

## The Two Reports

### The Contrast Between God's Report and Man's Report

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Please bear with my introductory comments as I quote rather extensively from a recent report sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. It goes something like this:

[T]he twentieth century witnessed the start of a "Great Restoration" of the world's forests. Efficient farmers and foresters are learning to spare forestland by growing more food and fiber in ever-smaller areas . . . Although the size and wealth of the human population has shot up, the area of farm and forestland that must be dedicated to feed, heat, and house this population is shrinking. Slowly, trees can return to the liberated land. . . . Since about 1950, U.S. forest cover has increased—despite the country's emergence as the world's bread and wood basket. Geographers have observed a transition from deforestation to reforestation in countries as distant as France and New Zealand . . . Studies by forest experts in Finland reveal that by the 1980s, wooded areas were increasing in all major temperate and boreal forests [that's a northern hemisphere forest]. These mid- and high-latitude forests account for half the world's total and span some 60 countries. Such forests today are also healthier . . . [E]ven [in the tropics] progress has begun to peek through. Preliminary satellite data suggests that the rate of tropical deforestation has slowed ten percent in the last decade. New studies in tropical western Africa reveal that deforestation in that region is only one-third the rate previously believed, and in some areas forests are rebounding. . . . Brazil has become a powerhouse in forest planting.

Wow, brethren, if that be true, we could almost say the Millennium has already started; already there is great growth in forests that has begun. Of course we know otherwise. This prestigious and influential report indicates that the progress of forest restoration is already well along, and it states that

by the year 2050 "humanity can vastly increase the area of forests." The report admits that much yet has to be done in order to achieve this goal, but it is very confident; it confidently claims that planet-wide reforestation is possible even in the face of growing population. The report concludes "Such a Great Restoration is truly a worthy goal for the landscape of the new millennium."

In substance, that is the contents of the prophecy of man, the vision of man, what man sees for his future. And I am going to call man's prophecy "man's report." I will be using that term several times. Man's report admits that things are not perfect right now. But, man's report optimistically proclaims man's ability to perfect anything, including his own human nature, by the way—given enough time.

In man's report, time is not an important factor at all. If evolutionists need another million years or so in the past, then they give to themselves the gift of time. In like manner, man claims to have "world enough and time" to get things right in the future. Man's report prophesies that, although there may be steps backward at times, in general things will get better, slowly, but over a number of years, as a result of the actions taken by men and by governments of good will.

And as we all very well know, in man's report, God does not count for very much at all. God is dead. Man's report centers on man. As we will see later, man's report is the product of his pride.

"Who has believed our report?" Millennia ago, God and the Word issued Their own prophetic report. Today, I want to look at various aspects of these two reports: man's report—man's vision of the future—and God's vision of the future. As you know, God's report does not square at all with man's report. In fact God's Word debunks man's report about the forests.

The two reports do not agree. To see just how different they are, let us begin in Isaiah 10. God here issues His own report about the condition of the world's forests in the next few years. Verse 5 tells us the subject is Assyria.

**Isaiah 10:12** Therefore it shall come to pass, when the LORD has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He

will say, "I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks."

In Isaiah's time when he wrote this, God had not finished "all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem." So, the prophecy which follows that we will be looking at is for the near future, when God will indeed finish "all His work on Mount Zion." In verses 13 and 14, Isaiah recounts the overweening pride of the Assyrian king. Here is that king's report of his own successes. Notice the use of "I."

**Isaiah 10:13** For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent; also I have removed the boundaries of the people, and have robbed their treasuries; so I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man."

The king's report centers on himself and it fails to recognize God's leadership. The king apparently considers God to be dead or at least to be irrelevant to history. For that reason, this report of the prideful Assyrian king that I just read here is really a very good example of man's report in general, because it is based in pride. In verse 15 God asks,

**Isaiah 10:15** Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it? Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it?

God chops, and God saws, and rulers and nations are really only His instruments. I think it was Phil Shields who brought that up earlier in the Feast. In verse 16, God enumerates His punishment on the Assyrian leadership.

**Isaiah 10:16-19** Therefore the Lord, the Lord of hosts, will send leanness among his fat ones; and under his glory He will kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. So the Light of Israel will be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame; it will burn and devour His thorns and his briars in one day. And it will consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field, both soul and body; and they will be as when a sick man wastes away. Then the rest of the trees of his forest will be so few in number that a child may write them.

