

In Turbulent Times Teach as Led the Depth of God

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Abstract

Turbulent times have been prevalent throughout human history. Are these times somehow different? I expect we all have both similar and different perspectives. This talk will review turbulent times, past, today, and the future. As a scientist, my approach is to seek and organize facts. Our guide will be God's creation, Word, and Holy Spirit. From these and His guidance let's relate our times to God's plan. Join me as the Lord leads us – to understanding and wisdom. I look forward to our time together – all disciples. Of special interest to me is the concluding discussion period. Opportunities for all of us to learn from each other.

Keyword: Christian Education, Depth of God, Spirituality

I. INTRODUCTION

Imagine the following situation. Bodies piled on the ground, many of them. Men, women, children. Pits have been dug and any means possible is used to push the bodies into the pits. Let your minds wander. Were these people executed, were they victims of an epidemic? Why are they being buried in mass graves? Certainly, this was a turbulent time for these people!

When could have such a scene taken place? Somewhere today, perhaps as a result of Covid? During World War II-in China, in Russia, or in Europe during the Holocaust? Could this have occurred in Europe during the many years of the Black Plague? This plague was in the mid-1800's during the time of Charles Spurgeon the great preacher. Or, during the Black Death, a bubonic plague of the mid 1300's that took the lives of an estimated 75 million or more in Eurasia, Africa, and Europe. Looking back in history, we can come up with many other examples of this kind of tragic turmoil. Certainly, many Christians have been involved in these and other turbulent times. We know that early believers experienced times like these and anxiously awaited Christ's return (1 Thessalonians 1:10, Titus 2:13). For we, living with the trials of today, also anxiously await Christ's return. In our context, the questions begging an answer are:

1. Is the turbulence we are living in today unique to our time and specifically, do these experiences relate to Biblical prophecy?
2. In light of the turbulence of our times, as teachers and students of the Word, should our ministry focus change?

As a scientist and professor, I came to Christ as my Lord and Savior just over 50 years ago. My walk with Him has been an adventure. He has not led me to preach, to be dedicated only to evangelism, or to be a prophet. He seems to have called me to teach His Word using the investigative skills He has developed in me, along with administrative and leadership skills. For example, I have served as an adjunct seminary professor teaching on the subject of Bible based management and leadership. This course developed principles from the Wisdom books and tested them using Christ and Biblical saints case studies. I believe some of my students are attending this conference.

Therefore, please recognize this paper is written from my study of His Word as a scientist guided by His Spirit. I also have been blessed with mentorship by individuals, their writings, and the writings of others from years past. All of these God has brought across my path. I will give reference to these Godly men and women. With that background, and the title of this paper, let us begin with a clear proposition.

It is my intent to complete this study resting on the full depth of God. Specifically, prophecy, which is over 25% of the Bible will be studied and referenced in accordance with the time allowed.

I make the point about prophecy because it has been my family's experience, that the churches we have been members of rarely talk about prophecy. That is contrary to the teaching of some of those I credit with mentoring me through preaching, teaching and writing. These include, Charles Spurgeon, David Jeremiah, Stanley Ellisen, Jack and John MacArthur, Don Smith, and Tim LaHaye. Through my studies I have reached certain conclusions regarding prophecies of the Bible. I will share some of these as it is appropriate. I realize that in prophecy there are a variety of different positions taken by scholars. My purpose in stating my findings is not to open up a debate forum. As an old professor, I trust that the topics covered here, along with the questions raised will encourage your thoughts and prayerful study.

I invite you to join together with me as we with the Spirit's guidance, research the topics announced and questions raised. May we all be blessed by our timely joint study of His Word in the light of current times.

II. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

2.1 TURBULENCE

A. Overview

Bear with me through this section as I work to develop what turbulence means and begin to look at it from a Godly perspective.

As a physicist and applied mathematician I spent about 15 years of my life studying so I could do a thesis about the stability of a particular fluid flow. A flowing fluid's speed and containment can be changed so to make that flow unstable, leading to turbulence. We see that phenomenon any time we go to a beach and watch the calm ocean at a distance. Up close on the beach however with the tide coming in there can be "breakers" when the flow of water is very turbulent as it comes crashing ashore.

What we are really watching is the application of forces to the water, gravitational, wind and ocean currents that bring about this beautiful sight. To study these kind of phenomenon, the mathematical physicist goes back to a formula discovered by a well-known scientist, Isaac Newton. It's called Newton's Law and is:

F (force) = m (mass) X (multiplied by) a (acceleration).

This equation describes the relationship between a force applied to a mass producing an acceleration of that mass.

