

Escape the Wrath

'A medieval astrologer prophesied to a king that his favorite mistress would soon die. Sure enough, the woman died a short time later. The king was outraged at the astrologer, certain that his prophecy had brought about the woman's death. He summoned the astrologer and gave him this command: "Prophet, tell me when you will die!" The astrologer realized that the king was planning to kill him, immediately, no matter what answer he gave. So he said, finally, "I do not know when I will die. I only know that whenever I die, you will die three days later".'

It doesn't take a prophet to sense when the king wants you dead!! Or does it? The Advent-Christmas season is literally rife with prophets and prophecies. But, when one actually looks at it, the entire Bible is filled with prophets and prophecies. It's literally just one prophet after another. We read today the shortest book in the Old Testament, by a prophet, Obadiah. He must have been a humble man, (which is always the best way to get on God's good side!), because his book, just a single chapter, which bears his name, says absolutely nothing about him except his name. The word Holy Spirit gave Obadiah was about Edom, the nation of the descendants of Esau, Jacob's older brother by a couple of minutes, if that. Edom and Judah, Israel, were literally brother na-

tions, but though their respective patriarchs Esau and Jacob themselves had reconciled in the later lives, Esau's descendant nation, Edom, hated the Jews, and, because of their nasty, evil behavior toward God's Chosen, Edom had consigned itself to become God's enemy, and they ultimately paid the price for it. For Edom, whose territory comprised much of what is now the country of Jordan, is no more, and hasn't been for thousands of years. It's all but forgotten. Only its ancient ruins, spectacular Petra foremost, are visited by thousands of tourists year after year.

Among the prophets and prophecies highlighted surrounding the birth of the Savior, is the fantastic account of the magi, wise men, kingmakers, who came to worship the newborn Lord Jesus. We'll read their account again next Sunday as we observe Epiphany. But following their visit, the reigning monarch, King Herod, was infuriated both by the possibility of a rival claimant to the throne, and by the fact that those wise men had blown him off. But first things first, Herod had to eliminate, yesterday if possible, the threat to him and his dynasty. He was a powerful monarch, which is why he's now called "the great", with far-reaching influence who struck fear into any who might countenance even disagreeing with him. His next act was in perfect character, and would further cement his reputation that he would suffer no fools, no ill will toward him. With the seeming total support of the entire Jerusalem establishment, he dispatched his army to Bethlehem and its environs to eliminate all possible claimants to his throne,

nipping them in the bud! So all the boy babies two years old and under were slaughtered, which in modern reckoning would be one year or less, since Jews then, as did many other peoples, some even today, count babies as one-year old at birth, because they were conceived roughly one year prior to their births. Herod probably thought to himself, “My compassion is with you, mothers. Be ever so glad that I spared you from being killed along with them! For you see, one in my position can never be too careful!”

Well, for this latest act of gruesome infanticide, God ended his life but a few weeks later, as he died of a terrible, horribly painful disease. Prior to the massacre, the Lord warned Joseph in a dream to immediately “get out of Dodge”, as it were, so he grabbed Mary and Baby, used some of the lavishly expensive gifts just received from the magi to pay for rapid passage out of Herod’s jurisdiction. They rushed under cover of darkness all the way to Egypt. Later, Holy Spirit gave Joseph another dream telling him that Herod had died, and it was now safe to return to the Promised Land. However, returning to Bethlehem, Joseph’s ancestral home, Mary’s too, Holy Spirit sent another dream that it was not safe there because Herod’s son was now on Judea’s throne. So they went up to where Mary had grown up, Nazareth, and our Lord grew up there, coming to be known as a “Nazarene”, or, in our Bible translation, “the Branch”. The Passion Translation is excellent for bringing out the meanings and word play behind words, like we so often use puns and homophones in English.

Most of these were totally missed by earlier translators. For both Nazareth and Nazarene come from a Hebrew root meaning “sprout”, “branch”. And the phrase, “Branch of the Lord”, His intervening in human affairs, appears frequently in the Old Testament. The meaning here is that Lord Jesus is literally that divine “Branch”, “Sprout”, not just that He was raised in a particular town. And here for all our lives we thought He was simply a Nazarene, with no idea what that actually meant!

Now from prophecies that we can see have already been fulfilled, to ones yet to be, we read from Revelation 14 about the 144,000 evangelists, an angel evangelist, the fall of Babylon the great, etc. We know from Revelation 7:4 that the 144,000 are all Jews, and because they've never “defiled themselves with women”, they're all men and probably quite young. Some even theorize that are all American Orthodox Jews who have yet to return to live in Israel. Furthermore, in 14:8, an angel announces the fall of Babylon the great. This “mystery Babylon” is often identified with New York City, and its global system of corrupt capitalism, rampant greed and unrestrained abominations and idolatry. I concluded so some years ago, since it's the only place that checks all boxes describing this horrendous “woman” who rides on the beast. As a student of prophecy, the problem was how to reconcile that plain conclusion of her complete destruction with the promise of revival in America that even now we are beginning to see. The assassination of Charlie Kirk made it clear just how

strongly that revival and reformation is progressing.

As Apostle Paul taught in I Corinthians 13:9, our prophecies are only partial, as no one prophet can see it all. Only God can see it all, as His vision sees all of time all at once. It is frankly vastly beyond our comprehension. Each of us can be given pieces of prophecy as God very much wants each of us to have knowledge and foreknowledge of things that concern us as individuals, as well as things on a much larger scale. Since each of us is but one part, one minuscule cell, in the single, humongous, universal Body of Christ, none of us can know exactly the same piece of anything. We depend on each other, must trust each other and communicate with each other to get a fuller understanding and picture of what is to come. For, it is crystal clear, that the Lord insists that we have a good idea of what's coming down the pike, before it gets here, all so we can be prepared.

Looking at what a variety of other contemporary prophets are seeing, and particularly at what Messianic Rabbi Pastor Jonathan Cahn has been shown, we know our current president, Donald Trump, is a type of Josiah, the last good king of Judah. Trump is quite obviously God's chosen vessel to be America's leader in this period. And his time as leader is God's reprieve before God's judgement falls on the United States for the great rebellion of so many against Him, and the unimaginable depravity that America has foisted on the world. Truly we're mystery Babylon with her unimaginable idolatries, harlotries, immoralities and

abominations. God's judgement is unavoidable, but we've been given a reprieve, of maybe 31 years. During this time, America will do great things for the world, but it appears that our revival will not reach many fellow citizens, and once it runs its course, and the believers are taken up by the Lord in the rapture, now with no restraining influences remaining, the pendulum will swing back to full-blown, all-out evil wokeism, rebellion in every form and at every turn. Like Judah before us, we will sink down as the anti-Christ beast system takes over the world, as Revelation describes, and, probably in a sudden attack, what is left of America is suddenly destroyed. The good news is that we will not be here. But we will come back, with the Lord at His second coming, and rebuild the world for Christ Jesus' Millennial Kingdom on Earth.

We must remember though that God's judgement, however much it is rightfully deserved, is always tempered, always purposed to bring as many to salvation as possible. For Lord Jesus died for all, even the vilest of sinners, who will repent. And during these coming dark days of tribulation such as the world has never yet seen, and will never see again, there will be those who finally "get the message", whose hard heads are finally cracked open by the Gospel, and repent. And if they endure until the end, which will be their executions, for not taking the mark on forehead or hand, well, Revelation 14:13 declares, "Blessed are the dead—the ones dying in the Lord from now on". "Yes", says the Holy Spirit, "they will rest from their trouble, for their deeds will live on!"

