

Newsbytes

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

**Reminder: Our 22nd Great Lakes Prophecy Conference starts Friday at 1:00.
Livestream available, or come join us!
Registration available at the door, \$35 for the entire event.**

The ‘Gloom and Doom’ Factor

September 2, 2020 Jack Kinsella

A reader emailed me yesterday saying, “the closer I look at prophecy and fulfillment, on an every-day basis, the gloomier it all seems. I know I can’t be the only one feeling that – we all must struggle with that...”

The prophecies of the Bible for the last days ARE a lot of doom and gloom — the very purpose of the Tribulation is to judge a Christ-rejecting world. It is called the Time of Jacob’s Trouble, the Day of Wrath, etc.

It is the time of God’s judgment on the world — and there isn’t much cheering going on. Three-quarters of the world will die of the plagues and judgments during this period. (Revelation 6) One third of the trees on earth will burn up, (Revelation 8:7) a third of all sea life will die, a third part of the ships will be destroyed in a sea turned one-third to blood.(v.9)

The judgment extends from the earth to the heavens: “And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.” (Revelation 8:12)

It isn’t a pretty picture to contemplate. Especially in light of the very next verse:

“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!” (Revelation 8:13)

No wonder much of the Church prefers the replacement theologian’s view that all prophecy was fulfilled with the Destruction of the Temple in AD 70 and that Revelation and Daniel are figurative or allegorical rather than predictive.

Sir Isaac Newton is reputed to have observed, “About the time of the end, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation, in the midst of

much clamour and opposition.”

Now that we live in that time, Newton’s observation sounds almost prophetic. There is a HUGE clamor surrounding the study of Bible prophecy. And any of you who’ve read the forum debates over replacement theology knows how strongly they oppose studying Bible prophecy.

In any case, the prophecies for the last days are so terrifying, many would rather allegorize them away.

We are not living during the Time of Jacob’s Trouble. But our world is preparing itself for that time as we sit back as astonished eyewitnesses. The chaos that seizes the planet during the Tribulation has its beginnings during the last days of the Church Age.

Jesus warned that there would come wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilences and so on. He warned that, “All these are the beginning of sorrows.” (Matthew 24:8)

The signs of the times are all around us and they are scary. They are scary even to many saved Christians who know the signs mean the Day of the Lord is at hand. They are scary to Christians who believe the Rapture will occur before the Tribulation begins.

There is nothing in Scripture to suggest that the Church Age will escape bad things in the last days — just that it will be removed before the beginning of the Time of Jacob’s Trouble.

Bad things are already happening. The wars. The rumors of wars. Famines. Earthquakes and pestilences. All on an ever-increasing scale of frequency and intensity. But Jesus said, “all these things MUST come to pass, but the end is not yet.” (Matthew 24:6) The ‘end’ He refers to is the ‘end of the [Church] age’ (Matthew 24:3), so we know it’s going to get uglier.

Those are all good reasons to get depressed with the ‘doom and gloom’ of Bible prophecy. It’s easy to get caught up in it — especially when examining the ‘nuts and bolts’ of how things fit together, and what Scripture says should be next on the global agenda. Since nothing particularly pleasant is prophesied to come upon the earth, studying it in detail gets pretty depressing.

And there are all the people we know that are not yet saved — we know that time is running out, that they won’t listen, and that is even more depressing.

We see all the tiniest details of God’s plan being played out before our eyes, but the details obscure the bigger picture.

This is GOD’S PLAN! Before the world began, God knew exactly how things would play out. He told us in advance of each event. He told us that fulfilled prophecy was His Signature;

“Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.” (Isaiah 45:21)

Also, “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear” (Isaiah 59:1)

In this generation, we live in an age of miracles. There appears that there is nothing that science won’t be able to accomplish eventually, thanks to the advent of computers. We can replicate almost any miracle except one.

We cannot predict the future. It simply can't be done. No computer could calculate every detail of every life in advance, which is what would be necessary. Should one person do something unexpected then the whole course of future history would change.

Bible prophecy was given to the Church in the last days for the same reason that the Apostles were given miracles, signs and wonders following Pentecost.