This equation has been applied over and over again through the years. It has been further developed for problems dealing with fluid flows. Fluids consist of many small bodies that all interact when forces are applied to the fluid itself. So, the equations get complicated in a hurry. Just for the record, here they are:

Today there are many scientists all over the world who are studying these equations. For many it is a lifelong endeavor. These equations are used to predict the weather, study the ocean currents, help in design of planes, and cars and for many other applications. There are four things that are important to note in applying these equations. I tell you these things since you are now experts in fluid mechanics (please bear with my humor).

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z} = 0$$

$$\rho \left[\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial u}{\partial x} u + \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} v + \frac{\partial u}{\partial z} w \right] = -\frac{\partial p}{\partial x} + \mu \left(\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial z^2} \right) + \rho g_x$$

$$\rho \left[\frac{\partial v}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial v}{\partial x} u + \frac{\partial v}{\partial y} v + \frac{\partial v}{\partial z} w \right] = -\frac{\partial p}{\partial y} + \mu \left(\frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial z^2} \right) + \rho g_y$$

$$\rho \left[\frac{\partial w}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial w}{\partial x} u + \frac{\partial w}{\partial y} v + \frac{\partial w}{\partial z} w \right] = -\frac{\partial p}{\partial z} + \mu \left(\frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 w}{\partial z^2} \right) + \rho g_z$$

1. These are equations that describe a fluid in motion (implies change)
2. They always depend on the application of force or forces.
3. They model only continuous fluid flows, not turbulence. This is important, not turbulence. Turbulence in this context implies a randomness, broken up, chaotic, non-continuous flow.
4. Fluids enroute to becoming turbulent go through alternative stages of instability, i.e., they take on another steady flow profile. The equations are valuable to also model these “secondary flows.”

It is interesting that as a creation of God, fluids seem to model some behaviors that are similar to how God acts. In His creation, God, brings about changes (by applying force(s) which result in new models. Turbulence is usually involved.

Fluid flow instability resulting in a new secondary flow is the area of my thesis. For example, you see this phenomenon in the ocean wave before it breaks into turbulence on the shore. The following photo shows a beautiful “secondary air flow” created (and left) behind by an airplane whose passengers have certainly

experienced

turbulence.



Based on what we see, as noted, the secondary flow is behind the plane. It now appears to be flying smoothly. A question for your consideration: “was the turbulence before or after the beautiful secondary flow?”

B. Definition Of Turbulence

As a scientist, I have been trained to look for precise definitions to lay as a foundation for research on any subject. So, let’s begin our study together with a definition of turbulence and with that, turbulent times.

On the web I found the following definitions for turbulence:

1. A violent or unsteady movement of air or water, or some other fluid.
2. Conflict or confusion, unrest.

Frankly, I’m confused by this definition. The first deals with a physical entity. The second seems to deal only with people. If the earth’s crust is broken, by an earthquake, is that turbulence? Is a fire raging out of control turbulence?



Let's move on for moment, putting this definition at the side of our plate. Ask now the related question what is meant by a "turbulent time?"

I found this on the web:

A turbulent time, place, or relationship is one in which there is a lot of change, confusion and disorder. Hmm, let's take these secular statements into account while looking at these concepts from a Biblical perspective. That is, we recognize God as the creator of and in control of all things. From my study, I have developed and offer a definition. I suggest we test the following:

Turbulence: Change or changes in God's creation (the physical universe, man and all other creatures) brought about by forces that create chaos, confusion and disorder, and/or a new structure, paradigm, or model.

C. Testing the Definition

To test the definition, let's use examples from God's Word.

1. Was creation a turbulent time? To God it was good, but in terms of the universe it was a new model.
2. Was the time of Noah and the flood a turbulent time? It was for Noah and his family as they were given instructions and they obeyed. And we never read that they complained. But it certainly was a significant change in the way of their life with all they were given to do. When the floods came, they saw a new plan that God had for the world. He also left a permanent reminder, the rainbow. Those that were "left behind" also had a "turbulent time." It is important to note that they were told it would happen but, didn't believe.

3. Was the time leading up to the Exodus a turbulent time? I suggest that it was for both the nation and for Pharaoh and his people. Note, God gave “early alerts” through the entire process.
4. Let’s look at The Olivet Discourse (Matt 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21). There is much there to discuss on our subject. Let’s simply take a small piece. In these verses identifies early warning signals; He describes these as “birth pains, with more to come.” He says, “these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately.” Looks like turbulence to me!

Matt 24: 4-8.