This is not talking about trees in Iraq. We all know that Iraq does not have a lot of trees. This is not talking about the Middle East which is badly desiccated now. This prophecy is aimed at today's centers of civilization, and it is referring to the lands to which Assyria migrated, with the Israelites actually, and in this case it is the lands of greater Germany. God's report says that a child will be able to count the trees remaining in the vast Bavarian forests; that was the home, the place of Hitler's Eagle's Nest if you will remember, a very forested area. This does not sound like a great restoration of the world's forests—at least not in the near term. God's report does not read at all like man's report.

As a New Testament reference, and I will pass over this very quickly in Revelation 7, here God embellishes His own report concerning the forests. Verse 3 of Revelation 7 reveals that God will delay His destruction of the planet's trees for the Elect's sake. Hang on to that word "delay."

**Revelation 7:3** saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

The rest of chapter 7 describes that particular sealing. We will take a look at Revelation 8:7 there in the next chapter. It tells us what happens immediately after the sealing. The first trumpet sounds,

**Revelation 8:7** And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

This does not just mean that we are not going to have to water our lawns for a summer or something like this. You have got to think about it, brethren, and I think most of you know this, wheat is a grass. It is all going to be burned up. God's report, for the near term at least, does not speak of great reforestation, but great famine.

To understand the full prophetic impact of the destruction of trees and of whole forests, we need to understand their symbolic meaning in Scripture. A forest, as you all know, is not just a collection of trees. It is, and I am quoting

here a definition of a forest, "brush and bush, countless species of insects, arachnids, mollusks, amphibians, reptiles, birds and, mammals—as much a part of a forest as a tree."

That is to say a forest is an ecosystem, of which trees are simply the most predominant feature. Symbolically then, a forest is a nation—even a civilization—we could say a system. Trees are the leaders of that civilization, the prominent elite. You can see this clearly in Daniel 4, where Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a tree growing strong, such that "its height reached to the heavens" (verse 11). In verse 22, Daniel tells us that Nebuchadnezzar himself was that tree that had grown so tall. If you want to see a more complex example of a tree and a forest and the symbolism involved there you can take a look at Ezekiel 31.

We did not go into the symbolic aspect of Isaiah 10 when I looked at it earlier, but we will address it for just a few seconds. But, God is clearly saying He is not only going to cut down the forests of Germany but the leaders of the whole European civilization, cut them down so much that a child will be able to number them. Remember there in Isaiah 10:18, God said He will kindle a fire that "will consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field, both soul and body; and they will be as when a sick man wastes away."

God is here speaking of not so much of trees, but of people. The prophecy as a whole, in my view, deals with the destruction of literal forests and, symbolically, it talks about the catastrophe that awaits the prideful leadership of Assyria—the German elite.

Ezekiel 20 firmly establishes this symbolic connection between forests and their trees—between civilizations and their leaders. God is speaking to Ezekiel.

**Ezekiel 20:46-48** "Son of man, set your face toward the south; preach against the south and prophesy against the forest land, the South, and say to the forest of the South, 'Hear the word of the LORD ! Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree and every dry tree in you; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the

north shall be scorched by it. All flesh shall see that I, the LORD, have kindled it; it shall not be quenched.'" "

Now I will insert here as an aside, when I was a boy, I remember reading, very vividly in fact, about Manhattan. I enjoyed reading about Manhattan, the great city. I read one time that the trees were skyscrapers, that is they referred to "the forest of skyscrapers in Manhattan." In that metaphor, the tall buildings are the forest's trees. This passage then could refer to the destruction of tall buildings, or towers, in a city.

Note that, by the way, the two towers of the World Trade Center, that they were called, and I think this was their official name, the North and South Towers. Note that they fell, not to an earthquake which is usually how you think that a tower would fall, but to a fire or through the effects of a fire.

I do not know whether you heard yesterday or read the text yet of his comments but God has raised up an enemy to America, to Israel, right now. Osama bin Laden was speaking in a video tape after our retaliatory attacks. He made the tape before, but he said that the September 11th attack caused fear in America, east and west, north and south. It was rather interesting terminology that he would use. I do not know whether you picked it up, but he did. It is not definitive and please do not misunderstand me; I am not saying that this passage here refers to the September 11th attack at all. It does not say that. That is not the substance of this scripture.

But it is interesting. For instance, you will note that in the September 11th attack the fire was quenched. It did not just burn itself out. God did send rain, if you will recall. So this passage does not refer to that. Nonetheless there are some interesting parallels and the warning is unmistakable. I do not think any of us have missed the warning characteristic of that date. We all understand that some day there will not be any rain to put out the fire.

Let us go back to Ezekiel 20. In verse 49, the prophet complains about the reaction he can expect from the people when he gives them this parable. He says, "Ah, Lord God! They say of me, 'Does he not speak parables?'"

