

Chapter 1

Countdown to the Year 2000

If even a fraction of what I've heard in the last two or three years is true, you and I don't want to be around on January 1, 2000. Consider these sobering suggestions of what may happen:

- A depression leaves millions of Americans jobless, hundreds of millions worldwide. Many are homeless, with no food and no way to get any. Scores of the nation's largest companies and thousands of smaller ones are bankrupt.

- The Big One devastates southern California, leaving fifteen thousand dead and tens of thousands injured. Downtown L.A. is a pile of rubble. Highways and freeways are devastated. State and federal governments stretch their resources to the maximum to provide relief.

- A killer asteroid a mile in diameter impacts in the Pacific Ocean several hundred miles off the North American continent, creating savage forest fires in the western part of the United States and Canada.¹ A massive tidal wave washes the coastlines of North and South America, destroying billions of dollars' worth of property and killing millions.

- To cope with the crisis, the world's leaders establish a one-world dictatorship under the auspices of the United Nations and ration food supplies and other essentials worldwide.

Does all this sound farfetched? Not if you've been keeping up with what's going on in the world.

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What the Experts are Saying

You'd have to be deaf, dumb, and blind not to know that the United States government is in debt more than four trillion dollars (early 1993). On top of that, America's banks have loaned \$214 billion dollars to foreign borrowers. And many of the governments involved will never pay back their loans, especially third-world nations that are struggling to survive. When the truth is finally out, everyone will be broke. The 1929 economic collapse pales into insignificance when compared with the depression that many experts believe is almost certainly coming between now and the year 2000. According to Dr. Ravi Batra, internationally known expert on world economics:

Ever since the Second World War, the world has been spared a severe economic crisis. To be sure, there have been a few recessions, some of them severe, but none has displayed the length and ferocity of the Great Depression that afflicted the world in 1929 and lasted more than eight years. I believe that a disaster of the same, if not greater, severity is already in the making.²

Dr. Batra was incorrect in his prediction that this depression "will occur in 1990 and plague the world through 1996."³ However, that such a depression is near can hardly be doubted.

Nobody knows when the Big One - the granddaddy of all earthquakes - will hit southern California, except that it will happen sometime in the next few years. In the meantime, each earthquake that strikes the region (two in quick succession in late June 1992) means that "tomorrow, next

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week, next month, next year are all more dangerous than they were.“⁴

If you haven't heard of asteroids, keep watching your TV. Scientists assure us that these “doomsday rocks,” as they call them, will inevitably strike the earth sometime in the future.⁵ Two scientists have already predicted that there is a greater chance the average American will die from a meteorite or asteroid impact than that he or she will die in a major airplane crash!⁶

And about the United Nations dictatorship - did you ever hear of George Bush's “new world order”? Bush is no longer president, but whether you and I like it or not, in one form or another, that new world order is coming.

What Religious People are Saying

So far I've pointed out what the scientists, the economists, and the politicians are saying about the future. What you may not know is that religious leaders are saying every bit as much. According to Pat Robertson, in his book *The New World Order*:

In 1991, the world owed an unbelievable \$25 trillion dollars in private and public debt. The exponential compounding of debt based on fractional reserve banking has created a monster that no central bank, no combination of banks, no single government, and no world government - especially the inefficient and corrupt United Nations - can solve. When the bubble finally bursts, the financial wreckage will be the worst in the history of the world.⁷

Robertson believes that for the past two or three centuries the world's financial barons have been building

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toward a new world order under their control, and he sees these plans coming to maturity in the next few years. He claims that American money helped finance the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia because the aims of the world's bankers for Communism are parallel to their aims for America and the West. "Until we understand this commonality of interest between left-wing Bolsheviks and right-wing monopolistic capitalists," Robertson says, "we cannot fully comprehend the last seventy years of world history nor the ongoing movement toward world government."⁸

It's irrelevant to this discussion whether Mr. Robertson is right about the world's bankers manipulating the world's economy for political ends. The point is that he is a religious leader who is saying some of the same things the world's politicians and economists are saying: An economic collapse is coming that will push the human race toward a one-world government.

Even more interesting is the vision of the future held by many Roman Catholics. Malachi Martin, a former Jesuit priest who has become a popular American author, recently wrote:

He [Pope John Paul] is waiting... for an event that will fission [divide] human history, splitting the immediate past from the oncoming future. It will be an event on public view in the skies, in the oceans, and on the continental landmasses of this planet. It will particularly involve our human sun, which every day lights up and shines upon the valleys, the mountains and the plains of this earth for our eyes....

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Fissioning it will be as an event, in John Paul's conviction of faith, for it will immediately nullify all the grand designs the nations are now forming and will introduce the Grand Design of man's Maker.⁹

John Paul's faith in this "fissioning event" stems from a vision that three children in the Portuguese hamlet of Fatima claimed to have received from the Virgin Mary in 1917. According to Malachi Martin, John Paul accepts the validity of that claim, and he believes that the children's vision will be fulfilled in his lifetime. Furthermore, Mr. Martin believes that a one-world government is just around the corner and that Pope John Paul will rule that new world order:

Willing or not, ready or not, we are all involved in an all-out, no-holds-barred, three-way global competition.... The competition is about who will establish the first one-world system of government that has ever existed in the society of nations....

Those of us who are under seventy will see at least the basic structures of the new world government installed. Those of us under forty will surely live under its legislative, executive, and judiciary authority and control....

