**The Harbinger misuse of Scripture**

Some thoughts on the Harbinger message of Rabbi Cahn by Dr. Jim Eckman ( see Web address below):

'Why is The Harbinger a book with the correct message (calling America to repentance) but with a faulty and potentially dangerous exegesis of Scripture? Several thoughts:

1. Although Cahn denies this, his book explicitly expects the reader to draw a connection between Israel as a covenant nation with God and America as a nation with a similar covenant relationship. For example, the dialogue between Nouriel Kaplan and the Prophet strongly implies that America is the new Israel. In chapter 19, “The Mystery,” Kaplan has a dream that involves the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem under King Solomon. In the middle of the dream, King Solomon remarkably and bizarrely transforms into the first president of the United States, George Washington. As David James shows, in an interview with Glenn Beck, Cahn connected Israel returning to the place where it was dedicated to God (i.e., Temple Mount) and America returning to the place where it was dedicated to God, downtown Manhattan, America’s first capital: “two parallel nations, two parallel places of dedication, two parallel places of destruction, and two parallel covenants.” Cahn keeps trying to deny such a connection, but whether explicitly or implicitly, this is the connection people are drawing. Further, one of the reasons Mormons are so enthusiastically endorsing this book is that the entire Mormon faith rests on the proposition that America is where the “lost tribes” of Israel came after the Assyrian invasion in 722 BC. America is the new Israel. But the Bible clearly states that Israel is in an unconditional covenant with God called the Abrahamic Covenant. America has no such unconditional covenant connection whatsoever to God. To even allude to such a relationship, as The Harbinger clearly does, is unbiblical and wrong.

2. Cahn violates one of the most basic principles of hermeneutics—the literal, historic grammatical method of interpretation. His hermeneutic is an allegorical one, where there are mysteries hidden deep in the text that, apparently, he has now uncovered. This allegorical interpretation of the Bible is terribly dangerous and subjective because there is no test for it. This is the mystery he sees in Isaiah 9:10 and, because he sees it, it is true and applicable to America. I know of no biblical scholar who would argue that Isaiah 9:10 can be directly or indirectly applied to America. Yet, Cahn clearly wants us to think so. The subtitle of his book shows this: The Ancient Mystery That Holds the Secret of America’s Future.

3. In chapter 17 of David James’s book on The Harbinger, James makes an important argument about Jonathan Cahn and his intellectual roots. He demonstrates quite convincingly that Cahn is influenced, if not actually propagating, an important form of Jewish mysticism called Kabbalah. Indeed, in Cahn’s book he has a dialogue between Kaplan and Goren, the editor, in which Kaplan visited a bookstore in Brooklyn filled with “all sorts of mystical Hebrew writings. That was his passion—finding meaning in mystical Hebrew writings.” The introduction of “Hebrew mystical writings” fits a pattern of many of Cahn’s sermons available online at his church’s website. The term “mystery” is used rather frequently and consistently. He instructs his parishioners to “listen to the rabbis.” That he is influenced by Jewish mysticism is clear and this helps us understand the genesis of his book The Harbinger. It is consistent with the tradition of Jewish mysticism, something that has unquestionably influenced Cahn.

The tragedy of The Harbinger is not its message: America does need to repent. Sin and its ugly consequences are pervasive in America and when one reads Romans 1:18-34 one sees the universal consequences that apply to every person, tribe or nation that defies God. The downward spiral of those verses characterizes every civilization in human history that has rejected God. America is suffering those consequences not because it is in a special covenant relationship with God but because God has established His moral law and to defy it is to experience these consequences. For those of us who love God’s Word, The Harbinger is a sad book. Cahn has taken an obscure verse in one of the most magnificent chapters of the Bible, Isaiah 9, which applies to Messiah Jesus, and turned it into an allegory that talks about America. This is not a “mystery” that applies to America and there is no “Isaiah 9:10 Effect” as the book implies. In Isaiah 9:10, Cahn has not discovered some esoteric mystery that has been hidden for 2,700 years. He has taken a verse that has nothing to do with America and through the twisting of words, through stretching the meaning of words and through downright misrepresenting the text of Scripture, caused people to believe directly or indirectly that God is speaking to America in this verse—and to our doom if we ignore it.

The Harbinger has a legitimate message—America needs to repent. It is a nation that God will hold accountable for the pervasive nature of sin in this country. But, that is the message of the Gospel itself. Humans are sinners; Jesus came to die for that sin; we appropriate that finished work of Jesus Christ by faith. The simple Gospel message is missing in The Harbinger—and that is a glaring omission, for it is the key to America’s repentance—not heeding an obscure mystery found in Isaiah 9:10 that has nothing to do with America.'.

https://graceuniversity.edu/iip/2013/02/13-02-23-1/