So what God does, beginning in chapter 21, is He sets about to explain the parable of the forest, making plain the symbolism. By the way, in the

Hebrew Scriptures, there is no chapter break between Ezekiel 20 and Ezekiel 21. We will continue in Ezekiel 21. God continues to instruct Ezekiel. I want you to notice as I read this the parallels between this verse and Ezekiel 20:46.

**Ezekiel 21:2-5** Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, preach against the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel [that is, the soil of Israel]; and say to the land of Israel, "Thus says the Lord: 'Behold I am against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you. Because I will cut off both righteous and wicked from you, therefore My sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from south to north, that all flesh may know that I, the Lord, have drawn My sword out of its sheath; it shall not return anymore.'"

That is, once it starts, God's judgment will not stop until He has finished His work. Man's report, reading so often like the report of that prideful Assyrian king in Isaiah 10, says that man is going to be able to save himself by his own prudence, by his own strength. God says otherwise. God says that He will burn the leadership of man's civilization.

Now what happens in a forest fire? The bush and the brush, all those "countless species of insects, arachnids, mollusks, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals [which are] as much a part of a forest as a tree"—all of those suffer. In fact they suffer in some cases more than the trees suffers. God's report states that man will not be able to save his own civilization—his own system that he has created.

In verse 6 of chapter 21, God instructs Ezekiel to give the people, his audience, a sign (something to help them understand). So we have progressed from highly symbolic language, from a parable to a rather straight-forward description of it, and now to a sign. This is a teaching tool God often uses in the book of Ezekiel. In verse 6, God tells Ezekiel to

**Ezekiel 21:6-7** "Sigh therefore, son of man, with a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. And it shall be when they say to you, 'Why are you sighing?' that you shall answer, 'Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, all hands will be

feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it is coming and shall be brought to pass,' says the Lord God ."

Ezekiel told the people he sighed "because of the news" (tidings in the King James Version). The Hebrew word is the very same word translated report in Isaiah 53:1—"Who has believed our report?" Both Fenton and Young translate that noun *news* or *tidings* as report. Let me read Fenton's translation of Ezekiel 21:7. It goes this way:

**Ezekiel 21:7** And then if they say to you, "[F]or what do you sigh?" you must reply, "At the report that has come." So let every heart sink, and all hands weaken, and every spirit faint, and all knees tremble like water! For the event will come to pass.

God's report emphatically warns: Believe it: "Surely, it will come" (Ezekiel 33:33). God is not dead, but is working to bring about what He has promised. None will stop Him. It is inevitable. It is not a matter of voting; it is not a numbers game. God's report is non-negotiable: "Let God be found true though every man be found a liar" (Romans 3:4).

That is an important scripture that we do not spend a lot of time with. As John Ritenbaugh said yesterday, God keeps His Word.

Let us turn to Ezekiel 9. Here God reveals the basic rock-bottom belief that underlies man's report. This is the foundational doctrine of man's prophecy. We will spend some little time on this important section. In Chapter 9, God is still flying around in His "portable" throne. Remember we used to use that term, the portable throne, surrounded by "living creatures" and "wheels" that we read of in Ezekiel 1. In fact, in the first 10 chapters of Ezekiel, God appears to be traveling in His portable throne toward Jerusalem, with various warnings toward Jerusalem which He is planning on destroying. We, of course, are not going to spend time in the whole ten chapters but we will take a look.

**Ezekiel 9:1** Then He [that is, God] called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand."



We will see that the city is Jerusalem, a type of the church. Continuing in verse 2:

**Ezekiel 9:2** And suddenly [hold on to that word suddenly] six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them [now that is the seventh man] was clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

They are in the Temple precinct. Now God does something quite remarkable; He moves from His throne into the Temple area.

**Ezekiel 9:3-6** Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub [that is from the portable throne, as it were], where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem [this is happening, you see, to Jerusalem], and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." To the others [that is to the other six beings] He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the temple.

This passage probably has something to say about America's current troubles. Notice that the six men have battle axes. God is here speaking of war, probably not of famine or pestilence, except as they might result from war. There is a very interesting matter of chronology in that matter.

What type of war is God speaking of? Well, verses 5 and 6, when you add it with the word suddenly which we saw in verse 2, is a classic description of terror-based warfare—that is the indiscriminate and pitiless killing of

civilians. (There are a number of such descriptions in God's Word.) As sincere as I believe Mr. Bush is about "rooting out" terrorism from the world, I think it will remain a common characteristic of 21st century warfare.

In one sense at least, God may have very recently unsheathed His sword, as we read in Ezekiel 20; "[I]t shall not return anymore." Terrorism will be with us until the Prince of Peace finally roots it out of this world.

