

Is the Gulf Oil Disaster Foretold in The Book of Revelation?

*A short Essay By Rev Earl Jackson
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Rev 8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

Rev 16:3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea.

There is no disputing the fact that if you go to the Gulf of Mexico and look at the condition of the water as it is contaminated by the massive BP oil spill that has now been spewing over 50,000 barrels a day of crude oil into the waters of the gulf, that the water resembles blood. The crude oil is blood red as it rolls itself onto the beaches and waterways.

So could all this red oil in the gulf be the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy? The answer is yes and no, which I will explain.

Yes, it could be the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, and I am sure that it won't be long before the prophecy nuts jump on this catastrophe to justify their particular brand of eschatology. Anything could be the fulfillment of prophecy, after all we don't know the secret workings of God. God is the God of the possible, and yes it is possible that God is doing something which He has somehow foreshadowed in the Bible. We have only limited knowledge, and a limited human perspective. God can use anything to fulfill His perfect and Sovereign plan. This is absolutely undeniable. While we have the mind of Christ, we do not yet have His sort of comprehensive knowledge of all things.

But is every news item and current event a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy? The answer is absolutely no! Prophecy does not include every possible news story, because it is limited by it's function as a Divine Revelation. It prophesies what God wants to reveal, through that medium, and no more. So

it is incorrect to interpret the Bible by current events. The interpretation of prophecy is correct only if it arrives at the Divine Revelation from God which it contains. If prophecy is revelation, then the question has to be asked: “what is this particular prophecy supposed to be revealing?” That question should not seem strange or vacuous to our minds, it is a fundamental question that applies to all of the scriptures, and not just to prophecy. “What is this particular verse or passage talking about?” That is perhaps the most basic law of hermeneutics. So why then, doesn’t the “prophecy nut” ask it, when they are always seeking a verse to quantify a current event? Why don’t they ask “What is God revealing here?”

Could the verses in Revelation prophesy the gulf oil spill? Yes, absolutely they could. But do they in fact exist to reveal that event as a matter of Divine Revelation? No they don’t. How do we know that? We know that by the context and purpose of the entire book of Revelation. The Apocalypse as it is called is not primarily a book of prophecy, it is an unveiling, a revealing of a person...Jesus Christ. We learn all this in the first verse of the book.

Rev 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

The apocalypse is the unveiling of Jesus Christ...the Revelation of Jesus Christ. And then verse one goes on to tell us the purpose for the revelation “to show unto his servants THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS”. Verse three goes on to say “THE TIME IS AT HAND” Considering that the book was written before the close of the first century, is there any warrant to explain it’s verses by happenings 1900 years distant? Such an interpretation is doubtful at best. Was God mistaken when He said that the events were imminent to the first century Christians? Does God not know how to tell us that “the time is at hand?” Is He uncertain how to communicate His truth? And what about the fact that it is addressed to seven local churches on earth at the time of the writing (Rev. 1: 11)? Does that not mean something revelatory?

Or are we to believe the current day prophecy nut, who simply puts it this way, “The time is at hand” and according to “the law of double fulfillment” and “the principle of prophetic foreshortening” it was at hand then in the first century, and it is at hand now 1900 years later because the actual

fulfillment was seen in a myst, they saw the far off mountain tops right next to the close mountain tops. So in other words, the prophet was basically stupid! He did not know what he was looking at. He couldn't have possibly known that the book was really a far off prophecy about events thousands of years away. It requires creative juggling and the application of some modern interpreter's wisdom, and exegetical soft shoeing, to understand the book of Revelation. John couldn't possibly have known what he was seeing. The holy Spirit didn't really mean what He wrote. He actually meant far more than John could have possibly known.

Come on people. Think about this. If God intended Scofield's notes to be included in the book of Revelation, He would have put them there. To completely disannul, and directly contradict, the very first verses of the book, through convoluted interpretation, is a theological and isogetical stretch to say the least. My opinion is that such arrogant and proud interpretations are akin to blasphemy. God did know what He was writing, and if it contradicts some far fetched prophetic interpretation, then so be it. "Let God be true and every man a liar" (Rom. 3: 4)

So then the argument will be made that Rev. 4: 1 is speaking about the far distant future because of the word 'hereafter'. But is that correct?

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

It is not my purpose to discuss all of the abuses of the dispensational futurists founded upon this verse. They use it to teach an imaginary rapture, so why wouldn't they use it to teach an imaginary futurism as well? The verse is simply a reiteration of what is taught back in the first chapter. Look at it there is nothing mysterious or difficult to understand here. Read it yourself.

Rev 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Hereafter when? Hereafter the current things, the things which are (AD 60-90?). What is so difficult about the word "hereafter" it means simply "after these things". John was to record the current things shown to Him, and the things which must soon come to pass. That is exactly what he did. There is

no way to stretch 4: 1 to mean events thousands of years hence.

I am not advocating a strict preterist interpretation of the book of Revelation. Preterism has many faults and inconsistencies, but I am advocating a common sense approach to the plain sense of inspired words. God knows how to speak all languages perfectly, and that means He knew exactly the right Greek words to have John write, in order to communicate His Divine Revelation in the Apocalypse.

Does the book of Revelation prophesy the gulf oil spill? No it does not. Could it have predicted the event? Yes it could have, had that been God's purpose, but the book of Revelation exists for the exact purpose which God has clearly stated, and for no other purposes. So let's not rush to the book of Revelation in order to understand the New York Times, it doesn't work that way, and I am very glad that it doesn't work like that. We have a hard enough time understanding God's plain words, without requiring "sanctified imagination" as a tool of biblical interpretation. God help us to not disobey The book's final warning.

Rev 22:18-19 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.