In both instances, God's Authority is proved by God-given signs.

It was by the Authority of God, authenticated by miracles, that the Apostles proclaimed the birth of the Church Age at Pentecost.

It is by the Authority of God, authenticated by fulfilled prophecy, that the Bible proclaims the end of the Church Age in this generation.

Taking into account the bigger picture, Bible prophecy isn't 'doom and gloom' at all. It is incontrovertible evidence that cannot be shaken by modern scientific 'miracles'.

When the skeptic argues for evolution and random selection, trotting out fossils, skeletons and diagrams, it seems pretty convincing. Maybe the Bible isn't all that literal, after all. Maybe science has got something there...maybe...(!)

But when one compares the accuracy of the Bible's account of the unknowable future to the ever-changing scientific 'explanations' for the distant past, doubts melt away. The skeptic has multiple explanations for static events that have already happened.

The Bible gives a single explanation for a fluid, changeable series of events predicted to happen thousands of years in the future — the events that define our present day. Which is more convincing?

Bible prophecy proves Jesus was the Son of God, regardless of the latest scientific, archeological or historical discovery. No matter what else might be offered as 'evidence' to the contrary, there is no other explanation for Bible prophecy. It is our generation's unique miracle.

It proves that He remains in charge of the affairs of men. Scripture records His Promise in all three Gospel accounts, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35. Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33)

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:" (2 Peter 1:19)

Bible prophecy is proof positive that God remains on the Throne, that His Word will NOT return to Him void, and that all the chaos and terror of the world notwithstanding, all continues to go according to His plan. Given the unbeliever's explanation of uncontrolled chaos, Bible prophecy isn't all that depressing, after all. What WOULD be depressing would be to be among the lost, not knowing what this world is coming to, and believing the world is in a state of uncontrolled chaos.

For the believer, Bible prophecy can be pretty encouraging, which is what the Lord intended for the last days' Church all along:

"But these things have I told you, that WHEN THE TIME SHALL COME, ye may remember that I told you of them." (John 16:4)

Return Of The Dust Bowl? The 'Megadrought' In The Southwest Continues

Michael Snyder

September 3

Much of the southwestern portion of the United States has been gripped by a drought that never seems to end, and there is a tremendous amount of concern that patterns that we witnessed back during the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s may be starting to repeat.

In a previous article, I discussed the extreme heat that we have been seeing in the region lately. Phoenix has never had more days in a year when the high temperature has hit at least 115 degrees, and other southwestern cities have been smashing records as well.

At the same time, precipitation levels have been very low, and the combination of these two factors is starting to cause some major problems.

A couple of weeks ago, NASA posted an article on their official website about the horrible drought conditions that we are now witnessing...

As the United States moves into the last weeks of climatological summer, one-third of the country is experiencing at least a moderate level of drought. Much of the West is approaching severe drought, and New England has been unusually dry and hot. An estimated 53 million people are living in drought-affected areas.

Since NASA posted that article, things have gotten even worse. If you go to the U.S. Drought Monitor website, you will instantly see why so many experts are deeply concerned. The latest map shows that nearly the entire southwestern quadrant of the country is now gripped by either "severe" or "extreme" drought. Needless to say, this is not good news at all for farmers and ranchers in the region.

Colorado is one of the states that is being hit the hardest. At this point, more than 93 percent of the entire state is experiencing very serious drought conditions...

According to United States Drought Monitor, drought conditions have gotten significantly worse in Colorado in recent days and weeks.

Last week, approximately 72 percent of Colorado was experiencing "severe" drought conditions or worse. This has now jumped to just over 93 percent.

Because things have been so dry, it is really easy for the wind to pick up dust and start blowing it around, and this summer we have been seeing some really impressive dust storms.

For example, earlier this month two giant dust storms actually "converged" in the Phoenix area...

Two dust storms converged over the greater Phoenix area on Sunday, hours after the city broke another record as a heat wave grips the West.

Thankfully, at this point we still have a long way to go before we return to the nightmarish conditions of the 1930s. The "Black Sunday" dust storm that so many history books talk about was actually 1,000 miles long, and it traveled at speeds of up to 100 miles an hour...

