personal relevance – its reality.

¹ Martin, Lee/Guardian Design Team; *Yearning for the end of the world*.
<http://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/aug/25/yearning-for-the-end-of-the-world>

The Biblical story of Christ's return offers a known future where one does not have to create an imaginary bliss. Those eschatological promises provide closure to mankind's story on earth. There will be no more pain, uncertainty, heartache, loneliness or death.

- *“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”* (Revelation 21:4).
- *“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes”* (Revelation 7:16-17).

In the minds of many there is, however, a stunning repudiation of those promises. Respected pastor, writer and teacher, John MacArthur, observed that “More and more people who want to call themselves Christians are disavowing any expectation of the Second Coming.”²

The End Times – “Not so quick!”

There's an inherent curiosity people have about the future and even what happens after death. In 1970 Hal Lindsey published the book *The Late Great Planet Earth*. By 1990 28 million copies had been sold.

1. If you followed Hal Lindsey, you've probably changed the "end of the world" date in your calendar several times. He initially predicted that the world would end sometime before December 31, 1988. In his later books, though less specific, he suggested that believers not plan on being on earth past the 1990s, then, of course, the 2000s. But Lindsey did more than just mistakenly predict the end of the world, he popularized a genre of prophecy books.³
2. Attempting to affirm Lindsey's original claim, Edgar Whisenant, former NASA engineer, published a book in 1988 called *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*, which sold some 4.5 million copies. Whisenant once famously said, "Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong." When 1989 rolled around, a discredited Whisenant published another book, saying the Rapture would occur that year instead. It did not sell as well, nor did later titles that predicted the world would end in 1993 and again in 1994.⁴
3. Then came the most popular prophetic tales in the *Left Behind* series, written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, which, though they do not predict an end date, provide a vivid fictional account of how Earth's final days could go. The 16 novels sold more than 63 million copies worldwide.⁵ Their appeal was more entertaining, appealing to the imagination than solemn concern to be ready.

² MacArthur, John; “The Second Coming: Signs of Christ's Return and the End of the Age,” p. 2.
https://www.preteristarchive.com/1999_macarthur_the-second-coming-signs-of-christs-return-and-the-end-of-the-age

³ http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2072678_2072683_2072696,00.html

⁴ https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Edgar_Whisenant

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_Behind

4. Finally, there was the late Harold Camping, who suggested the end would come in the 1990s.⁶ He revised his prediction several times until definitively declaring that the end would come on May 21, 2011. It didn't. He changed the date to October 21, 2011. The day came and went. At that point Camping finally threw up his hands and said: "We're living in a day when one problem follows another. And when it comes to trying to recognize the truth of prophecy, we're finding that it is very, very difficult. Why didn't Christ return on Oct. 21? It seems embarrassing for [us].... We are simply learning. And sometimes it's painful to learn."⁷

Even the Jehovah's Witnesses predicted Armageddon would occur in 1914, then in 1925 and then, again, in 1975 before changing their teaching in 1989 (specifically regarding Armageddon) that it would come "in our day."⁸

End-Time – Who cares?

The end of time is a genuinely interesting topic, but these failed predictions have confused the hope of many Christians and deepened the skeptics' resistance to the Bible. The question comes: "Does it really matter?"

- Jesus said: "*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father*" (Mark 13:32). Was that meant to be vague and dampening to the grip on one's hope?
- People in every Christian era assumed they would see Christ's coming. But – time is blunting that hope. Do we need a "desperate" situation to reignite that hope?

Perhaps the counsel that Peter gave should be a wakeup call: "*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God*" (II Peter 3:11-12a). Perhaps this means that we should be first focusing on having heaven in our hearts.

- Jesus did give the parable of a master who leaves his servants with important responsibilities and then returns unexpectedly (Luke 12:35-48, 19:11-27).
- In other illustrations, those who believed were rewarded. Those who scoffed were not. These stories do mean that He will return "*one day,*" but suggest that we must be motivated to make the most of *today!*⁹

However, a cultural religious trend is growing: "Who cares?!" This is a spinoff of misappropriating Biblical prophecy.

