

PREVIEW

APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON



**DISCOVER HOPE
BEYOND EARTH'S
FINAL BATTLE**

APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON

STEVE WOHLBERG

© Copyright 2020– Steve Wohlberg

All rights reserved. This book is protected by the copyright laws of the United States of America. This book may not be copied or reprinted for commercial gain or profit. The use of short quotations or occasional page copying for personal or group study is permitted and encouraged. Permission will be granted upon request. Unless otherwise identified, Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the King James Version. All emphasis within Scripture quotations is the author's own. Please note that Destiny Image's publishing style capitalizes certain pronouns in Scripture that refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and may differ from some publishers' styles. Take note that the name satan and related names are not capitalized. We choose not to acknowledge him, even to the point of violating grammatical rules.

DESTINY IMAGE® PUBLISHERS, INC.
P.O. Box 310, Shippensburg, PA 17257-0310
"Promoting Inspired Lives."

This book and all other Destiny Image and Destiny Image Fiction books are available at Christian bookstores and distributors worldwide.

Cover design by: Jaime Galvez and Eileen Rockwell

For more information on foreign distributors, call 717-532-3040.

Reach us on the Internet: www.destinyimage.com.

ISBN 13 TP: 978-0-7684-5807-7

ISBN 13 eBook: 978-0-7684-5808-4

For Worldwide Distribution, Printed in the U.S.A.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 / 25 24 23 22 21

ENDORSEMENTS

Powerful! What's the sound of a jaw hitting the floor? How do I get everybody I know to read this book? *Approaching Armageddon* proves the validity of the Bible—beyond a shadow of a doubt—like no book I've ever read. You won't want to put it down. Best book of the year, if you ask me. Bible prophecy books are sometimes speculative and unconvincing, but *Approaching Armageddon* stands apart. Air-tight Bible teaching that will convince even the skeptic of Jesus' soon coming.

Scott Ritsema

Author, Producer of "Media on the Brain"
Speaker/Director of Belt of Truth Ministries

Steve Wohlberg has done it again! He has taken the complex and broken it down for everyone to understand. *Approaching Armageddon* is timely, biblical, and interesting. It is refreshing to read a book that wades into so many challenging subjects with simplicity and sanctified logic. This Christ-centered approach to the subject of last-day events, especially the signs that portend the soon coming "Battle of Armageddon," is worthy of wide circulation. May it be instrumental in waking many Christians up and leading countless more to a saving relationship with, as Steve calls Him, "the Prophecy Man."

Allen Barnes

Director of Plain People Ministries

I was very excited when I saw another book coming out from Steve Wohlberg. What a timely topic, too! With Steve's deep understanding of Bible prophecy and his God-given ability to explain it so the average lay person can also understand it, this is definitely a must-read. With our world seemingly spinning out of control, this book can definitely give hope just when we need it most.

Kevin Bryant, MD

With his eyes on both the Bible and today's headlines, Steve Wohlberg perfectly articulates how biblical prophecy is now playing out before our very eyes in current world events. *Approaching Armageddon* reveals the truth about the chaos that surrounds us and opens eyes and hearts to the hope that we have in Christ Jesus, while strengthening our faith and preparing us to confidently give answers to all those who are lost, fearful, and confused.

Rob Pue

Publisher, Wisconsin Christian News
Commentator, VCY America Radio Network
Host of WCN-TV

Approaching Armageddon is a striking wake-up call for planet earth. Steve has clearly identified many end-time signs and proven how these signs are a direct fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Most importantly, he reveals how we can stand

victorious in these final days! I highly recommend this book to anyone who desires to understand the perilous days we are living in and be prepared for the soon return of Jesus!

Dustin Pestlin

President, Hope Through Prophecy

Are the unprecedented number and magnitude of frightening world events merely random and chaotic happenings? Or a long-foretold and long-awaited signal? Clear, fascinating, and gripping, *Approaching Armageddon* is a must-read!

Subodh K. Pandit, MD

Author of *Does God Really Exist?* and *Setting the Record*

Straight on Atheism, Agnosticism and Evolution

Speaker of the video series, "God Fact or Fiction?"

www.searchseminars.org

Approaching Armageddon is a must-read. Just as science has rules that guide careful scientists, Bible prophecies have rules that guide careful biblical scholars. In his gripping and easy reading style, Steve Wohlberg has managed to untangle important endgame prophecies using long-validated rules of good prophetic interpretation. He leads you on a compelling journey into the prophecies letting the Bible explain its own symbols. If you desire conspiracy theories, hype, and sensational nonsense that seems to plague books of this genre, you'll be disappointed in this book. But if you seek to

understand the Bible's end-time prophecies, you will be as delighted with this book as I was.