“Jesus told them, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, ⁵ for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately. ⁷ Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. ⁸ But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come. (NLT)

0. The word “turbulent” occurs 12 times in the Bible (in 8 translations). Genesis 49:4, Nehemiah 9:11, Job 40:23, Proverbs 7:11, Isaiah 8:7, Jeremiah 31:20, Jeremiah 46:7, Jeremiah 46:8, Jeremiah 51:42, Jeremiah 51:55, Ezekiel 5:7, and Zechariah 9:15. Most of these refer to water, but imply other elements of God’s creation. Let’s take the Ezekiel verse for example as it deals with the people of Israel. For contextual clarity I’ve also included the following verse.

Ezekiel 5:7-8.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because ye are turbulent more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept mine ordinances, neither have done after the ordinances of the nations that are round about you; ⁸ therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: ‘Behold, I, even I, am against thee; and I will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.’” (ASV)

I trust you will accept the offered definition of turbulence as a “working definition” for the purposes of this paper.

D. Final Observations

Before we leave the subject of turbulence and turbulent times, I believe there are a few observations that must be made.

1. In just the few references we have made to God’s Word concerning turbulence, several involve prophecy. Oh, how many more we can find when we search the Word? Based on our definition, simply study the Book of Daniel for examples. May I can suggest this study as a “homework assignment” before the conference. Studies like that suggested all reinforce the first proposition of this paper.
2. I hope you have noted, that to have turbulence always requires the application of force. It is only natural to inquire, from where does the force come? From our perspective and dependance on His Word, we know God can create and control the application of force through any of the resources in His creation. But what about Satan? We know he works evil in the hearts of men. But, can he create earthquakes, famines, floods? In the case of Job, God gave Satan certain permissions. Job lost his children by a mighty wind (Job 1:18-19), and lightening came from heaven and burned up his sheep and servants (Job 1:16). We know that God has

power over all nature (Job 26) and upholds and sustains the universe (Heb 1:3). There are other verses that clarify beyond doubt that God is in ultimate control of His creation. So, we certainly can conclude that God is the controlling influence in turbulence with the exceptions of those situations created by Satan within the authority God has granted him.

3. One question that we haven't discussed is why is there turbulence? Many of you can answer that better than I. From my studies, there is turbulence simply due to the war underway since Satan and his "band" of angels bolted from God (Isa 14:14, Rev 12:1-9). Satan's kingdom has reigned on earth since Adam and Eve sinned. He tempted Christ with all the kingdoms of this world, (Matt 4:8-9).
4. A careful study of Scripture shows that God has a battle plan in process. We are part of that plan. Isn't it exciting to be here on earth at this time, in "these times of turbulence?"
5. One last word, actually words that we haven't discussed are: time and times. The first, "time," appears 623 times in the KJV and the latter, "times" has 143 occurrences. A study on God's use of these words is important. More important is the concept of time, very pertinent to our overall subject. Therefore, I have added a section below on these words.

2.2 TIME & TIMES – THE WORDS . . . AND MORE

A. The Words

Times is an important word in the title of this paper. Let's first look at the singular version. Time is important to God, even a "blink" of time. As believers, we all know that the event we refer to as the Rapture will occur in a "blink" or "twinkling" of an eye! (1 Cor 15:52). Paul describes this same event in 1 Thess (4: 15-17). Regarding this event Mark says, "Take heed, watch and pray!" (Mark 13: 32-32). "Keep looking up!"

As believers we are told to "use our time wisely," (Col 4:5). As an "old guy," I like my afternoon nap. . . Each of us has challenges with making the best use of our time. I greatly appreciate the commitment each of you has made to be present today. And as we have prayed, "God use this time to glorify You!" Amen.

Another way I found the word "time" used is when Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes, "There is a time for everything and, . . . , - 29 times. It's interesting that some of these times are under God's control (a time to be born, a time to die), and some under man's control (a time to tear down and a time to build). Or, are they all under God's control?

Let's move on to the word "times." Often, it is used simply as the plural of our word of study. Like when Peter's asked Jesus if he should forgive a sinning brother up to seven times. Christ demonstrated the importance of forgiveness in His response: "seventy times seven." (Matt 18:21-22). Here He used the word to describe multiplication.

B. . . . And More

One of the ways we look at time is years. We all celebrate birthdays. As we grow old, we look both back at our lives and at what lies ahead. Verses I cherish in this regard are in Psalm 90 verses 10 and 12. (AMP)

10: "The days of our life are seventy years— Or even, if because of strength, eighty years; yet their pride [in additional years] is only labor and sorrow, for it

is soon gone and we fly away.” 12: “So teach us to number our days, that we may cultivate *and* bring to You a heart of wisdom.”