⁶ http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2072678_2072683_2072703,00.html

⁷ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/family-radio-founder-harold-camping-repents-apologizes-for-false-teachings.html>

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Jehovah%27s_Witnesses

⁹ <https://www.explorethegod.com/the-end-times-who-cares>

Indifferent Attitudes from Unexpected Places

The long “wait” for Christ’s return, the large number of failed timing predictions and the increasing rejection of Judeo–Christian thought has led many to “lighten their apostolic messages.” Consequently, even the meaning of worship is appealing more to the senses and not the heart or hope.

Examples:

1. Richard Holloway, former bishop of Edinburgh, England, who led the Anglican Church in Scotland in the 1980s, said people should settle for a “casual faith.” The New Testament is nothing more than an untidy bundle of writings.” “Don’t take Christianity seriously.”¹⁰
2. The Mormon Church considers gay marriage to be a “serious transgression” – but people in same-sex relationships are no longer considered “apostates.” They can remain members of that church.¹¹ Its religious base is weakening.
3. Teen Vogue Magazine has as its objective to be a “young person’s guide to saving the world.” (A worthy objective).¹² However, when influential Billy Graham passed away at age 99, its columnist Lauren Duca greeted his death with attacks, saying that he was “evil.” “Have fun in hell.” Moral voices are being demonically insulted.¹³
4. In a swearing in ceremony for the House of Representatives, February 28, 2019, Democratic Representative Steve Cohen from Tennessee omitted “so help me God.” When immediately confronted with this omission, Cohen affirmed it was on purpose. Jewish Jerrold Nadler (D–NY) defended the omission: “We do not have a religious test for office.”

Michael Johnson was later interviewed on Christian television. As an attorney, he specialized in religious liberty. He observed that “Americans intuitively have an appreciation for absolute truth and justice. We were programmed that way by our Creator, and that’s what the founders acknowledged from the very beginning.... The enemies of the faith would have us remove all vestiges of Christianity, all vestiges of the God of the Bible from the public square; and that’s not what the Constitution says, and that’s not what we’re required to do.”¹⁴

5. The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) are supporting the inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in federal civil rights, legislation protections. Pastor Dave Welch called this “The Great Evangelical Sellout,” a patent rejection of biblical truths, moral law and sound constitutional principles.

“While we agree with the CCCU/NAE statement that, ‘No one should face violence, harassment, or unjust discrimination...,’ it simply opens up a terrible Pandora’s box to

¹⁰ <https://www.wnd.com/2019/04/former-anglican-bishop-dont-take-christianity-seriously/>

¹¹ <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2019/04/04/mormon-church-repeals-ban-baptisms-children-gay-parents/3364524002/>

¹² <https://www.condenast.com/brands/teen-vogue/>

¹³ <https://www.breitbart.com/the-media/2018/02/22/teen-vogues-lauren-duca-rips-evil-billy-graham-fun-hell-bih/>

¹⁴ <https://www.wnd.com/2019/05/d-c-democrats-are-erasing-god/>

equate in the law race, religion and (biological) sex to sexual behavior and mental instability. 'Fairness for All' will become 'Special Rights for a Few,' which will continue to result in civil and criminal punishment of a legitimate 'Suspect Class' that actually does qualify – Christians who still actually believe and follow the authority of the entire canon of Holy Scripture from Genesis to Revelation."¹⁵

6. Reuters news reported an element of “deep interest in” a new “religious trend.” A 181-year-old Upper Manhattan graduate school, Union Theological Seminary, turned away an overflow crowd of 1,000 people from “religious lectures” on **social justice**. “In the nine years that Reverend Serene Jones has served as its president, she has never seen such crowds.”

Jones noted that “Since President Donald Trump’s election, such monthly lectures at the 600-seat Gothic chapel have been filled to capacity with crowds three times what they usually draw.” **Social and cultural concerns are taking precedence over spiritual interest.**

J. Patrick Hornbeck II, chairman of the Theology department at Fordham University, a Jesuit school in New York, said: “The new political climate is also spurring new alliances, with churches, synagogues and mosques [by] speaking out against ...” cultural bias.¹⁶

This reflects an unexpected ecumenical accord based on secular affairs and not Biblically-driven principles.

Moral Voices Speaking Out

Franklin Graham said in May (2019): “Many politicians don’t want God in any part of their politics or our country’s business because His standards condemn their sin.”

Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY) denounced that removal of “so help me God” (noted above), telling Fox News that House Democrats “really have become the party of [Godless] Karl Marx.”

