

Coming Soon Is America In Biblical Prophecy

A Russian professor named Igor Panarin has been predicting for a decade that the U.S. will fall apart. It will happen, he says, because of unrestrained immigration, economic decline and moral degradation that will fracture the United States and lead to a civil war, the collapse of the dollar, and the breaking apart of America into **six pieces (slide)**, with Alaska reverting back to Russia. He even gives odds, 55 to 45%, that it will actually happen. And he's not some nut job, Professor Panarin has gotten the attention of newspapers from *The Wall Street Journal* to the *Huffington Post*. He's a former KGB analyst and dean of the Russian Foreign Ministry's academy for future diplomats. Frequently invited to Kremlin receptions, he lectures students, publishes books and is a Russian media consultant on U.S.-Russia relations. A 50ish, polite, cheerful man with a buzz cut, Mr. Panarin insists he does not dislike Americans, but he warns that the outlook for them is dire.

From a biblical standpoint, there's nothing inherently implausible about his thesis. All human empires eventually come to an end. Only one kingdom is eternal—the kingdom Jesus Christ will establish when He returns.

Yet, we Americans think we're virtually untouchable among the nations. While I put no particular faith in what this Russian professor said, let's not forget that he lives in a country that a mere twenty-five years ago went by a different name and seemed invincible, the U.S.S.R. That's why today, as part of our **Coming Soon** study, we're seeking to answer the question: **Is America in Biblical Prophecy?**

Students of Bible prophecy often wonder why Scripture contains no clear allusions to the United States in the end time events that lead up to the return of Jesus Christ. There's little question that we're living in the days when God is shaking the nations in preparation for the coming of the Lord. Turn to Hebrews 12:26-29 (p. 1009). The writer of Hebrews warns us that we need to get ready for more shaking to come. Why?

1. God gives us a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. A passenger jet was going through a severe thunderstorm. As the passengers were being bounced around by the turbulence, a young woman turned to a minister sitting next to her and with a nervous laugh asked, "Reverend, you're a man of God, can't you do something about this storm?" To which he replied, "Lady, I'm in sales, not management." That's us. We're in sales, not management. No matter what happens to America, no matter what happens in this world, we must always remember that our God is a great God and we are part of a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. *"Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken"* (vs. 28).

There are several things to note about this kingdom. First, we've already received it, and yet it is still to come in its fullness. *"Receiving"* is a present participle, implying that we're in the process of receiving this kingdom. At salvation, we've already come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God and the heavenly Jerusalem, yet in another sense, we've not come to this city in its final form. That awaits the second coming of the King. The word *"receive"* also means that we don't work to merit this kingdom. It's a gift that God freely bestows on all those who believe in His Son. Finally, it's *"a kingdom that*

cannot be shaken.”That means it will outlast all earthly kingdoms, it will outlast America and all the kingdoms of this earth. Because it is God’s kingdom, it will remain “*forever and ever*” (Hebrews 1:8).

Every earthly kingdom that has been established has or will eventually fall to another, more powerful, kingdom. The history of the world is that of the rise and fall of kingdoms. Men like Alexander the Great devoted their lives to establishing these kingdoms, only to die and have their kingdoms broken up. The only kingdom that will endure is the kingdom of God and we are privileged to be members of this kingdom by His grace. Even if we are persecuted to death, God’s eternal kingdom cannot be shaken, and we are heirs of it through faith in Christ.

2. God was sovereignly involved in the founding of America. Every day when the sun rises over Washington DC, its first rays fall on the eastern side of the city's tallest structure, the 555-foot Washington Monument. The first part of that monument to reflect the rising sun is the east side of its aluminum capstone, where these words are inscribed: *Laus Deo*, which is Latin for “*Praise be to God.*” This compact prayer of praise, visible to the eyes of heaven alone, is tacit recognition of our nation's unique acknowledgment of the place of God in its founding and its continuance.

As we examine our nation’s history and impact in the world, it seems that God does have a plan for America though we have no direct reference to that plan in the Bible. That, though, does not discount the evident fact that God has a sovereign purpose for America in His redemptive plan.

