

# End Times



# Bulletin

# END TIMES BULLETIN

Welcome to what I believe is the first journal of its kind; an attempt to collate, present, and analyse some of the wealth of prophetic material that sees the world as we know it ending, or at the least going through dramatic changes, in the next twenty years or so.

Please contribute whatever you can to 'End Times Bulletin'. Not money, unless you particularly want to, but what will really make it worthwhile; newspaper reports, magazines (I'd love to see some of the Survivalist ones from the U.S.), predictions, premonitions, letters, comments, and so on. This is a small beginning but, three children, job, and other magazine allowing, it will grow as time goes on. For the time being I am only taking subs. for nos. 1 & 2, but will announce in the next issue future arrangements. Incidentally, if I've sent this to you without you paying for it first, please consider forking out the sub. I can't produce a magazine, even a little one, for nothing!

## ISSUE ONE

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## Editorial

### A STRANGE EXPECTATION?

At the time of the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan I became vividly conscious, for the first time, of the immensity of the threat of nuclear self-destruction. As at any time of international stress, I started buying, even reading, 'The Times', for there is certainly some comfort in being adequately informed. Additionally, I found myself glued to news bulletins, whether on T.V. or radio, and I recall one particular long, awful night, when I seemed to wake for every single bulletin on the BBC World Service, only to feel dreadful the following morning. I had been around during the Cuban crisis, but as a schoolchild of 11 you have rather different priorities than you do as an adult with two kids of your own. The anxiety, and the utter helplessness, were new, and unwelcome experiences.

As the weeks went on I found that some shared my own reactions, but that others saw such threats almost as a matter of, if not excitement, then at least a sort of rash abandon. People would say things like, "I'll just go out in the garden when the bomb drops", or worse, discuss with some vividness the effects of possible types of weapon, or even of chemical and germ warfare agents, as if we were ranging football teams against each other, and comparing their various talents. I can't recall now where I saw it, but some pundit or other made a very perceptive comment. He or she said that in such situations most people respond in one of two ways; either with fear and trembling, or with "a kind of fierce joy". Some even evince both such responses in turn; I guess there is some relation to depressive behaviour here.

It is not a very long hop from what I observed at that time, to the publication of this brief and tentative first issue of 'End Times Bulletin'. I find myself to be increasingly fascinated by the various attitudes to, and concepts of, what can only be described as a 'catastrophic' future; the extraordinary combination of a passionate desire for a better world, tempered with the knowledge that for the first time in our known history we, the inhabitants of the planet, can actually destroy ourselves without any recourse to, or demands on, an angry or impatient divinity. These elements, mixed with our traditional racial and economic prejudices, and the natural religious behaviour that finds various forms all over the world, seem to have led us to a foment of beliefs, hopes, fears, and calculations in which reason and unreason become hopelessly confused, and in which only the ideas of individual or family survival, whether on this world or another, take precedence.

The basic currency of these beliefs is prophecy, and its interpretation;— all those involved in the fear of the future business, be they U.S. Survivalists, holed up in caves ready to shoot all-comers, or Roman Catholics, waiting for the sign at Garabandal, and guessing at the Third Fatima Prophecy, or even fundamentalist evangelicals, noting the signs of dissolution already fulfilled, and anticipating the coming of the Lord to the air, all are making prophecies of one kind or another. The same goes on the one hand for the Peace movement, prophesying nuclear holocaust, and the pro-nuclear lobby, predicting safety in the balance of fear and mutual self-destruction, on the other. They are indulging in the same process; only the facts they choose, and their interpretation of them, differs.

Undoubtedly our proper, objective business in putting together ETB should be to record all such prophecies that come to hand, and to look for consistent elements in them, such as might give us a genuine glimpse of the future. I do not doubt that there is an element of truth in prophecy, as there certainly is in premonition, and we will do our best to ascertain if underlying the widespread expectation of a near or imminent upheaval in the course of our history, there is some real awareness.

But even among the more respectable prophecies, coming from sources of standing, tradition, and education, startling contradictions will quickly become apparent; if not in the nature of the end which will befall us then, at least, in the means and reasons that will culminate in that end. To take a very broad example; numerous apparitions of various forms of the Blessed Virgin Mary, more or less accepted by the established Roman Catholic Church, are reported to have warned witnesses that if mankind does not change its evil, apostate ways, then God will come to judge the world, and destroy unbelievers. On the other hand, much of the Evangelical movement on both sides of the Atlantic believes that the very signs of dissipation that the Catholics see as forcing the Almighty into an unwilling intervention, are in fact those that imply the inevitable, and imminent, fulfilment of Biblical prophecy - the Tribulation period, Antichrist, Armageddon, and so on. While one group dreads the end, and fights its hardest against it coming about, the literature and language of the other conveys an almost intense, overwhelming excitement at the proving right of strict Biblical interpretation. Meanwhile, some of those who live in fear of a man-made, nuclear destruction await the arrival of flying saucers to take them away from it all the instant before the bomb drops, whereas others, bristling with guns and knives, construct shelters in the deserts of the U.S.A. or in British back gardens, and wait to preserve themselves, when the time comes, from military disaster or civil riot.

