

THE WINGS OF THE EAGLE

By Francis Frangipane

Message for the week of March 3, 2003

We recently discussed a potential wounding that may strike America in the coming months. Whether it is something from hell that God allows or something that actually comes from His hand, the Lord will use this to help purify America's soul. I do not see the USA being destroyed, crushed or even marginalized; the chastening, if needed, I believe will bring this nation into its highest spiritual destiny. Whatever the conflict, its effect will help break the bonds of uncleanness from the land.

If there is a wounding, remember His hands also heal. Recall Jesus' statement to Peter, that Satan had demanded permission to sift Peter (and the disciples) like wheat. There were "two Peters" fighting for dominance in the apostle's life: a superficial, ambitious chaff nature and a deeper "wheat" nature. America is much like Peter: strong, self-confident and carnal. The Lord had to break Peter's self-will in order to unleash the spiritual side of the apostle.

Yet, it is possible that our prayers, our deepening godliness and fasting might cause conditions to change across the nation. It is possible to avert the wounding altogether.

As the Lord calls us to pray for the United States, I want to share with you my vision of God's plan for this nation. To do so, we will look into the Revelation of John. I know some think of America as a modern Babylon. To you I say that, even if we are exiled in Babylon, the command is still to pray for the nation, for in its welfare is our welfare (Jer 29:7).

THE REVELATION OF JESUS

The last book of the Bible is, as its introductory sentence proclaims, the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." The book begins with John's profound encounter with the Lord Jesus in which the apostle collapses like a dead man. In chapters two and three we see Jesus correcting and encouraging His church; in chapter four He is displayed as the King sitting upon His throne. In the next segment we behold the Lamb followed closely by His elect, where He opens the seals of judgment. And in the final section, Christ is revealed in a glory so expansive and brilliant that the earth and sky are swallowed in light, and in the Holy City, the sun itself pales and is needed no more.

Throughout the book, Jesus is continually unveiled as the Eternal Commander of the heavenly host, leading a triumphant church into His victory. If we do not see the revelation of the Son of God in this book, we will assume it is merely a prophecy of events. Without a vision of Christ, our fears magnify the judgments

of God; we will miss the Eternal Champion Who has written His autobiography before it happens.

It is with the reassuring knowledge of a conquering, invincible Christ that we step into the drama of end time events. And, I believe, as we study the twelfth chapter of John's Revelation, we will see a prophetic picture of America's end time role.

The chapter begins with a "great sign" appearing in heaven: "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." This woman is most often interpreted by Bible scholars as the true church (although a few scholars see her as ancient Israel). Clearly, however, the early Christians did not recognize the woman as natural Israel; they saw her as a prophetic picture of themselves (Jews and Gentiles united as a new creation in Jesus Christ). Indeed, because her children hold the "testimony of Jesus," and since they overcome by the "blood of the Lamb," she is Christian in nature and fulfills, in my opinion, the role of the "Jerusalem above," whom Paul says "is our mother" (Gal 4:26; see also Heb 12:18-23).

Verse two tells us that this woman is not aloof or quietly composed, rather she is in "pain to give birth," pregnant with the end time promises of God (see Gal 4:19). Her travail represents the most complete and focused intercession she can utter: the release of Christ in His many membered body. In spite of Satan's attempts to abort or kill her child, she fulfills her holy mandate and gives birth to that which shall rule the nations.

Those few commentators who identify the woman as natural Israel, logically identify her offspring as Jesus Himself. However, Matthew Henry, author of perhaps the most widely read Bible commentary, writes that the woman is the church. Of her offspring, he writes: "She was safely delivered of a man-child (v. 5), by which some understand Christ, others Constantine, but others, with greater propriety, a race of true believers, strong and united, resembling Christ, and designed, under him, to rule the nations with a rod of iron; that is, to judge the world by their doctrine and lives now, and as assessors with Christ at the great day" (from Matthew Henry's Commentary).

THE GREAT EAGLE

As compelling and profound as the above interpretation is, my purpose is to identify for our intercession a scriptural understanding of God's purpose for America. Let us, therefore, continue farther into Rev 12. After the woman gives birth, great conflict increases between the kingdom of God and Satan, first with a war in heaven, then with the dragon warring with the rest of the woman's offspring. Knowing his time is short, the devil rages, both against the woman and her seed. Now consider this next verse. John tells us that, to protect her, ". . . the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman" (Rev 12:14).