From the birth of the United States and throughout our history, we see America's leaders turning to God for guidance. We see George Washington kneeling in the snow of Valley Forge. We see our Founding Fathers on their knees at the first Continental Congress. We see the gaunt Lincoln praying in the hour of national crisis. We see Woodrow Wilson reading his Bible late at night by the White House lights. Washington summarized this national dependence on God, which was evident before his time and continued after him, when he said, “*No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of man more than those of the United States.*” More recently, President Ronald Reagan believed that God had a plan for our nation, writing, “*I have always believed that this anointed land was set apart in an uncommon way, that a divine plan placed this great continent here between the oceans to be found by people from every corner of the earth who had a special love of faith and freedom.*”

Clearly America did not become the land of the free and the home of the brave by blind fate or some happy set of coincidences. A benevolent God was hovering over this nation from her very conception so that today, although America has only 5% of the world's population, she has more than 50% of the modern luxuries that characterize civilization.

Why has God blessed this nation above all other lands? Why has America in her short history outstripped the wealth, power, and influence of all ancient and modern civilizations? Can God have blessed a nation so richly without having for her a pivotal purpose? What is God's plan for America? What is its place in end-time prophecy? These are questions many people are asking as they watch events coalesce toward

world crises. They wonder how America fits into what's going on in the world. Yet, to understand America's place in end-time prophecy, we must first answer the question: *Why has America been blessed above all other lands?* Let's explore some of the **reasons** for God's favor on America, and then we'll seek to show what this means in terms of coming events.

a. America has been a great force behind world missions almost since her founding. To the United States belongs the distinction of providing three-fourths of the missionaries of the last century and approximately the same amount of money and material aid. This means that 75% of all missionaries have come from a country boasting only 5% of the total world population. God blesses those who make His priorities their priorities.

God has blessed America because we've been the launching pad of the world's great missionary movement. In the aftermath of World War II, Americans started 1,800 missions agencies, sending out more than 350,000 missionaries. As a result today, 95% of the world's population have access, not only to some portion of Scripture in their language, but also to Christian radio, media, and Gospel outreaches via the Internet. That achievement is due largely to the missionary zeal of churches in the United States.

b. America has been a friend to the Jewish people. America has been a friend to Israel. Sometimes we forget that not every nation in the Middle East hates us. **(slide waving American flag in Tel Aviv).**

Since the turn of the twentieth century, Jews have made up 3% of the total population of the United States, where they've been protected from harassment and anti-Semitism. America has given Jews opportunity for economic, educational, and cultural advancement without fear of losing their religious freedom. America's historic support of Israel is based not so much on efforts by Jewish lobbyists in Washington or the presence of Jewish groups in our society, but on the Judeo-Christian heritage of our nation.

In 1948, President Truman's determination, in spite of the opposition of many of his advisors including Secretary of State, George Marshall, to recognize Israel as a nation was fueled by his lifelong belief that in the book of Deuteronomy, God had given the land of Israel to the Jewish people for all time. As we talked about last weekend, God has promised to bless those who bless Israel (Genesis 12:1-3). He's amply fulfilled that promise. America has been abundantly blessed as a nation because we have blessed the Jews.

c. America has been a free nation. If you study the Bible, you'll find that the principles of freedom are united with the tenets of Christianity. Historically, America has been the laboratory where those blended principles can grow and develop, and become an example to all the world. Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32).

Yet, freedom can never be taken for granted in our world. According to Freedom House's annual survey, 3 billion people, 46% of the world's population—live in a free to partly free country. Conversely, 54% or more than half the population of the world do not live in freedom. The tendency in a fallen world is always away from freedom and toward despotism and tyranny.

America has been a paradise of human liberty—a great oasis in a global desert of trouble, suffering, repression, and tyranny. Our nation is a dramatic exclamation point to

the assertion that freedom works! Yet, tragically our precious heritage of freedom is being challenged internally by the erosion of our culture. As long-held freedoms come under fire, some Americans, particularly those with wealth, are deciding that the United States is no longer the best place to live. According to the book, *Getting Out: Your Guide to Leaving America*, some 300,000 Americans a year are choosing to leave the country. It's the first time in history that the number of people exiting this nation has become large enough to be significant, and the emergence of such a trend calls our attention to the degenerating character of America. If our culture continues to jettison the principles that made our nation great, we can hardly expect the blessing of Almighty God to continue.

d. America was founded on a Judeo-Christian ethic. It's no mystery why America's founders insisted on the principle of freedom. Their dependence on the God of the Bible led them to subject themselves to Him as the ultimate authority for law rather than set themselves up as autocrats with the audacity to control the lives of their subjects. Because they submitted to God's authority, He's blessed this nation as none has been blessed in recent history. The Psalmist wrote, "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance*" (Psalm 33:12). The book of Proverbs adds, "*Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*" (14:34).

