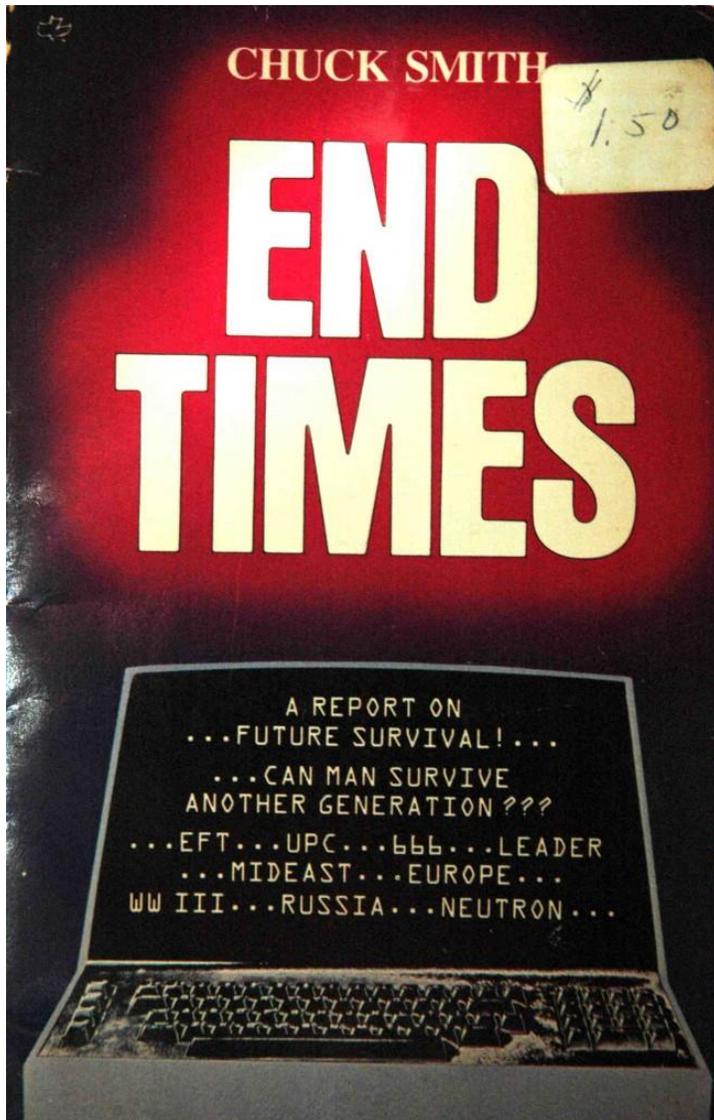


A few words about prophetic date-setters



I have noted how socio-economic-politico forces have hijacked Christianity throughout history. The result is not only to rob the Christian from a thriving 2nd personal loving relationship with Jesus Christ and love for fellow man, it uglies the testimony of Christianity before the world. We have noted the corruption of Christianity by socio/economic/politico forces in the ages of Constantine (313), Crusades (1100-1300), Inquisitions (1231-1834), antebellum America (1650-1850), Jim Crow South (1870-1960), Nazi Germany (1930-1940), consumer Christianity (1950-2018), and modern political Christianity (1950-2018).

What I have not covered is what is known is religious (religio) forces that have hijacked Christianity throughout history. One example of this is in the area of prophecy. American history is filled with prophetic "date setters" regarding the return of the Lord. This is unfortunate in light

of the fact that Jesus explicitly told us that “no man knows the day or the hour” (Matt. 24:36; 25:13).

It is uncontested that Jesus Christ explicitly taught that “It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority” (Acts 1:7). Yet this has not stopped innumerable biblical prophecy "experts" who have claim to know when He will return. One of the most well-known today prophecy experts is Hal Lindsey. He first predicted that the Lord would come in 1988. He based this on the year that Israel was founded (1948) and added forty years for “this generation” (Matt. 23:36). Since the Lord did not come by Dec. 31, 1988, he revised the “generation” to 70 years, which means that the Lord will return by the end of this year, 2018—we only have a little more than six months left. By the way, Lindsey is still considered a preeminent prophecy expert by many.

I am not denying Lindsey’s dispensational approach. My problem is with him going beyond the biblical data by his date-setting. This gives Jesus Christ and Christianity a bad name. The same problem exists among some Christians who deny climate change or make other claims that the Word of God does not address. Let us be careful about making claims that the Bible does not make lest we provide an occasion for the world to cast aspersions on the Word of God or Jesus Christ. This problem is especially prevalent in social, financial, and political matters. Remember, Jesus rejected both the Right (Pharisees) and Left (Saducees) religious and political parties. As far as we should speak about others, including our political opponents, consider the better way of Jesus in Matthew. 5:44-48.

I am not saying that Lindsey has no credibility regarding the biblical prophetic framework. I do not think he is a bum even though he said he would be a bum if he was wrong. In an 1977 interview, Lindsey was asked: “But what if you’re wrong?” Lindsey replied: “Well, there’s just a split second’s difference between a hero and a bum. I didn’t ask to be a hero, but I guess I have become one in the Christian community. So I accept it. But if I’m wrong about this, I guess I’ll become a bum” (see <https://americanvision.org/.../before-harold-camping-there-w.../>). it is worthy to note that he continues with his show, the Hal Lindsey Report, which is a "news site dedicated to news analysis of current events from the perspective of Bible prophecy.” But that is another matter.

Throughout American history, there have always been date-setters. While date-setters have harmed many Christians (many lose their faith when the Lord does not return according to set date), the greatest harm is the bad witness regarding the Lord. Unbelievers are watching and when we proclaim things to be Scriptural that prove to be false we damage the credibility of Christianity. In fact, anytime Christianity is hijacked by socio-economic-politico-religio forces, its truth/goodness/beauty is tarnished. We see this in slavery based on race (1650-1861), Jim Crow culture, and in dramatic prophetic date setting by many preachers.

Let’s renew our efforts to reject all of the social, economic, political, and religiously sensational influences that tarnish the beauty of the most beautiful Person who ever graced this planet, Jesus Christ--the God-man who brings us Truth, Love, and Goodness (John 1:14-18). Instead of being obsessed or mesmerized about the social, economic, political, and the sensational, let us be focused on the explicit command that is above all other

commands: to love God with all of hearts, souls, and minds, and to love others as we love ourselves—which is why the Bible was written in the first place (Matt. 22:37-40).

N.B.: The citation of American Vision above in no way suggests that I agree with its philosophical, biblical, or prophetic positions.

In His Grace,

Pastor Don