

# Living to Win

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Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

## Prophets New and Old

There are times when reading the prophets in the Bible that I feel as if I am reading an op-ed piece on current events. Take, for example, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. It's uncanny how close it is to the news you will see tonight on television. People don't seem to realize that many of the psalmists were prophets, partly because some people don't realize what prophecy is. It is not a mere foretelling of future events. If that were all it were, I can't see God bothering to tell us.

But if prophecy has to do with the "why" of future events, then there is every reason for us to know. Because if we can change the *why*, we may avoid the tragedy. That would explain another peculiarity of biblical prophecy. It has a way of recurring. Every prophet speaks out of history, and to his own generation. But it is eerie how events described also are directed to the last days of human history. There can be several reasons why this is so. For one thing, human nature doesn't change and we keep making the same stupid mistakes over and over again. As someone famously said, "Those who cannot learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them."

The other side of this coin is that, while human nature doesn't change, neither does the divine nature. If we make the same mistakes our fathers have made, God will respond as he always has. I think this lies behind something God told Isaiah in a challenge to Israel and their idols:

Produce your cause, saith the *LORD*; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods (Isaiah 41:21-23).

With that in mind, consider the 83<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. I won't cite the Psalm here as you can read it in your own Bible, but it identifies a people as

enemies and haters of God and his people. They are grimly determined to blot out the very name of Israel. This was true when the Psalmist wrote it, and it is true today. What is interesting is the equating of the hatred of God with hatred of Israel.

Who are these people? Well, they are named. At the time of writing, Edom was in the far south of Israel. Moab also was in the south across the Jordan River. The Ishmaelites were the Arabs, the Hagarenes in the same area. Ammon was directly to the east across the Jordan. The Amalekites were in the near South. The Philistines held what is today the Gaza Strip. Tyre was the center of Lebanon. If this were not enough, the Assyrians were in alliance with Moab and Ammon. Assyria was what is now modern Iraq.

It is impossible, I think, to ethnically determine who is who in the Middle East—especially since the Arab conquest of the region. But the lands are the same. And it seems strange to consider an Iraqi power helping the Palestinians

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## Help for Parents and Teachers of Teens

*By Pam Dewey and Allie Dart*

Youth culture is changing rapidly. Far too often there is a cultural-generational gap between parents/teachers and teenagers. Unfortunately homes have become houses where adults are consumed with satisfying their lusts and the child becomes a victim. There is a God, and parents and teachers often need help in showing their children and teens who He is.

There is so much information available for parents if they know where to go, and if they will go find it. "Generation Next" website has a one-hour documentary that includes the complete transcript of and links to audio or video versions. It includes interviews with young people all over the country by well-known journalist Judy Woodruff. Check this out for help.

The Center for Parent/Youth Understanding is a nonprofit organization committed to building strong families by serving to bridge the cultural-generational gap between parents and teenagers. At a time when an already confusing youth culture is changing quickly, CPYU helps parents, youth workers, educators, and others understand teenagers and their culture so that they will be better equipped to help children and teens navigate the challenging world of adolescence.

The mission of CPYU is to work with churches, schools, and community organizations to build stronger relationships between young people and those charged with helping them grow into healthy adulthood. This mission is accomplished by:

- Helping parents understand and respond to the complex world of their children and teens from a distinctively Christian point of view.
- Equipping teenagers to deal with the challenges of adolescence.
- Equipping parents and teens to respond to these challenges through a distinctively Christian world and life view.
- Raising the youth culture awareness of youth workers and educators, thereby helping them increase their effectiveness with parents, children and teens.

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### *Check This One Out!*

## **A Pentecost Children, Teens and Adults Will Long Remember**

*By Pam Dewey*

One of the goals of CEM and YEA is to find ways to engage our children in appreciating the Sabbath, Feasts, and annual Holy Days. As adults, we may be able to get excited about meaningful sermons and attractive special music, and consider those elements to be "celebration." But those things aren't necessarily what will convince kids that these are times of "rejoicing"!

At the CEM Family Retreat, May 25-28 at Paris Landing State Park, we are introducing an activity guaranteed to convince our kids that Pentecost is truly a time of fun, celebration, and rejoicing for them. The regular Pentecost worship service will be earlier in the day on Sunday. Then for Sunday afternoon, the picnic pavilions at the park will be transformed into a "Bible Times Bazaar," capturing just a bit of the excitement that kids in the first century would have felt arriving in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost.

Everyone, whether children, teens, or adults, is encouraged to come dressed as an ancient Israelite, with robes, sandals, and so on. A wide variety of booths will be set up, with Bible-themed crafts, games,

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again, as they did when this Psalm was written. The only power missing at that time was Persia, modern Iran, but they had not yet come into the picture. Oddly, it was the Persians who supported the return of Israel from Babylon. Everything changed in Persia after the Arab conquest.

So where does this Psalm go from here? Well, it is a prayer. It is a call for God to do what he has done before to the enemies of Israel. But then there is this interesting conclusion:

Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: That men may know that thou alone, whose name is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth (Psalms 83:16-18).

What struck me in a recent reading of this Psalm is that defeat of these nations was not merely vindictive, but was hoped to result in causing them to seek the name of God. Not only that, but that they might come to understand and know that *Jehovah*, not Allah, is the name of the only God.

