

News and Current Events :: The Prophecy Clock Has Now Run Out

The Prophecy Clock Has Now Run Out - posted by savannah, on: 2018/5/14 20:19

Remnant Review

Today is the 70th anniversary of the political creation of the State of Israel.

This fact is crucial for American fundamentalists. This is because most of them believe in something their pastors call "the clock of prophecy." It started ticking on May 14, 1948, or so they have been told by a generation of pastors and authors. But there is a problem. It was not supposed to keep ticking longer than 70 years "the normal lifespan of one generation.

Before I explain all this, I want you to understand that American fundamentalists are almost all dispensationalists. This is called pre-tribulation dispensationalism, and at least 99% of dispensationalists are pre-tribulation dispensationalists. They believe that Christians will be pulled out of history prior to the horror known as the Great Tribulation, which will come mainly on Jews living in the State of Israel after the Rapture.

American fundamentalism's 70-year unwavering political support for the State of Israel has been based on the doctrine of the Rapture.

The Rapture is the term that fundamentalists use to describe the supernatural transfer of residency of all living Christians from earth to heaven without death as the gate of passage. This essence of belief can be summarized by a variation of the famous "Go directly to jail" card in the board game, Monopoly: "Go directly to heaven. Do not pass death." Christians would thereby cheat the collectors, mortgage lenders, credit card debt, and even college debt. Above all, their heirs would evade morticians.

The Rapture was to have taken place no later than 2011, according to popular dispensationalism's interpretation of Bible prophecy. All Christians were to have been pulled out of history into heaven. The Great Tribulation for Jews in Palestine was to have begun then. Jesus and His angels should have returned yesterday to set up a one-world Christian government run by immortal Christians accompanying Jesus.

It didn't happen. Popular dispensationalism now has a major theological problem to answer. It is also a practical problem. It is also a psychological problem. For the last 70 years, the popular interpretation of Bible prophecy among dispensationalists has been this: the clock of prophecy began ticking again on May 14, 1948. It had 70 years to run. The clock has stopped.

Now what?

The Clock of Prophecy

What is the clock of prophecy? It is a metaphor. The Bible does not speak of such a clock. The idea was invented by dispensational theologians about a century ago. It has to do with the prophecy by Jesus in Matthew Chapter 24 regarding grim things that He described as taking place in Judaea before He returns to judge the world.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened (Matthew 24:15-22, King James Version).

This, He said, would take place in what He said was "this generation."

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh : So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled (verses 32-34).

It is obvious that this did not take place literally during the lifetimes of those people who were listening to Him. Beginning in the second century A.D., church theologians explain this seeming delay in terms of a non-literal fulfillment. A common explanation was that it was fulfilled with the Roman army's destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. I published David Chilton's cogent little book on this, *The Great Tribulation*, in 1987.

Dispensational theologians say that Bible prophecies must be interpreted literally. Therefore, they reject the church's ancient interpretation that Jesus' prophecy referred to the fall of Jerusalem, which did occur in the lifetimes of some of those who heard His words. Dispensational theologians have argued that the prophecy of the Great Tribulation was not meant for those listening to Him. This warning applied to a future generation. It applied to the generation that would be alive when the literal events had to take place. So, they argued that the clock of prophecy stopped ticking sometime before the end of the first century A.D. But because of dispensationalism's self-proclaimed literalism, the clock would have to start ticking again in order to allow for a literal fulfillment of Jesus' warning. The generation of Jews alive when the clock starts ticking will be "this generation" of Jews whom Jesus was warning.

After May 14, 1948, a growing number of dispensational preachers and authors began to identify that date as the date when Jesus intended His prophecy to begin to apply literally. They began to use the phrase "the clock of prophecy." It was said to have begun ticking with the advent of the State of Israel.

Pop Dispensationalism's warning to Jews in Israel

This interpretation of the clock of prophecy was so common prior to 1988, when the 40 years associated with one generation ran out, that it sold millions of books. Hal Lindsey's book, *The Late, Great Planet Earth* (1970) sold over 35 million copies. He and his long-term ghost writer Carole C. Carlson were quite explicit.

A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place. Many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives believe that this is so.

The most important sign in Matthew has to be the restoration of the Jews to the land in the rebirth of Israel. Even the figure of speech "fig tree" has been a historic symbol of national Israel. When the Jewish people, after nearly 2,000 years of exile, under relentless persecution, became a nation again on May 14, 1948 the "fig tree" put forth its first leaves.