Phil Mills, MD

In this time of uncertainty, when the world appears to be turning upside-down, there is anxiety and depression everywhere. People are confused and are afraid to trust the news, the government, and everyone in general. This is the perfect time for Steve Wohlberg's latest book, *Approaching Armageddon*, to be published. It is an easy-to-read, gripping, excellent, sweeping biblical summary of the prophecies of the last days of this earth's history. Instead of causing fear, however, it provides Bible answers to give us a calm, abiding trust in Jesus as our Savior. It will inspire you to more carefully read and study your Bible and find Jesus at the very center of the last book of the Bible. This gem is a must-read.

Ron Fleck, MD

President, Second Hope Ministries International

Once again Steve Wohlberg has written an engaging and compelling book that is a great wake-up call to all of us. Steve gives us hope in the midst of the troubles this world is going through.

Jeff Zaremsky

Director of *Shalom Adventure* magazine

www.ShalomAdventure.com

SPECIAL THANKS

To Don Nori, Jr., CEO of the
Nori Media Group / Destiny Image Publishers,
for believing in this project.

To your team that was able to bring this book
from manuscript to publication in
record time. Great job!

To Tim Saxton, who helped me with
critical research for this manuscript.

To all of my friends at White Horse Media.
It is wonderful to work with each of you!

To my wife Kristin, Seth, and Abby,
for your love and patience with Dad.

Above all, to my Creator who always fulfills His
promises, such as “Fear not, I will help you”
(see Isa. 43:1-3).



CONTENTS

	Foreword.....	13
	Introduction.....	19
Chapter 1	The Prophecy Man	23
Chapter 2	An Ancient King’s Dream	39
Chapter 3	“Not One Stone Shall Be Left”	59
Chapter 4	“I Will Come Again”	75
Chapter 5	“The Time of the End”	83
Chapter 6	“There Shall Be Signs”.....	97
Chapter 7	“Near—At the Door!”	111
Chapter 8	Mass Animal Die-Offs	153

Chapter 9	The Battle of Armageddon	169
Chapter 10	Hope Beyond Darkness	185
	About Steve Wohlberg	201

FOREWORD

I guess it was about twenty years ago now that I had a “divine appointment” with my television set. It was one of those rare nights when, no matter what I did, I was not able to fall asleep. So I got up and read from the Scriptures, prayed, and went back to bed. As the minutes ticked by on the clock on my bedside table, sleep still eluded me.

Frustrated, I went to the living room and turned on my favorite Christian TV channel. It was late at night, and there was a program on that I had not seen before. Here was a Bible teacher explaining the end times and Bible prophecy. Now, I had studied Bible prophecy for years; I had read Daniel, Revelation, Thessalonians, and, in fact, the *whole* Bible multiple times in depth, but after so many years of study, I still was unable to make a conclusive, comfortable connection between what I read in my Bible

and what 99 percent of pastors and prophecy writers were saying.

It was as if they had to twist and contort Scripture, take things out of context and move them around in space and time in order to fit *their* narrative. And it just never made sense. Why would one have to make such enormous leaps of faith and blindly accept the teaching and counsel of men in order for God's Word to line up with popular end-times theology? God doesn't hide His truths from us. The Scriptures still exist today, thousands of years after they were given by inspiration of God, for *our* benefit. James 1:5 offers the promise, "*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*"

I had been seeking clear answers that lined up with the Bible clearly, easily, perfectly, without being *forced*, like a square peg in a round hole, to fit a preconceived narrative—a narrative that was very, very popular and being taught from nearly every pulpit in the evangelical world.

At first, I watched this teacher on the television with a bit of skepticism—I had seen so many before and they were all saying the exact same thing. But this night was different. Here was a Bible teacher explaining prophecy in a way that I had never seen or heard before and backing up everything he was teaching with God's Word. He was not



FOREWORD

twisting or contorting Scripture or asking people to make assumptions, take giant leaps of faith, or take his word for it. Instead, he was *showing* us in God’s Word exactly what God had said and explaining things in a way that finally, for the first time in my life, made sense. His conclusions were practical, reasonable, and logical. And as I watched, a veil was lifted from my eyes. I was finally able to understand those “confusing” books of the Bible in a way that made perfect sense. Here was a Bible teacher who took God’s Word literally and explained the “hard things” so clearly that anyone could easily understand them.