America's founders and early leaders exhibited humble reliance on Almighty God. Godly dependence characterized our governmental philosophy through several generations and resulted in God's blessings on our nation. Our leaders stabilized government with a lifeline between their country and their God, with authority and blessing flowing downward as dependence and thanksgiving flowed upward.

Our first President, George Washington, set the tone for the nation's governmental authority when he said, "*It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.*" That philosophy remained intact through the time of Abraham Lincoln, who's quoted as saying, "*God is my witness that it is my constant anxiety and prayer that both myself and this nation should be on the Lord's side.*"

But today our heritage of national dependence on God is under fire. Forces within our nation threaten its divine lifeline. The attitude of many in our culture today seems symbolized by the powerful legal tides now trying to remove the words *under God* from the Pledge of Allegiance. Those two words were inserted into the pledge in 1954, partly to distinguish our nation from the atheistic communism of the Soviet Union. While these words came late to the pledge, they certainly reflected what had been a part of America's heritage from the beginning.

This recognition that our nation was founded on godly principles of freedom and divine authority continued to be the basic assumption of government through the middle of the twentieth century. Our leaders realized that once America failed to acknowledge that we were *under God*, our basis for freedom and equitable government would come crashing down. President Calvin Coolidge said it well, "*The foundation of our society and our government rests so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country.*" In other words, when America turns from its position of being under God, we can no longer expect His blessings on this nation to continue. We will have broken our lifeline.

French writer, Alexis de Tocqueville, after visiting America in 1831, said, "*I sought for the greatness of the United States in her commodious harbors, her ample rivers, her fertile fields, and boundless forests—and it was not there. I sought for it in her rich mines, her vast world commerce, her public school system, and in her institutions of higher learning—and it was not there. I looked for it in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution—and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great!*"

Have you ever wondered why God has blessed America so much? This country was founded upon Biblical principles that honor God. The phrase on our coinage is indicative of our religious beginnings, "*In God We Trust.*" No matter how prosperous we may become, we must never forget that God is the giver and sustainer of life and blessings. But God gives and He takes away; we dare not lose this landmark – we must trust in and acknowledge Him.

3. America has turned from God. Just this past week, Ruth Sweats, a 70-year-old widow who lives in the Osborne Apartments in Spring Lake Park, MN (near Minneapolis) tried to read her Bible, pray, and conduct a private conversation about her faith with another resident – but a social worker told her to stop. *The reason?* The complex claims that because it is a Housing and Urban Development property that receives funds from the federal government, it can't allow residents to engage in private religious expression in the commons area. So now not only is it illegal to pray in schools, it's also illegal to talk about your faith in government funded housing. Must we now surrender our constitutional rights of free speech and religion because we happen to live in a facility underwritten by federal tax dollars?

Can God bless America? Maybe we should ask, "Should God bless America?" Are we even "blessable?" And if God did bless America, what would He be saying about His own holiness? If God did bless America, what would He be saying about our morality? About our spiritual condition? Could God bless America and protect His reputation as holy God?

Obviously, God can always do whatever He wants, whenever He wants. But when it comes to blessing, He has clearly and repeatedly set down conditions. If you listen carefully to that song, *God Bless America*, there's no verse in there that identifies the conditions. Nor do Americans seem to be opening their Bibles to try to find out what the conditions are. I don't hear anybody say, "God, what do we need to do to be blessed?"

So let's answer the question nobody seems to be asking. The truth is that sadly, it doesn't appear that most Americans want to know the conditions for God's blessing. It's sort of like: "Don't ask, just bless. We'll ask, but don't ask anything of us. We just want blessing. Don't impose any conditions. Don't ask for anything from us. Give us protection. Give us safety. Give us freedom. Give us prosperity. But don't meddle with our morality."

It's as if Americans believe that we're "entitled" to God's blessings, just because we're Americans. If you had an adult child in your home with several DUIs, who'd totaled your car, would you keep buying them new cars? Would you keep "blessing" them with

vehicles even though their behavior has been irresponsible? No way! Can we really expect God to bless America, in light of the “behavior” of America?