Jesus said that this would indicate that He was "at the door," ready to return. Then He said, "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (Matthew 24:34, NASB).

What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place. Many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives believe that this is so (pp. 53-54).

He reinforced this with his book, *The 1980s: Countdown to Armageddon* (1980), which sold 20 million copies. On page 8, he wrote: "the decade of the 1980s could very well be the last decade of history as we know it." The next year, he and Carlson wrote *Hope for the Terminal Generation*.

He hedged his bets with the evasive "could be," but his books did not sell over 60 million copies based on "could be." The readers understood what he was saying by tying the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy to May 14, 1948. They read "will be."

Chuck Smith, pastor of the megachurch Calvary Chapel in Southern California, began his ministry in the same era that Lindsey began his a few miles away: the early 1960s. He was a major promoter of the May 14, 1948 date marker. He wrote a book six years after *Late, Great Planet Earth*. His book was titled *The Soon to be Revealed Antichrist*. He was insistent that "we are living in the last generation which began with the rebirth of Israel in 1948 (see Matt. 24:32-34).

☛ Two years later, he said it again in his book *End Times*:

If I understand Scripture correctly, Jesus taught us that the generation which sees the “budding of the fig tree,” the birth of the nation of Israel, will be the generation that sees the Lord’s return. I believe that the generation of 1948 is the last generation. Since a generation of judgment is forty years and the Tribulation period lasts seven years, I believe the Lord could come back for His Church any time before the Tribulation starts, which would mean any time before 1981. (1948 + 40 + 7 = 1981) (p. 35)

After 1988, the 40th anniversary of the creation of the State of Israel, the pop-dispensationalists’ definition of the generation became vague. The Rapture should have taken place in 1981. Lindsey has tried in recent years to wiggle out of what he and Carleson clearly wrote. A 2009 example of his wiggling is here. But he dared not abandon his view. Donations would dry up. He ended his wiggling article with this:

In summary, just as the first leaves of the fig tree indicate that the general time Summer is near, even so the appearance of all the predicted signs in concert within one time period appear, it indicates that the general time of Christ’s coming is near. And we are all commanded to “recognize” that His coming is near by the imperative mood verb of this Scripture.

I believe the signs I wrote about in the Late Great Planet Earth are still valid. In fact, more so now than ever.

He has a problem. He has recognized it since 1977. He was interviewed by Prof. Ward Gasque of Regent University in Canada. Lindsay spoke of the 1980s as the date of the Rapture. He hedged, but not far enough.

But I feel certain that it will take place before the year 2000.

“But what if you’re wrong?” I asked. Lindsey replied: “Well, there’s just a split second’s difference between a hero and a bum. I didn’t ask to be a hero, but I guess I have become one in the Christian community. So I accept it. But if I’m wrong about this, I guess I’ll be a bum.” (Christianity Today, April 15, 1997, pp. 40-41)

He is still on YouTube daily at age 88, still offering newspaper-based interpretations of the “signs of the times.” He still supports the State of Israel.

Wiser heads among seminary theologians were not explicit about 1948, but they had tiny audiences. The best-selling books focused on 1948 as a clear indicator that the clock of prophecy was once again ticking.

Until the collapse of the Soviet Union on December 25, 1991, pop-dispensationalism taught that the Soviet Union would be Satan’s earthly agency in surrounding Jerusalem in the Great Tribulation. Dispensationalists had been predicting that the USSR would be the oppressor ever since its creation in 1971. The history of this interpretation is here. The collapse of the USSR created a huge problem for pop-dispensationalism. I wrote about this in my 1993 book, *Rapture Fever*. You can download it here.

By using May 15, 1948 as their date marker, there is no way for pop-dispensationalists to evade the implications of the lack of a Rapture seven years before the Great Tribulation. There has been no such tribulation. The mythical clock of prophecy stopped ticking on May 13, 2018. Dispensationalists have no more date marker. Without a date marker, they have no clock of prophecy. The Rapture should have taken place in 2011.

They bet the exegetical farm on May 14, 1948. The farm will be foreclosed on intellectually speaking as the generation of the fig tree’s life expectancy is redefined as 80 years, 90 years, or 100 years. The movement will not be able to recruit intellectual leaders. Intellectually serious men will not build their theological careers around their predecessors’ highly specific and blatantly inaccurate predictions based on a highly specific date, only to spend a lifetime of waffling as Jews in Palestine get senile, unable to perceive the Great Tribulation before their eyes.

