"Terminal Generation"

(How the Internet is Fulfilling Bible Prophecy)

In 1969 four computers were joined together to form the grandfather of the internet. Workers at the United States Department of Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) wanted to create a flow of information between military instillations and other establishments. At the time they probably didn't realise that they had just made history, much less prepared the way for the fulfilment of Bible prophecy. Today 26% of the world's population are on the internet and by 2012 it estimated that 500 million homes world-wide will have broadband – a vital piece in the end times jigsaw. This article seeks to explore some of the ways in which the internet is helping to bring the prophecies of Scripture to pass.

1. Information Explosion

One of the most identifiable signs of the end times is the exponential growth in man's knowledge. In Daniel 12:4 the prophet was told, *"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, **and knowledge shall increase."*** Consider how much man's understanding has expanded since these words were spoken in the sixth century BC. We have grown in our knowledge of science, medical research, astronomy, engineering and so forth. This has been a steady progress over the last 2500 years. But no-one could have foreseen the multiplication of learning which has developed since the creation of the internet. Due to the speed of access that it has given to an ever-growing pool of research man's total understanding is doubling and redoubling at an immeasurable rate. What was once the work of a man's

lifetime can now be recreated in a matter of minutes. Consider what it will be like in a few years time with even more computer power. I read recently that at a conference, Brian Roberts, CEO of the media giant, Comcast, used Wideband to down load the 32 volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and Merriam-Webster's Dictionary in just over three minutes. Using a dial-up modem, this would have taken two weeks! Truly the internet is the information super-highway, fulfilling Daniel's ancient prophecy.

2. Global Viewing

Another thing that the internet has given us (along with satellite television) is global viewing of world events. Due to carefully positioned webcams and sites like *Google Earth Live* we can visit different places in both earth *and space* without leaving the comfort of our own homes. Many national and international events are given live coverage by news media sites. This again helps explain events in Bible prophecy. We are told in Revelation 1:7, *"Behold, He is coming with the clouds, **and every eye will see Him..."**. Once this was deemed either impossible or at best 'figurative'. Today – due partly to the internet - it is a living reality. We are not saying that this is how it will be done, but for the first time in history it is a possibility. Some believe that this also explains how the world will view the death and resurrection of the Two Witnesses in the middle of the Tribulation. John tells us, *"Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations **will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days...**Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and **great fear fell on those who saw them**...And they ascended into heaven in a cloud, **and their enemies saw them."** (Rev.11:9-11)*

Can't you imagine people gathering around the lap-top of a colleague in the office...or at an airport...or in a cafe...or in a taxi...to see these events of prophecy happening right before their eyes? In the past 600 million people are reported to have watched Neil Armstrong step on the moon. In the future the whole world will be able to see prophecy fulfilled by simply logging on to the World Wide Web.

3. Cyber Wars

The internet also adds another dimension to an already achievable aspect of prophecy: war. In His Olivet discourse the Lord Jesus told how this three-letter terror would afflict the earth before His return. *"And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars...For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."* (Matthew 24:6-7). Although this is well known, how many of us have ever viewed the internet as one of the battlegrounds which men would fight on? Yet in military circles this is now being referred to as 'The Fifth Domain of War' (the others being land, sea, air, space, and now cyberspace). America's newest security organisation is called "Cyber Command" and is devoted to the full spectrum of military 'cyberspace' operations.   They know that both the threat of incoming computer attacks is real, and the advantages of attacking this way are attractive.

At this stage you may be wondering what warfare capabilities can be carried out by a computer. If so, consider the following quote from *Publishers Weekly*:   "*In September 2007, Israeli cyber warriors 'blinded' Syrian anti-aircraft installations, allowing Israeli planes to bomb a suspected nuclear weapons manufacturing facility (Syrian computers were hacked and reprogrammed to display an empty sky).*" Clever, eh?