What I have found living the life God has blessed me with is that I often was totally absorbed in the “now” part of living. I have always thought and planned for the future, but in the context of this world. As I have gotten older, I finally have realized that as Solomon said, in Ecclesiastes 3:11, “He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also put eternity in their hearts, but man cannot discover the work God has done from beginning to end.” (HCSB).

Two things from these verses are important for our study.

1. God has placed eternity in our hearts for a reason-He anticipates we will be spending eternity with Him. Better concentrate on that! 2. No matter how hard we study the subject of this talk, we will not be able to uncover everything that God has done from beginning to end!

Then of course, there are other verses that deal with spending eternity in Heaven. We all know so well the salvation message in John 3:16. But, let us not forget the last phrase, “will not perish but have eternal life!” Wow, to spend eternity with our God! What a thought! What a reality!

There are many verses in the Bible that use the words “eternity” and “eternal.” I encourage you to do a search of these on your own. I have brought all of these aspects of time leading to the word eternity for a reason. Understanding the times is important. However, what we are studying all leads to the matter of eternity. Consider spending more time understanding eternity and teach accordingly . . .

2.3 TEACH AS LED

A. Overview

Our title to teach as led means, as led by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let’s spend quality time on that topic. I want to ensure we all know who the Spirit is; His role; and how we can be led by Him. We’ll finish this section with spending some time on the teaching resources available, in addition to the Holy Spirit.

B. First Things First – The Holy Spirit

It is straight forward for us to think of God and Jesus as persons. God is our “Father” and Jesus is His “Son” who came to earth to save us. It is more difficult to regard the Spirit as a person. In Scripture the Spirit of God appeared in Genesis as “hovering” over the waters of the earth. Appeared as a “wind” and “flames” at Pentecost and as a “dove” at Jesus baptism in the Jordan. From this one might conclude that the Spirit is a “force” or “activity” without personality.

However, if we search Scripture in greater depth, as we are instructed to do, there is so much more to learn about the “Spirit.” This part of my paper has this as the goal, to broaden our knowledge of the Holy Spirit relying prayerfully on the Holy Scripture as well as the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is spoken about throughout scripture. The Spirit is named by implication in Genesis 1:26, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” In addition note, Gen 11:7 dealing with those involved with building the Tower of Babel. “Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another speech.”

It is natural for us as students of scripture to ask the question: who is the “us” and “our” in these verses? We might conclude, depending on our knowledge of the Word, “our” God is a God head with more than one personality involved. There are many verses in scripture that clarify this matter, in both Old Testament and New. However, perhaps the most succinct statement is made by God, the Son in Matt

28:19 when He charges the disciples to go forth making disciples, “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Wow, that verse tells us a lot! It tells us we have a Triune God. Three persons in one! Many Bible scholars would correctly say this verse affirms the Old Testament scripture. This verse also confirms that the Spirit is more than a force or activity. Just as God and Jesus, the Spirit has a personality!

So, this basic finding leads to another proposition of this paper, To teach the full depth of God, we must use all the resources provided by Him. We must know and understand well the Holy Spirit who has been gifted to us by God’s grace. This gift when we accepted Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Our search for understanding begins in Genesis 1 which tells us all the members of the God Head were present in the beginning. And, they were all involved in our creation. That statement requires repeating. “They were all involved in our creation!”

Seeking Greater Understanding

Often we have a tendency to seek knowledge without realizing that knowledge alone is not enough. The Book of Proverbs invites us to seek wisdom as wisdom cries out (Prov 1:20-21, 8:1). Proverbs states that understanding of knowledge is necessary to gain wisdom which is only provided by the grace of God (Prov 1: 1-7 and chapter 2). Let us proceed prayerfully seeking God’s grace to understand the scripture He leads us to in this study.

C. Let the Search Proceed - His Personality, Unity with God the Father, and God the Son, and His Role in Us

A search of our concordance for the word “spirit” in scripture yields many references. I have selected a few that help in our search to learn more about the Spirit’s attributes and personality characteristics. Along the way, we will learn more about our triune God and how each member works with the others in perfect unity.

Now let’s look at a few key verses - study them prayerfully. From Paul in 1 Cor 2 - here we read that the Spirit “reveals” God’s wisdom. He “searches” the depths of God. He “comprehends” the thoughts of God, and He “teaches” us. It is through Him that we can have the “mind of Christ.”

1Cor 2:6-16

“Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is

himself to be judged by no one. 16 “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.” (ESV)

It is intriguing to me that having the Holy Spirit resident and being obedient to him results in having the mind Christ. Jesus expanded/explained this completely in John 14: 23 when he said: *“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him.”* Each member of our triune God works in complete unity with the others! And they are resident in each believer. What an awesome thought! Paul confirmed this in his first letter to the Corinthians both in chapter 3 and in chapter 6.

