

# Focus on Prophecy GUIDE 13



# God's Team Wins

- **Have you ever witnessed a remarkable comeback on the playing field? Many baseball fans remember the New York Mets in the 1986 Series.**
- **They lost the first two games at home against the formidable Boston Red Sox. It seemed the Sox were going to sweep.**
- **But the Mets came back and won the Series—to everyone's amazement. New York broke out in a huge celebration.**
- **More recently the Buffalo Bills, led by back-up quarterback Frank Reich, rebounded from a thirty-four point deficit at halftime to win a playoff game over the Houston Oilers.**
- **The fans went crazy in the stands. There have also been courageous comebacks by individuals that inspired people everywhere.**
- **Dave Dravecky came back from major surgery on his pitching arm to win a game for the San Francisco Giants.**
- **Nancy Kerrigan, after a brutal assault, managed to skate her way to a silver medal in the 1994 Winter Olympics. These are people who triumphed when the odds were stacked against them.**

# God's Team Wins

- **As you read the book of Revelation, especially the prophecy of the seven trumpets, it does seem like the odds are stacked against God's people.**
- **Earthquakes, burning cities, massacres, and pestilence loom on the horizon. But we're going to discover that, in the middle of death and destruction, God throws up His hands and says, "Time out! Take a deep breath. I have good news. It looks bad, but our team is going to win!"**
- **God's encouraging message about a great comeback is interwoven throughout chapters 10 and 11, between the sixth and seventh trumpets. I'm glad that when discouragement and despair threaten, God cares enough to pause and say, "I still turn the Earth and move the galaxies. I won't let your life spin out of control."**

# Daniel's Message Given to John

- **READ REVELATION 10:1-7.**
- **As we've seen in chapters 8 and 9, God's people are being viciously attacked by Satan. How does God respond? He sends an angel to the rescue. What encouraging news! And it's a "mighty angel" who comes down from heaven. God wants to make sure we know there is power in what He does.**
- **John writes, "I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices" (Revelation 10:1-3).**

# Daniel's Message Given to John

- **The angel holds an open scroll, or book, in his hand; he's standing with one foot on the sea and the other on the land.**
- **When the angel speaks, his voice rumbles across the earth like the roar of a lion or resounding thunder. Some commentators point out that this angel is the same one described in Daniel 12:5-9. Daniel pictures a "man clothed in linen" similar to the angel in Revelation 10.**
- **This Being is identified as Jesus. He has just given Daniel prophetic information Daniel can't fully understand. Daniel wants to know when the events, symbolically laid out for him, will take place.**
- **The response is, "Go your way Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (vs. 9). Daniel is also told that at the time of the end the book will be opened (understood) and "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase" (Daniel 12:4).**

# Daniel's Message Given to John

- **In other words, Jesus has a message for the whole world (as shown by His feet resting on both sea and land) which will be given and understood at the time of the end. This message was sealed in Daniel's time. The book so dramatically opened in Revelation is the sealed part of the book of Daniel. Now it can be fully understood. Remember, Revelation 10 is spotlighting events right before the seventh seal which announces the second coming of Jesus. Therefore, we can conclude that just before Christ returns, the book of Daniel will be unsealed—that is, opened—and its message understood.**
- **“The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever . . . that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel . . . the mystery of God would be finished” (vss. 5-7).**

# Daniel's Message Given to John

- **The following chart shows the parallels between Daniel 12 and Revelation 10. [CHART APPEARS HERE]**
- **READ REVELATION 10:8-11.: We must remember that not all the prophecies of Daniel were sealed—just those pertaining to the time of the end. The main prophecy that Daniel could not understand was the 2300 day/year prophecy of Daniel 8:14 and Daniel 9. The angel told Daniel that at the time of the end, people would begin understanding that sealed prophecy. We can identify this time of the end mentioned in Daniel 8, as a period beginning in 1798. Just as predicted, over 200 years ago, believers began to intently study the sealed prophecies of Daniel. As a result, the understanding of end-time prophecies, which had been neglected for some time, increased dramatically. Revelation 10 reflects this experience in God's command to John:**

