

The Harbinger: The Ancient Mystery That Holds the Secret of America's Future Study Guide

The Harbinger: The Ancient Mystery That Holds the Secret of America's Future by Jonathan Cahn

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Plot Summary

The Harbinger by Jonathan Cahn is an intriguing non-fiction book that compares the parallels between ancient Israel and modern America to demonstrate America's pending destruction. After anonymously receiving an ancient seal in the mail, Nouriel seeks answers from the prophet who tells him about the Nine Harbingers and how these have manifested in America since 9/11/2001, foreshadowing the nation's fall as a result of turning from God's way. The Harbinger is intriguing but disturbing as it provides evidence to demonstrate how the Nine Harbingers have manifested to warn Americans to return to God, else they will face the demise of their nation.

Nouriel approaches Ana, an important publisher, to share a mystery that explains all that has happened since 9/11/01 in America and will happen, as well as how it relates to the nation's future. After anonymously receiving an ancient seal in the mail, Nouriel goes for a walk where he encounters the prophet who is sent to teach him about the mysteries of the Nine Harbingers and how the ancient prophecy sent to Israel applies now to America. The prophet tells Nouriel about how ancient Israel was a nation blessed by God, but when they turned from His ways, the Nine Harbingers manifested as a warning of their pending destruction.

The prophet produces the seals of each of the Nine Harbingers, revealing their meanings to Nouriel and showing how the harbingers that manifested as a warning to ancient Israel have now appeared in America since the attacks on 9/11/01. All of these connect to show that America will fall and has already begun to fall as a result of their failure to follow God's ways as prophesied in Isaiah 9:10; the nation's only hope to avert judgment is to repent and return to God's ways.

The prophet teaches Nouriel about how 9/11 is related to America's financial collapse of September 2008, just as ancient Israel suffered financial crises as part of their warnings. Nouriel also learns how this is all related to the Shemitah, the seventh year designed for rest, and he finds that America's crises began on Shemitah with the attacks at Ground Zero just as the financial collapse occurred on Shemitah. The prophet teaches Nouriel about the three witnesses and how their proclaimed vow to rebuild after the breach demonstrates their defiance according to the ancient prophecy, while simultaneously foreshadowing their fall.

Nouriel also learns that the attacks of 9/11 took place on the same ground where America was consecrated and dedicated to God, another aspect adhering to the prophecy. The prophet urges Nouriel to repent, and Nouriel turns his life over to God, accepting his role as the scribe sent to warn America of the danger it faces, and this is why he contacts Ana. Through Nouriel's narrative, Ana's skepticism transitions into belief, and she agrees that it is important for Nouriel to share his message with the entire nation. After warning Nouriel that he will be despised for his message, the prophet reminds him that this outcome is better than having the nation's destruction on his hands, so he urges Nouriel to sound God's alarm.



Chapters 1 & 2

Chapters 1 & 2 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 1: An Ancient Mystery, Nouriel asks what Ana would think about an ancient mystery that holds the secret to America's future. Aware that Ana is not known for wasting time or suffering fools, Nouriel carefully says that this ancient mystery holds the key to America's future and is not fiction. Ana is skeptical, but Nouriel insists it is real. Her expression becoming disengaged, Ana claims she is very busy, but Nouriel begs her to listen while going on the possibility that he speaks the truth and the truth is important enough to warrant her time. Agreeing to temporarily indulge him, Ana leads him to the conference room where Nouriel claims the ancient mystery explains everything that has happened, is happening and will happen, from 9/11 to the economy, the war in Iraq, and Wall Street's collapse; it also holds the key to America's future, "And it's not only a mystery, it's a message, an alarm" (page 3). This warning to America goes back 2500 years, yet no one knows about it except Nouriel and the unidentified man who told him about it. Ana sarcastically asks where this man learned of the mystery, and when Nouriel asks where prophets get their messages, she argues that she has not heard about prophets since Sunday School. Nouriel claims that the message is what is important, not the messenger. He tells Ana all of this because the stakes are so high and the future of millions of people hangs on this mystery. Intrigued, Ana encourages Nouriel to tell her how it began. Nouriel pulls out a reddish, circular object covered with ancient inscriptions and explains this is the first seal.

