

JAN
MARKELL

UNDERSTANDING

THE
TIMES

MAKING SENSE OF THE CHAOS
LEADING TO EARTH'S FINAL DAYS

UNDERSTANDING
THE
TIMES

JAN MARKELL



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*This book is dedicated to all those who long for truth
and who wish to understand the times, contend
for the faith, and be watchmen on the wall in this
chaotic generation. We live in a time like no other
that is distorted by fake news, deception, delusion,
and false teaching. All those who strive to see
beyond this fog are a great encouragement to me.*

*This book is also dedicated to those who
long for our Lord's appearing.*

We will soon enjoy our crown.

2 TIMOTHY 4:8

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CHAPTER 1

A FRONT-ROW SEAT TO THE LAST ACT



I have considered myself a watchman on the wall for many years. There is never a shortage of news or events to highlight as our planet groans with wars and rumors of wars, moral and spiritual decline, and rampant apostasy.

Even so, God is doing good things too! Not everything reported today deals with how the sky is falling. God is saving souls, and Bible prophecies are being fulfilled. So much is happening that it is a challenge to keep up with it all. So when it comes to world events and Bible prophecy, commentators, columnists, authors, and pundits have to be selective. That is not easy.

Our Times—Not a Pretty Picture!

First Chronicles 12:32 says that the sons of Issachar were men who understood the times. That suggests that God's people need to understand what on earth is happening. And the only way to do that is to understand what the Bible says about our times.

Here are some thoughts for starters.

Second Timothy 3:1-7 is a powerful passage that talks about the character of fallen mankind during the last days. It's not a pretty picture! *Perilous times will come*. People will be self-focused. They will be covetous, boastful, proud, blasphemous, unthankful, unholy, and without natural affection. There will be little respect for parents. And people will be marked by a "form of godliness" (verse 5)—they might look good on the outside, but it's a completely different story on the inside.

People will be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. *If it feels good, do it!* They will call evil good, and call good evil (Isaiah 5:20). People will be so bad because of reprobate thinking that God will give "them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting, being filled with all unrighteousness" (Romans 1:28-29).

People will also gravitate toward false theology (1 Timothy 4:1). This means solid churches will be hard to find. There will be many wolves among the flock (Acts 20:29).

Most troubling of all, "the spirit of the antichrist" (1 John 4:3) is already here, even before the Antichrist—whom I call Mr. Fix-It—will turn up on the world scene during the end times. By then, believers will have already been raptured from the earth. But his influence precedes him, even before his appearance.

A Front-Row Seat for the Last Act

Our world is getting worse. At first we might think, *Who would want to be an end-times Christian?* However, we have been called for such a time as this, and we are here on assignment! It

is a privilege and a challenge to be alive in these days. *We have a front-row seat to the last act.* The drama has become intense. The players are all in place. The stage is being set. And you can't understand the times without developing a biblical perspective that helps to shine the light of God's truth on everything.

When it comes to understanding the times, our school education doesn't matter. If we don't know what the Bible says about life during the last days, we'll be vulnerable to deception. If we don't know God's prophetic word, we will be lost in a sea of terrifying headlines that make no sense.

The way our world is coming apart at the seams, our human inclination will be to hide in a storm shelter until things get better. But that's not what God desires of us as Christians. And sadly, too many churches are leaving their flocks unprepared for these last days.

Game Changers

From a prophetic standpoint, there have been many game changers all through the history of mankind. And lately, they've become more frequent. When I began a radio outreach in the spring of 2001, I had no idea how much the world would change in the days to come.

One example is what took place on September 11, 2001. I simply was not prepared. Sure, I had been to Israel, and I had seen the Arab-Israeli conflict firsthand during the 1980s. I knew that Islam would be a major end-times player, but not to the degree that it has played out since that fateful day.

Now I am watching so much more—new wars, pandemics, economic turmoil, governments taking greater control and

leading us toward globalism, and all sorts of happenings that can be called apocalyptic without being sensational. Today's crises are truly stunning. They are coming fast and furious.

On many days, I feel overwhelmed. And if this longtime watchman is taken aback, I can imagine what others are feeling!

On October 7, 2023, another game-changing event took place. It was a wake-up call for the world, and especially for Jewish people everywhere. Hamas terrorists invaded southern Israel and slaughtered 1,200 innocent Israelis. This horror scene alone would have been sufficiently shocking, but the calamity didn't end there. Much of the world turned their backs on Jewish people and made them the targets of antisemitic attacks. I will address that later in this book.

Following that fateful day, the spread of what I call Israel Derangement Syndrome increased all the more. You would think people would have been sympathetic toward the victims of a terror attack. But not when it comes to Israel. Rioters and protesters in many countries held up signs that read "Long live Hamas!" *The world was cheering for barbarians!*

Who could have imagined that would happen? Jewish society and culture has long been a blessing to the whole world. Yet today, the Jews are being hated and hunted down as they were in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s.

Hadn't a world war put an end to Jew hatred? Hadn't haunting scenes from the Holocaust caused the world to say, "Enough!"—to the point of creating a Jewish national homeland? This was to be a place where Jews could always be safe—a place created in a

United Nations vote that said Jewish torment had to come to an end. There was almost universal agreement about this.

At the time Israel became a nation again, America stepped up to the plate and led the way. President Harry Truman abandoned his advisors, who had urged him to move on and not side with the Jews. But Truman said no. He would be like the ancient King Cyrus, who, many centuries earlier, had allowed the Jewish captives in Babylon to return home.

Hunted Once Again

Out of the slaughter of Jewish innocents in southern Israel came a world on edge. Jews stopped wearing Jewish symbols. In France, radicals spray-painted the Star of David on Jewish homes, targeting them for antisemitic attacks. In other parts of the world, Jews were hunted and threatened. Jewish students at universities hid in dorm rooms or cafeterias while antisemites pounded on doors with the intent to hurt them.

The scenes were shocking and even terrifying. *If you were a Jew, it was clearly 1938 in Germany all over again.* That's the year when a wave of violence against Jews exploded, culminating in Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass. That's when large mobs all over Germany vandalized and destroyed synagogues, businesses, and homes, and murdered hundreds of Jews. Thousands more were arrested in the weeks afterward.

But after October 7, 2023, the violence against Jews surfaced all over the world—not only in Germany. Hundreds of thousands were enraged by an anti-Jewish bloodlust that terrified even

non-Jews. Christians were left in shock. This was clearly a new day. If ever Isaiah 40:1-2 was appropriate, it was now:

“Comfort, comfort My people,” says your God.
“Speak kindly to Jerusalem.”

Look Up and Not Around

In the upcoming chapters, we'll look at the tide of our times from a biblical and prophetic perspective. While we could easily be discouraged by all that's going wrong, I want to remind us we're to live with anticipation in these amazing times—and consider our place in God's end-times plans. We are to be “encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:25).

As fellow watchmen, we can't merely sound a warning. We are to prepare people for what is happening, encourage them to understand the times, and urge them to look up to God and not around at the world.

If God has you here on assignment, then shouldn't you view this as an amazing time to be alive?