There is much fear about, but what is there to fear? Weighing up the material I have seen in recent months, we seem to be about equally in awe of our own talent for self-destruction, and of the power and intentions of our various interpretations of God. Additionally, we seem to have got our basic animal and religious fears rather confused with our politics. The most recent issue of 'Sanity' usually a very sound presentation, being the journal of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, reads like a catalogue of extreme left-wing organisations. On the other hand, some of the extreme evangelical material harbours elements of international conspiracy theories that are unpleasantly reminiscent of pre-war Germany, and are clearly anti-Semitic. Any student of the Illuminati would do well to launch themselves into the End Times literature. But however many choices may or may not be open to us all in deciding what our individual or communal future may be, it is only in the most obscure metaphysical systems that more than one actual future will come about; and I do not subscribe to such complex and numinous systems. That being the case - if there is only one actual future - then it is clear that only a very small proportion of all this prophesying and predicting is going to prove correct; only such a proportion will correlate together in one viable set of events. At its crudest, it is no good believing that your salvation lies in the hold of a flying saucer, if at the instant it lands to collect you, your third of the earth is destroyed by a giant comet, with its epicentre on your landing site!

It is possible that the most powerful, and successful prophecies, are those which fulfil themselves. And to be honest, the sort of prophecies we are dealing with in ETB are not the sort to whose fulfilment I wish to contribute. I have no intention of going for the easy mark of ridiculing individuals involved in the foretelling of the future, unless they are clearly doing it for personal advantage, but this does not mean that we cannot analyse the components of specific items, and consider what sort of sense they are likely to make. Personally, I hold no particular religious views, though I read Theology at Oxford for some time, and at least have some acquaintance with the niceties and approaches of that subject. I am not a Christian; I do not believe in Christian salvation, nor that the Bible is the Word of God. I think, and will continue to think unless I find evidence to persuade me otherwise, that we are, if in the most fragile and incoherent way, masters of our own destiny. I acknowledge and share the need to believe in an interested divinity, or benevolent aliens, or the Virgin Mary, or whoever else may intervene to save us from ourselves, but even so I suspect that what happens is really up to us.

Bearing all that in mind, I would say that while 'End Times Bulletin' has clear responsibilities to the accurate reproduction and analysis of prophecy and prediction, and while it is more than likely that we will find some sort of recurrent, consensus pattern to what is foreseen, as important is the need for an overview based on reason, humour, and common-sense. That is what we'll try to provide.

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ALL YOUR WAYS  
ARE KNOWN  
TO ME



Nostradamus  
and the  
End Times

by Jenny Randles

"In the year 1999 and seven months  
A great king of terror will descend from the skies.  
He will bring back to life the great ruler.  
Before then the war will reign merrily."

Century 10. v.72.

This is perhaps the most famous of 942 prophetic verses written in the sixteenth century by mystic and sage, Michel de Nostradamus, who is much better known by the Latinised name of Nostradamus. This particular quatrain is unlike most of his other work, which tends to be clothed in obscurity and laced with multiple layers of possible meaning. Here, he appears to be very specific. He rarely gives a date within his prophecy; and yet when he does his track record for success is pretty good.

For example, in Century 2, v.51. we find these words . . .

"The blood of the just will be demanded from London  
Burnt by the fire in three times twenty plus six . . ."

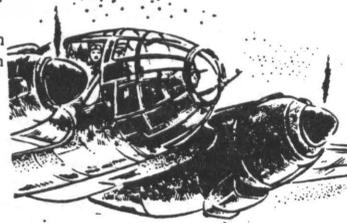
Three times twenty plus six is, of course, 66 . . . a year ending in '66 ? But, as with everything connected with the infuriating Nostradamus, things may not be as simple as they look. 666 is the number of the Beast, according to the Book of Revelation. 999 is this number upside-down (an interesting choice for our emergency and disaster phone number then - as 111 would be quicker to dial!) In the religion-steeped times in which he lived, it was second nature to presume significance for these death numbers. 999 A.D. was held by some to herald the end of the world, and some kind of great come-uppance was anticipated for both 1666 and 1999. Presuming, therefore, that he was pointing towards 1666 (not 1766 or 1866, etc.) the verse does seem remarkably appropriate. For that year saw the Great Fire of London, unquestionably one of the events of the century. It is odd that Nostradamus seems to have sensed this, a hundred years beforehand, by stressing its significance with a dating. Or - it could be coincidence, I suppose.

Nostradamus claims that he deliberately obscured the meaning of his verses, perhaps because he did not think that man should know all the things he had seen. Also, to be too accurate as a prophet was to risk life and limb, as a heretic or worse. He says he hid a code within them; whether or not this is true we do not know. Nobody has satisfactorily cracked any such code - though there are periodic claims to this effect from people with eyestrain after long nights spent with numerous dictionaries. For here is another problem with his 'Centuries' (so named because they are grouped into nine chapters of 100, with an inexplicably short and incomplete further chapter). Nostradamus used his extensive knowledge of languages to mix ancient and modern French with Provençal, Latin, and odd words from other tongues, too. He also delighted in conjuring up anagrams with which he liberally sprinkled his text, such as those involving "Hitler" and "Napoleon".

Who was Nostradamus? He was a doctor born in 1503 who wandered the towns and villages of France curing a sick populace frequently beset by plague. His courage, humility and compassion were well-attested; but he was also an erudite man, and a scholar of the occult. He held the view that the earth went round the sun a century before Galileo's trials and tribulations for speaking such heresy. Like many of his contemporaries Nostradamus was an astrologer in the days when astronomy was astrology, and a widely used, respectable science. Using this and his mystical visions he began to offer prophecies in the latter part of his life, and even did so at the court of the king and queen. In his last decade he graduated from yearly almanacs to the far more ambitious project of the 'Centuries', through which he hoped to present a future history of the world.

