

The Late Great Planet Earth

Joy Schmidt [Pople]
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Prophecies for Jesus' coming

Lindsey's explanation of the two portraits of the Messiah (the suffering lord and the reigning lord) is that a valley of time separates them. But nowhere does Lindsey ask how God feels about human suffering and salvation and why God's will should be prolonged.

Lindsey goes on to say that prophecies for the first coming were precisely fulfilled and notes that there are many more prophecies for the second coming. Will we take them seriously and literally?

Restoration of Israel

Many Christians expect that Christ will return to Israel, which will be restored in the last days as the central nation of God's providence. Israel's destruction as a nation was predicted in Deuteronomy 28, as Lindsey notes, but only if they were disobedient:

"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee." (Verse 15)

Also, verse 46 says of the coming sufferings resulting from disobedience: "And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever." Therefore, prophecies of the second exile and the dispersion of the Jews world-wide are given as a warning, not as an expression of God's intention. There are also prophecies for the physical restoration of Israel after a long desolation in Ezekiel 38 and 39, which should be considered as a warning of what would happen if the Jews rejected Jesus.

Lindsey quotes the prophecies from Matthew 24:15-20 as referring to the second coming, and the people fleeing to the mountains to escape destruction. Verse 34 says, "This generation shall not pass, till all these

things be fulfilled."

Lindsey's interpretation is that the generation which sees Israel being re-established as a nation will see the fulfillment of all these prophecies. However, "this generation" refers to the people Jesus was speaking to, and his disciples expected that all the prophecies of his return would be fulfilled in their lifetimes. Jesus told them that to make them work more earnestly to spread the gospel.

Lindsey says that three events will center around the Jews in the end times: The Jewish nation will be established in Palestine; the Jews will repossess Jerusalem, and the Jews will rebuild the temple and reinstate ancient Jewish rites.

Lindsey sees dual aspects to the restoration predicted for Israel: physical restoration (items one and two above) and spiritual restoration (item three). He predicts that the northern enemy will invade before the spiritual restoration is fulfilled, but there is no biblical evidence for that statement. The well-known vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37 explains the dual restoration: first the dry bones were reassembled, with sinews and flesh, but there was no life. God's spirit then entered them, and they rose. Lindsey also cites many writers from previous centuries who expected the physical restoration in Palestine of the Jews.

The revived Roman coalition

Lindsey considers the major key to understanding the prophecies of the future to be Daniel 7. There we find the vision of four beasts having successive dominions: a lion (Babylon), bear (Media-Persia), leopard (Alexander the Great) and the fourth beast (Rome).

This fourth beast has ten horns representing ten kings and another one springing up where three others fell, making war with the saints until the Ancient of Days comes. Many Biblical scholars see this as predicting the first advent: the ten kings being ten conquered nations in the Roman Empire, the other one being perhaps King Herod who persecuted the Jews just before Jesus' coming and during his early years. Daniel 7:13 says that after the beast is conquered, the son of man will come with the clouds of heaven and be presented to the Ancient of Days. Kingly power, sovereignty, and glory are to be given to him at that time, and all people will serve him. Even Jesus referred to this type of prophecy in Mark 14:62:

"And Jesus said, I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Jesus, if he could have overcome Satan and established the heavenly family, society, and nation, would have won the Roman Empire and been recognized by all nations. But because Jesus could not do this, the fulfillment of these prophecies has been delayed until the second coming. In Daniel 7:12 it clearly states that the first three beasts remain, even after the fourth beast rules. Obviously, in the 2,000 years since Babylon, Persia, and the Alexandrine rules, the greatness and sovereignty of these kingdoms has not been continuous, and in our days is no longer significant. Also, it is illogical that there should be three consecutive kingdoms prophesied, and a fourth one 2,000 years later.

But Lindsey, like many fundamentalists, mistakenly assumes that this prophecy refers only to the second coming. He says that the ten horns are ten nations arising from Rome's cultural heritage in the latter days. The little horn is the antichrist, different from the others in that he is both a political and religious leader (no biblical basis for this statement). Lindsey believes that the Common Market and the reunification of Europe into a ten-nation confederacy will fulfill this prophecy.