In Chapter 2: The Prophet, Nouriel explains that seals were used in ancient times to mark a document as authentic or authoritative. Recognizing Nouriel's name as that of a freelance journalist, Ana realizes he is not crazy as he explains that he became involved in the mystery when he received this seal in the mail from an anonymous sender. Unsure what to think, Nouriel put the seal in his pocket and took a walk along the Hudson River. While sitting on a bench and examining the seal, a man next to him noted the writing is Paleo-Hebrew, explaining that ancient objects are a hobby of his. The seal came from the kingdom of Judah, where most of the Bible comes from, and the words were important for them since they were a message from God, sent through his prophets via vision, dream or sign, and it could be catastrophic to ignore such a message. The prophet was responsible for delivering God's words to the nation, but the message was important because of who sent it, and it would come at the appointed time when the nation needed to hear it. Some listened to the prophet, but some did not heed the warning of the message so the prophets were persecuted, leading to the nation facing judgment, calamity and destruction. Explaining that this man was the prophet, Nouriel explains that the man always wore a long, dark coat. When Nouriel asked the prophet why anyone would send him an ancient seal since he has nothing to do with important messages, the prophet suggests that Nouriel is about to receive such a message. He reveals another seal with different markings, telling Nouriel, "It's all about finding out what it's all about" (page 12). Where there is a seal, there must be a message, and the prophet has a message for Nouriel. Insisting this has nothing to do



with him, Nouriel starts to leave, but he is torn between the impulse to run and the need to hear what the prophet has to say. The prophet tells him it is the appointed time for the mystery to be revealed but not for an ancient nation. Nouriel goes home, but unable to stop thinking about the seal, he researches the Bible for prophets and their messages. Several weeks later, he returns to the same bench, drawn to return though he fears what the prophet's message may mean, and on his third trip, he encounters the prophet again, and, "Then it began" (page 14).



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 3: Kingdom's Eve and the Nine Harbingers, the prophet asks why Nouriel returned, and Nouriel responds that the prophet is the only one who can give him an answer to his problem of the prophet. The prophet asks if Nouriel is ready for the answer, and when Nouriel says he hopes so, the prophet says it is time to begin, so Nouriel turns his recording device on. Speaking as if recalling a distant memory, the prophet explains that Israel, the ancient kingdom, had no idea what was coming and thought things would never change, but they should have known; it was there from the beginning, but they forgot their purposes. As the only nation called into being for the will of God with their covenant and conditions, Israel would be blessed if they followed the ways of God, but if they turned from God's ways, calamity would replace their blessings. The mystery is why they would turn away. Israel lost the meaning behind God's name and merged him with the gods of other nations, cutting themselves off from God and transforming themselves into His enemies; yet, God was merciful and repeatedly called for them to return through his prophets, but the nation still rejected His call and turned on the faithful, so the alarm grew louder and joined with calamity as God removed His hedge of protection from them so their enemies could breach their gates in 732 B.C. When Nouriel asks what this has to do with the present, the prophet insists, "Unless you understand what happened then, you'll never understand what's happening now" (page 18). It is the appointed time for the message to be sent to America, a nation that, like Israel, was dedicated to God's purposes and thus its rise or fall is dependent on its relationship with God. From the beginning, it was foretold that America would rise to heights unknown to other nations, and if the nation aspired to fulfill its calling, to be a vessel of redemption and an instrument of God's purposes, it would become blessed and prosperous; however, the other side to the covenant is that these blessings would be replaced with curses if the nation turned from God's ways. America has been very blessed, but it is turning as America began removing God from their national life in the mid-twentieth century by making public allusions to God unwelcome. God has been replaced with idols of sensuality, greed, self-worship and so forth as the nation that was once dedicated to God fills the world with the obscene. After the prophet confirms that America is in danger of judgment, Nouriel argues that people would listen if God sent a message, but the prophet insists that Americans have deafened their ears, so the alarms must grow more severe and the nation will enter a new stage. The hedge of protection has already been removed and the Nine Harbingers, manifested during Israel's last days as a warning of pending judgment, have now manifested in America. The prophet tells Nouriel that there are nine seals, one for each harbinger, and Nouriel will keep each until they meet again when he will be given the next seal and the next mystery. The prophet is certain that Nouriel will return because he will not stop until he finds what he is seeking, and his original seal will be returned when they are finished. Before leaving, the prophet tells Nouriel that they will meet again at the appointed place when it is time to speak of the first harbinger, and though they do not know where or when, Nouriel will be there.