We can virtually dismiss the suggestion that any hoax is involved. Several very early editions of the prophetic books exist, published within a few years' of the author's death in 1566; and the first three centuries were published in book form as early as 1555. When a prophecy postdates this - as many do - then, provided one can accept the way the words untangle, and be satisfied he really has prophesied something, we have hard evidence for the paranormal perception of information. That is no doubt one reason why the world is so fascinated by this work; it has never been out of print in over 400 years.

Just what does Nostradamus have to say about the near future? Our task in answering that question is complicated by all the problems already mentioned. Then, of course, his as yet unfulfilled quatrains may well cover a large span of future time. There is certainly no sign that Nostradamus predicts an imminent end of the world, and broad hints that he sees things lasting a few thousand years or so yet. So some of his verses might apply to events he sees happening in 2982 or 3982, in which case we can scarcely hope to interpret them. Even in the 400 hundred years since his death Nostradamus faced this problem of the world changing beyond recognition. This provides some of his very best predictions. The way he describes air travel, submarines, and other modern technical artefacts is well worth reading. And in a classic prophecy he talks of air battles, probably from WWII. Here he sees the airmen in their breathing masks as if in silhouette against the dark sky. His way of describing them is "half-pig men" . . . a phrase which would have been meaningless fifty years ago, but which is now seen to be remarkable. In fact, just how one might expect a sixteenth-century man to describe an incomprehensible vision of an alien future.



Playing the Nostradamus prediction game is fun, but foolhardy. It should not be undertaken too seriously. The 1999 event discussed at the start of this article would appear to describe some cataclysm as this present century draws to a close. But what is it? A great king of terror might be a nuclear missile . . . or a rocket . . . or an alien spaceship? Each of these things has been surmised by somebody. Certainly the Mars (god of war) factor implies that a war will be in progress, and using this as a catch theme and employing some astrological dating techniques (which he does sometimes use) one can find other quatrains which may (and I stress that word) apply to the near future. So let us juggle a bit with his verses and see what we can come up with. Sadly, the most obvious common denominator is the concept of war.

Nostradamus tells of three "Antichrists" who will lead the world into terror. Many of his verses refer to these three men. Napoleon and Hitler, with their plans to dominate the world, have been effectively linked with two of them. The third one, it seems, is yet to come. And the finger of suspicion is clearly pointed eastwards.

"Long awaited, he will never come again in Europe.

He will appear in Asia . . . "

Century 10. v.75.

This warlord leader from the east is bent on expansion and invasion.

"From the Black Sea and the Great East  
A king will come who will see France.  
He will march through the Balkans  
And leave his bloody rod in Turkey."

Century 5. v.54.

And again, this time with a possible dating (though an astrological one, and not a verbally named one like 1999).

"The Arab Prince in (August 1987?)

The Church's reign will fall to the sea.  
In the region of the Middle East, almost a million men  
Will invade Egypt and Turkey."

Century 5. v.25.

Many other verses echo the images emerging here. The centre of action is placed firmly in the Middle East (which ought not to be too much of a shock to us nowadays) But it spreads to Greece and Turkey, and eventually "to see France". Indeed, the suggestions are that much of Europe will be affected by this "bloody rod". The invader is eastern and anti-Christian (The Church's reign will fall . . . ) And this concept of an anti-Christian battle is a common one (which may of course have been influenced by the much greater importance of the Church at the time of Nostradamus . . . "And so, the Easterners, drive out and kill the Cross". (C.6.v.81)

What about Russia, America, NATO and so on . . . the scenario most westerners see as leading to World War Three, should there be one? Remember how he says "he will never come again in Europe" . . . but after who . . . Hitler? There is talk of a still improbable mutual treaty (between Russia and America?) . . . "When these of the northern pole are united as one . . . (C.6.v.21) . . . "One day there will be friendship between the two great leaders . . ." (C.2.v.89). Both of these quoted verses go on to link this alliance with the easterner who, it seems, is precipitated into action by the possible consequences of such a merger.

The results of the religious war seem to be horrific. Century 2. v.3 talks of, "Heat, like that of the sun", which cooks fish in the Aegean (a nuclear explosion might well be indicated). Even more disturbingly, Century 2. v.95 says, "The Populated lands will become uninhabitable . . ." One must feel worried if this refers to the immediate future.

It is easy to build up a picture of some substance round these skeletal images (and others like them). Indeed, this is what I did in my unpublished novel, "Children of the Armageddon", which is based on the prophecies. But it is a controversial and dubious process, which is why I underplayed the role of the prophecies in my story, and filled them out with a much more substantial plot. Do not forget that this is my interpretation. The translations and the juggling acts are mine, not always agreeing with others who have tried. I claim no great probability for the events I have portrayed (thank goodness!) However, I have to say that others who have played the Nostradamus game have come up with views not at all dissimilar. They too see him describing a war which begins in the late eighties or early nineties. And the fascination of his work, and 'do-it-yourself prophecy' based on the verses, remains strong. We continue to have books written about Nostradamus, and even songs.

Sixties folkie, latterly a considerable success in the U.S.A. Al Stewart, wrote a long song titled, simply, "Nostradamus". He based the song heavily upon the best modern translation of the prophecies, that by Erika Cheetham. She even wrote the sleeve notes on the album. He interpreted some of the key prophecies thus; -

"In the New Lands of America three brothers now shall come to power.

Two alone are born to rule, but all must die before their hour.

Two great men, yet brothers not, make the north united stand.  
Its power be seen to grow, and fear possess the eastern lands.

Three leagues from the gates of Rome a pope named Pol is doomed to die.  
A great wall that divides a city at this time is cast aside."

