



# Prophetic Observer

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Keeping Time On God's Prophetic Clock

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## Resurrection in the Gospels

by Noah W. Hutchings

All resurrection promises in the Old Testament are centered in the coming of the Redeemer, the Savior, the Messiah. Without the coming of Christ, all those in the Old Testament who died in faith would have died in vain. Likewise, without the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, the hope of all Christians for eternal life would be in vain. Paul forthrightly declared the necessity of the literal resurrection of the body of Christ from the grave in **1 Corinthians 15:13-14**: **“But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”**

Jesus Christ declared Himself to be the only hope of mankind in a literal resurrection. He said, as recorded in **John 11:25-26**: **“... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. ...”**

When Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, the nation of Israel was divided into three main groups: the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the lower class. The Sadducees were the upper class, composed mostly of the wealthy—the landowners and the richer merchants. The Sadducees were mostly agnostic in their belief toward God. Even some of the higher priests were included within the membership of this sect. The Sadducees' heaven was here on earth, and they denied the existence of angels, a future life, and the resurrection. We read in **Matthew 22:23**: **“The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection. ...”**

The second division of Israel according to theology was the Pharisees. The Pharisees were of the middle class. They were very patriotic and prided themselves on being keepers of the law and traditions of Israel. Being students of the Scriptures, they stoutly believed in the resurrection of the dead. Because they believed in the resurrection, some of the

Pharisees became disciples of Jesus when He demonstrated His power over death in the raising of the dead. However, the majority of the Pharisees rejected Jesus as the promised Messiah, and it was their influence over the people that led to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

The lower class, which comprised the vast majority of Israel at that time, were too busy earning their daily bread to become involved in politics or religion. Most of them were honest, hard-working people, who did the best they could to provide for their families, honor the law, worship God, and go up to Jerusalem at least once a year at the time of Passover. It was from the lower class that Jesus won most of His disciples.

Because all the Old Testament teachings on resurrection looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, the miracles of Jesus in the raising of the dead and His teachings on this subject comprised an important part of His earthly ministry. His declaration that He was the resurrection and the life was followed by a visible demonstration to prove that He was the Redeemer who had come to raise the dead. After Jesus professed to Martha that He was the one who was sent by God to bring the dead back to life, we read the account of what happened next in **John 11:41-46**:

**Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to**

**Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.**

Lazarus had been dead for several days, and his body already was in the process of decaying. Yet Jesus restored the soul and the spirit to the body, and the dead man lived. Another account of Jesus raising the dead is recorded in **Luke 8:49–56**, where the Lord restored to life the dead body of Jairus' daughter. However, these miracles in raising the dead were mere signs of Christ's power over death, and not literal demonstrations of resurrection. Neither the daughter of Jairus nor Lazarus was raised in a glorified body. It is evident from Scripture that they lived out their normal life span, and then died a natural death. We read in **1 Corinthians 15:21–23**: **“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.”**

Jesus Christ was the first to be raised in an incorruptible and immortal body. There will be no other person raised in a glorified body until Christ's return. Many Christians are concerned about what happened in **Matthew 27:50–54**:

**Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.**

Jesus Christ was resurrected in a glorified body, but Matthew does not call the appearance of the saints in a body a resurrection. This probably was a localized miracle for the benefit of Israel, to again prove to the Jews that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the promised Messiah. Not all the saints arose—only some in the graveyard in the vicinity of Jerusalem. This miracle is recorded only in Matthew, indicating that it was a sign to the Jews, and it is nowhere else mentioned in the Bible. What happened to the bodies of the saints that arose after the resurrection of Jesus and appeared to many in Jerusalem is not known. It is not necessary that we do know. Inasmuch as Jesus Christ has the power to restore a dead, decaying body

to life, He could have brought the bodies of the saints in the graveyard at Jerusalem back to life for five minutes, an hour, a day, or whatever length of time it was needed to prove that He had risen with the power of resurrection over all death. This particular incident was another miracle to show Israel that if the nation would receive Jesus as Messiah, all the saints would be resurrected, and the promised Kingdom would be brought in at that time.