A month later, one of the most severe storms of the era, nicknamed "Black Sunday," enveloped the Great Plains. It was 1,000 miles long, contained 300,000 tons of dust, and traveled up to 100 miles per hour. This weather didn't just affect the land: Farm animals choked on dust and suffocated.

At least 7,000 people died from "dust pneumonia" as a result of breathing in the fine particulates, and countless more were driven from their homes and livelihoods by the endless, swirling dirt.

Let us hope that we don't see anything like that any time soon, but scientists are using the term "megadrought" to describe what the southwestern portion of the country is currently going through...

The western United States and parts of northern Mexico have been suffering through drought conditions on and off since the year 2000 - and unfortunately it may not let up any time soon.

A new study has examined extreme droughts in the region dating back 1,200 years, and found that the current conditions have the makings of a "megadrought" that could last decades.

In fact, the lead author of that study is actually telling us that the current drought is "on the same trajectory as the worst prehistoric droughts"...

"We now have enough observations of current drought and tree-ring records of past drought to say that we're on the same trajectory as the worst prehistoric droughts," said study lead author A. Park Williams, a bioclimatologist at Columbia University, in a statement. This is "a drought bigger than what modern society has seen."

Ultimately, the experts don't know how long this new "megadrought" will last.

It could theoretically end next year, or it could persist for the foreseeable future.

But if it continues to intensify, it is going to become increasingly difficult for farmers and ranchers to make a living in the affected areas.

In addition, supplies of fresh water are going to become increasingly stressed. The once mighty Colorado River is now so overused that it doesn't even run all the way to the ocean anymore, and experts are deeply concerned about the future of the river.

In the end, this "megadrought" may force dramatic changes in cities all over the region. Sadly, things have already gotten so bad that you can see the impact of the drought "everywhere"...

"You see impacts everywhere, in snowpacks, reservoir levels, agriculture, groundwater and tree mortality," said co-author Benjamin Cook, of Columbia University's Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory. "Droughts are these amazingly disruptive events. Water sits at the foundation of everything."

Those that have been following my work for many years know that I have been watching developments in the southwestern quadrant of the country for many years, and things have really started to escalate here in 2020.

What a crazy year this has been. We are still dealing with a global pandemic, 58 million Americans have filed for unemployment over the past 23 weeks, civil unrest continues to rage in our major cities and major politicians are being chased down the street, and this month we have been hit by one natural disaster after another.

Now a presidential election is rapidly approaching, and many people believe that what we have experienced so far is just the beginning of our problems.

Inside One Of Big Brother's 'Location Harvesting' Contractors, Which Tracks 'Hundreds Of Millions' Of Phones

by Tyler Durden

Zero Hedge

A Virginia-based software company founded by two US military veterans with backgrounds in intelligence has been tracking hundreds of millions of mobile phones across the world, according to documents reviewed by the Wall Street Journal.

The company, Anomaly Six LLC, draws location data from over 500 apps - partly through their proprietary software development kit (SDK) which they've paid to embed directly in some of the apps, while the company gets location data from partner providers. The SDK allows the company to obtain a user's location if they have allowed the apps in question to access the phone's GPS coordinates.

App publishers often allow third-party companies, for a fee, to insert SDKs into their apps. The SDK maker then sells the consumer data harvested from the app, and the app publisher gets a chunk of revenue. But consumers have no way to know whether SDKs are embedded in apps; most privacy policies don't disclose that information. Anomaly Six says it embeds its own SDK in some apps, and in other cases gets location data from other partners. -Wall Street Journal

Anomaly Six holds contracts with several branches of the US Government - although they told the Journal that they 'restrict the sale of US mobile phone movement data to nongovernmental, private sector clients,' according to the report. Private sector clients - typically marketing companies or others in the advertising space - buy and sell geolocation data, sometimes 'reselling it to government agencies or contractors' according to the report.

And as the Journal notes, in the case of Anomaly Six, "the direct collection of such data by a business closely linked to US national security agencies is unusual."

Founded by defense-contracting veterans who spent most of their careers in close contact with government agencies, tailored their operation to interface with national-security, according to interviews and court records.