That teacher was Steve Wohlberg.



I couldn’t wait to share what I was learning with my wife and many others. We continued to watch the entire series of presentations from Steve. I later purchased several of his books and video teachings. We even held small group meetings to share the video lessons with others. Many eyes were opened.



Some time later, a friend, knowing I had been studying Steve’s work, suggested I get in touch with him and invite him to write a monthly column in the Christian newspaper I publish. This friend gave me Steve’s phone number and I called—wondering if this “famous TV preacher” would even be willing to speak to a “little fish” like me. I was pleasantly surprised to find Steve not only warm



and cordial, but friendly and excited to become one of our regular columnists. And his monthly articles ran in our newspaper every month for over a decade, reaching countless thousands of readers whose eyes were also opened to the simple, plain truths of God's Word regarding end-times prophecy and much more.

Steve has since authored more books than I can count, on a wide variety of topics—topics that are of vital importance for a biblical understanding of the times we're living in. In addition to Bible prophecy, he's written on witchcraft, the occult, "new age" religions, death and the life to come for believers in Christ, the "emergent" church and the great falling away, natural health issues, and much more.

Steve is not afraid to blow the trumpet of warning regarding "sensitive" topics that many pastors refuse to ever preach on. But even as he exposes the wicked deeds of darkness, he does so, every time, with a message of *hope*. The blessed hope that we can all be assured of as Christ-followers.

The book you're about to read is as relevant as today's newspaper headlines. Thank you for buying a copy. If you've never read any of Steve's work before, you're in for a real treat. I am confident you'll find the teaching eye-opening and captivating, a "page-turner" if you will,



FOREWORD

as you discover the answers you've been seeking regarding all that is taking place in our world *right now*. You may find parts of the book that will challenge your theology. But let me ask you this: if what you *thought* you knew about your theology was wrong, *when* would you want to know?

The time is now, friends. Just as God Himself closed the door of the Ark and only a small remnant was saved, there is coming soon that great and terrible Day of the Lord, and then there will be no second chances.



But *Approaching Armageddon* isn't just for you. It's meant to equip you to go and make disciples, teaching them to obey all Jesus commanded. Soon—I believe very soon—the lost souls around us will be looking to *us* for answers. And in a world of lies, they'll be desperate for the truth. Are you ready to give those answers? Are you confident in your biblical knowledge and understanding? I hope you are, because *you* have been called into the Great Commission in these closing days of planet Earth and there are souls out there starving for God's truth, and it's up to you to feed and care for these lost, confused sheep. Don't take your commission lightly.



This book will equip you and give you the confidence you need to provide those answers in a clear and understandable way. And as we know from 1 Peter 3:15, we





APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON

must “*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*”
Amen.

Approaching Armageddon is, at once, a warning, a clear explanation, and a message of hope for all who will come to Christ in repentance and faith. Indeed, it is a vital message with *eternal* significance!

Rob Pue

Publisher, Wisconsin Christian News
Commentator, VCY America Radio Network
Host, WCN-TV

INTRODUCTION

*W*hat's going on? millions wonder as they witness chaotic events that keep rattling planet Earth. The steady disintegration of family values, deadly diseases like the novel coronavirus, economic upheavals, unprecedented hostilities between political parties, explosive racial tensions, protests and riots, LGBTQ controversies, rising depression and suicide rates, plus countless other shock waves keep ripping humans apart.

Even nature itself seems to have gone berserk. Record heat waves, decimating cold spells, rising sea levels, food shortages, and mass animal die-offs are all being discussed on CNN, Fox News, throughout social media, and on news apps. If that isn't enough, killer earthquakes, monster storms, fierce wildfires, destructive tsunamis, raging

APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON

floods, and lava-spewing volcanoes just keep pounding humanity—with no end in sight.

People's heads are spinning.

By the time you read this, new woes will undoubtedly have smitten too many of us.

What's next? millions anxiously inquire.

Is there any possible way to make sense out of such apparent senselessness? Are we human beings nothing more than fragile life forms on a planet twirling randomly through mindless space toward our eventual demise, without any firm hope of a happy, permanent future?

Personally, I don't believe that dismal scenario for a minute. It's true that life on earth is getting tougher, but rest assured that *Approaching Armageddon* isn't only about Bad News. Definitely not! There's Good News, too. In fact, a big picture exists that is sensible and offers hope for everyone—whatever our skin color, physical ailments, past failures, or the size of our bank accounts. Believe it or not (and I'll offer solid evidence shortly), this larger perspective has been accurately revealed in the pages of an ancient book—the Holy Bible.