1 Cor 3:16.

“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?”

1 Cor 6:19-20.

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

Additional explanation regarding the Spirit's role in teaching is provided by John. He quotes Jesus telling the disciples (and us) that the Spirit also teaches, bringing to remembrance what He has said to them (and us).

John 14:25-26.

“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

And from Paul also in 1 Cor 12 we learn about the spiritual gifts. These verses are worthy of prayerful study, but it is important for the purposes of this review to note that the gifts come from the Spirit, “who apportions to each one individual as he wills.” (1 Cor 12:11). Therefore, we can conclude more attributes of His personality - He has a will and the ability to give gifts of a spiritual nature!

Does the Spirit apportion by a measured amount, you a cup and me a half-cup, or does He apportion by gift? I can find no reference to the former, only the latter. It appears that how we each respond to the Spirit is critical to how the Spirit works in and through us. In this regard, from Paul in his Letter to the Romans (15:13), we find another attribute, that the Holy Spirit has “power.”

Romans 15:13.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

He also Intercedes for us in communicating our prayers.

Romans 8:26-27.

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

And almost last but not least, The Holy Spirit has the ability to give direction.

Acts 13: 1-3.

“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.”

Before one more closing observation, we would be remiss if we didn't also note other important aspects of the Spirit's personality. Of course, He is God's convictor in the act of salvation (Joh 16:8). He can be grieved (Eph 4:30), vexed (Isa 63:10), resisted (Acts 7:51), quenched (and tempted - Acts 5:9).

D. Holy Spirit Recap - So what should we do with what we know?

Although brief, we have reviewed several of the many scriptural references that describe the Holy Spirit and His role as a member of our Triune God. His personality attributes have been the main focus. As we look ahead to the last section of this paper, let's summarize how we may prayerfully rely on the Spirit as a learning and teaching resource.

The Spirit:

1. Dwells within believers
2. Has a will
3. Gives special gifts
4. Teaches
5. Brings Christ's words to remembrance
6. Guides and directs,
7. Has power
8. Intercedes
9. Convicts
10. Can be grieved and vexed
11. Can be quenched
12. Can be tempted

As we prayerfully consider this list, remember as believers we have God within us. I said it before and it's worthy of repeating. What an awesome thought! Do you believe that and understand what that means? Does this mean believers have the Kingdom of God within them? I suggest that the above list warrants additional study and should form the basis for how we proceed with the next section of this paper. And how as teacher (and students) each should proceed in their servant leadership roles.

Regarding study of this list, for example, consider the topic of quenching the Spirit. Do a web search on ways one can quench the Spirit. I have found seven! Are there more? As an old research professor, I am used to asking a lot of questions, so I appreciate your patience with me. I also encourage each of you to "research" the Word. Ask questions. You will not come up empty handed!

Our Triune God works in perfect harmony to complete God's grand plan of creation and salvation including His presence within every believer now and through eternity. How blessed we are!

E. Summary - Teaching Resources

Let's summarize as we finish this section. What resources do we have available? well, that seems to be easy. The Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit. Whoa! what about the book of God's creation? there is a Psalm of David that is pertinent here. After all, who grew up shepherding his father's flocks, studying God's universe night after night?

Psalm 19:1-6 .

¹"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ²Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not

heard. ⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, ⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. ⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.”

Charles Spurgeon wrote a wonderful exposition on this chapter. In my words I have summarized below a few of the thoughts from this work. God’s glory and his hand work of creation are displayed for all. There are no words spoken, yet there is a message available for all peoples. Peoples throughout the world, no matter what language they speak. This Psalm speaks of setting a tent for the sun. Man, created to stand erect can look up to see the heavenly hosts God has created. He sees the sun emerging bright each and every day like a bridegroom, beaming as He traverses a set course. Nothing evades His light. How many lessons can we derive from these verses? and, isn’t it a pity that today’s scientists seem to seek evidence that God’s creation is in conflict with God’s Word? In reality, they are in perfect harmony.

The rest of Psalm 19 deals with God’s written Word. The Law receives much attention. Noteworthy is the last verse (14) of David’s closing prayer recognizing the source of his redemption: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.”

It is through God’s written Word that we learn of our Messiah and God’s saving grace! Lastly, as a resource, we are instructed to seek counsel from Godly individuals. Proverbs is the best source I have found concerning seeking wise counsel. Let’s consider a few.

