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# LAST DAYS PROPHECY SEMINAR

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## LESSON TWO: "What is the Sword that is in the Land?"

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### INTRODUCTION

When attempting to identify Bible prophecy with current events, it is a prerequisite that we determine whether or not we have the scriptural right to do so. The purpose of this paper is to show that God's Word gives us the authority to identify Last Days' prophecy when we see His sword in the land.

#### **1. Do we have a right to go into the Old Testament to research prophecy?**

##### **A. Yes. Not only is it our right, it's our responsibility to do so.**

- 1) I Thessalonians 5:1-7, *"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. [2] For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. [3] For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. [4] But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. [5] You are all sons of light and sons of the day. **We are not of the night nor of darkness. [6] Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. [7] For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night."***
- 2) II Timothy 2:15, *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

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### REFER TO PAGE 41 – Article from Charisma "Apocalypse Now?"

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#### **B. Q: Will everyone receive the interpretation of these prophecies and their fulfillments? A: No.**

- 1) Isaiah 28:9-13, *"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from the milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? [10] For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little. [11] For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, [12] To whom He said, "This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest," and, "This is the refreshing"; [13] But the word of the LORD was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little, that they might go and fall backward, and be broken and snared and caught."*
  - Notice in vs. 11 the reference to "another tongue."
  - The other tongue is "prophecy."
  - There are two tongues: Old and New Testament prophecy.

#### **C. We are walking in prophecy's light.**

- 1) When a prophet of old brought forth a prophecy from God, the light of that prophecy did not necessarily shine at that moment.
- 2) For example, we are now walking in the light of Isaiah's prophecy (chapters

- 13,14). When Christ was born, they walked in the light of Isaiah 9.
- 3) We are not walking in new light.
- 4) John 12:35, *“Then Jesus said to them, “A little while longer the light is with you. **Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.**”*

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**REFER TO PAGE 37 – “How Do We Interpret Prophecy?”**

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**2. The Sword of God**

- A. When most people think of a sword they think of fighting and/or destruction. It's important to realize that the word *sword* in the Bible can represent two distinct things: 1) the Word of God, and 2) the Wrath of God.
- B. The *sword of God* can be defined as the *Word of God*.
- 1) Hebrews 4:12, *“For **the word of God** is living and powerful, and **sharper than any two-edged sword**, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*
- The Word of God is compared to a two-edged sword.
  - The Word of God has the ability to pierce...another characteristic of a sword.
- 2) Ephesians 6:17b, *“...and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is **the word of God.**”*
- Again, part of the armor of God is described as a sword.
- 3) Who is the Word of God?
- He is none other than Jesus Christ.
  - John 1:1, *“In the beginning was the Word, and **the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**”*
- C. The *sword of God* can also be defined as the *wrath of God*.
- 1) The sword of God used for judgment.
- a. Isaiah 34:5,6a, *“For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; indeed it shall come down on Edom, and on the people of My curse, for judgment. [6] **The sword of the LORD is filled with blood...**”*
- b. Jeremiah 44:13, *“For I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, **by the sword**, by famine, and by pestilence.”*
- 2) A sword comes out of Jesus' mouth.
- a. Revelation 1:16, *“He had in His right hand seven stars, **out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword**, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.”*
- b. Revelation 2:16, Jesus speaking, *“Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them **with the sword of My mouth.**”*
- c. Revelation 19:15, *“**Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword**, that with it He should **strike the nations**. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”*

### **3. The Sword in the Land**

#### **A. As watchmen, we are supposed to be watching for a sword in the land.**

- 1) Ezekiel 33:2-4, *“Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: ‘When I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, [3] when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, [4] then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes them away, his blood shall be on his own head.’”*
- 2) If you read the book of Revelation you will see the destruction that will take place in the last 3 ½ years when God’s Indignation—or His sword—is in the land reaping judgment.
  - a. When this takes place, there is no longer a need for a watchman because the destruction will be at hand and God’s judgment will not be turned back.
  - b. So, when do the watchmen need to warn the people? Prior to the time of God’s Indignation.

#### **B. How do we determine whether or not God’s sword is in the land?**

- 1) We read the prophecies of the Bible and familiarize ourselves with landmarks to watch for.
- 2) We do not create events to try and match Bible prophecy, we simply watch and identify the signs we see happening around us.
- 3) We do not predict Bible prophecy, we simply watch and see.
- 4) We do not “wait and see” because by then it will be too late.

#### **C. What evidence is there of God’s sword in the land that we can identify?**

- 1) Nahum 2:4 – The automobile.
- 2) Joel 2:4 – The motorcycle.
- 3) Ezekiel 10 – The airplane.
- 4) Zechariah 13:7-9 – The reformations of 1923 and 1957.
- 5) Acts 3:21 – The restoration of the Sabbath and the Feasts to the church.

### **4. Is God’s Sword in the Land Today?**

#### **A. Yes. It began with the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Towers in New York City.**

- 1) Zephaniah 1:14-18,
  - [14] *“The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out.*
  - [15] *That day is the day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.*
  - [16] **A day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers.**
  - [17] *I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse.*

[18] ***Neither their silver and their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land.***

**B. The key statement in this passage is “a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities against the high towers.”**

- 1) This statement is a very accurate description of the events that took place on 9/11/2001 when 2 jet airliners crashed into the World Trade Towers resulting in the death of 2,750 people.
- 2) This was the most prominent attack on American soil since the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.
- 3) This was a world-changing event...something drastic had taken place.
- 4) The towers were at one time the tallest buildings in the world.
- 5) 50,000 worked in the towers...and 200,000 visited it daily.
- 6) Fenced city: The Pentagon was attacked which is the centerpiece of our defense system. It's also interesting to note that the Pentagon is shaped like a courtyard—the buildings actually form a “fortress” around an inner courtyard.