So - if the third Kennedy becomes U.S. President and dies on doing so. If the U.S. and Russia (or the U.S. and Britain??) suddenly align. If the Berlin Wall is torn down. If a dictator rises to great power in the east and threatens the status of Christianity. And if the Middle East struggle starts to spread towards the Balkans with the prospect of nuclear weapons being used in Europe . . . don't be too surprised. Nostradamus wouldn't be! Al Stewart says about Nostradamus . . . "History seems to be on his side", and, despite the difficulties and the controversy, that seems a fair assessment. If the signs begin to come to pass it might not be too bad an idea to head for the hills. It could be better to be branded a fool and survive . . . than to laugh and chuckle - all the way up to the pearly gates.

## NOTES on the NEW AGE from Andy Collins

The expansion and recognition of so-called 'new age' ideals has been quietly occurring for at least twenty years now, and this has almost certainly been due to a widespread dissatisfaction with our present environmental situation, along with the course presently being taken by humanity as we see it. Many, especially the more youthful, not unnaturally consider mankind to be destroying itself; destroying the world in which we live; thus implying a very bleak future. Many feel that we urgently need to carefully rethink our current situation and attempt, in some way, to regain a more harmonious course as a vital alternative to what we are now going through.

We have seen how subjects such as ecology and conservation, and peace movements, have consistently grown in influence, with the urgent attention of trying to alter our overall view of life. In a sense, attempting to turn us away from certain technological and scientific developments which might be disastrous for us if left to run their course. Alternative, 'new age' thought is growing, and a large proportion of a concerned public support the moral issues involved. Look at current reactions to the nuclear arms race; the anti-nuclear campaigners all over Europe realise the threat posed to all humanity by nuclear devastation; it is one that none of us can ignore.

Environmental and nuclear issues are probably those most important in 'new age' thought, but there are others which many also feel must begin to be an integral part of our lives if we are to pull through this worrying period.

These include an understanding of such diversified fields of study as psychic awareness, the paranormal, and the apparent relationship between the subtle forces of terrestrial nature, and the cosmos. It seems possible that a full comprehension of the presence, nature, and potentials of these matters is a vital factor in our survival.

But before we go any further, perhaps we should clarify what we mean when we refer to the 'new age'. What is it? How does it relate to the area of interest taken up by 'End Times Bulletin'? According to many astrologers, psychics, mystics, and prophets of the past and the present, civilisation as we know it is about to undergo a period of dramatic change, turmoil, and upheaval. Much will be destroyed in the process, and only those who have been able to prepare and support themselves both materially and spiritually will survive to tell the tale. Seemingly, those who are prepared will inherit the land, and begin what is seen as a new age of awareness. A time when, once more, mankind would be able to live within the symbiosis of nature.

Many believe that this period of upheaval will not only be the result of our current disharmonious ways, but also of the effect of cosmic influences on the planet as it passes through the cosmos on a spiralling path of some kind. According to the metaphysical doctrines and philosophies of a number of past great spiritual cultures, these cycles of cosmic influence have occurred for many thousands of years. They have been given names by each culture each corresponding, in a way, to seasons of the cosmic year. Apparently, we are about to enter a 'winter', or a period of darkness to be followed, supposedly, by a

new spring, the dawn of a new age, called by some the Age of Aquarius.

As we head into the end of this present cycle, or aeon of time the cosmic effect, we are told, will cause a great many things to happen. Aside from creating widespread natural upheavals and alterations in climate, weather, and geophysical events, it will have a severe psychological reaction. For those who have prepared themselves, the supposedly harmonious and balanced in nature, it will afford them a growing insight of things to come. For the rest - the unaware, the unharmonious, in other words most of society today - it will cause physical and mental degeneration, resulting in a collapse in public order, wide scale war, anarchy, chaos, and disorder. The ultimate effect would surely be the destruction of life as we know it.

Such, then, are some of the views of those who believe that we are heading towards a 'new age', that has been prophesied for 2,000 years or more. Whether such events will occur, or their influence be felt in our lifetimes, is difficult to say. If a nuclear war were to occur tomorrow then, no doubt, some of the prophets would have been proved to be correct. If we never have one, then the chances are that mankind may carry on for thousands of years before any dramatic change occurs. The Christian Armageddon, or day of judgement, has never taken place, despite the fact that, for many, it has always remained 'just around the corner.' However, we can obviously not ignore the fact that many great changes have occurred in the past couple of thousand years, but not instantly - over a prolonged period of time.

Our own future may well look bleak, with the threat of economic decay, nuclear conflict, and gross misuse and poisoning of the Earth. But in the 'new age' ideals we may have a course to the light at the end of the dark tunnel - should the dramatic changes ever take place. In a sense, if we can recognise the problems that lie ahead, both man-made and natural, we might just be able to avert them. And for this reason alone we should take such subjects and ideals very seriously.

This, then, in simple terms, is what the 'new age' is all about. It is not necessarily that some great catastrophic event is about to take place. Nor is it the modern-day version of the Christian Armageddon. It is primarily an attempt to regain a harmonious balance between ourselves and the earth on which we live. This is an attempt to establish a true wisdom and knowledge in the light of our current understanding, to lead civilisation towards a more reliable destiny. This is why subjects such as the health of the body and the mind, ecology, conservation, alternative energy sources, peace movements, and creative living form the integral aspects of 'new age' thought. Additionally, psychic awareness, paranormal manifestations, and an understanding of what are known as earth mysteries, also play an important role in the ideals of alternative thinking. To regain a balanced and harmonious path we have to realise the true capabilities of our minds; their effects upon others, on the environment, and upon reality itself. We must also try to comprehend mankind's relationship with nature, and how its subtle processes effect our lives and evolution. Only then can we start even considering the attainment of 'new age' awareness in totality.