Prov 11: 14 – “Where there no wise guidance is, the people falleth, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” (ASV)

Prov 12:15 – “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.”

Prov 15:22 – “Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.” Prov 28: 26 - Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.

Prov 19:20-21 – “ Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.”

These verses speak for themselves. Let us prayerfully proceed to the last section of this paper.

III. CONCLUSION

3.1 THE DEPTH OF GOD

A. Overview

1. In our study so far, I have prayerfully strived to establish a framework to reach the point where we can answer two questions raised at the beginning: 1. Is the turbulence we are living in today unique to our time and specifically, do these experiences relate to Biblical prophecy?
2. In light of the turbulence of our times, as teachers and students seeking to know God better, should our ministry focus change?

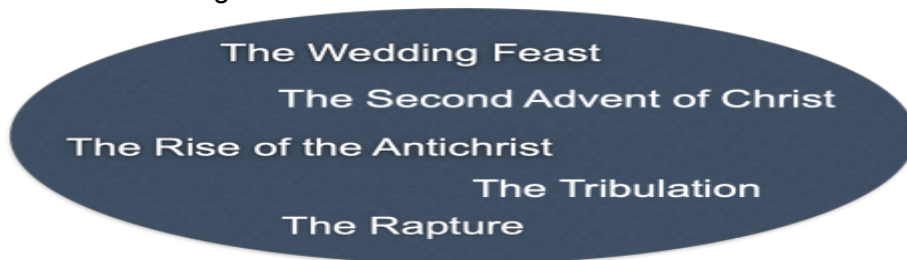
We still have a lot of work to do!

B. Today’s Turbulence - Relation To Prophecy

Regarding the first question dealing with turbulence and prophecy, each generation alive today will have a different answer. Within each generation there may

also will be different responses. I can't begin to handle all of these options! However, I can comment from having a few years of hindsight and time in the Word. In my lifetime, I have never seen so much turbulence! And, now more than ever we need to be studying Bible prophecy. We'll start by considering prophetic events so all of us are on the same page in relating prophecy to current times. There are five events I would like to research and order their occurrence using Scripture. These are displayed in the following graphic.

Since I am leading this discussion, I'll pick the verses that we search. Let's start with 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. We are going to obtain much information from these writings of Paul.



¹“Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, ¹² in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

These verses enable us to put four events in order of relative occurrence.

First, however, we need some explanation of terms. “Day of the Lord” is used 19 times in the Old Testament and four times in the New Testament. The prominent theme of every “Day of the Lord” is God’s judgement of sin. Bible scholars (LaHaye and others) interpret its use in these Thessalonian verses to refer to the Tribulation. The next term to explain is the “second coming of Christ.” LaHaye and others note that this event should not be confused with the Rapture when the Church will meet Christ in the air.

With the above explanations, verses 1-3 tell us the Antichrist will be revealed before the Day of the Lord (Tribulation) followed by the return of the Lord (second Advent). Verse 7 tells us the Holy Spirit will be removed first as He is restraining the Antichrist. Since each member of the Church by definition has received the Holy Spirit for eternity, all will be removed when the Spirit is taken away. This event, the Rapture, will be described in additional verses we’ll look at.

Hey, we have made great progress! So, let's see what we can find about the remaining event – The Wedding Feast.

Now we need to look at the Book of Revelation chapter 19. What is described in this chapter is the concluding of the Tribulation period. I encourage reading of the entire chapter. I have included here verses 6 through 16. The wedding supper of Christ with His Church followed by His return to earth (accompanied by the Church) as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

⁶ “Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure’— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹ And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true words of God.’ ¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, ‘You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’”

The Rider on a White Horse.

¹¹ “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in^[b] blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule^[c] them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”

So, we have discovered the order of occurrence for our future list of events is: The Rapture, The Rise of the Antichrist, The Tribulation, The Wedding Feast and finally, The Second Advent of Christ.