**C. It's interesting to note that vs. 18 makes a reference to silver and gold along with the destruction of the high towers.**

- 1) The twin towers were located in the heart of New York City's financial district.
- 2) They were considered an icon of the USA's—and the world's for that matter—capitalistic economic system.
- 3) In the towers were the offices of approximately 500 companies—the majority of them were financial firms.
  - a. Citizens from over 90 countries were killed in the attack.

**5. What is the sword of God in the land today? It is the time of Jacob's trouble.**

**A. Who is Jacob?**

- 1) We believe that Jacob is Israel according to Scripture.
  - Genesis 32:28, “And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.”
  - So Jacob's Trouble can now be defined as “Israel's Trouble”.

**B. Where is Israel now?**

- 1) Israel has been scattered all over the world as a result of their punishment from God.
  - a. Ezekiel 4:13, “Then the LORD said, “So shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, where I will drive them.”
  - b. It's been called the Jewish Diaspora and it began when Nebuchadnezzar carried away the Jewish captives to Babylon (circa 606 BC).
  - c. The word *bread* can also be translated *supplies*.
  - d. New Living Translation: “Then the Lord said; “This is how Israel will eat defiled bread in the Gentile lands to which I will banish them.”

- 2) The Jews have been returning to Israel.
  - a. Jeremiah 30:3, *“For behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,’ says the LORD. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.”*
  - b. There are organizations today that focus on raising money to help Jews return to Israel. They ask individuals to sponsor airline tickets for displaced Jews to fly home to Israel.

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**REFER TO PAGE 42 – “Operation Exodus”**

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**6. What is Jacob’s (Israel’s) Trouble?**

**A. Where does the phrase come from?**

- 1) Jeremiah 30:7, *“Alas, For that day is great, so that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.”*
- 2) Hendrickson’s Pulpit Commentary says about verse 7:  
*“That day; “the day of Jehovah,” “the day of the great judgment upon the world, of which the fall of Babylon is regarded as the opening scene. It is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; rather, and a time of distress shall it be (even) to Jacob.”*
  - a. Note the introduction of the fall of Babylon into the time line.

**7. Identifying Israel’s Trouble**

**A. What does God say is Israel’s trouble?**

- 1) Jeremiah 30:8,9, *“For it shall come to pass in that day,’ says the LORD of hosts, **‘That I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them.** [9] *But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.”**
- 2) It’s important to recognize that with God there are only 2 types of people: Jew and Gentile.
- 3) So Israel’s trouble begins when God breaks the hold that the Gentiles have on the Jews and the whole world for that matter.
- 4) NOTE: It’s important to note that since Jesus Christ paid the price for everyone to be saved and subsequently born-again, it’s no longer the physical heritage that God is concerned about. In other words, God is not concerned whether or not you are born a Jew today, He is concerned about whether or not you have been born-again.
- 5) Romans 9:6-9 tells us that God’s Israel today are defined as those who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**\*\*\*KEY 6) Jacob/Israel’s Trouble is when God begins to remove the Gentile Babylonian system of confusion that has engulfed the entire world and oppressed His people.**

**B. Isaiah 13:1, *“The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.”***

- 1) **The city of Babylon is located approximately 55 miles south of Baghdad.**
  - a. The city now lies in ruins, but it is considered to be one of the most

famous ancient cities in the whole world. It was the capital of 10 Mesopotamian dynasties starting with the dynasty of King Hammurabi (1792-1750 BC).

- b. The last dynasty at which Babylon achieved its zenith, is well known particularly of its 2<sup>nd</sup> king, Nebuchadnezzar (605-563 BC), to whom most of Babylon's existing buildings belongs.
- c. Babylon was renowned for its high, well-fortified walls and for the magnificence of its temples and palaces.
- d. It was the site of the tower of Babel referenced in Genesis 11 where God confused the language of the earth and scattered the people over the face of the earth (Genesis 11:9).
- e. Excerpts from article dated January 15, 2005 from *The Guardian* entitled, "Babylon wrecked by war":

*"US-led forces leave a trail of destruction and contamination in architectural site of world importance."*

*"Troops from the US-led force in Iraq have caused widespread damage and severe contamination to the remains of the ancient city of Babylon, according to a damning report released by the British Museum."*

*"The ancient city has been used by US and Polish forces as a military depot for the past two years, despite objections from archaeologists."*

*"Babylon, a city renowned for its beauty and its splendor 1,000 years before Europe built anything comparable, was chosen as the site for a US military base in April 2003, just after the invasion of Iraq."*

*"The significance of Babylon is not lost on the coalition," he added. "The site dates back to the time of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, but there are very few visible original remains to the untrained eye."*

## **2) Saddam Hussein claimed to be a direct descendant of King Nebuchadnezzar.**

- a. Nebuchadnezzar is the Babylonian king who in 586 BC:
  1. Destroyed Jerusalem (II Kings 25:1, "...Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around.)
  2. Destroyed the temple of God (the temple that Solomon built for God).
    - II Kings 25:9, "He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire."
  3. Carried away the Jews into exile in Babylon.
    - II Kings 25:11a, "Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people who remained in the city..."
- b. According to Eric H. Cline, an assistant professor of ancient history and archaeology, "Saddam also portrays himself as the successor to Nebuchadnezzar. In 1979, he was quoted by his semi-official biographer as saying: "Nebuchadnezzar stirs in me everything relating to pre-Islamic ancient history. **And what is most important to me about**