It is usually interpreted that Paul meant in **1 Corinthians 13:13** that the saved will be known in Heaven even as they are known on earth. But what identifies the individual? Is it outward physical appearance, or the personality? Is our physical appearance our identity, or do what we think, how we act, what we say, and our feelings and emotions identify us more? Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks upon the inward man. The Scriptures say that the resurrection body will be a spiritual body—we will be known by our spiritual identity more than our physical appearance.

The Old Testament teaching concerning the resurrection of both the just and the unjust was verified by Jesus in **John 5:28–29**. But the greatest teaching on the resurrection by Jesus was by and through His own resurrection. He predicted that He would die and be raised again. We read His words in **Matthew 12:40**: **“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”**

He arose again the third day to prove to man that there was a resurrection from the dead, and He said in **John 14:19**, **“... because I live, ye shall live also.”** He was seen of above five hundred witnesses. God raised Him up to prove to the world that He had offered a payment for sins, that through faith in Him men could be raised in a glorified body and stand before the Creator. It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ that inspired the greatest message to moral man ever written:

**So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.**

**—1 Corinthians 15:54–58**

# The Consuming Presence

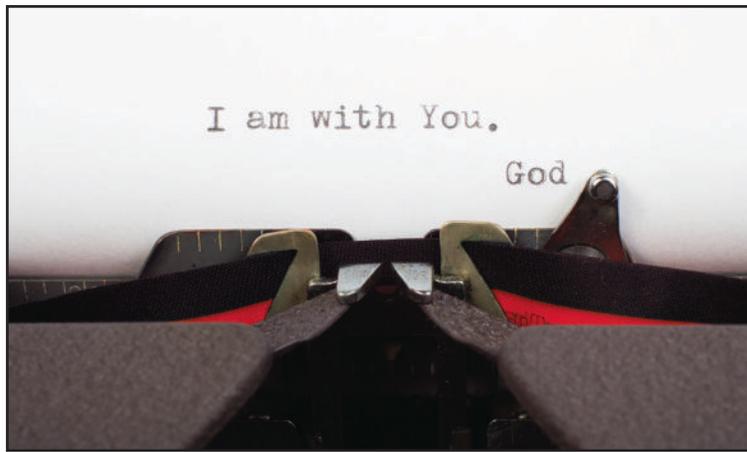
by Pastor Larry Spargimino, Ph.D.

“... that the nations may tremble at thy presence!”

—Isaiah 64:2

The Second Article of the 1973 *Humanist Manifesto* revealed its position on the Christian faith with unabashed clarity: “Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. ... There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body.”

Since those words were written our country, and our world, have seen a steady erosion of biblical values. The election of Joe Biden as President of the United States—though some say, quite convincingly, by fraud—is a testimony to the lateness of the hour. Joe Biden has signed a record number of Executive Orders, a reflection of the Democrat Party’s intractable desire to remove all the moral advances of the Trump Administration. This statement in no way should be taken as indicating that I give wholehearted assent to everything that you can think of about Donald Trump’s personality and character, any more than I would give wholehearted assent to everything written in sacred Scripture about King David’s personality and character. Trump’s core values and platform, however, resonate with Christians.



These men of God come from a variety of backgrounds, but all traced our problems to rebellion against God and His order. Schaeffer wrote *A Christian Manifesto*, which was a direct response to the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, the *Humanist Manifesto I* of 1933, and the *Humanist Manifesto II* of 1973—all of which made man the final arbiter of right and wrong, good and evil.

Solzhenitsyn, the Russian dissident who gave a rousing speech at Harvard in June of 1978, arrived on campus a hero, but outraged the intelligentsia because he was considered “an orthodox Christian ayatollah.” He chided the Western world, including America, for losing its courage in confronting evil and said our foreign policies were based on “weakness and cowardice.” And then he caustically added, “Should one point out that from ancient times, declining courage has been

considered the beginning of the end?”

