

February 8, 2021

Dear Members and Friends!

This is a very personal letter which I wanted to write in order to clear up some misunderstanding and address some outstanding issues. As many of you know, I stated quite strongly and repeatedly that I was convinced, based on my understanding of biblical prophecy, that Donald Trump would be re-elected in 2020 and that he would stay in office. I have since then apologized for my statements in a recent *StandingWatch* program, titled, "The Second Impeachment Circus."

Nothing in this letter is meant to take away from my apology. That Donald Trump isn't presently occupying the White House is obvious. Still, I also promised in the *StandingWatch* program that more would have to be explained in order to get the entire picture.

This letter is meant to do just that.

When Donald Trump announced that he would run for the Presidency in 2016, I stated with conviction that I believed he would become President. I stated with the same conviction that I believed he would be reelected in 2020. What went wrong?

Several ministers and numerous members wrote me to tell me or remind me of the fact that they, likewise, were convinced or at least felt very strongly that Mr. Trump would stay in office. How could we all have been so wrong?

In fact, some implied that I must be a false prophet as I said something which did not turn out to be true. Reference was made to Deuteronomy 18:20-22, which says:

"But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death. You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed."

On the face of it, that would mean that the early New Testament apostles would have been false prophets, because they all believed and proclaimed dogmatically, undoubtedly with the conviction that they were inspired by God, that they would still be alive at the time of the return of Jesus Christ. Later it became clear to them that they would all die, but that was not clear to them at first.

It is obvious that Deuteronomy 18:20-22 does not address these kinds of scenarios. *Matthew Henry* explains that the false prophet makes wrong predictions, contrary to the plain meaning of Scripture, to encourage people to sin (cp. Jeremiah 23:20-22). The false prophet claims to speak in the name of the LORD, but it is his goal to lead the people to wrong gods. In reality, a false prophet speaks in the name of other gods, either expressly (cp. Deuteronomy 13:1-5), or clandestinely.

The *Nelson Study Bible* points out that false prophets might even predict events which do come to pass, while true prophets may predict events which do not materialize. A classic example is Jonah who proclaimed that God would destroy sinful Nineveh in 40 days. Due to the sincere repentance of the Ninevites, God relented from the calamity which He had planned to bring about (compare Jeremiah 18:7-8; 26:3). This did not make Jonah a false prophet.

This brings me to the next important issue; namely, that God has sometimes changed His mind to bring about a certain event, or that He has delayed certain events, not because of the repentance of the people, but because of *lack of repentance*. We know that a falling away from the Truth is prophesied, because true members of God's Church refuse to accept and maintain the love of the Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 9-10). We read that because lawlessness will abound, the love of God in Church members will grow cold (Matthew 24:12).

Still, God wants to save as many as are allowing Him to do so. He has patience with us, not willing that any one of us should perish, but that we all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9) and the knowledge of the Truth. So, He gives us time to repent, delaying or holding back certain events in the process. The apostle Peter tells us that we can either delay (see again 2 Peter 3:9) or hasten (2 Peter 3:11-12) the return of Jesus Christ. Sadly, it is my assessment, when considering the state of affairs of the entire Church of God, being composed of numerous organizations and splinter groups, that some, if not many, are guilty of delaying Christ's return, due to their lack of repentance and zeal; and so, it is high time for them to wake up, and any who are within our own fellowship who may be in the same category, and to change their way of life, because God's patience will come to an end.

This brings me to an all-important question, and it is not being asked to "justify" comments which I made regarding the re-election of Donald Trump in 2020. The question is: Did God delay or postpone certain critical developments of events (compare, for example, Revelation 10:6; Ezekiel 12:21-28; and Habakkuk 2:2-3)?

To put it differently: Did God allow Donald Trump to "lose" the election to give some Church members more time to repent? Is that concept even conceivable?

Consider this:

Many feel that Donald Trump did in actuality win the election, but that it was stolen from him due to massive voter fraud, irregularities and unconstitutional changes regarding the voting system in some states just prior to the election. Much evidence was presented to courts for this claim, but no court looked at the evidence. Instead, all cases were adjudicated based on judicial technicalities... with the idea that nobody, not even the President himself, had any standing to raise the issues. It seems that most politicians (let alone the mass media and Big Tech) are now just too willing to "move on," without ever addressing the possibility of a massive voter fraud. But does this mean, then, that the current President sitting in the White House may not be the one whom *God* accepts as rightfully occupying the office? Undoubtedly, in that case, God would have allowed him to be there, without putting him there directly. (Of course, when I stated that Donald Trump would be re-elected, I did not take the possibility of voter fraud into consideration.)

And so, in addressing our times and the situation within the USA, God makes the following stunning announcement in Hosea 8:4:

"They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval."

IF this statement could be applied to our current situation in the USA, then please allow me to draw another parallel:

We know of King Nebuchadnezzar who had become like an animal and who lived for seven years with the animals, because God punished him for his pride. However, during that time, God preserved the office of kingship for him, which he would occupy again after his sanity had returned.