**Nebuchadnezzar is the link between the Arab's abilities and the liberation of Palestine.**

- c. Cline further writes: *"In February 2001, one day after Ariel Sharon was first elected prime minister of Israel, **Saddam Hussein announced the formation of a "Jerusalem Army," consisting of seven million Iraqis who "volunteered to liberate Palestine" from Israeli rule.** In August 2001, the Associated Press reported that thousands of Iraqis had taken to the streets, waving guns and calling for the "liberation of Palestine" under Saddam's leadership. **Their banners read "Here we come Saddam...here we come Jerusalem"**" (Cline, Eric H., "Saddam Hussein and History 101", [www.gwu.edu/~bygeorge/030403/clineedit.htm](http://www.gwu.edu/~bygeorge/030403/clineedit.htm) 1).*
- d. Saddam Hussein considered it part of his destiny to continue the work of Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem.
- e. According to Steven Wagner, *"Saddam believes he is the literal reincarnation of King Nebuchadnezzar II, according to "investigative mythologist" William Henry and others...He is attempting to recreate and outdo the feats of the biblical king."*
- f. Wagner continues: *"It is well known that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has connected himself with Nebuchadnezzar, spending over \$500 million during the 1980s on the reconstruction and the re-establishment of ancient Babylon, the capitol of Nebuchadnezzar. **Over sixty million bricks have been made to place in the walls of Babylon, each engraved with the inscription 'To King Nebuchadnezzar in the reign of Saddam Hussein.'**" (Wagner, Steven, "Saddam Hussein and the Paranormal," [www.about.com](http://www.about.com))*

C. Israel's Trouble is defined in Isaiah 13,14.

1) Isaiah 13:1-10,14-16,19,22

[1] *"The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw."*

- **Notice that this is a prophecy about the fall of Babylon.**
- **Presiding Bishop Samuel Kramer declared in his PENTECOST 2009 Annual Address that "Babylon is Falling".**

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**REFER TO PAGE 39 – "The Three Primary Definitions of Babylon"**

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**SHOW BABYLON ON MAP ON PAGES 3 & 4**

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[2] *"Lift up a banner on the high mountain, Raise your voice to them; wave your hand, that they may enter the gates of the nobles.*

- [3] *I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones for My anger—Those who rejoice in My exaltation.*
- **How do we know that the “sanctified ones” are the USA? Because the USA is the one who did the work.**
  - **The USA is the “mighty one” on the world stage today.**
  - **The USA is the only country that has “In God We Trust” on our currency.**
  - **The USA is the only country that was founded on Biblical principles using the Word of God to help write our Constitution.**
- [4] *“The noise of a multitude in the mountains, Like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The Lord of hosts musters the army for battle.”*
- **When the USA invaded Iraq, they marched a noisy caravan right down the main road to Baghdad.**
  - **It was the USA who was attacked on 9/11.**
  - **However, the USA formed a coalition of many nations before they invaded Iraq.**
  - **Approximately 40 nations comprised the USA-led multinational force.**
- [5] *“They come from a far country, from the end of heavens—the Lord and His weapons of indignation, to destroy the whole land.”*
- [6] *“Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.”*
- **The hand of the Lord is the sword of the Lord.**
- [7] *“Therefore all hands will be limp, every man’s heart will melt,”*
- **Before the USA invaded Iraq they dropped millions of leaflets on the Iraqi people warning them to disarm themselves, otherwise they would be killed on sight.**
  - **The leaflets said: “Coalition Forces do not wish to harm the Iraqi people. For your safety and the safety of others DO NOT CARRY WEAPONS!”**
  - **If they do not have guns in their hands, their hands are limp.**
- [8] *“And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; they will be amazed at one another; their faces will be like flames.*
- [9] *Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.*
- [10] *For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine.”*
- **As the USA invading forces were advancing on Baghdad, they**

were stopped just short of Baghdad by a blinding sand storm.

- The sand storm blocked visibility and they found themselves unable to see anything.

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**REFER TO PAGE 45 – “Push North Hampered by Sandstorm”**

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[14] *“It shall be as the hunted gazelle, and as a sheep that no man takes up; every man will turn to his own people, and everyone will flee to his own land.”*

- Saddam Hussein was hunted down like a wild animal...in fact he was found hiding in a hole in the ground.
- Hussein kept running from place to place like a wild deer.
- What does it mean when it says “as a sheep that no man takes up”? The term refers to a sheep that has fallen on its back and is completely vulnerable. If the sheep is not turned over, it will die.
- Notice how no Arab nations came to the rescue of Iraq. No ally stepped forward to help Iraq fight against the USA-led coalition.
- The reference to every man returning to their own people shows that the USA and coalition will leave Iraq. In fact, many nations have already abandoned the coalition and returned home.

[15] *“Everyone who is found will be thrust through, and everyone who is captured will fall by the sword.*

[16] *Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished.”*

- After the USA freed the Iraqis from Hussein’s iron fist, they rioted in the streets and looted the homes and palaces, and ravished the people—raping the women and killing indiscriminately.
- Also, the suicide bombers kill everyone in the immediate vicinity...men, women, children...they kill indiscriminately.

[19] *“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”*

- How did God overthrow Sodom and Gomorrah? He rained down fire and brimstone from heaven.
- When the USA-led coalition attacked Baghdad (the site of the original Babylon), they attacked them with planes and bombs from the heavens.
- The program was called, “Shock and Awe.”