The vast majority of dispensationalists after 1948 have believed that Christians will not be subjected to the Great Tribulation. That was a major motivation in adopting that theology: an escape clause. Only a tiny handful of dispensationalists have said that Christians will go through the Great Tribulation.

Prior to about 1880 in the United States, there were premillennialists. They were not dispensationalists. They have not believed that Bible prophecy applies to Jews or the State of Israel. They have taught that Christians will go through the Gr

eat Tribulation prior to Jesus returning in person to set up a 1,000-year kingdom on earth and in history. They call this period the millennium.

The vast majority of Christians have not believed that either the millennium or the Great Tribulation will be fulfilled literally. They are amillennial. The Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy are amillennial. In the Western Church, this goes back to Augustine.

Re-thinking Mortality and Dispensational Theology

Because of this faith in the date of the beginning of the ticking of the clock of prophecy, millions of American fundamentalists have believed over the last 70 years that they will be carried out of history at the Rapture, which absolutely had to take place prior to May 14, 2018. The belief has been almost universal. Dozens of books have been written about the Rapture. All of them have had the same message: the readers, if they are born-again Christians, and if they do not die before May 14, 2018, think that they will never experience physical death. Instead, their bodies will be carried into the sky, where they will be transformed. They will be immortals in heaven for seven years. Then they will accompany Jesus and his angels when Jesus returns in person to set up an international one-world state. This will be a massive top-down bureaucracy. The bureaucracy will be staffed by immortal, pain-free, terrorist-immune, atheist-immune Raptured Christians.

It is never said specifically where Jesus's headquarters will be, but it is generally assumed that it will be Jerusalem.

Dispensationalists believe that they will rule politically for 1,000 years, at which time Satan and his demons will rebel. Jesus and His angels will put down this rebellion in the final act in history prior to the final judgment.

This belief has kept dispensationalists from developing any form of political theory. No political theory valid today, prior to the one-world Christian state, has any value. It will not exist in the millennium. The same applies to all economic theory. Whatever is applicable today under both socialism and capitalism will not prevail in the coming Christian bureaucratic order.

The Great Political Exception

There is one exception to this silence regarding Christian political theory among dispensationalists. This is the exception of political support of the state of Israel. They are unapologetic for their support of the State of Israel. It does not matter which political party leads the coalition national government. (No party has ever gained a majority in the Knesset.) They are adamant that the United States government continue to provide economic aid to the Israeli government, which is in the range of \$3 billion to \$4 billion a year.

Why? Because the survival of the State of Israel is mandatory for their theory of the Rapture. If Christians are to escape the cares and responsibilities of this world without dying, they must be Raptured (a passive-voice verb) prior to the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation must come upon Israel. If the State of Israel is somehow defeated militarily by regional enemies and therefore ceases to exist, then the Great Tribulation must be in the distant future — maybe centuries — when a new, improved State of Israel will be established. If this were the case, then there could be no legitimate hope in the Rapture as the way of deliverance today.

“Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.” This popular white gospel song points to the dispensationalists' psychological problem. The doctrine of the Rapture offers an escape clause. Dispensationalists cling to it, despite the fact that there is no clock of prophecy any longer, and therefore there is no way to justify anyone's confidence that he is living in the supposed end times.

Paul called the church “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16). It is unwise for Christians to recommend federal government subsidies to the church. It is even more unwise for them to recommend federal aid to the government of the State of Israel.

Conclusion

There comes a time when a wise man abandons the intellectual defeat of the worldview he has held dear. Dispensationalists in the pews are no longer buying mass paperback books on the Rapture.

The idea of a revived clock of prophecy never offered legitimate hope. Jesus was clear: there will be no time when the c

hurch is separated from its enemies in this world prior to the final judgment.

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn (Matthew 13:24-30).

He explained its meaning to the disciples.

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 13:34-43).

Do you have ears? Then hear.

Re: The Prophecy Clock Has Now Run Out - posted by Lysa (), on: 2018/5/14 20:30

In the documentary The Coming Convergence, they speak of a generation between 70 years and 120 years. And that it is in this space of time is when Jesus returns!!!! :) :)

It's a very good documentary, if you can find it to watch. I watched it on Amazon Prime Video.

Re: - posted by savannah, on: 2018/5/14 20:54

"It's a very good documentary..."

It can only be 'very good' if it be very true!