Let us carry on in Ezekiel 9. The six men do as they are told, following the leader with the inkhorn, beginning with the sanctuary, and leaving Ezekiel all by himself. There he stands and he laments in verse 8:

**Ezekiel 9:8** "Ah, Lord GOD! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?"

God's answer is really kind of scary. God does not pick up here and reassure Ezekiel that He will save a remnant. He does that in other areas. At the end of Amos 9, for instance, we have one of those "fast-forward" areas that David Maas mentioned yesterday. You know, where God does encourage the people and talk about His remnant and talk about how He will save Israel.

But in this particular case God does not hit the fast-forward button. Not at all. In fact, God does not even answer Ezekiel's question directly. That is kind of what is scary about it. He seems to have something else on His mind. It is as though He is preoccupied with another, a bigger subject.

God focuses on the false doctrine that underlies man's report. It is one of the principal lies that Satan, who has deceived "the whole world" (Revelation 12:9) has told. Here is that false doctrine, the lie of Satan.

**Ezekiel 9:9** "The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!"

Consider that against John's signature sermon, "Do You See God?" The world's peoples do not see God, and they think that God does not see them! That is the foundational belief of man's report, that man is alone. Satan has done such a good job of fooling people that people do not even believe that Satan exists, much less God. And if God is alive (and some people do

believe He is alive), they believe that He has gone away somewhere—He does not see them; He does not care. He does not matter; He is irrelevant to modern life. There is lots of results of this way of thinking. I will mention only a couple of them because you can develop this out any time you want to.

First, since he is alone, man has come to feel that he bears the responsibility for developing his own civilization, his own religion, his own governments. And we understand that man is being led by Satan, that it is Satan's government. It is Satan's civilizations that he is building.

Secondly, since man is alone, God's law has no force in his thinking. It is as irrelevant as is God is. In man's report, God's law figures about as prominently as God does—which is not very prominent at all.

Turn, please, to Ezekiel 12. We have looked at the foundational belief, the doctrine, of man's report. We all know that man's report and God's report, are miles apart. They could not be much further apart, could they? They are day and night. And they both cannot be right. One of them is eventually going to have to go. In Ezekiel 12, God tells us exactly what is going to happen.

**Ezekiel 12:22** "Son of man, what is this proverb that you people have about the land of Israel, which says, 'The days are prolonged, and every vision fails'?"

That is, people claim that their future in the land of Israel is indefinite. It is just going to go on. Now, when Ezekiel wrote this, the Assyrians had already deported the ancient Israelites. The land was depopulated of Israelites up in the northern part. This passage does not refer to ancient Israel, but it refers to today's Israel. And, today the average Joe Israelite believes that the North American civilization he inhabits will have no end. Some go as far as to assert that the PAX Americana (that is, the peace America supposedly brings), as well as the American world hegemony, will be around for centuries. I have seen that written. There is no end in sight! The days are prolonged.

If they had taken a look, if they had read and believed Deuteronomy, they would have known better. In Deuteronomy 4:26 it simply says that if people disobey God's law and fall into idolatry, they "shall not prolong [their] days"

in the land, "but shall utterly be destroyed." Verse 27 tells of God's scattering, of His depopulating the land, or prolonging their stay in it. Deuteronomy 4:40 near the end of the chapter tells us that we prolong our days in the land when we obey God's law.

The people in Ezekiel's time—and the people in today's time—do not believe Deuteronomy 4, written by God's prophet, Moses. Rather, they claim that the visions of the prophets fail, every vision fails. And when they say that, they are really saying that God's report, His prophecy that this civilization will be destroyed, is false. That is what they are saying. And when they say that they are asserting that their sinning will have no consequences either for them or for their land. They are asserting that God requires no reckoning for their rebellion from His law. God has a few words about that idea. Continuing in verse 23, let us see what God says. He says to Ezekiel,

**Ezekiel 12:23** "Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will lay this proverb to rest . . ."

That word "rest" is to cease and to stop, and it is the same word *shabat* that Richard referred to in Genesis 2:3. And the translators of the New King James Version translate it "lay to rest," and I think they probably took their cues from its *shabat's* traditional translation in Genesis 2:3 where God rested—He stopped—on the seventh day. The very next clause in Ezekiel 12:23 makes plain what the word *shabat* means:

**Ezekiel 12:23-25** . . . and they shall no more use it [that is they will stop using this proverb in Israel] as a proverb in Israel." But say to them, "The days are at hand [that is they are not prolonged], and the fulfillment of every vision. For no more shall there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am the LORD. I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it," says the Lord GOD."