In the following pages, I'm going to highlight numerous easy-to-grasp biblical signs—like road signs on a highway—indicative that earth's present chaos is entirely symptomatic of the fact that humanity has entered a



INTRODUCTION

unique period of history called “*the time of the end*” (Dan. 12:4). I’ll also explain what’s on the ultimate horizon—beyond Armageddon—which is unimaginably glorious to those who choose to be part of it.

But before this book examines those signs, I will offer sensible reasons why—in the midst of widespread skepticism, agnosticism, and atheism—we *can* have confidence that ancient biblical predictions are both trustworthy and accurate and not simply the fare of sensationalist tabloids.

“*Come now, and let us reason together,*” wrote the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 1:18). It is my sincere hope and prayer that as you ponder the sobering information within these pages you will discover a God of infinite love, enthroned above earth’s chaos, and a bright tomorrow.

“*Let not your heart be troubled,*” declared the greatest Teacher this world has ever seen (John 14:1).

“*Peace I leave with you,*” is His promise (John 14:27).

We all need His peace today.



CHAPTER 1

THE PROPHECY MAN

“Wise men still seek Him.”

—Popular saying on bumper stickers, magnets,
decals, Christmas tree ornaments

Before I explain what “The Prophecy Man” is all about, here’s a quick quiz question: Can you guess what book is the world’s all-time bestselling volume? It has been printed by more printing presses, translated into more languages, and purchased in more countries than any other book ever written in the history of literature.

No, it’s not *Harry Potter*, but the Holy Bible.

That, in itself, should cause us to candidly consider its contents. Yes, of course, I realize that skeptics abound

who don't believe that the Bible is an inspired book; but honestly, such skepticism isn't new.

The ideas of the French atheist Voltaire (1694–1778) greatly contributed to the infamous French Revolution (1793–1797), during which the French legislative assembly literally burned Bibles and abolished religion. “It took 12 men to originate the Christian religion,” Voltaire famously declared, “but it will take but one to eliminate it. Within fifty years from now the only Bible will be in museums.”

Voltaire was wrong.

He's dead—but the Bible lives on.

Not only that, but the French Revolution, which was influenced by Voltaire's teachings, became so horrific and disastrous that shortly after rivers of blood flowed through the streets of Paris, France's same legislative assembly that abolished Christianity reversed course, giving both the Bible and belief in God legal protection. A few years later, the Geneva Bible Society purchased Voltaire's house in Paris and turned it into its home base to print stacks of Bibles!

“The Bible is an anvil that has worn out many a hammer” is an old saying that still rings true today.

Here's another quiz question: Can you guess the name of history's most famous Person? More books have been

written about Him *by far* than about any other human being who has ever walked this earth. Not only that, but this unique Person has more followers today worldwide than any other religious leader who has ever taught among men, including Moses, Mohammed, Buddha, or Confucius *combined*. It's the truth. That Person is Jesus, also called the Christ. The Holy Bible calls Him the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Today His religion, Christianity—in spite of the failures of many of His professed followers—is *the largest religion in the world*.

What makes Jesus Christ unique above all other humans? Many things, but perhaps His most astonishing feature are the numerous *prophecies* pinpointing His birthplace, hometown, teachings, betrayal, suffering, and manner of death that He uniquely *fulfilled*. Honestly, *no other religion* can make such claims about its founder or about anyone else for that matter. Wicca has nothing like this in its magical teachings. Neither does Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. It's a fact—there simply aren't any prophecies in the Koran, Hindu writings, Buddhist works, or in the New Age movement predicting definite events in advance that have literally been fulfilled in real history. But the Bible has lots of these prophecies, and many were uniquely fulfilled by Jesus. The details are astounding. Here are only a few examples.



APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON

Over 700 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah predicted:

*The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, **the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son**, and shall call His name Immanuel [meaning, “God is with us”] (Isaiah 7:14).*

While many have always found the idea that Jesus was conceived inside of a virgin woman hard to believe, this is exactly what the New Testament describes. The book of Luke reports:

*Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, **to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.** And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne*



of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:26-33).

According to the biblical record, Jesus was miraculously conceived deep within the womb of His mother (Mary) *before she had physical intimacy with any man.* Thus, *Jesus had no earthly father.* His conception was wholly supernatural.