[22] *“The hyenas will howl in their citadels, and jackals in their pleasant places. Her time is near to come, and her days will not be prolonged.”*

- The word *citadel* means *a fortress protecting a city*.
- Since the invasion of Iraq, the capital of Baghdad has been divided into different zones that are petitioned off by walls and barbed wire.
- The Green Zone...is the walled-off district of Saddam's former presidential complex...serves as the command center for the war.
- The news has been full of suicide bombers attacking temples, mosques, and shopping places.
- Hyenas and jackals are wild dogs/creatures that kill indiscriminately and they are known as scavengers.

## 2) Isaiah 14:1-11,18-32

[1] *"For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob."*

- **Again, Jacob/Israel is prophecied to return to Israel.**
- **They are building a security wall to protect themselves.**

[2] *"Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD: they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors."*

- **We've already established that entire ministries have been formed for Christians to help sponsor airline tickets to return the Jewish people to Israel.**
- **It's interesting to note that the Arabs in Israel today are generally the lower class of citizens that work as maids and domestic help.**

[3] *"It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve,*

[4] *that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: "How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!"*

- **The oppressor is Babylon. Saddam is not there.**
- **Saddam used to fund the suicide bombers in Israel. He would pay \$25,000 to each family whose son would carry out a suicide bomber attack.**
- **Since his death, the suicide bombers in Israel have essentially stopped.**

[5] *"The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers;"*

- **The USA produced a deck of cards that listed the family and**

**regime of Saddam Hussein. Each member had a card and they were considered the most wanted in Iraq.**

- **The family members of Saddam were killed.**

[6] *“He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he who ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted and no one hinders.*

[7] *The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.”*

- **After 9/11, President Bush stated that he would not allow anyone or anything to destroy our peace.**

[8] *“Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, ‘Since you were cut down, no woodsman has come up against us.’*

[9] *Hell from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming; it stirs up the dead for you, all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.*

[10] *They all shall speak and say to you: Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us?*

[11] *Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, and the sound of your stringed instruments; the maggot is spread under you, and worms cover you.’*

[18] *“All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, everyone in his own house.”*

- **The USA-led coalition will leave Iraq.**

[19] *“But you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, like the garment of those who are slain, thrust through with a sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a corpse trodden underfoot.*

[20] *You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named.”*

- **Saddam was buried like a pauper in his hometown.**
- **He was not buried like a king...like the other leaders of Babylon.**
- **Saddam was found guilty of mass killings of his people.**

[21] *“Prepare slaughter for his children because of the iniquity of their fathers, lest they rise up and possess the land, and fill the face of the world with cities.”*

- **Saddam’s sons were killed and their bodies shown on worldwide television to prove to all that they indeed were dead.**
- **People were afraid that Saddam’s regime would come back...they wanted proof that the sons were dead.**

[22] *“For I will rise up against them,” says the LORD of hosts, “And cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and offspring and posterity,” says the LORD.*

- [23] *"I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and marshes of muddy water; I will sweep it with the broom of destruction, says the LORD of hosts.*
- [24] **The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand:**

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**REFER TO PAGES 43 & 44 – "Bin Laden: I ordered 9/11 attack"**

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- [25] *That I will break the Assyrian in My land, and on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders.*
- [26] *This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations."*
- **God's purpose was not just Babylon, His purpose starts there and goes throughout the whole world.**
- [27] *"For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?"*
- **On December 30, 2006, Iraqi Dictator Saddam Hussein was executed (by hanging).**
  - **President Bush ordered a "Surge" in Iraq on January, 2007.**
  - **It was after the surge that Iraq settled down considerably.**
  - **This was the beginning of the removal of God's hand from Iraq.**
- [28] *"This is the burden which came in the year that King Ahaz died.*
- [29] *"Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia, because the rod that struck you is broken; for out of the serpent's roots will come forth a viper, and its offspring will be a fiery serpent.*
- **The original rod that struck Babylon happened in August 1990 when USA President George H. W. Bush attacked Iraq after they invaded Kuwait (the Persian Gulf War also known in the USA as "Operation Desert Storm").**
  - **The serpent's root is former President George W. Bush's (the elder Bush's son) campaign against Iraq after the 9/11 attack.**
  - **The last Bush was more venomous than his father.**
- [30] *"The firstborn of the poor will feed, and the needy will lie down in safety; I will kill your roots with famine, and it will slay your remnant.*
- [31] *Wail, O gate! Cry, O city! All you of Philistia are dissolved; for smoke will come from the north, and no one will be alone in his appointed times."*
- [32] *What will they answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD has founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall take refuge in it."*

**8. Now what?**

**A. Zechariah 12:2 says that Jerusalem will become a cup of trembling.**

- 1) Zechariah 12:2, KJV, *“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege against Judah and against Jerusalem.”*
  - a. This is happening now.
  - b. Can we agree that Jerusalem is under siege by terrorism today?
  - c. Do we recognize the whole world is watching and wondering whether or not Israel will strike Iran over its nuclear program?
  - d. It is an accepted fact that Israel is increasingly coming under isolation from all of the nations of the world.

**B. What is the next step in God’s plan?**

- 1) For Israel to become completely isolated from all other nations.
  - a. Zechariah 12:3, KJV, *“And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”*
  - b. Israel is becoming a political liability to its allies.
  - c. They have come under heavy condemnation for their retaliation against Gaza in the winter of 2008/2009. They were accused of crimes against civilians, using cluster bombs, using unnecessary force, etc. They have been condemned by the world.