Clint Cooper wrote in a commentary at the *Times Free Press* that the Democrats’ agenda isn’t complicated. “Invoking God would mean the existence of an entity more powerful than the federal government. And that’s not what Democrats want to consider.”¹⁷

Jewish author David Horowitz warned that persecution of Christians is inevitable in America. He noted that the “first and most important right guaranteed in the Bill of Rights is religious liberty” (p. 44). During the Obama years “religious expression in the military became a criminal offense” (p. 138). Horowitz noted that *wallbuilders.com*, a faith-based website that chronicled scores of incidents of war on Christian America, identified Barack Obama as “America’s Most Biblically Hostile U.S. President. His negative impact ... [undermined] America” (pp. 148-151).¹⁸

¹⁵ <https://www.wnd.com/2019/01/evangelical-groups-hop-on-lgbtq-bandwagon/>

¹⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-religion-idUSKBN16Y114>

¹⁷ <https://www.wnd.com/2019/05/why-has-the-democratic-party-turned-its-back-on-god/#VYzewCGq9Su84R0J.99>

¹⁸ Horowitz, David; *Dark Agenda, The War to Destroy Christian America* (Humanix Books).

With the acceleration of defiance against Christianity (Jesus Christ), how many pastors are warning, explaining, preparing their congregations for a threat to religious freedom? Hosea's declaration is apropos now:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6).

Lashing out at the radical, very un-American Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rush Limbaugh said:

"Well, I'll tell you what my privilege is, Cortez. My privilege is being an American. My privilege is being born in the United States of America. My privilege flows from the two greatest political documents ever written: the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. My privilege was to be born in a country that acknowledges the origins of my freedom and liberty and my right to pursue happiness. And that's God ...," he said.¹⁹

So electrifying, an unexpected voice came out in defense of God:

Highly respected Tucker Carlson at Fox News said: "Self-righteousness is always a marker for secret creepiness. The people yelling the loudest are usually hiding the most.

"Keep that in mind the next time you hear some Democratic politician lecturing you about your moral inferiority. That's the guy you need to watch carefully. Chances are he's up to something awful behind closed doors.

"Because consistency does not matter to the left. Only virtue matters. We're good people; therefore, we must rule. You are not; therefore, you must obey....You can't commit sin if your intentions are pure. And liberals believe their intentions are the purest.

"If that sounds like theology, and not public policy, that's because it is theology. Modern liberalism is a religious movement. It's a replacement for the Protestant Christianity that the left worked so hard to undermine and destroy.

"Liberals are speaking the language of faith, albeit a faith without God. This is the main reason that right and left talk past each other. The reason our public debates are so weird and unsatisfying."²⁰

The Bible declares that governing authorities are appointed by God to uphold what He says is good and to punish evil (Romans 13:1-7.) When this is forgotten, nations always become more corrupt.

The rich, God-oriented leadership of this nation's past:

- The Declaration of Independence was written after a day of fasting and prayer, which was set aside by the Continental Congress to be observed by all the colonies on May

¹⁹ <https://www.wnd.com/2019/02/rush-limbaughs-privilege-declaration-constitution/>

²⁰ <https://www.breitbart.com/clips/2018/05/10/tucker-carlson-modern-liberalism-religious-movement-replace-christianity/>

17, 1776. The July 4th Declaration concludes with its signers declaring that they had “a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence.”

- At the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin quoted Psalm 127:1: “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.” He then said, “I firmly believe this.” Therefore, he asked that “prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberation be held in this assembly every morning.” The practice was then commenced to begin every assembly of Congress with prayer to God by a Christian minister.
- Our first president, George Washington, said: “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.” Today, we hear instead that Biblical morality must not influence our laws!
- President Andrew Jackson said of the Bible: “That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests.” It is not by accident that the Ten Commandments, from the Bible, are inscribed on the wall of the U.S. Supreme Court.
- President Abraham Lincoln said: “It is the duty of nations, as well as of men ... to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.” Lincoln knew that we could not stand for long without heeding the one true triune God!
- Consider a U.S. Senate action in 1863. It resolved that: “Whereas, the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God, in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for National prayer and humiliation.”²¹

The Snare of Doubt

The deliverance of God’s people from the evil elements of earth is a Biblical promise. Jesus’ coming is an inscribed hope. A personal home in heaven was assured by Christ Himself. A new heaven and a new earth are direct prophetic words from God.