Lindsey believes that the ten nation confederacy will happen before 1980. As an example of historical errors in the book, Lindsey assumes that Hitler's scheme for the Third Reich derived from the original Roman Empire. Rather, Hitler was thinking of the First Reich as the mythological days of the early Germanic tribes. Lindsey tries so hard to prove that present European trends are a revival of the Roman Empire, but without historical basis.

A great deal of space is devoted to Revelation 13, regarding the beast with seven heads and ten horns (same description as the beast in Daniel 7).

One of the heads has a deadly wound which has healed. The beast derives his power from the dragon (Satan) of chapter 12:3. The beast is described as being like a leopard (very swift to attack), with the mouth of a lion (making a big noise) and feet of a bear (sneaking up unawares on the victim.) Lindsey warned that Satan will give the beast miraculous powers, and therefore cautions Christians not to believe miracles and signs. Chapter 13:3 describes the beast as having a mortal head wound. The person with this mortal wound will have a statue made of himself and men will worship the statue. He thinks that the antichrist figure has not appeared, or at least has not made himself known.

Communism as the antichrist

Although Lindsey and several other schools of thought believe the antichrist will be centered on Rome as a world dictator, or maybe a Roman Catholic Pope, it is also possible to view the prophecies as being fulfilled in the rise of Communism as a world power. The ten horns of the beast signify the ten satellite nations in Europe in the Soviet Communist sphere: East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. There have been seven "heads" or leading figures in the Soviet Communist tradition: Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Malenkov, Bulganin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev.

In Revelation 12:3, 4, the dragon is described as being red (color associated with Communism), drawing with his tail one third of the stars of heaven. Through Communism, Satan has captured the allegiance of one third of the earth's population.

The head with a mortal wound could refer to Stalin, who was badly denounced and attacked under Khrushchev, but is now being reinstated as an ideological hero.

Additional prophecies in the Bible indicate the antichrist role of Communism:

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (I Thess. 5:3)

Communism deceives many people with false promises of peace and prosperity. As soon as they take over a country they begin a terrible purge of political and business leaders, intellectuals, and religious people.

It is also interesting to note the roles assigned to heads of some Communist states:

"The son of perdition... opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (II Thess. 2:4)

Churches in Communist countries have been turned into museums or relics with pictures of Lenin, Stalin, or other figures prominently displayed. In North Korea, school children are taught to pray to Kim Il-Sung: if they pray to God they get no rice; if they pray to Kim Il-Sung, they get rice ...

In the rest of II Thessalonians 2, Saint Paul describes how this wicked one will appear only at the proper time, when the restraining force is taken away:

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." (Verse 11)

Scholars and scientists behind the Iron Curtain must rewrite history and revise scientific studies to correlate them with the Marxist-Leninist ideology. When one studies Marxist philosophy and the history of Communist rule, one can see clearly how it is an antichrist movement.

In Revelation 13:11-18, a second beast appears after the former, which Lindsey assumes will be a Jew, probably from the tribe of Dan, playing a John the Baptist role to the former beast. (However, there is no biblical evidence for the second beast being a Jew.) This second beast is also called the false prophet (Rev. 19:20 and 20:10) and is cast with the first beast into the lake of fire. The second beast is the one who will make it impossible to buy or sell without the mark of the beast, 666. (Rev. 13:17, 18).

Babylon and the "One World Church"

The third figure in this drama is the "Mystery Babylon" (Rev. 17 and 18). Lindsey equates Babylon with the "One World Church" that is to help the antichrist before the time of the tribulation (p. 103). His explanation of this is mostly a diatribe against astrology and the ecumenical movement; he cannot substantiate it from the Bible. On page 132, Lindsey says that Rev. 6-19 all describe events to take place during the tribulation.

Therefore, there should really be no need for the faithful Christians who believe in Lindsey to worry about the "One World Church." If events take place as Lindsey prophesies, they will be raptured before the "One World Church" appears! There are many Christians who say that the "beast" is the "One World Church." Lindsey says that the whore or harlot is the "One World Church." But no one can give any biblical basis for either view.