It is not too much to say, in fact, that the chosen purpose of John Paul's pontificate... is to be the victor in that competition, now well under way.¹⁰

Another religious group with significant views about the near future is the New Age religion that has swept into the Western world from the East. Many New Age devotees believe in an imminent catastrophe that will involve our entire planet:

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Nostradamus, the sixteenth-century prophet whose enigmatic riddles describing future events have long challenged translators and interpreters, wrote of a massive earth catastrophe to be followed by a great peace among the peoples of earth while the devil is confined to the bottom of the abyss. Clues as to the timing of this event have led many to calculate that it may occur in July, September, or October of 1999.¹¹

Former White House correspondent Ruth Montgomery became an ardent follower of New Age ideas during the early 1960s and wrote profusely on the subject for many years thereafter. Her book, *Ruth Montgomery: Herald of the New Age*, was coauthored with Joanne Garland. Says Garland:

Ruth Montgomery's Guides have begun warning of a shift of the earth "shortly before the year 2000," ever since dictating material for *A World Beyond* in 1971.... This global catastrophe, the Guides claim, will cleanse the earth of pollution and evil people and will usher in the long-awaited New Age of a thousand years of peace.¹²

What the Bible Says

These are some of the ideas of religious -people. But what does the Bible say? Amazingly, far more than most people realize. Many people overlook the real significance of a statement by Jesus that was quoted by Luke:

There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken (Luke 21:25, 26).

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Notice that according to Jesus, signs in the sun, moon, and stars will cause panic - anguish and perplexity - among the nations, particularly at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Luke goes on to say that the entire human race will be terrified by this shaking of the heavenly bodies.

We cannot say exactly what Jesus meant, though again it comes close to the signs in the heavens that Malachi Martin and Pope John Paul predict. I pointed out earlier that in recent years scientists have begun warning of the devastating effect a major asteroid impact would have on our planet. Whether this is what Jesus meant remains to be seen, though it would certainly fit His words.

Numerous references can be found in Revelation of massive physical damage to our planet, along with terrible ecological devastation. If Revelation is correct, the shifting of the earth on its axis as predicted by the New Age, with a resulting breakup of the earth's crust, could well happen:

The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and... there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake.... Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found (Revelation 16:17, 18, 20).

Ravi Batra and Pat Robertson anticipate a terrible economic collapse in the near future. Most people are not aware that Revelation is entirely in agreement:

“Woe! Woe, O great city,
O Babylon, city of power!
In one hour your doom has come!”

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“The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more....

“They will say, ‘The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.’ The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn....

“They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out:

” ‘Woe! Woe, O great city,
where all who had ships on the sea
became rich through her wealth!
In one hour she has been brought to ruin!’ “
(Revelation 18:10, 11, 14, 15, 19).

And notice the following description in Revelation 8 about terrible ecological devastation:

The seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water - the name of the star is

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Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter (Revelation 8:6-11).

But does the Bible speak of a one-world government? Absolutely. Notice the following passages from Revelation:

I saw a beast coming out of the sea.... The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.... And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation (Revelation 13:1, 3, 7).

The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast (Revelation 17:12, 13).

That sounds amazingly like the United Nations, in which the various nations retain their independence yet give some of their authority over to the world body for the common good.

With scientists warning about the potential for massive catastrophes in the near future, and with various religious groups predicting the same, will it happen in our day? I can't prove it to you, but I believe that the answer to both of these questions may very well be Yes. But the really big question is this: If these things are true, what will they mean when they happen, and what should they mean to us even now, before they happen?

Jesus said, "When you see these things [the signs in the sun, moon, and stars that He predicted] happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:31). In the context of the entire chapter in which He spoke these words,

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Jesus meant that these signs would mean that the second coming of Christ is near.

Many Christians today are convinced that Christ will return in the very near future. If this is true, then the Bible's prediction of the reign of the antichrist over a new world order is also about to happen. I believe the terrible depression and the devastating natural catastrophes that I described earlier in this book will propel the world into the coming one-world government far more rapidly than today's most ardent proponent of a new world order would dare to dream about.

Fortunately, there is hope. For out of the chaos of these calamities, and out of the ruins of the antichrist's new world order, God Himself will establish the ultimate "new world order" that will last forever. However, all of this is getting ahead of our story. It will take the rest of this book to develop these thoughts. And, as we shall see in the next chapter, the story began many millenniums ago in a part of the universe that is hundreds, perhaps millions, of light years away from planet Earth.

1. As it plunged toward the earth, an asteroid a mile in diameter would create a fireball hundreds of miles in diameter.

2. Ravi Batra, *The Great Depression of 1990* (New York: Dell, 1987), 9.

3. Ibid.

4. *The Idaho Statesman*, 1 July 1992, 3A.

5. According to Donald Yeomans, an astronomer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California,

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“Earth runs its course about the sun in a swarm of asteroids. Sooner or later, our planet will be struck by one of them” (Newsweek, 23 Nov. 1992, 56, 58). Yeoman’s opinion is shared by nearly all scientists who have studied asteroids. It’s not a question of whether, they say, but only of when, another major asteroid will strike planet Earth. See, for example, Clark Chapman and David Morrison, *Cosmic Catastrophes* (New York: Plenum Press, 1989), 36.

6. See Clark Chapman and David Morrison, *Cosmic Catastrophes*, 283. Clark Chapman is a planetologist at the Planetary Science Institute in Tucson, Arizona, and an advisor for NASA and the National Academy of Sciences. David Morrison is chairman of NASA’s Solar System Exploration Committee and chairman of the Division for Planetary Sciences of the American Astronomical Society.

7. Pat Robertson, *The New World Order* (Dallas: Word, 1991), 133.

8. *Ibid.*, 71.

9. Malachi Martin, *The Keys of This Blood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 639.

10. *Ibid.*, 15-17.

11. Ruth Montgomery with Joanne Garland, *Ruth Montgomery: Herald of the New Age* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1986), 233.

12. *Ibid.*, 233, 234.