Commentators offer various interpretations as to who or what is represented by "the great eagle." It is significant that within their range of perspectives, there is

this view offered by the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary: "The great eagle is the world power...in early Church history, Rome, whose standard was the eagle, turned by God's providence from being hostile into a protector of the Christian Church. As 'wings' express remote parts of the earth, the two wings may here mean the east and west divisions of the Roman empire."

According to this 1871 commentary, early Christians interpreted the "great eagle" as the Roman Empire. In partial fulfillment of John's prophecy, under Constantine in 312, great protection did indeed come to the early church. (Constantine himself was viewed as the "man-child...caught up to God" through his vision of the cross, and he also "ruled the nations.")

This interpretation by the early church, that a great nation would be turned to God to protect the church from persecution offers a legitimate faith-pattern for us. Beloved, consider: the symbol of the United States is, in fact, the great eagle! And while we may argue about the future, let us acknowledge the past: the wings of this eagle have indeed provided refuge for persecuted peoples for hundreds of years! *It is highly possible that the great eagle mentioned by John is a reference to God's plan to use the USA as a place of protection prior to the rapture of the church!*

SEEING AS GOD SEES

We cannot ignore the fact that there is great spiritual wickedness in high places over America. Still, as wickedness has become increasingly more brazen over the last 30 years, so the true church in the U.S. has become more pure, with maturing prayer and unity. Thus, we would be in great error to ignore the Father's intentions for America. This is not to limit His purpose with other nations around the world, either. Great evangelists will come from Africa and Asia; even Russia will have a mighty role in the end time harvest. God's heart is for the nations. However, within the context of all that He is doing, we are confronted with a prophetic reference to the wings of the great eagle being given to the church at the end of the age. Even Bin Laden is credited with saying he desires to die in the belly of the eagle (in a terrorist act). Why should we not accept that the Almighty might have created the USA to protect Christians during the time of Satan's worst raging?

I realize that, for some, the mere suggestion that the United States may be the (or "a") fulfillment of the "great eagle" resurrects all the negative impulses they have had about America. Some are convinced that America is the final manifestation of Babylon. Yes, the *spirit* of Babylon is here (as it is throughout the western world), but this nation is *not* "Babylon" spoken of in Revelation 17 and 18. The "blood of prophets and of saints" (Rev 18:24) has not been poured out upon America's streets. The exact opposite has been true: America has been a place of safety for the church and a gift of divine protection for the nation of Israel!

Imperfect as this nation has been, still the United States has been a strong defense for the oppressed of the earth. Time and again the wings of this "Great Eagle" have been given to Christians fleeing persecution from around the world. Despite all the flaws, prejudices and injustices committed by Americans, there simply has never been a nation whose spirit was *more* given to protecting the church, or people in general, than the United States. Can any one nation on earth better fit the prophetic profile of this verse?

BOTH WINGS

Consider also, our Scripture text reads, "the two wings of the great eagle" were given to the woman (the church). Why would John specify "the two wings," as though we did not know how eagles fly? I believe the Holy Spirit wants us to know God's will is not just sheltered under the eagle's "right wing." There are divine passions sheltered under the "left wing" as well. Christian Republicans ought to pray for and publicly support the interests of Christ, as they are revealed in the Democratic party: care for the poor, civil rights and protection for the environment. Likewise, believing Democrats should cross the aisle and take strong pro-life stands, and also publicly resist the legalization of perversion under the guise of freedom. Beloved, I believe the Spirit of God has set His sights upon this nation. America has a unique role in end time events which will take both wings to fulfill.

Will there be a wounding, a chastening of our land? If the prayer movement staggers, if we put down our spiritual vigilance, increased difficulties will be almost inevitable, especially if the entertainment industry continues to embrace the deep things of hell. Yet, we are moving in the right direction. The Supreme Court recently made significant restrictions on abortion rights, and more restrictions are coming. This is an answer to prayer, but obviously much work is needed.

However, I am fully convinced that whatever happens, it will be filtered by the mercy of God and redeemed to serve His purpose. I also believe that our Father will increasingly capture the soul of America until "the two wings of the great eagle" are given to the woman.

In our next message we will discuss the spirit of strife that is in the land. Until then, let us stand before God for all nations during this difficult time.

For more from Francis Frangipane, visit his website at <http://www.frangipane.org>