THE WORLD HAS HAD *enough*... OF HUNGER, INJUSTICE, WAR.  
IN ANSWER TO OUR CALL FOR HELP, AS WORLD TEACHER FOR ALL HUMANITY

# THE CHRIST IS NOW HERE.

## HOW WILL WE RECOGNIZE HIM?

Look for a modern man concerned with modern problems—political, economic, and social. Since July, 1977, the Christ has been emerging as a spokesman for a group or community in a well-known modern country. He is not a religious leader but an educator in the broadest sense of the word—pointing the way out of our present crisis.

We will recognize Him by His extraordinary spiritual potency, the universality of His viewpoint, and His love for all humanity. He comes not to judge, but to end and inspire.

His presence in the world guarantees there will be no third World War.

## WHEN WILL WE SEE HIM?

He has not as yet declared His true status, and His location is known to only a very few disciples. One of these has announced that soon the Christ will acknowledge His identity and within the next two months will speak to humanity through a worldwide television and radio broadcast. His message will be heard inwardly, telepathically, by all people in their own language.

From that time, with His help, we will build a new world.



It would seem that Benjamin Creme, who on 25.4.82 arranged for the above message (in a rather fuller form) to appear in the London "Observer" and a number of other major national newspapers around the world, at a cost said to exceed £125,000, has been receiving information about his concept of the Second Coming since about 1958. Since 1974 he has been working actively to gain support, and has become a well-known lecturer on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1980 he published a resume of his work so far, "The Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom" (Tara Press) and attracted considerable support; this eventually led to the publication of the statements quoted from above. And, so far as we can tell, to the disillusion of another host of believers, and perhaps of the apparently sensible prophet himself.

For I write this on 26.6.82, and so far, nothing has gone right for Mr.Creme. It would seem that, in the U.S.A. he gave additional clues which were supposed to enable listening journalists to find the Christ. Essentially, he was purported to be a community worker, working within the Pakistani community, and living in the Brick Lane area of London. It was said that on specific dates he had appeared on T.V., and on the BBC World Service. All this should have been sufficient to find him.

However, though one American journalist, from Boston, I think, got off on the wrong foot by looking for Brick Lane in South London, where it isn't, even those who went to East London, where it is, had no more luck. Indeed, one man who fitted some of the elements of the predictions was considering taking out an injunction to keep the press away, and none of the locals appeared to take it at all seriously. Quite simply, the Christ has not even been run to ground, let alone declared himself via a worldwide television and radio broadcast.

It was all a nice idea. Very English, very fair, very reasonable, really. It was to involve all religions and races, fulfilling all their various expectations. I would see it as most closely identified with the Hippy mysticism of 1967 or so. But though it was pleasant while it lasted, and though Mr.Creme has now said that the Christ will use the communications link-up of the World Cup broadcasts to make himself known, I'm afraid that we can only chalk another one up to experience.



Behind, I show you a mystery. He shall not all show, but we shall all be changed, to a moment, on the breaking of an eye of the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For they are already dead and we are already, and the world must put an eternity.

## THE RAPTURE

compiled by

Kevin McClure

In the June 1982 editorial of the British journal "Prophetic Witness", there is a piece entitled, 'The End is not Yet'. Part of it runs; "There are about 600 or more active volcanoes in the world", reports an eminent Cambridge scientist. "Is this Armageddon?" No, I think the evidence is against that . . . if only people would take time to study prophetic literature, what a packet of pointless anxiety they would save themselves! The Bible makes it crystal clear that the end of the world cannot take place until certain great happenings occur - the Rapture of the Church, the Great Tribulation, the Return to Olivet, and the Millennial Age. The end of the world is at least 1,007 years away. The end of the age may be very near."

If the significance of a prophecy, or group of prophecies, was to be measured in terms of the number of those that believe in them, and the vehemence of that belief, then the prophecies of a 7 + 1,000-year period being fixed before the actual end of the world is of importance indeed; 7 years Tribulation, and 1,000 years of the great Millennial Age. It is favoured and broadly accepted by the whole of the Christian Evangelical movement, and by a number of smaller, more fringe, groups and faiths. Though there are some disagreements as to the precise order, and relative importance of the various events forecast to occur, particularly in the initial seven-year period, there is a general consensus that each particular event in the sequence will occur at one stage or another.

The occurrence of these events, and the meaning of their occurrence, is assumed and interpreted from the text of the Bible, taken as literal and absolute. To quote the Revd. E. Buckhurst Pinch in his booklet, "There will be a Millennium", "What God says concerning the future is as exactly true as what God has recorded concerning the past, and we are no more allowed any opinion concerning God's pronouncements about the future than we are about those concerning the past. In that sense, prophecy and its interpretation are an exact science . . . The Book means exactly what it says. I challenge anyone to find in the Bible one single prophecy of Christ's first coming which was not literally, precisely and exactly fulfilled as it is written in this book . . . If, then, the prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ were fulfilled literally, surely it is intelligent to believe that the prophecies concerning His second coming will also be, especially when it is remembered that they were written and spoken very largely by the same prophets and on the same occasions as those concerning His first coming."

While this sort of certainty may seem strange to many of us, and while not all those who believe in the sequence of events may not do so with such conviction, there is a great volume of faith devoted to accepting the Bible prophecies in the most clear-cut terms, within a very precise time-scale.