There have been other acts of aggression over the internet where destructive viruses (such as the infamous 'Stuxnet' used against Iran's nuclear plants) have targeted computer systems to sabotage military – or even industrial – works. Once in a computer system these forms of malware are almost impossible to stop and the damage caused is often critical. Make no mistake about it: cyber weapons are deadly. They can deliver their payload in fractions of a second, cross borders, and even use other nations infrastructure for their attacks.   Even key military and political *persons* are at risk.   According to one article I read, a hospital computer was hacked and an incorrect drug prescribed deliberately to a patient – who subsequently died. The possibilities for computer warfare are endless. The reality is we are now in a global cyber arms race where, due to the limited cost of these weapons, almost every nation has a chance to equip themselves. It has been referred to as the "Great Equaliser." I believe it is one of the ways the internet is helping fulfil Bible prophecy.

4. World Wide Evangelism

Another prophecy which the Lord Jesus gave in Matthew 24 was the spread of the Gospel to every nation. He said, *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." (v14)* The internet is one of the key ways in which we can see this happening.   According to a report in the *British Church Newspaper (31/7/09) "Middle East Media has made the Bible available in Arabic as a free download for mobile phones and there has been a consistent 10,000 downloads every month over the last year."* Praise the Lord! The internet can go where missionaries are often banned. With the growing number of

internet users this opportunity is expanding. At the start of the new millennium only 1.7% of the population of China was online. Now it's over 10% (approximately 123 million people). Even here in the Western world it has an important part to play – especially among young people. Those born between 1980 and 1995 have been termed the "net generation" and, regrettably, are more at home on the computer than in a church service. Yet the Lord is reaching them where they are. *"For example, more than 1.7 million have reported decisions for Christ at Jesus.net, a France-based Internet evangelism ministry...Each day, about 1500 people accept Christ through the ministry. After completing a contact form, they receive a free Bible and are contacted by a church or Christian in their area."*[1] Electronic evangelism is helping to bring our Lord's prophecy to fulfilment. With world population doubling every 39.5 years on the one hand and the church in the West shrinking on the other we can only imagine how important this will be for the future.

5. The Spread of False Teaching

Sadly, whilst the internet has proven to be a great tool for evangelism it has also been used as a means of misleading many. It is interesting that we call it either 'the net,' or 'the web' because that is just what it has been used as by Satan: a tool to snare people. False teachers abound on the internet and this would definitely seem to help fulfil another aspect of Bible prophecy. The apostle Paul forewarned the following: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, **they will heap up for themselves teachers**; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."* (2

Tim.4:3-4). The heaping up of teachers is a good description of what you find when you look for spiritual matter on-line. The options presented are inexhaustible. The danger is that pastors cannot *vet the net* like they can visiting speakers to their churches and so many are misled. Not only that but false teaching travels to countries where Christians are persecuted. Secret believers in places like China, where false cults are a massive problem, often look to their computers to substitute their lack of fellowship and ministry, and as a result they are exposed to doctrinal error. Yet that very danger points to another fulfilment of End Time prophecy through this means.

6. A Smaller World

In one of his books Mark Hitchcock tells the story of how he shrunk his favourite shirt in the wash. He then comments that just as his shirt went from XXL to XXS overnight, so the same thing has happened to our world. This is definitely true and the World Wide Web has played a major part in bringing this about. Thanks to the internet most people are just a click away and the whole world is a smaller place. This explains how the antichrist, *"shall devour the whole earth"* (Dan.7:23) in just three and a half years, ready for the mark of the beast to be inflicted on all men (Rev.13) by the middle of the Tribulation. Normally conquering the world takes time, but electronic communication and surveillance makes this a reality. (Someone has said that I.B.M. could stand for, "I've Been Monitored"!) The three C's of any military operation are Command, Control and Communication. All these can be achieved by the World Wide Web, as well as other modern technologies. It would seem that this is another possible fulfilment.

Conclusion

If anyone doubts that we are living in the End Times they should consider the phenomenon of the internet. It is something that is unique to this generation and is bringing Bible prophecy to pass at an amazing pace. It is not true that 'things have always been like this' – they haven't. This could well be a terminal generation in more ways than one. Are you ready? Do you know the Lord? Why not browse our own web-site and learn more about Him.

- Jon Ikin
- *This article first appeared in "Prophetic Witness" magazine, February 2011*

[1] The Digital Awakening, Charisma magazine, May 2010, p52