Chapters 4 & 5

Chapters 4 & 5 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 4: The First Harbinger: The Breach, Ana tells her secretary to hold all calls for the rest of the day before Nouriel continues with meeting the prophet weeks later after being unable to make sense of the symbols on the first seal. While at Battery Park, looking at the Statue of Liberty, Nouriel notices the prophet nearby. The prophet explains that the first seal shows the removal of the hedge of protection, foreshadowing a future judgment so severe that the nation will never recover if it comes to pass.

The First Harbinger, the Breach, was meant as a wake-up call, but Israel committed themselves to defending their country so such an attack could not happen again, unaware of the dangerous era they had entered. Similarly, God removed America's hedge of protection on 9/11/01, allowing their defenses to be breached, and like Israel, America responded by increasing their defense and national security. For both, though things seemed to return to normal, it was all an illusion as the danger remained.

The prophet exchanges the first seal for the second which depicts images of men, and when Nouriel asks for a clue, the prophet tells him the meaning behind the Second Harbinger can be found "by the ruins of an ancient people" (page 33), foreshadowing Nouriel finding these ruins.

In Chapter 5: The Second Harbinger: The Terrorist, Nouriel takes the second seal to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, comparing the images until he finds that the figures on the seal match the figures on a massive stone wall from the ancient Assyrians. The prophet appears and explains that the Assyrians were a military people from the mountainous regions of northern Mesopotamia whose name inspired dread throughout the ancient world.

The Assyrians invaded Israel in 732 B.C., manifesting the Second Harbinger, the Terrorist. Al Qaeda members are the spiritual children of the Assyrians, using a similar language and coming from the same place as Iraq is located and in the same place as ancient Assyria was found. As the Assyrian invasion drew Israel into war, the attacks on 9/11 led America to war where American soldiers fought in Iraq, the same lands where the Israelis fought the Assyrians; however, Israel would learn that their danger came from losing their protective covering as they turned from God, and there would be no safety without returning to God.

Now, the same sign appears in the modern world, and the prophet asks what this means for America before handing Nouriel the third seal and warning that he will need a word to decode it. Nouriel leaves to research the Third Harbinger which would lead him to more than he expected; "It would lead me to the key that would unlock the mystery of all the Harbingers" (page 42).



Chapters 6 & 7

Chapters 6 & 7 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 6: The Oracle, Nouriel's search for the word that will reveal the Third Harbinger leads him to the New York Public Library where the prophet appears to intervene in his fruitless efforts. The prophet produces a roll, similar to the Dead Sea Scrolls, and reads the message given to Israel after the first attack which holds the key to America's future: "The bricks have fallen, but we will rebuild with hewn stone; The sycamores have been cut down. But we will plant cedars in their place" (page 46). This was Israel's response to the first invasion, and it sums up the nation's spirit of pride and defiance, sealing their course and foretelling their future. Instead of answering God's call to return, they boast of their resolve, ignoring the alarm and rejecting God's calling. Their vow was a sign of judgment in and of itself as it referred to the prophecy from Isaiah 9:10, and if this same prophetic message manifests in America, it will foreshadow judgment. The Nine Harbingers are a sign that America has fallen from God as they have all reappeared in America. Isaiah 9:10 holds the key to unlock each of their mysteries and join them together to form the prophetic message. In regards to the seven remaining harbingers, the prophet tells Nouriel, "As for the other seven, one is of stone; the other is fallen. One ascends. One is alive; the other once was. One speaks of what is; and the other speaks of what would be" (page 50), foreshadowing Nouriel's discovery of the rest of the harbingers.