Drop down to verse 28, where God asserts that "none of My words shall be postponed any more, but the word which I speak will be done."

The implication is that God has in the past postponed judgment. He says, "I'm not going to postpone indefinitely. I'm not going to postpone anymore." God's patience has a limit. There will be a time soon when there will be no more lying reports. Man's report of his ongoing evolution will fail. I want you to understand brethren, that that is what man's vision is. That is what man's view of civilization is. It is based on evolution. Man considers himself evolving. Man says that he has oodles of time. He has given himself oodles of time, and that he will use that time to perfect himself, even to perfect his human nature. God is not going to agree with that report.

I do not know whether you realize it, but today mankind, especially in Israelite countries, remains optimistic; even in our present troubles, many people are confident that America will overcome whatever enemies she has. There is a sign on the marquis across the street that claims "USA will win." Perhaps you have seen it. The mayor claims we will build higher towers. God will surely and swiftly execute His own report, and when He does so He will demonstrate for all that man's report of his ability to perfect himself is a fraud and a lie. We can count on that happening very shortly!

"Who has believed our report" The report of God and of His Christ and of His prophets and of His messengers from Enoch to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong? If we believe it then it will become our report as well—something that motivates us, something that we live. For example, if we believe God's report, then we came to the Feast of Tabernacles not just by habit, not just because that time of year rolled around, not just for social reasons, but because we are convinced that God's report is true, that God means business. We are here today because we are fully persuaded that God will soon overturn "this present evil world." We are here because we believe that the days are not prolonged.

Or, are we more like the evolutionists than we would care to admit? Do we, like them, habitually give to ourselves the gift of time? Have we unwittingly, perhaps distracted by man's world around us, swallowed man's report that we have gobs of time to fix things—to build our careers, to accomplish our goals—because the Lord delays His coming? We do not admit to that belief,

of course. We do not talk about that every day, but do some of us silently believe that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation?"

People can become optimistic in quite bad situations, even in almost the worst of situations. People can get used to almost anything, after all, towers have fallen before—Babylon fell, Babel fell, Siloam fell—some towers have fallen in the past and other towers are going to fall tomorrow. So, what is new? Why should we get excited about it? Why get bent out of shape because of a couple of fallen towers?

I think we know why we should get excited, do we not? Do we ask in all this: "Where is the promise of His coming?" Have some of us quietly come to think that "the days are prolonged"?

If we have come to think that way, then we probably are not sighing and not crying for all the abominations we see around us as we read about there in Ezekiel 9:4. And, if we are not sighing and crying for them, we are a part of them! We are complicit with them.

Understand, that our sincere crying and our sincere sighing implies our action to separate ourselves from all those abominations. In other words, we abandon the abominations for which we are sincerely sighing and crying. If we are not sighing and crying, then we have come to accept the abominations, maybe even to be a part of them. Either we are complacent about the abominations, or complicit with them. And both of them will get us into a lot of trouble.

And, if that is the case—if we are part and parcel with Israel's abominations—then we very well may be among the first of those destroyed by the six beings wielding battle-axes. Remember, that carnage begins in God's sanctuary—the church—and it was for those who did not sigh and did not cry for the abominations in Israel. And please be aware it is not future. In a very real sense, it has already begun. The future is now.

The apostle Peter attests in I Peter 4:17 that "[T]he time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God"—the sanctuary, where the six beings begin their work. In the very next verse, Peter asserts as part of a rhetorical

question that "the righteous one is scarcely saved" (verse 18). That is a chilling conclusion to the whole matter. No wonder Paul urges "him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). We need to be aware that, perhaps in a whole number of ways, God's sword is now unsheathed!

Do we dare take the more sure word of prophecy that we have, do we dare take the warning of God's report lightly, glibly? I began with an extended quotation from man's report. I am going to conclude with an extended quotation from God's report. In Isaiah 55, God affirms that His report will stand, that it will provide eternal nourishment for all mankind.

**Isaiah 55:10-11** "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

Remember in the days of the Exodus, God intervened such that not even a dog barked at His people as they left Egypt. Well, whenever we follow God's lead, great things happen. Notice in the next verse here what God's report says will happen to His people in the near future:

**Isaiah 55:12-13** "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn [Remember, Isaiah 10, we read that God would kindle a fire to devour the thorns and briers of Assyria in one day? Notice what replaces those thorns and those briers.] shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

Man will not restore the forests. God will restore the forests. And He will plant His civilization—His system—on this planet. When He does so, He will raise us up as its leaders, as trees, planted by rivers of water.