"God saw everything that He had made; and behold, it was very good." Genesis 1:31

Re: a rehearsal of rapture enthusiasm - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/5/14 22:57

Way back in the day..approx. 1980 when rapture teaching was full-on the subject of any eschatological teaching...I was attending a first Baptist Church (actually just visiting from time to time) They always gave testimony time so I took that moment to tell them God had spoken to me and showed me in scripture the rapture was wrong, it was an error. Well, that went over like a lead balloon, I was asked to leave the meeting, so I waited outside to see if some of the elders or others might talk with me about it.

Nope, they were not hearing anything I had to say on the subject. From those days forward I have kept that position and encourage others to look past the Valvoord, LeHay, Lindsey teachings. Calvary Chapels were coming into prominence then with Chuck Smith rehearsing Rapture teachings and making his own prognostication for 1988, but that came and went.

As time went on, the Rapture teaching really began to show its reason for existence...escapist teaching that pleased a middle American Christian who was now also absorbing large quantities of Hagin and Copeland. With their large crusades and even larger ministries buying up big pieces of air time; prosperity and guaranteed healing sat largely on the steps of rapture-readiness. Combining the Rapture with W.O.F. add some excited Pentecostalism and some nervously cautious Charismatics you get huge amens when "Jesus is returning soon" was declared triumphantly from the microphone. The Southern/First/anything else Baptist walked lock-step with rapture enthusiasm.

Back then the Cold war between Russia and the USA was tense, nuclear threat was always around the corner and movies like the 'Day After' nuked everyone into the fear-rich environment belonging to 'loving this present world'. Christians were not at all immune, you could get hundreds and thousands to attend "end times" conferences...The SDA had been doing that for a while on a much smaller scale but common for them. TBN was getting bigger adding station after station promoting Lindsey, Smith, Copeland, Hagin...all of these parroting one another in their end times declarations.

To voice a contrary opinion such as "Well, that gap in Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy is without foundation" You get the look like you just said Jesus is "not the way". Or to mention this is escapist teaching geared toward sensationalizing the return of Christ (to sell millions of books) and imply that your abundant giving to these evangelistic ministries is necessary to usher in Christ by a full proclamation of the gospel world-wide ...so said TBN about a 1000 times over the next few years. To say that you were sensationalizing that teaching was tantamount to renouncing the faith.

For me, this is "Fad" Christianity, the popularization of a doctrine used almost exclusively to promote evangelism and fund raising. Yet, looking back was the foundational teaching that filled the bank accounts of W.O.F teachers, charlatans, sensationalizers and end-time experts.

The rapture and its dispensational cousins hang on because the Lord has not done a full work of exposing it to the realities of his sovereign plans. I would not be surprised that if the Lord tarries history will log that time of the Late 70s' to the 2000's as a time the Church was duped out of its money, taught to idolize celebrity Christians and spun around enough to dizzy anyone attempting to discern the times with a clear vision.

There were no doubt so many wonderful things done over that 30 year period they cannot be numbered. Jesus despite our silly immaturity and naïveté continued on blessing, giving, loving and growing us all along the way. But future generations will see it for what it was, our children/grandchildren will seek God and he will show them a new mode of living out their faith jettisoning the dead and stale which we cling to with a death-grip.

But, future generations are poised to make their own errors, poised to eradicate what they deem traditional and stale...and only by the grace of God will they see in truth what past generations have done right and what they have erred in.

Re: The Prophecy Clock Has Now Run Out - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2018/5/15 9:21

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

It has been assumed that the putting forth of leaves is the day Israel became a nation again but what if that is wrong? What if instead, the budding here is referring to the completion of the temple and priestly functioning of it again. That has yet to be seen and is coming.

Re: - posted by wayneman (), on: 2018/5/16 12:46

I just finished a novel lampooning the whole rapture novel genre, and passed advance copies out among my Calvary Chapel friends, and they love it! I was half-expecting them to take me out in the parking lot and stone me, since the rapture is a CC doctrinal distinctive. But it seems, after a half-century of headline-watching and date-moving, even the most avid dispensationalists are now willing to rethink things, or at least take a challenge in good humor.

Synopsis: the church is raptured, but only one guy is taken - some country preacher named Larry - and the prophecy experts and rapture novelists all get left behind, along with the other two billion church members.

Re: - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2018/5/16 14:41

I haven't got the whole escatalogical picture figured out myself as I see problems and weaknesses on both sides so don't assume that I am pre-trib rapture when I point out the problem with rapture = second coming position.