I have made it clear that in spite of minor disagreements, there is a broad acceptance of the seven-year course of events that lead to the Millennium; the first of these events, in almost all versions, is said to be the Rapture of the Church. The events of the seven-year Tribulation period, which sees the world move from conditions very similar to those that afflict us now, through a period of immense suffering, to the inauguration of the 1,000 year reign of Christ on Earth, are accepted as being inevitable once the Rapture has occurred. There are,

of course, said to be 'signs' to warn us that the Tribulation period is imminent. We will deal with these elsewhere - the first is most commonly believed to have been the re-establishment of the State of Israel. But these signs are not linked in a direct, temporal relationship to the periods of Tribulation and Millennium; the Rapture is.

Over the first few issues of ETB I will consider several of the outstanding events and characters said to have their place within the Tribulation period. And rather than making you depend on my word alone to understand what each of these is about, I will include not only the key relevant scriptural material, but also a wide selection of interpretations of it, mostly from relatively modern prophetic material. The Rapture of the Church seems to be the obvious place to start.

So what, essentially, is the Rapture? What is it said to entail? And what evidence is presented to support the contention that it will occur, and that it will occur soon? We must first, as we will often find ourselves doing, look to the Bible to set the scene for the event that is described by one leading commentator in the following way. "The Scriptures predict that the Church will be 'raptured' or 'caught up' to heaven, at the coming of the Lord for them."

"We want you not to remain in ignorance, brothers, about those who sleep in death; you should not grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and so it will be for those who died as Christians; God will bring them to life with Jesus. For this we tell you as the Lord's word: we who are left alive until the Lord comes shall not forestall those who have died; because at the word of command, at the sound of the Archangel's voice and God's trumpet call, the Lord himself will descend from Heaven; first the Christian dead will rise, then we who are left alive shall join them, caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus shall we always be with the Lord. Console one another, then, with these words." (First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians. Ch.4. v.13 - 18. NEB).

"So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." (Letter to the Hebrews. Ch. 9. v.28. RSV).

"What I mean, my brothers, is this: flesh and blood can never possess the Kingdom of God, and the perishable cannot possess immortality. Listen. I will unfold a mystery; we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet call. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise immortal, and we shall all be changed." (First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Ch. 15. v.50 - 53. NEB).

The verses from Thessalonians are those most often quoted, and from their original form derives the term 'rapture', though the word itself is never used in this context in the Bible. The implications of these passages is reasonably clear. The Christian dead must find their reward in Heaven, so they are taken. But those who are not yet dead, who are alive at the time when the dead are to be taken up, must not receive any harder treatment. Therefore they, too, must be taken up. However, they cannot be taken to the Lord in purely physical form, so their form, physical at least, has to be changed before their journey. The change will be instantaneous. That is not great Biblical interpretation, but I think it serves its purpose. It may seem that the textual evidence appears a little thin, but it is as evidence that it is widely accepted.

A more definite picture of the event, and its implications for both those who are chosen, and those who are not, emerges from the following excerpts from a variety of evangelical books and pamphlets . . . . .

"First of all, it only concerns the Lord's people. Only the dead in Christ receive their resurrection bodies, and only those who belong to Christ are caught up to meet him. Not one unconverted person will be amongst these greatly privileged people. Secondly we should carefully notice that the passage (in Thess.) clearly states that this coming of our Lord is in the air, and not a coming to the earth, which the writer believes takes place some time later."

"The Rapture is the coming of Christ to the air for his saints, at which time the saints will be caught up to meet him."

"The Rapture will take place in a fraction of a second. As our Lord descends into the air, there will be a commanding shout, the voice of an archangel and a trumpet of God, summoning first the dead in Christ to arise and, immediately after, those of us who are still on the earth. We shall all be caught up in clouds to a grand assembly with our Lord."

"The removal of the Church from the world will doubtless be little more than a 'nine days wonder', but it will mark the withdrawal also of the present restraint upon sin provided by the presence of the Christian, and the Holy Spirit of God."

"The words 'caught up' come from the Greek word 'Rapture', which literally means to seize as a robber seizes a prize. The Latin word is *rapto*, meaning to seize forcefully . . . . This, of course, does not refer to certain denominations or religious groups, but to all the individuals who have repented of their sin and have, in faith, invited the Lord Jesus Christ into their life."

"Someday, a day that only God knows, Jesus Christ is coming to take away all those who believe in him. He is coming to meet all true believers in the air. Without benefit of science, space suits, or interplanetary rockets, there will be those who will be transported into a glorious place more beautiful, more awesome, than we can possibly comprehend. Earth, and all its thrills, excitements, and pleasures will be nothing in contrast to this great event. It will be the living end, the ultimate trip. . . . . God's word tells us that there will be one generation of believers who will never know death. These believers will be removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation - before that period of the most ghastly pestilence, bloodshed, and starvation the world has ever known. Examine the prophecies of this mysterious happening - of the Rapture. Here is the real hope for the Christian, the 'blessed hope' for true believers."

The last quote above comes from Hal Lindsey's book, 'The Late Great Planet Earth'. At the time of writing, it has sold in excess of 15 million copies, and is without doubt one of the most important elements in the widespread anticipation of major change and upheaval. It is also an intriguing and entertaining read.

It is also worth looking at three fictional interpretations of the Rapture, each of which appears in a specifically evangelical novel. The first is from Sydney Watson's 'The Mark of the Beast', which was first published in 1918, and has recently been reprinted.