According to Lindsey, Babylon (the "One World Church") will be a mystery religion, because the name Babylon has been associated with astrology. Lindsey points to the widespread interest in Satan worship,

astrology, and drug use as preparation for the takeover by the "One World Church." Idol worship is also prophesied in Rev. 9:20. The fundamentalist Christian's fear of astrology is based on this interpretation. But the Book of Revelation is full of astrological references.

To connect astrology with Babylon, Lindsey quotes Isaiah 47:9, referring to the "Queen of the Chaldeans and daughter of Babylon":

"But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood; they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries and for the great abundance of thine enchantments."

Revelation 17:5 describes "Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." According to Lindsey, a harlot is one who "claims to be united with Jesus Christ in a mystical marriage but is really an adulteress in the spiritual sense." (p. 111). The harlot rides on the seven-headed and ten horned beast.

"The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth, and there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." (Rev. 17:9-10)

Lindsey says that the seven kings represent Chaldea, Egypt, Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece, Rome (at John's writing) and last, the revival of the Roman Empire. All these kingdoms were supposed to have been centered on astrology.

The apostate church

People may ask how the Christian church could let this happen. Regarding the Christian church at this time, Lindsey says that the church is apostate and has no power to stop these growing abuses. Lindsey lists the doctrines of the apostate church as: Denial of Christ's return (II Peter 3:4). Denial of the second coming (II John 7). Denial of sin (I John 1:8). Denial of the Trinity (I John 2:23) -- actually, this verse only says, "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father... ", not that Jesus was God Himself. Denial of the virgin birth (no scripture is given to substantiate this, since the virgin birth was never mentioned in the Acts or the Epistles as part of the early church's teachings).

Denial of a personal God

Predictably, Lindsey rejects the ecumenical movement, such as the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. The reasons he gives are: in 1969, the World Council of Churches recommended resorting to violence if it is the last way to overthrow political and economic tyranny and recommended that churches confess that they are filled with racism.

Also, he accuses the World Council of Churches for engaging in Christian-Marxist dialogue which compromises Christian beliefs. Lindsey is right in opposing this situation, but an apostate church is one that also does not oppose tyranny and one that upholds racism. The state churches behind the Iron Curtain can be accused of spiritual harlotry and collaboration with the Communists. Marxism-Leninism, a God-denying religion, is "drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. 17:6). More than 80 million people have died under Communist rule.

The true antichrists: those who oppose Christian unity

Lindsey goes out of his way to try to show that a "One World Church" will be the antichrist, by "proving" that God never desires unity. He bases his argument on the story of the Tower of Babel. This tower was built to "reach to the heavens" (Gen. 11:4). He interprets this to mean studying the stars (astrology). In verse 6, God said:

"Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from which they have imagined to do."

This does not mean that God never intended to have a unified world culture, as Lindsey states, but that their hearts were evil, and thus if they were united they would only multiply evil. God intends to destroy Satan's sovereignty by dividing it and letting the relative good overcome the relative evil. Then the Messiah can come and unite all people in goodness.

Christian unity is the major theme of Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 and of Saint Paul in Ephesians 4. Jesus' longing for unity is most clearly stated in the following:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me throughout their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one

in us: That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20, 21)

There are several important points to note: (1) Jesus' prayer was for our time, since we have believed on him through the words of the disciples; (2) that our unity as Christians is to be like that of God and Jesus; and (3) that only if Christians are united will people believe that Jesus was sent by God. In light of this, how can anyone say that Christian unity is against God's will? Saint Paul says that Christians are to be united as one body, centered on God, our Heavenly Father.

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, there is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4:11-13)

Therefore, anyone who is against unity of true Christians stands in the way of the spread of the gospel and the growth of Christians to become the mature image of Christ. We can conclude, therefore, that such a person is the antichrist.

Divine Principle solves riddle of the rapture

Lindsey believes that the rapture will take place before the seven years of tribulation. All true believers, living and dead, will rise into the air at Jesus' coming. Nowhere does the Book of Revelation prophesy a rapture.

Three passages are used to substantiate the belief in the rapture: I Thess. 4:16-17, I Cor. 15:50-54, and Rev. 13:6.