I don't hear any national cries of repentance, do you? I don't hear any national affirmations of the law of God, the Word of God. I don't hear any cries for virtue and forgiveness. I don't even hear many preachers preaching like that. The truth is that we're in, frankly, no position at all to be blessed.

It seems to me that this prayer is futile. We're actually in a better place to be unblessed...cursed, if you can handle that word, because blessing has always had its conditions...*always*. And the conditions aren't hard to find, you just need to read your Bible. A good place to start is the Ten Commandments. I think that we'd have to admit that God's Top Ten are being violated on nearly every level in America. Can we really then expect God to bless us?

4. The Bible is silent on the future of America. When it comes to prophecy, it's easier to be a Jew than an American. A Jew knows their future. Israel is mentioned over 2300 times, but there's no America in the Bible.

Today there are more questions about the United States in prophecy than any other country. And for good reason: America is the only super power. Because of America's unique role in the world there's much discussion about how it will fit into the biblical end-time plans set by God. Much speculation has confused the body of Christ concerning where America is in prophecy.

Four main theories have circulated about America in prophecy. As Dr. Tim LaHaye wrote, *“One of the hardest things for American prophecy students to accept is that the United States is not clearly mentioned in Bible prophecy...”* You will look long and hard and you won't find any specific mention of the United States or any other country in North or South America in Scripture. It may be that in the grand scheme of history, the United States is a new kid on the block. As a nation, it's only 250 years old—much younger than the nations of Bible times that are featured in biblical prophecy. In fact, the Bible makes no mention of most nations in the modern world. Ancient Bible prophets were primarily concerned with the Holy Land and its immediate neighbors. Areas remote from Israel do not figure into prophecy and are not mentioned in the Bible.

So does the United States have a place in end time prophecy? There's nothing that's specific, though there is an allusion to a group of nations in Ezekiel 38 that might apply, but even that's not specific. The question is *Why?* Why would the God of prophecy not refer to the supreme superpower nation in the end times in preparation for the one-world government of the Antichrist? That question has no one, simple answer, but it will help us understand what is going on in the world today if we look at some of the best thinking that students of prophecy have given us on why America is absent from end-time prophecies.

a. Some think that America will be incorporated into a European Coalition. According to this theory, though America is not mentioned by name in prophecy, it will be in the mix of the political realignments that foreshadow the end of time. We can see signs of such realignments taking place today with our connections with the European Union and NATO.

b. Some think that America will become a second rate power. Perhaps the silence of Scripture on the future of America indicates that by the time the Tribulation period arrives, America will have lost her influence in the world and will no longer be a major player. For example, America's insatiable thirst for oil and our inability to close the gap between supply and demand could cripple our ability to defend our borders and protect our nation. Some maintain that the total absence of any scriptural reference to America in the end time is evidence that the United States may have been crippled by a nuclear attack, weapons of mass destruction, or some other major catastrophe. In a post 9/11 world the detonation of a dirty bomb, nuclear device, or biological weapon on U.S. soil is a dreaded yet distinct possibility. Such an attack could kill millions, reducing America to a second rate power overnight. Just look at what 911 did to us and that was a "small" attack.

Add to that, our enemies today are not nations, they're religious ideologues and share a common disregard for human life and a burning hatred for the United States. While we'd like to close our ears to predictions of impending disaster, many international experts see a major attack on our country in the near future as virtually inevitable.

c. Some think that America will implode from moral decay. (Think about where are at today in light of our heritage. Watch this clip.) The average lifespan of all of the world's greatest civilizations from the beginning of history has been about 200 years. During that two century span, each of these nations progressed through the following sequence: from bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to great courage; from courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to complacency; from complacency to apathy; from apathy to dependence; and from dependence back into bondage.