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**REFER TO PAGE 46 – “Palestinians call for Israel to be ‘punished’ for Gaza offensive”**

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- d. They are beginning to be a weight to the USA. President Obama has not shown the same commitment to Israel as former President Bush...and the Israelis are very concerned.
  - A Jerusalem Post poll from June 2009 showed that only 6 percent of Israeli Jews think that he [Barack Obama] is pro-Israel and a more recent Haaretz poll showed that a mere 12 percent of Israelis think Obama is supportive of Israel.
- e. Rahm Emanuel—considered to be a very conservative Jew (at least politically)—served as one of Obama’s top advisors. He was routinely condemned by the media in Israel as having abandoned the Jewish people because he did not influence Obama to be more supportive of Israel.
  - “Emanuel is widely perceived as being a self-hating Jew who is determined to prove himself to Obama by sticking it to Israel” (“Court Jew, Rahm Emmanuel...Israel knows it, too”, August 27, 2009, <http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com>)

- f. In June 2009 Obama spoke to a very large crowd in Cairo, Egypt. In that speech Obama likened the plight of the Gazans/Palestinians to that of the Jews during the Holocaust.
  - g. One writer wrote: *"While the professionalism and conviction with which Obama delivered his speech was praised by some Israeli officials, others **felt the president's reference to the Holocaust followed by a direct passage where he spoke of the suffering and humiliation of the Palestinian people was hurtful and unnecessary.**"* (UPI.com, "Israeli Response to Obama Speech Divided", June 4, 2009)
- 2) While Zechariah 12:3 is the beginning of Israel becoming a weight to all the world, it is not the scenario described in Zechariah 14:4 when all the nations of the world come against Israel in the battle of Armageddon.
- a. It is the build-up to the Armageddon scenario.

## **9. When will Jacob's/Israel's Trouble end?**

### **A. When Jesus returns at the 7<sup>th</sup> trump to destroy the armies of this world.**

- 1) Zechariah 14:3,4, *"Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. [4] And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south."*

## **10. Conclusion**

In Ezekiel 33 we are told to be watchmen for the people. What are we watching for? God's sword/hand in the land. What do we see happening in the land today? The beginning of Jacob's/Israel's Trouble.

What is Jacob's/Israel's Trouble? When God begins to bring judgment on Babylon. This began after 9/11/2001 when the USA-led coalition invaded Iraq, the original location of Babylon. This time of trouble will continue until the 7<sup>th</sup> Trump return of Jesus when He destroys the armies of this world in the battle of Armageddon.

# LAST DAYS PROPHECY SEMINAR

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## LESSON ONE • SUPPLEMENT #1: “How do we Interpret Prophecy?”

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[NOTE: For more information on this subject read the Manual of Apostles' Doctrine and Procedure, V,A,1,c. “Interpretation of Prophecy”]

Since God never changes and uses the same principles for the manifestation of His work in succeeding generations, particular passages of prophecy often have multiple fulfillments. Generally these are manifest in three dimensions: the historical, the spiritual, and the future national; however, there are many passages that have more than three fulfillments.

### **1. THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF PROPHECY**

#### **A. HISTORICAL**

- 1) God uses prophecy to foretell an event that literally takes place...it becomes part of history.
- 2) No prophecy can be fully understood unless its historical fulfillment is comprehended first.
- 3) Example: II Kings 20:17, *“Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried away to Babylon; nothing shall be left,” says the LORD.*”
- 4) This prophecy was given to Hezekiah—king of Judah—from Isaiah approximately 701 BC.
- 5) This prophecy was literally fulfilled in approximately 587 BC when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed Solomon’s Temple and burned the city of Jerusalem and carried away the Temple instruments and the people of Israel into the captivity of Babylon. Read the account in II Kings 25.
- 6) After the historical fulfillment of a particular prophecy is understood, spiritual and future national fulfillments may also be developed.

#### **B. SPIRITUAL**

- 1) God uses prophecy to foretell a spiritual event that will take place.
- 2) Example: Isaiah 1:21, *“How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.”*
- 3) This is a prophecy concerning spiritual Jerusalem—the city of God.
- 4) This prophecy was spiritually fulfilled in 325 AD when the Roman Empire merged itself together with the remnant of the Early Church that Jesus instituted. The faithful city that Jesus authored, became a harlot and full of murders.

- 5) "Historians estimate that, in the Middle Ages and Early Reformation Era, more than 50,000,000 Martyrs perished." (*Halley's Bible Handbook*, pg. 726)

### **C. FUTURE NATIONAL**

- 1) God uses prophecies to foretell events that will happen in the future.
- 2) Example: Jeremiah 30:3, "*For behold, the days are coming', says the LORD, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the LORD. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.'*"
- 3) This prophecy is in the process of being fulfilled now; however, it will be ultimately fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns and establishes His millennial reign in Jerusalem.

## **2. EXAMPLE OF ALL 3 DIMENSIONS IN ONE PROPHECY**

A. The prophecy of Amos 9:11-15: "*In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that does this.*"

- 1) This prophecy was written in approximately 758 BC.
- 2) At the time this prophecy was written, the Temple of God was standing in Jerusalem.

B. HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT – This prophecy was literally and historically fulfilled in the days of the rebuilding of the temple of Solomon which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

- 1) 960 BC – Solomon's Temple built in Jerusalem
- 2) 585 BC – Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, destroyed Solomon's Temple and carried the Jews away into captivity.
- 3) 515 BC – Solomon's Temple rebuilt in Jerusalem.

C. SPIRITUAL FULFILLMENT – During the work of the Early Church, James declared this prophecy was again fulfilled spiritually in the rebuilding of the spiritual house of David that was the Early Church and in the bringing of Gentiles into that house.

D. FUTURE NATIONAL – This prophecy is again in the process of being fulfilled in the Last Days when the church (tabernacle of David) is being restored among the Gentiles. And, Amos 9:11-15 will be fulfilled in the Last Days when the nation of Israel will be planted in their own land never to be removed again.