- But – this reality seems “just out of reach.” Few are “desperate” to have it happen.
- From secularization of religious leaders, revised history of the integrity of America’s founders, to inappropriate use of Biblical prophecy and distinct moves to undermine Judeo-Christian values, **a demonic move to encourage doubt is underway.**

Peter had some very important words regarding this time:

- *“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation”* (II Peter 3:3-4).
- This is directed at those living in our day.

Peter’s cautionary issues are: (1) scoffing at a Biblical promise and (2) being driven by “lust” (*epithumia* – G), desiring what is forbidden. Looking first at the latter:

²¹ https://www.plaintalk.net/local_news/opinion/article_3bd518d8-9c45-11e8-86e1-d7b9751821e0.html

- From the shocking culture of pedophilia by Catholic priests to the “elite” sex operations of the late Jeffrey E. Epstein, global passion to fulfill lustful perversion has become epidemic.
- 2018 Stats from just one porn site:
 - There were 4.79 million new videos uploaded to Pornhub – 12 new videos and 2 hours of content are uploaded every minute.
 - 30.3 billion searches — 962 a minute
 - Visits to Pornhub totaled 33.5 billion over the course of 2018, an increase of 5 billion visits over 2017.
 - Porn sites receive more regular traffic than Netflix, Amazon, & Twitter combined *each month*.
 - 35% of all internet downloads are porn-related.
 - Recorded child sexual exploitation (known as “child porn”) is one of the fastest-growing online businesses.
 - Porn is a global industry, estimated at \$97 billion, with about \$12 billion of that coming from the U.S. (*Pornhub Insights*, December 11, 2018).²²

Compounding this degrading trend is the promotion of explicit sexual behavior in schools and libraries. One example is a book, *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*. That is located in the teen section of sixty libraries in Australia. It **exalts** the perversion of a boy’s behavior, starting at the age of six.²³

This depravity is a sign of our time. It has assumed jurisdiction over the passions of men and women. Paul notes in his most instructive letters to Timothy that when this occurs, it will be “*perilous times*” (II Timothy 3:1-5). In verse 3, the Greek is best translated in the NET Bible:

- “... *unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, opposed to what is good*” (II Timothy 3:3 – NET).
- A “natural” spinoff of this lust is **rejection** of the wonderful spiritual truths in God’s Word (our Creator’s personal messages for mankind)!

Secondly, Peter said that these individuals would be “*scoffers*.” They communicate doubt and distaste for something that hints at guilt stemming from their “*perversions*.” There is an *inherent perception* that these behaviors are wrong and out of line with some *higher standards*. It is dealt with by scoffing and even denying a Biblical standard.

- Denial is a defense mechanism to reject reality. It can be temporarily healthy in certain circumstances. But, sneering is a path of trying to eliminate the threat of reality.

²² <https://www.roadtoGrace.net/current-porn-statistics/>

²³ <https://dailycaller.com/2019/08/18/australia-libraries-transgender-teen-book/>

- Even when evidence is “irrefutable,” it is resisted through scoffing.²⁴

“But you, dear friends – recall the predictions foretold by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. For they said to you, ‘In the end time there will come scoffers, **propelled** by their own ungodly desires.’” (Jude 1:17-18 – NET).

What are those scoffers trying to deny?

- They mock the lapse of time since the first prediction that Christ was coming soon.
- If that delay is reality, then many of His standards are not that important.
- They must reject that many apocalyptic prophecies are coming to pass – that Jesus is coming soon! That actually becomes a threat to them.

Peter’s “scoffers” are a prophecy directed at those living in the last days. Many of those individuals (a silent majority?) harbor subliminal desires for a delay that would be helpful to them!

- “I hope the second coming will hold off until ... [I finish my education, I retire, my baby is born, I see my first grandchild, I enjoy traveling, I get married, etc.]”
- The Word contains objective truths despite what one wants or dreams of.

The Bible is quite clear about God’s last-day itinerary! That has fostered the heavenly imperative to “*watch*.” It is based on *objective* signs. So we come full circle back to our title, “*Desperate*” for the End.²⁵

- That is inherent in all God’s true followers!

Franklin S. Fowler, Jr., M.D.
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²⁴ https://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/09/29/the_odd_body_denial/

²⁵ <https://www.prophecyupdate.com/pun051717.html>