Another, perhaps even more striking example is King David. When due to David's sins, God allowed that his son Absalom rebelled, occupied Jerusalem and was declared to be king of Israel (2 Samuel 16:16-18), the Bible never recognized him or referred to him as king, but it continually referred to David as the King (2 Samuel 16:5-6; 17:17, 21; 18:4-5), including when he fled from Absalom and Jerusalem and did not, technically, occupy the throne in Jerusalem until the death of Absalom and David's return to Jerusalem.

So, is it possible that Donald Trump will run again in 2024 and be elected then, thereby reclaiming the office of President? And that this might occur, after the Biden administration will have contributed in the meantime to a complete economic downfall of the USA, as many anticipate? There are certain critical prophecies which must be fulfilled, and it does not appear at all that they will be fulfilled by Joe Biden and his administration.

As we pointed out many times, the Bible shows that a third Temple will be built in Jerusalem prior to Christ's return. The relationship between Israel and the USA under Donald Trump had never been better. That is why many felt, especially in Israel, that Donald Trump would in some way help with the building of the third Temple. It appears that Trump, who called himself the "chosen one," shared and perhaps still shares this belief. The fact that coins were printed in Israel portraying the third Temple together with Trump as the modern King Cyrus who helped the Jews in building the second Temple is surely no coincidence; nor is the letter by the Sanhedrin pleading with Trump to help in building the third Temple.

We will have to see whether and how all of this may come to fruition. It does not appear that it could come to fruition under Joe Biden.

In addition, the relationship between the USA and the EU is prophesied to deteriorate until the point of outright war, which will be *instigated by Europe*, not the USA. Again, it appears unlikely that this outcome could be reached under Joe Biden, who wants to be nice to the Europeans, but if Trump (or someone like Trump, even though nobody else seems to be on the horizon to "qualify" for the "job") were to come to power in 2024, the situation may be quite different. Europe is preparing for such an eventuality and it is determined to increase its military spending and to build a powerful European Army as soon as possible.

Again, nothing in this letter should be misconstrued as saying that I am trying to retract my apology. What I said and believed was objectively false, and for that I am sorry. But is it possible—please bear with me and with a little foolishness on my part—that the substance of what I said—to an extent unknowingly—might have been delayed, but that it still could come to fruition in some way in the future?

God directs His servants to speak for Him, even though they may not fully understand what they are actually saying. The prophets of old did not understand some of the prophecies which they were asked to proclaim (compare Daniel 12:8-9), and they had to learn and recognize that they were not speaking to themselves, but to the early apostles and Church members regarding Christ's suffering and glorification (1 Peter 1:10-12). The High Priest uttered a prophecy just before Christ's arrest, not even understanding the meaning as to what he was saying, but God directed it that way (John 11:49-53).

In the recent past, the Church of God, under the human leadership of Herbert Armstrong who died in 1986, powerfully preached during World War II that those events then occurring would culminate in the Great Tribulation. That didn't happen, but Mr. Armstrong recognized this fact and—based on clear biblical prophecies—continued to proclaim warnings about Germany arising after the war to lead the final resurrection of the ancient Roman Empire. Again, through watching world events, but due to a miscalculation and misunderstanding of "19-year time cycles," Mr. Armstrong pointed

to 1975 as the possible year of Christ's return. (Mr. Armstrong wrote a booklet, titled, "1975 in Prophecy," but it was said that the choice of the year was to counter those who proclaimed that certain unbiblical events would take place in 1975). In any event, Christ did not return in 1975, and many Church members walked away from God's Church and God's Truth, because they lost sight of the true role of God's Church. Up until his death, Mr. Armstrong preached the sureness of biblical prophecy regarding events preceding the Great Tribulation and the subsequent return of Jesus Christ. While he initially thought that he would be alive at Christ's return, he came to understand that another generation would arise to see the fulfillment of end-time events revealed in the Bible.

We, also, will have to wait and see. That is our mission—to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God (that is, the good news which is given to us by God the Father and Jesus Christ) and to stand watch and announce what God reveals to us. Sometimes, we might see dimly as through a dark mirror (1 Corinthians 13:12), not fully comprehending as to what God wants us to say, but the light of understanding will shine brighter and brighter, if we do not refuse to do what God expects of us to do (2 Peter 1:19-21). After all, we have been given the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10), and God promises His servants that He will reveal to them what He is about to do (Amos 3:6-8; also compare John 16:13).

Mr. Armstrong stated that he would change if proven wrong from the Bible, and that is how we in the Church approach our own calling. When events occur which don't work out the way we anticipate, or at least not quite yet, our focus remains to go to the Word of God and pray to God for the understanding of His Will—and to faithfully and zealously continue to fulfill our part in the Work of God.

So, please, let us have patience and wait for God to show us more clearly what the future holds. But if the past and the present are guides in any way, an unsuspecting world will soon be confronted with surprising and unexpected developments, culminating in the Great Tribulation. However, God's people should not be in darkness so that that Day will overtake them as a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6).

Your brother in Christ,



Norbert Link