# LAST DAYS PROPHECY SEMINAR

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## LESSON ONE • Supplement #2: “The Three Primary Definitions of Babylon”

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### **1. There are 3 primary definitions of Babylon talked about in the Bible.**

#### **A. First: The physical Babylon that began in Genesis 11 when God confused the languages of the world and scattered the people.**

- 1) Genesis 11:9 *“Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.”*

#### **B. Second: The Babylonian Empire which influences nations to this present day.**

- 1) The Babylonian Empire ruled the world from 606 – 536 BC during part of the time the Old Testament was written.
- 2) This is the general confusion that persists in the world concerning God and His truth faith.
- 3) Jeremiah 51:7, *“Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD’s hand, that made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore the nations are deranged.”*
  - Notice the reference to ALL THE EARTH. Babylon’s influence continues today.

#### **C. Third: The Roman Catholic Church. It is the false church that professes to be the Bride of Christ.**

- 1) Revelations 17:3-6
  - [3] *“So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*
  - [4] *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.*
  - [5] *And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*
  - [6] *I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.”*

- a. In the Scriptures, the Bride of Christ is referred to as a woman.
- b. The same is true of the false church.
- c. Song of Solomon 6:8,9 *"...sixty queens, eighty concubines...virgins without number...but My dove...is the only one of her mother..."*

2) Revelation 18:7, *"In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.'"*

**D. The Bible student must be aware of the multiple definitions for Babylon used in the Bible.**

- 1) One must read the context of the scripture passage to determine which Babylon is being referenced.

# Apocalypse Now?

YOU MIGHT REMEMBER Edgar Whisenant. He wrote a best-selling book titled *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*—and a much less popular sequel, *The Final Shout: Rapture Report 1989*. The second book said Jesus didn't come back in 1988 because the author missed his mathematical calculations by a year.



*Wrong emphasis on eschatology causes us to lose sight of the Great Commission.*

The mood of the 1980s was uneasy. After Ronald Reagan was elected president, some Christians surmised that Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev was the Antichrist. When he died they gave the title to the next Soviet leader, Yuri Andropov, and then to his successor, Konstantin Chernenko. When Chernenko died unexpectedly, people were certain that Mikhail Gorbachev was the Antichrist because he had a red birthmark on his forehead.

But Jesus didn't return during Gorbachev's tenure. In fact, the Soviet system crumbled and Christian missionary activity blossomed all over the cold Russian landscape. The doom-and-gloom crowd found someone else to fill the Antichrist's shoes. First it was Bill Gates, then Osama bin Laden. Today it's a toss-up between Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez.

We've been tossed around by silly rumors of global conspiracy. One warned that J.C. Penney credit cards carried the mark of the beast. If you believe everything you read on the Internet, that same mark is on President Obama's birth certificate.

All this foolish prognostication bothers me because Jesus made it strictly off-limits. He said, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority" (Acts 1:7, NASB). We don't have the right to predict the date of His return or to guess the timeline of the final judgment.

The apostle Paul also warned the early church to avoid date-setting. He told Timothy: "But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels" (2 Tim. 2:23). Paul wanted his followers to keep their focus on the main thing—the spreading of the gospel—so they wouldn't get sidetracked.

Christians hold different views of the last days. Premillennialists focus on the rapture of the church—an event described in the New Testament. Postmillennialists emphasize the triumph of Christ through history—a theme of the book of Revelation.

When people ask me about my eschatological position I tell them I am a "pan-millennialist" (as in: "It will all pan out in the end"). I know Jesus will return in triumph. But we can't figure out these things beforehand. Anyone who claims to be an "expert" in the mysteries of Christ's return forgot that Jesus Himself said, "Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Matt. 24:36).

What concerns me most about an unhealthy focus on eschatology is that it distracts us from the priority of evangelism.

People who get carried away by rapture fever can become escapists. I've met Christians who want Jesus to come back tomorrow even though there are entire tribes in Asia and Africa that have never heard the gospel. I know smug postmillennialists who were so happy that God's kingdom is advancing that they felt no responsibility to reach the lost. And I know Christians who are so focused on Israel that they forget the rest of the world.

In all these cases a wrong emphasis on eschatology causes us to lose sight of the Great Commission.

No great Christian revivals of the past were triggered by date-setting, rapture fever or prophecy seminars. John Wesley preached the atonement of Christ and the reality of hell. William and Catherine Booth wept for souls and preached salvation throughout England. Revivalist Charles Spurgeon rebuked the preachers of his day for their eschatological speculations. He wrote:

"O that Christ crucified were the universal burden of men of God. Your guess at the number of the beast ... your conjectures concerning a personal Antichrist—forgive me, I count them but mere bones for dogs; while men are dying, and hell is filling, it seems to me the veriest drivel to be muttering about an Armageddon. ... I would sooner pluck one single brand from the burning than explain all mysteries."

If only the American church would leave the distractions behind and return to a healthy focus on what really matters.

» J. LEE GRADY is editor of *Charisma*. You can find him on Twitter at [leegrady](#).