Five years later, in May of 1983, when he received the Templeton Prize, he gave an address titled “Godlessness: The First Step Toward the Gulag.” Solzhenitsyn reminisced about his childhood and said, “More than half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: *Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.*”

## God’s Consuming Presence And His Prophets

In every age, and at every time, God raises voices that speak out with moral clarity and a powerful anointing that challenges and addresses the moral freefall of the culture. In his 2017 book, *God’s Prophetic Voices to America*, Dr. David Reagan mentions several, such as David Wilkerson, Francis Schaeffer, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Erwin Lutzer, and Jonathan Cahn, among others.

## A Warning To America—Past and Present

In a 13-minute on-camera video released on social media, messianic rabbi Jonathan Cahn shared a prophetic warning. He began his presentation by citing George Washington’s prophetic warning to America that he gave during his very first presidential address to the nation: “The propitious smiles of heaven cannot be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right that heaven itself has

ordained.”

Cahn reminded Americans that we have done what we were warned not to do, but still so many are confused about why the blessings of Heaven are being removed from our land, leaving us to face violence, division, and godless leadership. Cahn then addressed President Biden: “This day will pass. The applause of men will fade. This administration will inevitably be over. The world will pass away but you will stand before God and give account. For it is written in His Word that we will each stand before God and give account.”

The saints of God have always coveted God’s presence. David said, **“in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”** (Ps. 16:11). Moses, for example, knew the necessity of the presence of God and said, **“If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence”** (Exod. 33:15). Sometimes the Lord’s presence is somewhat hidden. We may look for it and even strain for it. **“And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice”** (1 Kings 19:12). God made His presence known by a whisper—inaudible above the din and confusion of the times, but very real, nevertheless, for those who will listen carefully.

God’s presence will bring success in any endeavor. This is especially evident in the Great Commission. Jesus gave an encouraging promise to His disciples and said, **“I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”** (Matt. 28:20). The Commission was challenging. The disciples really did not know the full extent of the Great Commission. They did not know the expanse of our Lord’s words to them. But in the first couple of centuries, when one’s view of the world was limited, and into the twenty-first century, when we can see Planet Earth from outer space, the words “I am with you always” give comfort and strength.

When Jesus told His disciples about His continuing presence He did not promise that He would be with them in the same way that He was during His earthly ministry. Jesus said He was going away and that He would come again at some future time to **“receive you unto myself”** (John 14:3). In **John 14:26**, Jesus explained the Source of His disciples’ power in the present age: **“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”**

The Holy Spirit would bring power to God’s servants, and conviction to those who heard the Word of God. From a small and unassuming beginning, the people of God would bring the Good News to every part of the planet.

The Lord Jesus Christ, however, did not promise ease and safety during this age. We read of the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7) and of the challenges the Apostle Paul faced (2 Cor. 11:16–33). When Paul was in Troas he received an invitation from the Lord to go into Macedonia. In Acts 16:10 we read, **“And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.”** The Lord was present in the sense that the Lord blessed Paul’s witness to Lydia, as the Lord opened her heart (Acts 16:14).

### **An Awakening to Confront the Catechism of Revolution**

We are living in a day of intense spiritual conflict fueled by a revolution against all that is good and holy. No one can deny that. The stakes are high. The enemy is dangerous, but as we have said at the opening of our broadcasts for almost nine decades, “God is still on the throne and prayer changes things.”

Prayer warriors do more than pray, however. They are the faithful remnant who willingly count the cost of faithfulness. Jesus did not die to keep us safe. He died to make us dangerous. During times of danger, uncertainty, and challenge the issue becomes one of God’s presence—His consuming presence. **“Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down...to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!”** (Isa. 64:1–2). God has many names, yet here it is singular – “thy name.” The singular is intensive, the sum of the glorious attributes of Almighty God. Are you that faithful remnant whom God will use in these last days?

We see ominous signs all around us. There is rebellion against God’s created order. Those who identify with Christianity and conservative issues are demonized. What will a God-hating government impose on the people of God? Their rage seems to know no limits or restraints. It is fiendish and devilish. This is the time to call on God, that He may rip open the heavens and make His presence felt on earth in a most dramatic way.

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