## Daniel's Message Given to John

- **“Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, ‘Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.’ So I sent to the angel and said to him, ‘Give me the little book.’ And he said to me, ‘Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.’ Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter” (vss. 8-10).**



## Daniel's Message Given to John

- **After carefully studying Daniel's prophecies, many nineteenth-century Bible scholars and church members concluded that the "end time" of Bible prophecy began in 1798. Some also concluded that the 2,300-day/year prophecy would end in 1844.**
- **They were correct in calculating these dates, but assigned them a mistaken meaning. These Christians thought Jesus would return to Earth in 1844.**
- **The prophecy actually refers to Christ's final judgment preparations for His second coming.**

## Daniel's Message Given to John

- **Many of those alive in 1844 lived in eager anticipation of Jesus' soon coming. Many signed their letters, "Yours in the blessed hope." One stated, "This was the happiest year of my life." Another recalled, "My heart was full of glad expectation."**
- **Understanding Daniel's prophecies, opening that sealed book, was sweet to the taste. But when their interpretation proved wrong and Christ didn't return they experienced bitter disappointment.**
- **Some turned away from their faith. Others managed to work their way to a different understanding of what Daniel meant.**

## Daniel's Message Given to John

- **Even though discouraged, this small group of Adventists, believers in the Second Advent (second coming of Jesus), many of them in their teens and twenties, went on to make an impact in the world for Christ.**
- **They tried to follow God's command in Revelation 10:11: "You must prophesy again."**
- **They still believed the gospel message could revolutionize planet Earth; they had a burden to help men and women everywhere get ready for the return of Jesus.**

# Daniel's Message Given to John

- **Gospel outreach flourished during this time period of the open book. Joseph Wolff, a Jewish believer from Germany, made a great impact all over the Middle East with his prophetic preaching. Edward Irving led seven hundred ministers of the Church of England who spearheaded a prophetic revival in Great Britain.**
- **Other champions of the Advent Awakening included Lacunza, a Jesuit priest in South America; Bengal, a minister of the Lutheran Church in Germany; Gaussen, a minister in Switzerland; William Miller, a leader in the United States, and even a group of children preachers in Scandinavia.**
- **They all preached the same message—Jesus is coming soon! The Spirit of God led people living in different countries, and in some cases studying independently, to speak the same message!**

## Daniel's Message Given to John

- **THOUGHT QUESTION: In 1844 Jesus began His final judgment in preparation for His second coming. (False OR True)**
- **The 2,300-day prophecy in Daniel 8, 9, ended in 1510. (True or False)**
- **The sealed book in Revelation 10 is the sealed portion of the book of Daniel—the part Daniel didn't understand. (True or False)**
- **The angel of Revelation 10 is actually Jesus Christ. (True or False)**

# The Message of the Open Book

- **What is the essential message of the open book? It is the gospel story! It reveals the God whose love caused Him to come to this earth and die for you and me.**
- **And He is coming soon to Earth because He longs for us to be with Him. So even though dates and historical events are sometimes useful to understand, don't get bogged down in the details.**
- **If you forget everything else, remember this much: God loves you and has set a date, a time when He is coming to be with you.**
- **He's excited about this great rendezvous. His prophecies are really love poems that say excitedly: "Be dressed and ready when I come. You don't know the day or hour, but you'll know when it is close!"**

# The Message of the Open Book

- ***Have you ever had a pleasant experience that turned into something bitter?***
- ***If yes, what helped you deal with the disappointment?***
- **If you are currently going through a difficult personal experience, remember that Jesus is waiting expectantly for you to reach out and accept His free offer of assistance.**
- ***What would you like to say to Jesus right now?***

# The Message of the Open Book

- **READ REVELATION 11:1-6. : Revelation 11 is highly symbolic, as you can tell. Let's start with a summary of key events.**
- **VERSE 1. John takes a reed (a tape measure) and is told to measure three things. "Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.**
- **But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.**
- **And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth' " (vss. 1-4).**