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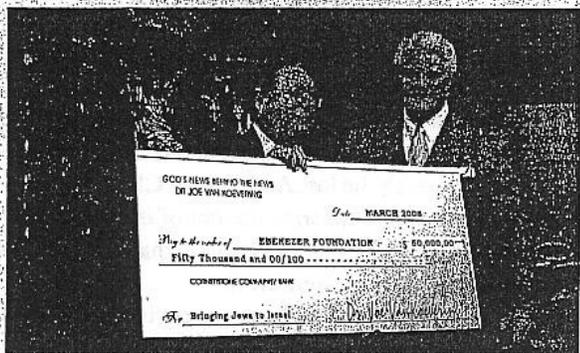
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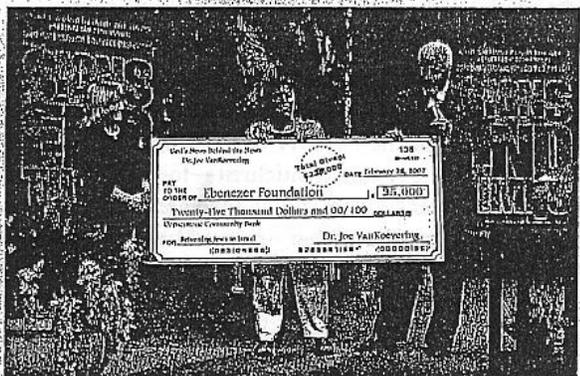
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I believe they will never be uprooted again, according to Amos 9:15 -

*"I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them," Says the LORD your God." (NKJV)*

In times of trouble, Israel is being re-gathered to the Promised Land as the prophets foretold. The most significant sign of the lateness of the hour is this prophesied restoration of the Jewish people to the land that God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as an everlasting possession. There is a mighty move of God in Israel. There is a genuine openness among the Jewish people.

God's News has made a long-term financial commitment to assist in bringing these Jewish emigrants home. You and I are literally helping to fulfill prophecy. The actual cost to bring one Jewish person out of exile can vary, depending upon their circumstances and country. Many of these Russian Jews flee growing anti-Semitism with the clothes on their backs and a few boxes of personal belongings, as well as a hope that someone like you and I will help them return to the land given them by God. Will you help us today? Call 1-800-366-1463.

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We have turned on the "porchlight of peace" to these disadvantaged chosen people. We must put our faith, prayers and finances to work IMMEDIATELY before the rising tide of anti-Semitism gains more ground! That "door of escape" for God's chosen people is still open. ■

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# Bin Laden: I ordered 9/11 attack

## Video references events of 2004

BY MAGGIE MICHAEL  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

CAIRO, Egypt — Osama bin Laden, publicly injecting himself into the campaign four days ahead of presidential elections, said in a videotape aired Friday that the United States can avoid another Sept. 11 attack if it stops threatening the security of Muslims.

In the segment broadcast, the al-Qaida leader refrained from directly warning of new attacks, although he said "there are still reasons to repeat what happened."

"Your security is not in the hands of Kerry, Bush or



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Al-Jazeera broadcast a video Friday in which Osama bin Laden said the U.S. can prevent further attacks by not threatening Muslims.

PLEASE SEE BIN LADEN ON 10A

# Bin Laden lashes out at Bush family

CONTINUED FROM 1A

al-Qaida. Your security is in your own hands," bin Laden said, referring to the president and his Democratic opponent. "Any state that does not mess with our security, has naturally guaranteed its own security."

Admitting for the first time that he ordered the Sept. 11 attacks, bin Laden said he did so because of injustices against the Lebanese and Palestinians by Israel and the United States.

In what appeared to be conciliatory language, bin Laden said he wanted to explain why he ordered the suicide airline hijackings that hit the World Trade Center and the Pentagon so Americans would know how to act to prevent another attack.

"To the American people, my talk is to you about the best way to avoid another Manhattan," he said. "I tell you: Security is an important element of human life and free people do not give up their security."

It was the first footage in more than a year of the fugitive al-Qaida leader, thought to be hiding in the mountains along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

The Bush administration said it believes the videotape, which carries English subtitles, is authentic and was made recently. A U.S. official noted that bin Laden mentions that it has been four years since Sept. 11, 2001, and that U.S. casualties in Iraq have reached 1,000. That death toll was reached in early September.

White House press secretary Scott McClellan said the administration did not plan to raise the nation's threat level for now. The U.S. official said the 18-minute tape lacks an explicit threat and repeats well-worn themes.

There was no way to determine exactly when the tape was made — but it offered evidence that bin Laden was alive and following events.

Bin Laden accused Bush of misleading Americans by saying the attack was carried out because al-Qaida "hates

**"God knows that it had not occurred to our mind to attack the towers, but after our patience ran out and we saw the injustice and inflexibility of the American-Israeli alliance toward our people in Palestine and Lebanon, this came to my mind."**

**Osama bin Laden**

*tape broadcast on al-Jazeera*

freedom." The terrorist leader said his followers have left alone countries that do not threaten Muslims.

"We fought you because we are free ... and want to regain freedom for our nation. As you undermine our security we undermine yours."

He said he was first inspired to attack the United States by the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon in which towers and buildings in Beirut were destroyed in the siege.

"While I was looking at these destroyed towers in Lebanon, it sparked in my mind that the tyrant should be punished with the same and that we should destroy towers in America, so that it tastes what we taste and would be deterred from killing our children and women."

"God knows that it had not occurred to our mind to attack the towers, but after our patience ran out and we saw the injustice and inflexibility of the American-Israeli alliance toward our people in Palestine and Lebanon, this came to my mind," he said.

Bin Laden suggested Bush was slow to react to the Sept. 11 attacks. At the time of the attacks, the president was listening to schoolchildren in Florida reading a book.

"It never occurred to us that the commander-in-chief of the American armed forces would leave 50,000 of his citizens in the two towers to face these horrors alone," he said.

goat and its butting was more important than the planes and their butting of the skyscrapers. That gave us three times the required time to carry out the operations, thank God," he said.