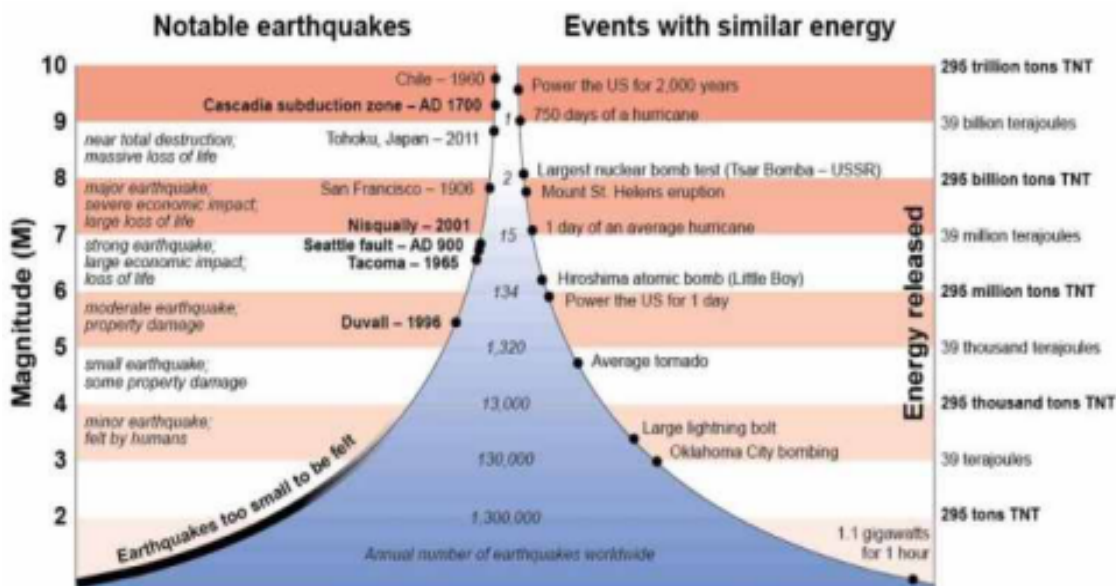
It is very easy to enlarge our study here to consider more events – the Word is so rich in prophecy! We will do just a bit more - I did promise more on the Rapture. For the record, a few key verses by topic are: describing the event: 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-53. Ensuring the Church will not experience the God's wrath (Tribulation); 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9, and Romans 5:9.

As I indicated earlier, there are different opinions about when the Rapture will happen based on other Scripture.

Having finished our brief first look at prophecy, let's return to the question about what the current events might be telling us First let's talk about what we are seeing. Top on the list is the war in Ukraine and the threat of it expanding into a global conflict. Threats have been made to use nuclear weapons. Rumors of attacks on other contested lands such as Taiwan. Financial sanctions, threats of holding back grain shipments to selected countries potentially causing famines. The Covid pandemic. Persecution of particular ethnic and religious groups. By the way, I'm sure you have noted that I haven't spoken about earthquakes. There is a reason. Checkout the following web site:

<https://theconstructor.org/earthquake/frequency-earthquake-worldwide/5921/>.

A simple review of their web comments and data is that there has been no increase in major earthquakes since about 1900.



So, the world has seen all of these kinds of turbulence before. But there are some significant differences. To show what is different at this time, I believe it is necessary to delve back into the word, the prophecies in the Book of Revelation as well as other books in Scripture. We also need to look at things that our news media hasn't considered. Things which from a Christian's perspective re: prophecy are important. Through this we must remember that God, before exercising judgement on the world (or a country) has always given warnings. To begin, let's look at the prophecy in Revelation 11 about the two witnesses.

Rev 11: 3-13.

³ "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." ⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. ⁶ They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. ⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, ¹⁰ and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" and they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. ¹³ And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city

fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Carefully read vs 9-12. What takes place here is during the tribulation. It is clear the activities of the witnesses, their witnessing, their miracles, their death and resurrection as well as their ascension will be observed over all the world. The description in vs 10 is also found in Rev 3:10 and 6:10 and is understood by Bible scholars to be the unbelieving world. Hmmm, Our God, who created all, knows all, and knows the means would exist to see the witnesses in real-time any-where in the world!

On a similar note, consider the 144,000 representing all the tribes of Israel. They are introduced, described as “servants of our God” and sealed on their foreheads in Revelation chapter 7. Please read it carefully. Interestingly there is no description of their activities, but immediately in the same chapter is the description of a “multitude that no one could number” standing before the throne, identified as coming out of the tribulation. These are those who have given their lives because they would not accept the seal of the Antichrist! Is it possible that the 144,000 had the greatest evangelical ministry the world has ever seen. Let the Spirit help us to understand what will happen through their ministry.

And,

Rev 9: 17-17.

¹⁶ “The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. ¹⁷ And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths.”

Let's do some higher math here. By my calculation that army is 200 million strong. I have heard that is the size of China's army. Wrong! Their army today is listed at just over 4 million counting reserves and paramilitary (source: International Institute for Strategic Studies). In fact, if one does a search (from source) seeking to total all of the world's armies (active, reserve, and paramilitary) the total from 172 reporting is about 75 million. However, it is interesting to note that with China's population of over 1.4 billion, their number of service age citizens is over 600 million. Also keep in mind that North Korea, Vietnam, India and other nations in the east have large armies as well as populations.