# The Message of the Open Book

- **The next two verses show us the power the two witnesses wield over the earth.**
- **“If anyone wants to harm them [the two witnesses], fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies.**
- **And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.**
- **These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire” (vss. 5, 6).**

# The Message of the Open Book

- **Wow! This all may seem as far-fetched as a science fiction account of aliens invading our planet.**
- **But it's actually a very unique description of the power of the Word of God.**
- **The two witnesses represent the Bible, the Old and New Testaments. They're also pictured as lampstands and olive trees. This is familiar biblical imagery.**
- **In John 5:39, Jesus identified the Scriptures as, "these are they which testify (witness) of me."**
- **In Matthew 24:14, Jesus said the gospel would be preached to the world as "a witness to all the nations."**

# The Message of the Open Book

- **In biblical times olive oil was used to light lamps. Psalm 119:105 states, “Your [God’s] word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:130 says, “The entrance [understanding] of Your words gives light.”**
- **The two witnesses are called olive trees and lamps because the Old and New Testaments are our main sources of spiritual light.**

# The Message of the Open Book

- **The point, then, of verses 1-6 is that the message of the Bible is the standard (measuring instrument) for determining who belongs to Jesus and who belongs to Satan. That investigative process is what began in heaven in 1844. Jesus will come when that process is complete, when it is openly and fairly determined whose side everyone is on—Christ's or Satan's.**
- **John relays a special word of caution in Revelation 22:18, 19. He says that if anyone adds or detracts from the book of Revelation, "God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book."**
- **God wants to safeguard His message because His message leads us to salvation. And those who deliberately oppose or distort God's truths, sent to the world by Jesus who died that we might live, forfeit that special relationship between God and His followers.**

# The Message of the Open Book

- **READ REVELATION 11:7-10.:** This is a description of Satan's vigorous attempt to destroy the Bible. From a previous study we learned that the 1,260-day/year period extends from A.D. 538 to 1798.
- During this time period those who are not God's people, identified as Gentiles in chapter 11, oppress Christians and attempt to suppress the Word of God.
- During the closing years of this prophetic period, the French Revolution actually launched an all-out assault on Bible truths for three-and-a-half years.
- Princeton University professor R. R. Palmer refers to this time as an "earthquake" in his book *The Age of the Democratic Revolution* (2 vols.). That's exactly what John pictured in Revelation 11:13—"a severe earthquake."
- The French Revolution was noted for its opposition to Christianity. During the Reign of Terror, as many as fifty people a day were decapitated by the guillotine.

# The Message of the Open Book

- **The “beast” from the “bottomless pit,” which John describes, is a symbol of the anti-Christian stance of the French Revolution and its war on the Bible.**
- **The references to Sodom and Egypt represent spiritual decay. Sodom was destroyed because of its moral degradation and defiance against God. The Egyptians challenged God directly with their own idols and were destroyed by plagues.**
- **In summary, God’s Word was trampled on by men, but there is hope, there is light at the end of the dark tunnel!**
- **READ VERSES 11-14.**
- **Now we come to a time of great triumph. Now we come to the time when God’s team wins!**

# The Message of the Open Book

- **What happens to these two witnesses after they are persecuted for their faithfulness to God?**
- **“Now after three—and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’**
- **And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was an earthquake, and. . . . seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven” (vss. 11-13).**

# The Message of the Open Book

- **These verses describe what followed the final three-and-a-half years of the French Revolution's grisly rule of the guillotine and the suppression of the Bible. Christianity awakened to a great revival.**
- **Bible truths were rediscovered and championed as never before. In the end, some of the greatest skeptics had to acknowledge the power of God.**
- **The French Revolution slid down into the very earthquake it had caused, while the Bible reclaimed its place of honor in the hearts of people around the world.**



# The Message of the Open Book

- *These are some of the key events in the awakening of faith:*
- In England, John Wesley and George Whitefield sparked a great evangelical revival.
- Foreign missions entered a new era. Henry Martyn, a twenty-five-year-old Cambridge graduate, arrived in India as a missionary in 1806. Henry proclaimed, “Let me burn out for God.”
- His same spirit was seen in Judson of Burma, Carey of India, Morrison of China, Moffat and David Livingstone of Africa. Their witness energized thousands of Christians worldwide.
- As boys and girls knelt beside their beds at night they promised God they would follow Him at any cost—and follow Him they did!