I used to ponder the closeness of the Hebrew Eloah to the Arabic Allah, considering maybe Arabs and Jews were worshiping the same God. But the various words for God in Hebrew—El, Eloah, Elohim—are generic and apply across the spectrum of the gods of the Middle East. Then elohim might have included Baal, Ashtoreth, Moloch, and any number of others, just as it is used for God.

When we look at the enemies of Israel today, the picture looks much the same. People from the same lands hate Israel and Israel's God. And, while I haven't confirmed it, I seriously doubt that the Arabs believe for a moment that Allah is the same as Israel's God.

So you can see why I say that reading the biblical prophets feels a lot like reading today's news. The situation in Israel is dire. I hadn't realized until I heard Dick Morris say it: One nuclear weapon could wipe out 80% of the population of Israel. Therefore, Israel cannot wait and retaliate. They have no choice but to preempt. Any thinking person can look at the world situation and see massive loss of life on the horizon.

Pat Robertson, though, said that God spoke to him and said that a terrorist event would lead to a massive loss of life in the United States late in 2006. I don't know Pat Robertson, and I have never followed the 700 club, so I don't know what to make of him. But his predictions have a Jean Dixon quality to them. Speaking of his record in making predictions, he said: "I have a relatively good track record. Sometimes I miss."

Robertson's predictions can't be called prophecies in the biblical sense, even though he claims God told him. God doesn't miss. So he has to be placed in the category of many psychics like Jean Dixon. They make a lot of predictions, and if one comes true, then they look as if they really do have an other world connection.

I couldn't find a transcript of what Robertson said, but what troubled me the most was that there

was no strong moral teaching accompanying the prediction. Prophecy, in biblical terms, is not like that. Prophets didn't just tell man that bad things were coming. They told them *why* they were coming.

Take Jonah as a case in point. His message was, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." That cannot be all that he said. We know this because of what the King of Nineveh said in response. He called upon the men of Nineveh to "turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." Jonah, sorry to say, was more concerned about the accuracy of his prophecy than he was with achieving the result God had in mind—the repentance and salvation of the Ninevites.

Never sell short a national day of prayer. We haven't got to the place of calling for a fast in sackcloth and ashes, but it may come to that. There is much more to say, and I said it in a recent message titled, *Prophets New and Old*. You can get a *FREE* CD or cassette tape of the sermon just by checking one of the boxes on the enclosed card and sending it back to us.

Holding the faithful word,

*Ronald L. Dart*

PS. If you normally like cassettes, you may want to consider getting an inexpensive CD player. Our cassette duplicating equipment will soon force us to stop offering cassettes. By the way, keep in mind that we depend on contributions from our listeners to keep us on the air. If you can help, we will be more than grateful.

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and other activities for kids at each one. The goal is to provide both fun and education for the participants.

Suggestions for exciting activities that might be included, and volunteers to help make this project come to life, are welcome. If you have an idea or are willing to help out in the preparations, contact Pam Dewey at oasis@chartermi.net, 3508 Babylon Rd., Allegan MI 49010. Get your costumes for the whole family ready, and plan to be part of the celebration!

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## 2007 Feast of Tabernacles Emphasis on Youth

*By Toni Coffee*

Where do young people want to go for the Feast of Tabernacles? Where lots of other young people will be! Christian Educational Ministries' 2007 Feast site in Ft. Walton Beach is a beautiful beach setting for keeping the Feast and a magnet for young people of all ages. CEM's strong commitment to youth ministry ensures a memorable and faith-building experience that no family, no young person will want to miss. Youth Educational Adventures (YEA) classes/seminars provide relevant Bible study lessons, activities, and leadership opportunities unlike any other Feast site. Each day—except Holy Days—begins with an hour-long gathering of enthusiastic young people for five age groups to focus on a fun, yet meaningful, interactive study of God's Word.

YEA classes make kids and young people want to attend and experience inspiring, age-appropriate biblical discussions, make new friends, and enjoy the company of like-minded peers. This year, a dedicated staff, prepared to grab the minds and hearts of young people, will present the following classes/seminars:

- Beginners (ages 3 to 5) – What Will You Bee?
- Primaries (ages 6 to 8) – Friends Forever
- Juniors (ages 9 to 11) – Stay on Course
- Intermediates (ages 12 to 15) – Impressions
- Senior Teens Seminars (ages 16 to 20) – In Search of God

Join us for a worshipful Feast experience in 2007, packed with recreational activities for the whole family. One where young people will look forward to joining their peers in daily instruction in the Word of God in a supportive, uplifting environment. And, if you'd like to be a part of the 2007 YEA servant team, please contact Allie Dart, YEAAdvisor, at allie@borntowin.net.

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## Calendar of Events

**Pentecost/Memorial Day Weekend**, May 25-28, 2007, Family Retreat at Paris Landing State Park, TN. For reservations call 1-800-250-8614, CEM Group #3078. For additional information, log on to <http://tennessee.gov/environment/parks/ParisLanding/>. Pictures from last year can be seen at: <http://groups.msn.com/SkipsPictures/shoebox.msnw>. There will be great sermons, seminars, YEA classes/seminars for five age groups, and fun family activities. To help, email [smartin400@sbcglobal.net](mailto:smartin400@sbcglobal.net).



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Update**

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*That the man of God may be proficient  
and equipped for every good work.*