Ok, let's start putting some of this very interesting study together.

First, let's consider the technology available today. World-wide real-time video communication and powerful computers are important for the times described in the verses noted. The former came available around the year 2000, but is much better today with light weight video equipment and satellite transmit/receiver devices. Of course, virtually everyone has a smart cell phone to capture “happenings” and we have the internet “social media” to spread the news. I have been told that there are more cell phones per capita in some countries than there are bathrooms!

Artificial intelligence has emerged to not only track what you and I order and consider ordering on the internet, but to track our every movement through our cell phones. Invasion of privacy is becoming a major issue in democracies. The chip technology is so good today it is already being used to implant humans for medical purposes. Sweden is probably the leader in this. If the Antichrist came to power tomorrow, it would be technologically practical to require a “mark of the Beast” chip implant on every living individual.

A third technology is that related to the weaponry. Not only are the weapons capable of mass destruction, they can be guided using “smart” technology to target

from remote operators. Hardware and software technology, including the ability to build micro motors, is resulting in the creation of robot soldiers. Is it possible in the near future that a 200 million “robot” army may exist?

There are other early alerts that God is providing that we don’t hear about in the news. We should look for and be aware of apostasy in the churches. Here are a few verses for reference purposes: Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 3:12, 6:4-6; 2 Peter 2:20-22. Here in the US, we daily hear of churches that claim to be Christian embracing the WOKE concept, and/or supporting the LGBT beliefs. In the US, church membership has declined from 73% of the population in 1938 to less than 50% today. We are a nation that has endorsed abortion although from God’s Word He knows every child in the womb! Our Supreme Court is now considering overturning its decision allowing abortion made years ago. This decision may result in some upheaval in our nation’s populace. Our country’s leadership has taken the liberal direction in every major strategic area for which they have an opportunity to decide. Truth is under attack from all directions! There are some, perhaps many respected church pastors who believe that our country is seeing the early warning signs of God’s pending judgement on us.

Surely there are other areas to consider, but I offer only one more. Clearly there has been a movement toward a one-world government. It began well before the creation of the UN, but that is a good reference point. Today there are many smaller multi-country organizations. For example, the EU, the Arab League, the African Union to name just a few the about 20 I can find in a search of the web. In addition, there are voluntary organizations and international arrangements. The UN is one of these, but there are many others. Typically, they are focused on providing an infrastructure to meet operational needs of the countries to cooperate (source: Wikipedia). For example, World Health Organization, the International Criminal Court, the World Bank/International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the G7, the G20. There is another effort and organization that is not included on this list. I suggest you search the web for: New World Order. Seems our world is looking for a “world leader.”

So, let’s summarize. Yes, I believe that these times are different in view of what is happening and in view of what the Word tells us. Based on my studies, I believe that the next event to happen is the Rapture. And, I believe it could happen at any time. In fact, I join many believers with the simple prayer. “Lord, come quickly!”

C. What Should Our Focus Be?

We have arrived at the time to close up the content dealing with teaching “the Depth of God.”

In Summary: The foundation which we have built is, teach from the Word, from your heart, as God leads through His Spirit.

Regarding what to teach, nothing has changed since God spoke through the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 43:10-12.

“You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. ¹¹ I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. ¹² I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and I am God.

He repeated it twice, “You are my witnesses!” Witnesses to whom? The world! We are all missionaries to the world. That the world may know who God is! I urge you

to study these verses. We are to know God, to understand and teach that He is the one and only God! Stick to the fundamentals! The need is great, especially now in view of expectations that the Rapture could come at any time.

As you follow God's directive, learning to know Him and witnessing, dig deep into prophecy. Remember it comprises over 25% of God's Word.

"Prophecy is history before it happens!"

(LaHaye).

Finally, I have to leave you with a few assignments:

- Check out where the word "church" or "churches" appear and don't appear in the Book of Revelation. What does that mean to you?
- Notice how Christ closes the letters to the seven churches. And then, "surprise!", look at Jesus' parables and check-out how often he closes with a similar statement. Do you hear Him?
- Find statements made by Jesus in the New Testament that relate to the Rapture and the Wedding we read about in Revelation. Who is in the Wedding and who isn't?
- And lastly, as you study, learn and teach, remember to keep in mind everything in the light of eternity.

We've covered a lot a ground. Some I'm certain is better known by you than by me. Hopefully I have been able to raise interest in some new topics for you. And, have motivated you to be a detective researching God's Word as guided by His Spirit.

As we close in Prayer, I am reminded of a great American President who, I believe, knew Christ well. Ronald Reagan once said,

"If not us, who? If not now, when?"

Amen.

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