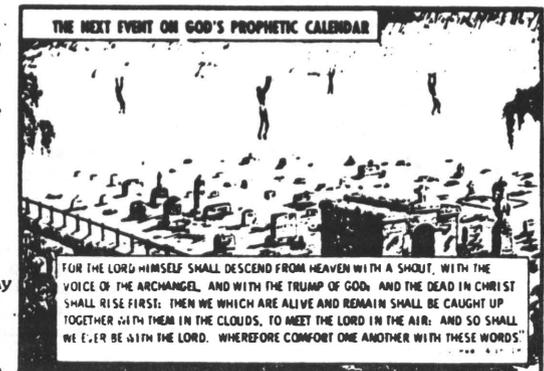
"Where?" smiled Bastin.

"I don't think anybody knows where, sir!"

"I do, Charley, and many others today who have been left behind from that great Translation know - they have been 'caught up' into the air where Jesus Christ had come from Heaven to summon them to himself. Mr. Hammond's there, Charley, and that sweet little adopted daughter of mine, whom you once asked me whether angels could be more beautiful than she was!"

Secondly, from the best-selling '666' by Salem Kirban, published in 1970.

"Just then, Bill shouted excitedly, "George, look out that window. I tell you that's not just a cloud. I've never seen the sky so funny looking. It's as though it was opening up . . . George IT IS OPENING UP . . . PEELING BACK LIKE A SCROLL. George, what's happening?"



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. WHEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS!

He was shouting now, and I felt embarrassed. But I looked around and everyone in the plane was standing up and pointing with excitement. And then it happened . . . almost like the twinkling of an eye. It seemed like the plane got much lighter . . . turned abruptly and went into a dive from 80,000 feet high. I lost consciousness . . . I don't remember exactly what happened. There had been two stewardesses standing next to me; but when I awoke only one was there! I picked her up off the floor and she rushed to the pilot's cabin. When she came out she was ashen white, and put her hand to her mouth to hold a scream. Just then, the intercom came on and we heard a voice. "Ladies and gentlemen. . . something rather unusual has happened. We are not sure what, but please be calm, everything is under control. Our pilot has vanished . . . perhaps some mysterious celestial illness. This caused the abrupt dive, but your co-pilot now has full control of the aircraft. Please keep your seatbelts fastened." why should that make the stewardess shout with fear, I wondered, and then I looked around me and she pointed with trembling hands. "LOOK", she screamed, "HALF OF THE PASSENGERS ARE MISSING!" I'll never forget the chills that ran up and down my spine. It wasn't half, but it looked as though 100 or so just disappeared. And I turned to tell Bill. BUT BILL WASN'T THERE! And suddenly it came to me . . . . I WAS HERE."

Thirdly, from what I found to be a beautiful and moving book, "The Seven Last Years", by Carol Balizet, published in 1978 . . . .

"At that moment the house moved beneath their feet. "My word, what was that?" The nurse looked startled. Stubby's parents without thought reached out for each other in frightened stillness as the house began to tremble.

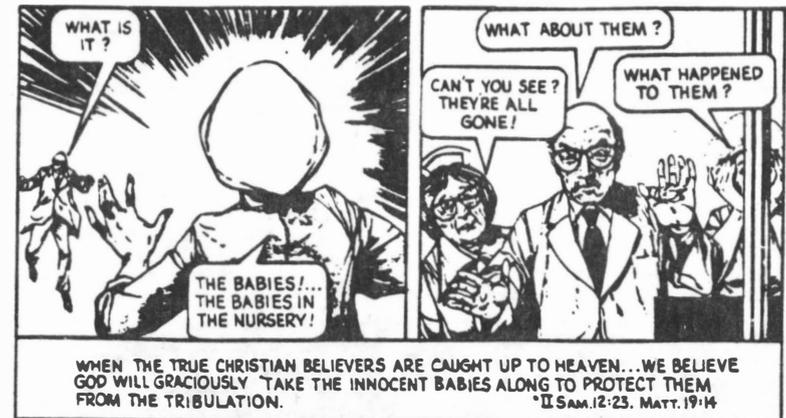
Although terrified himself, Stubby found himself unable to take his eyes off the nurse. He saw the fear go out of her eyes, replaced by a look of speechless joy. Even as he watched, she began to change. Her face grew gloriously bright, her clothing too seemed to glisten. The lighting in the room dimmed as plaster dust drifted down from the ceiling, but the luminescence about the nurse's body remained. "Mama, look!" Stubby breathed. "Look at her!" He turned to his parents, huddled together on the bed. "Papa, can you see her?"

The walls buckled, and with a noise of thunder the roof fell in. People and furniture vanished in a tangle of rubble and massive tree limbs. Stubby, unhurt, saw a large figure, tall and powerful in appearance, standing nearby. To Stubby's dazed mind he appeared to be warding off roof boards and chunks of debris, undismayed by the ruin and turmoil all about him. "Your parents' life on earth is finished, Stubby. But there is work for you if you will take it." Tears started from the boy's large brown eyes at the certainty that his mother and father were dead. But the deep voice speaking his own name seemed to lend him courage. Silently he followed the tall figure from the ruins of his home. It was only when the man seemed to move through the wall and not through the door that Stubby's teeth began to chatter."

If Biblical prophecy is not only true, but has also been interpreted correctly, then the Rapture promises to be the most startling physical event that has ever occurred on earth; enough phenomena, in one amazing instant, to make all previous reports of the paranormal pale into insignificance. As much heartbreak, perhaps, as has been caused by all previous conflicts and disasters.