After hearing these astonishing words from the lips of a holy angel, Mary blurted out, *“How can this be, since I do not know a man?”* (Luke 1:34). Good question, Mary! *How can this be?* Notice carefully:

And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

That’s how!

According to the angel, this unique conception was the work of *the Holy Spirit.*

Another Old Testament prophet named Micah added this new detail—the predicted Coming One would be born inside the tiny town of Bethlehem, which lies about

APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON

five miles south of Jerusalem. Now don't miss this point—Micah predicted this *nearly 700 years before Jesus was born*. His prophecy declared:

*But you, **Bethlehem** Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth are from of old,
From everlasting (Micah 5:2).*

Approximately nine months after Mary's encounter with the angel, the New Testament reports that "*Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king*" (Matt. 2:1). Bingo. Micah said it. Jesus fulfilled it. Honestly, can you think of any other human being who can legitimately claim that his birthplace was pinpointed *700 years* in advance?

There is no one but Jesus.

Bethlehem is a big tourist attraction today—for good reason.

Isaiah also predicted the Promised One would live in the vicinity of "*Galilee of the Gentiles*" and would bring "*great light*" to those who "*dwelt in the land of the shadow*"

of death” (Isa. 9:1-2). The New Testament later reports that Jesus did in fact grow up in “*the region of Galilee...in a city called Nazareth*” (Matt. 2:22-23).

***That it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:*

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles:

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,

And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death

Light has dawned” (Matthew 4:14-16).

Nearly 600 years before Christ’s time, Daniel predicted this long-awaited “Messiah the Prince” would appear publicly near the close of a 70-week, 490-day-for-a-year time prophecy (see Dan. 9:24-27). In the New Testament, in the year A.D. 27, shortly after His public baptism in the river Jordan, Jesus announced:

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15).

APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON

In the 400s B.C., Zechariah predicted that Israel's future King would humbly ride into Jerusalem on a lowly donkey (see Zech. 9:9). Jesus did exactly that (see Matt. 21). The New Testament reports:

*All this was done **that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by the prophet, saying:*

“Tell the daughter of Zion,

‘Behold, your King is coming to you,

Lowly, and sitting on a donkey,

A colt, the foal of a donkey” (Matthew 21:4-5).

Zechariah also predicted that the future Messiah would be betrayed for “*thirty pieces of silver*” (Zech. 11:12-13). One of Christ's own disciples, named Judas, did exactly that. The New Testament reports:

*Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back **the thirty pieces of silver** to the chief priests and elders... saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” ...**Then was fulfilled what was spoken...**“And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced” (Matthew 27:3,4,9).*

Near the end of His earthly life, during His public trial, the Roman governor Pontius Pilate openly confessed, “*I find no fault in Him*” (John 19:4). The reason Pilate found no fault in Jesus was because there was no fault in Jesus. During an earlier encounter with His enemies, Christ innocently inquired, “*Which of you convicts Me of sin?*” (John 8:46). His life was 100 percent flawless. He never cursed, got drunk, acted improperly, lied, or even spoke a false word. Not once. Honestly, no other human being can legitimately claim such spotless sinlessness.

Not one.

Jesus Christ’s flawless morality was also predicted by Isaiah the prophet who, after describing His unjust treatment, added:

He had done no violence,

Nor was any deceit in His mouth (Isaiah 53:9).

Approximately 1000 B.C., King David predicted that the future Sufferer would be enclosed by a band of wicked men, that His hands and feet would be unjustly pierced, and that certain individuals would cast lots for His clothes (see Ps. 22:16-18). The New Testament reports that after Jesus was rejected by the Jewish Sanhedrin, given over to death by Pontius Pilate, and then handed over to rude Roman soldiers:

APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON

*Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, **that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by the prophet:*

*“They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots” (Matthew 27:35).*

In the book of Isaiah, chapter 53, many details are given about how a humble, suffering Servant would be despised, rejected, taken prisoner, unjustly “*cut off from the land of the living*,” be buried in the tomb of a rich man, and yet after that, “*He shall prolong His days*” and see again (Isa. 53:3,6,8-11)! In other words, He would *rise from the dead*. Verifiable history reveals that each of these minute prophetic details were literally fulfilled by Jesus (see Matt. 26:23; 27:57; 28:1-8). After His resurrection, the Risen One told His wondering disciples:

*“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things must be fulfilled** which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms **concerning Me.**” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus **it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day**, and that repentance and remission of*

sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:44-48).