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit corruption." (I Cor. 15:50)

Lindsey believes that at the rapture our bodies will be changed. However, this verse means that the satanic flesh and blood inherited through the fallen blood lineage must be changed to the temple of God, by being born into the lineage of Christ (Rom. 8:23).

Then we can inherit the Kingdom of God. Lindsey says that our bodies will change at the rapture, when: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (Verse 5 2) This is also seen in Philippians 3:20,21:

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.... "

Therefore, Christians expect their bodies to be changed-both the decomposed bodies of the passed-away saints, and the bodies of Christians living on earth at the time of the rapture.

However, because of the Divine Principle, we know that the resurrection from death to life is the spiritual transformation from being separated from God to being one with God. This transforms our bodies to the status of temples of God. (See Chapter 5 of Divine Principle)

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (I Thess. 4:16-17)

This transformation comes by receiving the new truth (trump of God) brought by the Lord of the Second Advent, believing it, and attending the Lord, and being delivered from original sin through him. Those in the spirit world will recognize him first, and then those on earth will come to him through spiritual cooperation.

The final passage Lindsey cites to prove the rapture is too flimsy to pass scrutiny:

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." (Rev. 13:6)

The only people that Lindsey can think of who would be in heaven would be the raptured saints. According to him, the antichrist, forced to think of an explanation for the sudden disappearance into thin air of all the Christians, would blaspheme them for being heretics and trouble-makers. Obviously, however, many saints in the spirit world, men of great faith in God, have been denounced by Communist leaders. Russian Communists now teach that Jesus was a cosmonaut coming from some part of outer space who hoodwinked the people. God's work and God's prophets have been discredited by many recent

materialist writers. In Soviet Russia, Christians are locked up in insane asylums, and the populace is told that anyone who believes in God is mentally ill.

A source of disagreement among Christians is whether the rapture will be an event distinct from the second coming and whether it will come before the tribulation. To both questions, Lindsey answers yes, for the following reasons: (1) According to Lindsey's system of thought, the rapture is to take away the church, but the second coming is for the benefit of the Jews. In Revelation 7, the 144,000 gathered are from the 12 tribes of Israel, and they are to be missionaries to the Jews (never expressly stated in the Bible), preparing people for Jesus' second coming. He says that while the second coming will be visible to the entire earth (Rev. 1:7: "Every eye will see him"), only the Christians will see the rapture, because it is to be a mystery (I Cor. 15:51: "Behold, I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep....").

However, the word mystery or secret can mean something not now known, but to be revealed later. It does not justify a rapture that only Christians will see. (3) Lindsey says that the second coming will be a time of global war (not expressly stated in the Bible) but the rapture will not necessarily be during a time of war. (4) His chief reason for believing in the rapture is that the Bible talks about physical bodies of Christians being changed. Therefore, the principle of resurrection in the Divine Principle solves the issue by explaining that the change is spiritual.

Interestingly enough, Lindsey believes that there will be a literal Kingdom of Heaven on earth after the second coming and during the millennium, but that it will be only for the converted Jews. The Christians will have only a spiritual kingdom in the clouds, while waiting for the great judgment. All these arguments are an elaborate avoidance of the Bible's simple teaching that the Kingdom of Heaven will come on earth with Christ's coming.

Besides, it is not logical that the faithful Christians who have been praying throughout the centuries "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," be resurrected to only a spiritual kingdom. Even on earth today many Christians still pray for God's kingdom to come on earth.

Lindsey's major omissions

There are many Christians who can read Lindsey's book and consider it to be a complete discussion of the prophecies of the future. However, there are major oversights in Lindsey's work. Jesus clearly states that the Jews lost their mission as the chosen people by rejecting him as the Messiah (Matt. 21:43). There is no mention of the "One who is to rule all nations with the rod of iron" (The Lord of the Second Advent) as being a man, born of a woman (Rev. 12:4-5).

There is no hint that the Lord will have a new name when he come (Rev. 2:17; 3:12; 19:12). Never are Jesus' sad words concerning his rejection at the second advent referred to (Luke 17:25; 18:8; Matt. 7:21-23). Lindsey closes with a description of the glories of the new heaven and the new earth, but nowhere does he talk about the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-10; 21:1-4; 22:17) or the restoration of the tree of life (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14).