Excluding the hijackers, the Sept. 11 attacks killed 2,749 people at the World Trade Center, 184 at the Pentagon and 40 in Pennsylvania.

In planning the attacks, bin Laden said he told Mohammed Atta, one of the hijackers, that the strikes had to be carried out "within 20 minutes before Bush and his administration noticed."

Bin Laden also said the Bush administration was like repressive Arab regimes "in that half of them are ruled by the military and the other half are ruled by the sons of kings and presidents."

He said the resemblance became clear when Bush's father was president and visited Arab countries.

"He wound up being impressed by the royal and military regimes and envied them for staying decades in their positions and embezzling the nation's money with no supervision," bin Laden said.

"He passed on tyranny and oppression to his son, and they called it the Patriot Act, under the pretext of fighting terror. Bush the father did well in placing his sons as governors and did not forget to pass on the expertise in fraud from the leaders of the (Mideast) region to Florida to use it in critical moments."

The image of bin Laden reading a statement was dramatically different from the few other videos of the al-Qaida leader.

In the last videotape, issued Sept. 10, 2003, bin Laden is seen walking through rocky terrain with his top deputy Ayman al-Zawahri, both carrying automatic rifles. In a taped message issued then, bin Laden praises the "great damage to the enemy" on Sept. 11 and mentions five hijackers by name.

But in none of his previous messages, audio or video, did bin Laden directly state that he ordered the attacks.

The last audiotape purportedly from bin Laden came in April. The speaker on the tape offered a truce to European nations if they pull troops out

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# Push north hampered by sandstorm



March 26 2003, 12:13 AM

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Both sides are girding for the coming battle of Baghdad as US

armoured columns advanced from two directions, coming within 80km of the capital before sandstorm - and a formidable Iraqi army - forced a delay.

The storm has cut visibility to as few as 20 metres, severely restricting the operations of air support. Columns of tanks, artillery and other vehicles were reduced to a crawl. Reports suggest the storms may intensify and possibly hamper operations for several days.

Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi leaders vowed resistance, and US and British leaders warned that the contest for Baghdad could be bloody. Two divisions of Saddam's elite and loyal Republican Guard troops - about 20,000 fighters - were believed to stand between allied forces and the centre of Saddam's regime.

There are unconfirmed claims by unnamed US officials that Saddam has given his hardened Republican Guard the authority to use chemical weapons.

Five days into Operation Iraqi Freedom, resistance prevented American and British forces from securing the southern cities of Basra and Nasiriyah and thwarted efforts to extinguish burning oil wells.

Saddam sought to rally his own country in a televised appearance. "Be patient, brothers, because God's victory will be ours soon," he said, appearing in full military garb and seeming more composed than in a taped appearance broadcast last week.

Despite Saddam's defiant pose, a military barracks in the northern part of the country was bombed, and Baghdad fell under renewed air attack by day and by night. Iraqis set up mortar positions south of the city and piled sandbags around government buildings and other strategic locations, in evident anticipation of a battle to come.

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Inside the Middle East

# Palestinians call for Israel to be 'punished' for Gaza offensive

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### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- U.N. group presents scathing report on Israel's conduct during Gaza offensive
- Palestinians urge U.N. to address alleged crimes; Israel condemns report
- Report accuses Israel of "actions amounting to war crimes" during offensive
- Report finds Palestinian militants also committed war crimes

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\* SEPT. 29, 2009

(CNN) — Palestinians on Tuesday urged the United Nations to "punish" Israel as a scathing U.N. report accused the nation of war crimes during its military offensive in Gaza last winter.



A Palestinian boy kicks a football outside damaged homes in northern Gaza in January 2009.

But Israel rejected the investigation as one-sided and shameful.

The report accused Israel of committing "actions amounting to war crimes, possibly crimes against humanity" during its military incursion into Gaza from December 27 to January 18.

Richard Goldstone, the South African judge who headed the U.N. investigation into the conflict, demanded that someone be held responsible for crimes committed during it.

"The lack of accountability for war crimes and possible crimes against humanity has reached a crisis point," Goldstone said Tuesday. "This is the time of action."

He formally presented the report to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland on Tuesday.

It claims that the Israeli Defense Forces "failed to

take feasible precautions required by international law to avoid or minimize loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects."

Ibrahim Khraishi, the Palestinian Authority's ambassador to the United Nations, called the report professional and unbiased.

"This report should not be another report to just document and archive," said Khraishi. "My people will not forgive this council if they let these criminals go unpunished."

But Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Aharon Leshno-Yaar, questioned the report in strong language Tuesday, calling it one-sided and shameful.

"This report is based on carefully picked incidents, cherry-picked for political effect," Leshno-Yaar said. "The authors of this fact-finding report had little thought about finding facts."

Israel did not cooperate in the U.N. investigation, calling it flawed and biased.

There is an ongoing dispute about the number of people killed in the three-week military offensive which Israel called Operation Cast Lead.

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The Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights put the death toll at 1,419 and said that 1,167 of those were "non-combatants."

The Israeli military released its own figures earlier this year, claiming 1,166 people were killed and that 60 percent of those were "terror operatives."

A separate report released earlier this month by Israeli human rights organization B'tselem put the death toll at 1,387, claiming that more than half of those killed were civilians.

Israel has said it "had both a right and an obligation to take military action against Hamas in Gaza to stop Hamas' almost incessant rocket and mortar attacks upon thousands of Israeli civilians and its other acts of terrorism."

Hamas is the militant Palestinian movement which governs Gaza. It rejects Israel's right to exist.

The U.N. report said Israel fired the chemical agent white phosphorus in civilian areas, intentionally fired upon

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