"Anomaly Six is a veteran-owned small business that processes and visualizes location data sourced from mobile devices for analytics and insights," the company told The Journal in response to questions for the article. "We leverage detailed location data from numerous first-party sources to provide insights into groups, behaviors, and patterns."

The company acknowledges the "intense scrutiny" surrounding government access to private location data - but insists they aren't breaking any laws, and that the data it peddles is 'commercially available.'

Anomaly Six said it would support regulation to require more disclosure by apps of how data is collected and used. The exact apps the company partners with couldn't be determined and the company declined to comment, citing confidentiality agreements. The partnerships between data brokers and app makers are typically closely held trade secrets within the world of commercial-data sales. -WSJ

Calls for greater transparency

Marketing expert and founder of the Location Based Marketing Association, Asif Khan, says government access to harvested consumer location data has been a longstanding problem for the industry - and has insisted that app-makers provide greater transparency with consumers regarding how their data is used once collected.

"You could argue that the government has the right, just like any commercial entity, to buy the data, if the data is available from a commercial supplier," said Khan, adding "But you also need to be able to clearly say 'this data could be used by government.'"

"I think the average consumer doesn't have a clue," he added.

That said, the data harvested from apps typically doesn't link to the name of the cellphone owner. Instead, devices are typically identified using an alphanumeric code. Still, the movement patterns of a specific phone over time (such as where it is every night) can allow analysts to deduce who owns it.

Consumers world-wide are often in the dark about governments' acquisition and use of such data. Despite collecting data from consumer apps, Anomaly Six doesn't have a privacy policy on its website, nor is it registered as a data broker in California, where a state law passed in 2018 typically requires companies to detail how they are acquiring and using consumer data. The company says it doesn't meet the definition of a data broker under California law and isn't required to register. The California attorney general's office didn't respond to a request for comment.

According to interviews with numerous people in the industry, there is little regulation in the U.S. about the buying and selling of location data, leading to what one industry veteran called "the Wild West." Consumers have come to expect free apps, and app makers have turned to selling user data to pay for the costs of developing and running the software, people familiar with the industry. -WSJ

Anomaly Six and its founders been sued by a competitor, Babel Street, which provides social-media monitoring services to the intelligence community and law-enforcement agencies. Of note, two founders of Anomaly Six are former Babel Street employees who left in 2018, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit, filed two years ago, offers insight into the secretive world of location harvesting products used by the US government.

Anomaly Six founder Brandan Huff had managed Babel Street's relationship with the Defense Department. His co-founder, former Army contractor Jeffrey Heinz, also manage Babel Street's relationships with the DOJ, US Cyber Command, civilian federal agencies and the intelligence community according to court records.

For example, one of Babel Street's products, "Locate X," provides access to the location records of millions of cell phones harvested from consumer apps. Babel claims their two ex-employees sought to build a competing product.

Babel Street doesn't publicly advertise Locate X and binds clients and users to secrecy about even its existence, according to contracts and user agreements reviewed by the Journal. Developed with input from U.S. government officials, according to court records, Locate X is widely used by military intelligence units who work on gathering "open source" intelligence, or information taken from publicly available sources. Babel Street also has contracts with the Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department, and many other civilian agencies, federal contracting data shows. Babel Street didn't respond to a request for comment. -WSJ

What's more, both Babel Street and Anomaly Six products can be used to combine traditionally gathered intelligence - such as social media data, satellite imagery, confidential human sources, consumer data from the private sector and intercepted communications, according to interviews with people familiar with the process as well as documents reviewed by the Journal.

The data is combined into what's known as a "pattern of life" analysis, which allows for a deeper

understanding of a potential intelligence target's habits which can possibly be used to predict future behavior.

"It's really alarming to learn about companies like this that claim to have years' worth of location data from all over the world. Revelations like this just keep coming," said Georgetown University law professor Laura Moy, who directs the school's Communications & Technology Law Clinic.

"Users have no idea that when they install a weather app, a game, or any other innocuous-seeming app that their private location data is going to be harvested and sold. Apparently that's what's happening here, and we have no transparency into the practice."