If you believe the rapture is the event that happens immediately before or perhaps during the battle of Armegghedon when dead and alive saints will rise to meet Jesus in the air, then why does the Bible talk about the coming of the Lord as being like a thief in the night? Nobody will have seen it coming? We have the book of Revelation and so many things have to happen before the Second Coming: the two witnesses, the rebuilding of the temple and reinstituting sacrifices, the destruction of Babylon, 1/3 of humanity killed, the mark of the beast instituted, everything in the seas dies, etc., etc. So how confident are you that since most of these haven't happened yet, Jesus can't come back yet? Are we getting away from the idea that Jesus could come back at any time?

-Daniel

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/5/16 15:08

True witness, Paul explicitly taught in 1 Thessalonians 5 that believers are not in darkness and His coming will NOT come as a thief, but we are to watch. It comes as a surprise and as a thief in the night to those in darkness.

This passage also tells us that the church will be around at His 2nd coming, otherwise why instruct the church that they are to watch and be sober so we can see these things unfold.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/5/16 15:51

Hey Daniel-

My advice is to hold on very loosely to the items mentioned in the 2nd paragraph of your post. There is great disparity among Christians what those things mean and anyone who claims to have it figured out doesn't, quite frankly.

If you get into a "checklist" mentality regarding the things you note, you may be setting yourself up for much confusion and disillusionment.

We know Jesus is coming back; beyond that there is not much certainty.

Re: Prophecy Update on a Generation - posted by savannah, on: 2018/5/16 17:28

Seventy years ago, on May 14, 1948, the political state of Israel was established. For millions of Christians, the political establishment of Israel in 1948 has held prophetic significance. The claim has been made repeatedly that 1948 began what has been called the "fig tree" generation based on Matthew 24:32-34 where Jesus said:

Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

The fig tree is said to be Israel becoming a nation again, a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. From the 1948 date, a Christian could calculate that the "rapture" would take place within 40 years before that 1948 generation passed away.

In his 1976 book *The Soon to be Revealed Antichrist* Chuck Smith wrote, "We are living in the last generation which began with the rebirth of Israel in 1948 (see Matt. 24:32-34). You will search in vain in the three verses Smith references to find any mention of 'the rebirth of Israel'."

He repeats the claim in his 1978 book *End Times*: "If I understand Scripture correctly, Jesus taught us that the generation which sees the 'budding of the fig tree,' the birth of the nation of Israel, will be the generation that sees the Lord's return. I believe that the generation of 1948 is the last generation. Since a generation of judgment is forty years and the Tribulation period lasts seven years, I believe the Lord could come back for His Church any time before the Tribulation starts, which would mean any time before 1981. (1948 + 40 + 7 = 1981)."

If this prophetic math sounds familiar, it's because the same end-time logic was used by Hal Lindsey in 1970. With t

he publication of *The Late Great Planet Earth* in 1970, Lindsey made a near-certain prediction that a pre-tribulational rapture would take place before the passage of 40 years from 1948:

The most important sign in Matthew has to be the restoration of the Jews to the land in the rebirth of Israel. Even the figure of speech "fig tree" has been a historic symbol of national Israel. When the Jewish people, after nearly 2,000 years of exile, under relentless persecution, became a nation again on 14 May 1948 the "fig tree" put forth its first leaves.

Jesus said that this would indicate that He was "at the door," ready to return. Then He said, "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (Matthew 24:34, NASB).

What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place. Many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives believe that this is so.

Here's the curious thing. The New Testament doesn't say anything about Israel becoming a nation again. The Old Testament prophesies that Israel would return to their land and rebuild the temple, and Israel did return to their land and rebuild the temple after the exile. That's why there were Jews living in Israel and there was a temple during Jesus' ministry and beyond. There is no indication in Matthew 24 that the fig tree has anything to do with Israel becoming a nation again.

In 1977, Lindsey was interviewed by Prof. W. Ward Gasque of Regent University in Canada regarding the rapture. Lindsey said:

There a lot of world leaders who are pointing to the 1980s of being the time of some very momentous events. But I feel certain that it will take place before the year 2000.

Gasque then asked, "But what if you're wrong?" Lindsey replied:

Well, there's just a split second's difference between a hero and a bum. I didn't ask to be a hero, but I guess I have become one in the Christian community. So I accept it. But if I'm wrong about this, I guess I'll be a bum.