Is this really true?

Did Jesus Christ—who I am calling “The Prophecy Man”—*really* rise from the dead?

Consider this—four different historical accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) all testify that Jesus lived, taught, and was publicly crucified by Roman soldiers. After six hours of awful suffering on a splintery cross, soldiers “*came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead*” (John 19:33). His body was then taken off the cross, prepared for burial, and placed in a cold, clammy cave just outside the gates of Jerusalem (see Matt. 27:57-61).

After Jesus’ body was placed in the cave, “*a large stone*” was rolled over its entrance (Matt. 27:60). Because His enemies wanted to make sure His disciples didn’t remove that stone, steal His dead body, and then falsely claim He was resurrected, they persuaded Pontius Pilate to post a guard of Roman soldiers outside the cave (see Matt. 27:62-66). At that point, Jesus’ remaining disciples were utterly downcast. Their Master was dead. They went into hiding. But a short time later, something of such historical magnitude happened that it suddenly transformed that

utterly devastated band of dejected Jews into fearless men and women willing to die for their faith.

Think about it. If Jesus' disciples had snatched His dead body out of that cave, why would they fearlessly be willing *to die for a lie?* (Most of them were later executed for their faith.) And how could they have gotten past those burly Roman guards, who might be executed if they failed at their specific assignment of protecting Christ's dead body.

It's not logical.

Nevertheless, the tomb was empty!

Not only that, but in the following weeks, over 500 eyewitnesses *saw* the Risen One (see 1 Cor. 15:6). The Bible says that Jesus "*shewed himself alive after his passion [suffering] by many infallible proofs*" (Acts 1:3 KJV). Forty days after His resurrection, the Bible then records that in full view of His wondering disciples:

While they [His disciples] watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).

More on that last part later.

After His ascension, the historical Jesus simply vanished from the pages of history. He was gone. No body. No remains. Nothing. But that was far from the end of His story. History records that Christianity became unstoppable and spread like wildfire throughout the Roman Empire, in spite of incredible opposition and bloody persecution from Roman emperors like Nero (A.D. 37–68), Decius (A.D. 201–251), and Diocletian (A.D. 244–311).

Today, Christianity is *the largest religion in the world*.

Inquiring minds have soberly pondered these historical realities for nearly two thousand years, and skeptics have done their best to disprove them. But they've failed. The evidence still stands. Honestly, the only logical explanation for these astonishing facts is that Jesus Christ *really did rise from the dead*. After looking objectively at these verifiable historical circumstances, bestselling author Josh McDowell, in his book *The Resurrection Factor*, concludes that the case for Christ's resurrection would pass the rigors of any objective court of law.

Nearly two thousand years later, His teachings still have power to transform human hearts. Countless people today can testify that the words of Jesus Christ recorded in the New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have delivered them from addictive habits,



APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON

discouragement, fear, despair, and hopelessness into a new life filled with meaning, renewed purpose, hope for the future, and the wondrous assurance that there truly is a God in heaven who created our universe and who loves them deeply—in spite of their sins and faults.

Here is another famous reading summarizing the incredible impact of history's Monumental Man:



A child is born in an obscure village. He is brought up in another obscure village. He works in a carpenter shop until he is thirty, and then for three brief years is an itinerant preacher, proclaiming a message and living a life. He never writes a book. He never holds an office. He never raises an army. He never has a family of his own. He never owns a home. He never goes to college. He never travels two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He gathers a little group of friends about him and teaches them his way of life. While still a young man, the tide of popular feeling turns against him. One denies him; another betrays him. He is turned over to his enemies. He goes through the mockery of a trial; he is nailed to a cross between two thieves, and when



THE PROPHECY MAN

dead is laid in a borrowed grave by the kindness of a friend.

Those are the facts of his human life. He rises from the dead. Today we look back across nineteen hundred years and ask, What kind of trail has he left across the centuries? When we try to sum up his influence, all the armies that ever marched, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned are absolutely picayune in their influence on mankind compared with that of this one solitary life.¹

In light of the fact that the Holy Bible remains the world's bestselling book, that Jesus Christ is history's most famous Person, and that Christianity itself is the world's largest religion, doesn't it make sober sense to at least consider what Jesus and other biblical prophecies have to say about the times in which we live?

I think so!

APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON

NOTE

1. James Allan Francis, "Arise Sir Knight!" in *The Real Jesus and Other Sermons* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1926), 123-124.