At what point is America in this cycle? Popular blogger, La Shawn Barber, answered this question in her article, *America on the Decline*. She wrote:

"In 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire', author Edward Gibbon discusses several reasons for the great civilization's demise, including the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home and the decay of religion. America has been compared to the Roman Empire in secular and religious ways. Regardless of its ultimate legacy, America is a civilization on the decline. A couple of centuries from now (or sooner), someone will lament the loss of a once-great civilization that brought prosperity to the world and tried to make it safe for democracy. The glory that was the United States will lay in ruins, brought down not by terrorists but its own debauchery and complacency." I fear that Barber's analysis is right on the money with one exception: given the present situation in the United States, another "couple of centuries" for America just doesn't seem to be in the equation. Nevertheless, her analysis is very perceptive. She continues it by referencing an expert from decades past. In 1947, forward-looking sociologist Dr. Carle Zimmerman wrote a text called *Family and Civilization*. He identified eleven "symptoms of final decay" observable in the fall of both the Greek and Roman civilizations. See how many characterize our society today: *No-fault divorce; Birth Dearth; increased disrespect for parenthood and parents; Meaningless marriage rites/ceremonies; Defamation of past national heroes; Acceptance of alternative marriage forms; Widespread attitudes of feminism, narcissism, hedonism; Propagation of antifamily sentiment; Acceptance of most forms of adultery; Rebellious children; Increased juvenile delinquency; Common acceptance of all forms of sexual perversion.*

One can't read lists such as these and doubt that America is throwing away its treasured position as the most blessed nation ever on the face of the earth. Remember, as we noted earlier, God blessed this country for a reason: our nation was founded on submission to Him. But now as the reasons for His blessings upon America erode, we can expect the blessings themselves to fade as well. It's a simple matter of cause and effect: remove the cause, and the effect ceases. Once, we invited God into our nation. From the first moment of our existence, we opened our national doors to Him and made Him welcome as our most honored guest. But now our culture seems bent on shutting Him out. Most can remember the classic painting of Jesus standing outside a door waiting to be allowed entry. That poignant portrayal of Christ on the outside, wanting to fellowship with His creation, has never been more powerful than it is today.

It saddens me to say it but I don't think any of us can deny that America is now infected with the deadly disease of moral decay. That infection eats away at our foundations and we can expect the law of cause and effect to come into play. Scripture often warns us that a long-suffering God will not forever strive with men. If we ignore divine directives, we can't expect God's blessing. A limb that cuts itself off from the trunk will not continue to live.

d. Some think America may become impotent because of the Rapture. If the Rapture were to happen today and all true believers in Christ disappeared into heaven in a single moment, America as we know it could be obliterated. It's estimated that at the Rapture, America will lose millions of citizens, all its Christians in a split second. This means that not only would our country lose a minimum of 25% of her population (if not more), she'd also lose the best, the salt and light of our nation. Who can imagine the impact on our country when all the godly people disappear, enough to empty many vast cities, leaving only those who've rejected God? It's not a pretty picture.

We who love Christ will be blessed by the Rapture in more ways than one. We not only will know the joy of being with our beloved Lord but also will be spared the horrors that the world will suffer through the evil of people left in the wake of the Rapture. It's like a reverse surgical operation—one in which all of the healthy cells are removed and only the cancerous ones are left to consume one another.

Conclusion: No nation, outside of Israel, has such roots and connections to the Bible, as does the United States. The patterns of this land, the federal buildings, and the documents of the Founding Fathers give evidence to America's divine design and prophetic purpose. Because we know the truth, our responsibility to it is greater than that of other nations. If we sin against truth, we deserve the punishment meted out upon the scales of justice in God's courtroom. The greatest need for America, the greatest need for the Church, the greatest need for you and me – is to repent. We've become desensitized to sin.

Repenting in Biblical terms means more than apologizing. It requires a turning away from wrong and turning toward that which is righteous. Criminals can say that they're sorry for their crimes, when in reality they're just sorry that they were caught. True repentance happens when you say, "I am sorry and will not do it again. I will do what is right." Jesus, in Luke 6:46, said, "*Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?*"

When America is in trouble, we know how to pray. The Gulf War and 9/11 are prime examples of that, but sadly, America has forgotten how to repent. The clock is ticking and our time is running out.

And then we need to trust. It would be easy to give into fear and paranoia about the future. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.”*

Finally, we need to be prepared and my friend if you have never trusted Christ, then you are totally unprepared. Jesus could return at any moment. God’s judgment is already falling. If you don’t know Christ, then run to Him today, come to the Cross and trust Him as your personal Lord and Savior.

*No nation remains great forever.
No superpower lasts forever.
No nation has a special claim on God.*