# The Message of the Open Book

- **Bible societies exploded onto the scene. Around 1800, Joseph Hughes, a Baptist layman, felt impressed by God to provide Bibles inexpensively for the people of Wales.**
- **As his vision for Bible distribution intensified he asked, “Why not the world?” In 1804, a few years after the French Revolution had peaked, Hughes and others founded the British and Foreign Bible Society.**
- **In 1816 similarly dedicated believers created the American Bible Society. These societies have made a tremendous impact. Each year they distribute millions of Bibles, New Testaments and other Christian books in hundreds of languages.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: The two witnesses in Revelation 11 represent God the Father and God the Son. (False or True)**

# The Bible Cannot Be Defeated

- **Yes, God makes sure that His Word “lives and abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23). He invests it with His own unconquerable life.**
- **Powerful human leaders may seem more alive than any printed book. But after they become statues, the Bible still comes to life in human hearts everywhere.**
- **Surely the people are grass.**
- **The grass withers, the flower fades.**
- **But the word of our God stands forever**
- **Isaiah 40:7, 8.**

# The Bible Cannot Be Defeated

- **American revolutionary Thomas Paine once said, “I sincerely detest” the Old Testament.**
- **Thomas Paine is dead, but the Bible he detested is still creating spiritual revolutions.**
- **The skeptic Voltaire used his considerable wit and intellect to attack the “superstitions” of the virgin birth and the resurrection of Jesus.**
- **Voltaire is dead but millions of Christians are still celebrating Christmas and Easter.**
- **Jesus said, “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).**

# The Bible Cannot Be Defeated

- **The words of the Bible not only have life; they are able to give life.**
- **Like a buried seed germinating into a blossoming plant, the Word of God in our hearts blossoms into a whole new way of living.**
- **Peter described it as “having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23). (God Cares, Vol. 2, Maxwell, pp. 295, 296.)**

## Conclusion

- **The letters of Jacob the candlemaker sent from the town of Bruges to his wife in 1569 are remarkable for their cheer and tenderness.**
- **He reminds his “affectionately beloved and chosen wife” of God’s promise: “He who touches you touches the apple of His eye.”**
- **He speaks of the time when God will wipe away all their tears and about the wonderful things God has prepared for those who love His appearing.**
- **Jacob’s letters are full of encouraging words from the Scriptures.**

# Conclusion

- **What makes these letters even more remarkable is that they were penned in prison by a man about to be burned at the stake as a heretic. Jacob had decided to take a stand on the Word of God against certain religious traditions.**
- **During long hours of interrogation he was threatened and told to submit to the wisdom of his superiors. Jacob replied, “I do not rely upon my own wisdom, but I rely upon the words of Christ.”**
- **This lone candlemaker managed to resist the enormous pressure of church authority because he remained “satisfied with the simple holy Scriptures.”**
- **And that powerful Word of God enabled him to keep on sending out letters of encouragement to the very end, when he died in the flames “with intrepid spirit.”**

# Conclusion

- **Are you standing on the Word of God today? People all over the world are polarizing, taking sides. Some choose Satan's way of force and intimidation.**
- **Others remain faithful to Christ's gospel of love and grace. We are living on the brink of the Kingdom of God; we are living between the sixth and seventh trumpets. We need an unshakable place to stand.**
- **We need to build our lives on the life-giving Word of God. We need to take a stand with Jacob the candlemaker, and lift up our light in this dark world.**
- **TO THINK ABOUT: *What kind of commitment would you like to make to God right now?***