He was wrong, but he didn't become a bum. He and many other prophecy writers like him continue to see the political reestablishment of Israel in 1948 as the key end-time prophetic sign that will lead to the rapture and untold global slaughter. When the 40-year-generation interpretation failed, they redefined a generation to be 70 years.

May 14, 2018, is the 70-year mark, and there hasn't been a rapture.

In his interview with Gasque, Lindsey speculated that a generation could be "between sixty and eighty years."

It was these types of predictions that led more responsible prophecy writers to abandon the fig tree generation interpretation. John F. Walvoord was one of them:

Actually, while the fig tree could be an apt illustration of Israel, it is not so used in the Bible. In Jeremiah 24:1-8, good and bad figs illustrate Israel in the captivity, and there is also mention of figs in 29:17. The reference to the fig tree in Judges 9:10-11 is obviously not Israel. Neither the reference in Matthew 21:18-20 nor that in Mark 11:12-14 with its interpretation in 11:20-26, gives any indication that it is referring to Israel, any more than the mountain referred to in the passage. Accordingly, while this interpretation is held by many, there is no clear scriptural warrant.

Like Walvoord, dispensational author Mark Hitchcock also rejects the often-used argument that the fig tree in Matthew 24:32 describes the reinstitution of the nation of Israel, a point he makes in his book *The Complete Book of Bible Prophecy*. There are other dispensationalists who reject the widespread belief that the fig tree of Matthew 24 refers to modern-day Israel. Larry D. Pettegrew, Provost and Dean at Shepherds Theological Seminary, wrote: "The fig tree, however, does not illustrate Israel becoming a nation in 1948. The fig tree is simply an illustration from nature."

In the Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible, published in 2000, the editors conclude (contrary to LaHaye's personal beliefs on the subject) that "the fig tree is not symbolic of the nation of Israel."

Jesus used the parable of the fig tree as an analogy. His point was that when leaves begin to appear on the fig tree—or, for that matter, on all the trees (Luke 21:29)—it is a sign that summer is near. Similarly, when Jesus' first-century audience (this generation) saw certain signs, they knew that the kingdom of God was near, right at the door (Matt. 24:33). Near to what? Near to fulfilling the promise Jesus made about coming within a generation to destroy the temple and the entire Old Covenant system and inaugurate a New Covenant (Matt. 24:1-3). This is the simple and clear meaning of the text. Any other interpretation wildly stretches the Bible beyond its intended meaning.

The Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 and parallels in Luke 17 and 21 are not about restoring Israel as a nation again. They refer to the judgment of Israel that took place in AD 70. You see, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, Chuck Smith, and many other contemporary prophecy writers were right about one thing. A biblical generation is about 40 years in length. They went wrong in their timing. That 40-year generation is long past.

Now that the rapture has not taken place after 40 and 70 years from the 1948 starting point, as so many prophecy writers claimed it would, what's next? I predict that a generation will be extended to encompass 100 years, and we will continue to see prophetic speculation about the supposed fig tree generation. When it does not take place in 2048, a generation will become 120 years, and when it doesn't take place then, a generation will become a thousand years. - Gary D.

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/5/16 18:17

Sounds like Gary D doesn't think Jesus is coming back in the next thousand years, if at all!

Re: , on: 2018/5/16 18:58

I think according to our brother Gary, Jesus returned in 70 AD. We just are living in one messed up millennium.~

BlaineV

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/5/16 19:42

He may be a full preterist- I am not 100% sure.

Regardless his point is well taken. We do not know when He is coming back. It might be 700 years from now. The apostles thought He was coming back in their lifetimes.

There is nothing wrong with hoping and looking for His appearing, as the Church has been doing for the last 2000 years.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2018/5/16 20:40

As far as I know, there are still people alive that were born in 1948.

And doesn't Jesus warn us against the attitude of "My Lord delayeth His coming"?

Kind of tired of jaded cynicism, "yeah, people have been expecting Jesus' return for thousands of years, don't get all worked up for nothing". He is definitely returning soon, like a thief in the night, just like He said. I think it will take most Christians by surprise, because they are getting too comfortable in this world.

Lord Jesus, start with me, renew this blessed hope, set my heart on fire with Your love. Shake me out of apathy and coldness toward You, so that my love for You is like the love Jacob had for Rachel; years would seem like days, if I have to wait that long. Come quickly Lord.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2018/5/16 21:25

This should get us fired up:

<http://www.tscpulpitseries.org/english/1980s/ts880905.html>