My limited knowledge of Biblical criticism certainly doesn't equip me to discuss this material in any detail. Anyway, that is not the point. I am trying to present information in a way that will allow readers to draw their own conclusions, and also to lay foundations I can refer to in future issues of ETB. There are, of course, variations even among believers as to precisely what they believe. Though the general view is that only those who truly believe prior to the Rapture will escape the Tribulation, there is also some speculation that those who find faith during the Tribulation period (and surely there would be a great many) will be taken then to avoid further suffering. Others believe that the Rapture will not be 'pre - Tribulational'; that the whole Church will have to suffer all or part of the Tribulation.

A major point of debate is as to whether babies and young children - even if non-Christian - will be taken, or whether they will, despite their innocence, be left to the horrors of starvation, war, and death. Though the majority opinion seems to be that 'unsaved children' or 'unconverted children' will be taken, and that, to quote the perceptive Frederick Tatford (probably the most respected figure in this subject

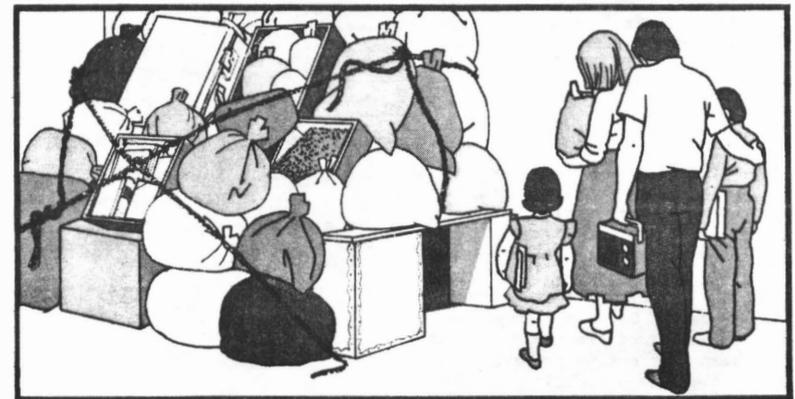


this side of the Atlantic), "The horrors of the coming judgements are for those who have invoked them by their lives and conduct, and surely not for the innocent and guileless", this interpretation does seem to derive more from a refreshing touch of compassion than from direct Biblical authority, which is at best scant. It is an important question, though, and highlights the problems of dealing with prophecy in terms of bald fact.

That, in as brief a form as seems reasonable, is the substance of the element of prophecy known as the Rapture. It seems, to me, a very frightening, even merciless prospect, not consistent with more liberal forms of theology. Nonetheless, it is a concept that finds echoes in all sorts of other areas of faith and belief, as we shall see as time goes on. And if the 'signs' explained in the Bible are being interpreted correctly, and are happening as we are told, who is to say when or if it may occur? It is a powerful concept. It bears thinking about.



## At home



# Social Security and the Mark of the Beast

Any of you who read the other journal I edit, "Common Ground", or "Fortean Times", or a number of others in the field of anomalous events, will be well aware of the power of rumour and myth, and the way in which they can develop, despite attempts to stop them. There are more powerful myths entailed in the End Times field than is decent.

You will read much in these pages of the whole "666 - Mark of the Beast" business, particularly as a supposedly increasing use of this number is one of the key signs of the imminence of the Rapture and all that follows it. This interest is based upon just two verses in Revelation, which run . . . "He causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save that he had the mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name".

Now, this prevalence of 666 takes many forms, and I will attempt to explain what this means and why in the near future. But for the time being, those verses will suffice to give meaning to two items that appeared in "Prophetic Witness", and also, the American case, in the amazing best-seller "When Your Money Fails - the 666 System is Here". Similar stories, presumably all coming from the same original source, abound. It must be said that the good Dr. Tatford has done his best to debunk them, but still they exist and develop.

"A correspondent tells of meeting a Christian lady who informed her that she had lately received from the Department of Health and Social Security a form to fill in, one of whose queries was: "Where will you have the mark - on your head or on your hand?" Puzzled by the question, she called at the local office to report the matter and to inquire as to what it meant. She was informed by a responsible member of the staff that the form had been sent out in error and in advance of the date officially set for

its release, but that the questionnaire would in due time be issued to every adult member of the European Economic Community".

And from the U.S.A. . . . .  
"During the months of July and August 1980, the Internal Revenue Service made a mistake that it wishes could be reversed. Reports from several states, such as Kentucky, Indiana, Maryland and Virginia, confirm this startling news item. Scores of Social Security cheques were accidentally mailed to recipients that required a special and unusual process for cashing. It was so unusual that banks refused even to try to cash them. The instructional paragraph on these cheques were changed to read that "the party cashing the cheque must have the proper identification-mark in their right-hand or forehead"; without it the cheque could not be cashed. Naturally, the banks as well as the receivers of the cheques were surprised, confused and frustrated. The IRS was contacted in each case and after much confusion, denials, and arguing, the IRS admitted the mistakes. The cheques were valid Social Security cheques. However, they were not usable at this time. In fact, the whole problem with them was that they were sent out too soon. These government cheques requiring the "mark in the person's right-hand or forehead" are not to be put into use until 1984. Think of it!"

I don't know about the U.S.A., but I've worked for the British D.H.S.S. for 10 years now. I've certainly never heard of any such form, but then there are plenty of forms I haven't heard of. But more important, I've never even heard a rumour of it or this story, and I'm sure it would have travelled like wildfire. But the clincher is this - whoever heard of a D.H.S.S. form being both designed and printed more than a few weeks before it was needed. We have enough trouble getting some of the ones we do need!