In Chapter 7: The Third Harbinger: The Fallen Bricks, Nouriel realizes that the third seal depicts bricks from the prophecy as he stands outside the library, and the prophet clarifies that the fallen bricks were the physical sign of the Assyrian invasion, comparing them to Ground Zero. Israel's fallen bricks served as a warning of the nation's future, just as the fall of the World Trade Center, the symbol of America's economic power, warned that no nation is invulnerable when their source of power crashes to the ground. The nation seemed to hear God's call, gathering for prayer, but there was no real change of heart so the nation resumed their departure from God with increased speed, responding only to the immediate situation without considering any deeper message. The prophet leaves Nouriel with the fourth seal, warning that the Fourth Harbinger was conceived on American soil and set in motion by the nation's leaders, but it is hard to miss since it is the largest one.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 8: The Fourth Harbinger: The Tower, Nouriel researches the Tower of Babel since it seems to be depicted on the seal, but he finds no connection between the Tower and Isaiah 9:10, so he visits the largest standing tower in New York City, the Empire State Building, where he encounters the prophet. The prophet tells Nouriel that the next part of the prophecy regards rebuilding which is the key to the Fourth Harbinger, the Tower, but the problem lies with the spirit and motive behind the rebuilding as they defiantly rebuilt with stronger material. Likewise, American leaders repeatedly promised to rebuild after 9/11, and these words were followed by action as a sign appeared at Ground Zero claiming the intention to build the Freedom Tower, meant as a symbol of rebuilding but is actually an icon of defiance. Defying God always leads to disaster, and America's promise to rebuild parallels Israel's boasts to rebuild stronger buildings, symbolizing the defiant nation as described in Isaiah 9:10. The boast would be thwarted, but it began with Israel's vow to rebuild a tower after the bricks had fallen, a testament of their defiance. Giving Nouriel the fifth seal, the prophet notes that this harbinger is about foundations and will be found far from here.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 9: The Fifth Harbinger: The Gazit Stone, the fifth seal shows an irregular line which Nouriel takes to be a mountain, but he finds nothing about mountains in the prophecy until he researches hewn stone and learns that the Hebrew word for stone is Gazit Stone, indicating a stone cut from mountain rock. Unable to connect the clues to America, Nouriel goes to upstate New York where he notices a mountain that matches the shape on the seal. At the top of the mountain, he finds the prophet who explains that the laying of the first stone, the cornerstone, is symbolic because it signals the beginning of the nation's rebuilding and the fulfillment of their vow as well as their rejection of God's calling. After 9/11, a Gazit stone from this mountain was carried to Ground Zero to mark the beginning of their rebuilding and restoration, as in ancient Israel. This message of defiance embodied the nation's misplaced confidence in their own power to emerge stronger than before, manifesting their spirit of defiance. After the stone was laid, controversy about rebuilding arose, and the plans to rebuild were frustrated until the stone was removed from Ground Zero altogether. Paralleling this, Israel's plans to rebuild were also frustrated and ultimately led the nation to the point of destruction. Though America has no clue it is reenacting the ancient prophecy, the laying of the Gazit Stone is one more link in the chain of judgment. Handing Nouriel the sixth seal, the prophet tells him that the image and prophecy should be clear enough as the Sixth Harbinger appeared on the same day as the First Harbinger and in the same place as the one that came after it.



Chapters 10 & 11

Chapters 10 & 11 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 10: The Sixth Harbinger: The Sycamore, Nouriel assumes that the tree depicted on the sixth seal refers to the sycamore mentioned in the prophecy, but he cannot find a connection to 9/11 since the tree is not native to the American northeast. He ends up on a rowboat on the lake in Central Park where he again encounters the prophet who notes that they are in a place of trees. He explains that the fallen sycamore foreshadows the uprooting of the kingdom and serves as a sign of warning which becomes a prophecy of judgment when the warning is ignored. To Nouriel's question about how this relates to 9/11, the prophet explains that the North Tower collapsed in the last moments of the calamity, sending debris containing soil and grass because the falling tower struck a tree which became a symbol of 9/11 and Ground Zero. This tree was an English sycamore, named after the Middle Eastern sycamore, and the tree became a focal point of interest and attention, transforming into a symbol as the harbingers before it did. No one orchestrated the harbingers; they manifested because it was necessary. The uprooting prophesies the nation's downfall, sending a call to redemption for those who hear it and the sound of judgment for those who do not. Leaving Nouriel with the seventh seal which also depicts a tree, the prophet explains that it is closely joined to the Sixth Harbinger.

In Chapter 11: The Seventh Harbinger: The Erez Tree, after exiting the rowboat, the prophet leads Nouriel to the Bethesda Fountain, explaining that Bethesda means mercy and love which is God's nature. The Seventh Harbinger, the Erez Tree, refers to the cedars that would be planted in the sycamores' place according to the prophecy of Isaiah 9:10. Because cedars were stronger and more highly valued, Israel hoped the cedar would stand strong against future attacks. The Erez Tree becomes the symbol of their prideful, godless hope when it is actually a harbinger of judgment in reality. In November 2003, America planted a cedar in the same place where the sycamore once stood, signifying the nation's false hope and defiance though it was planted as a sign of hope. Still, it symbolized the nation's defiant rejection of God's call though their only true hope comes from returning to God; without returning, the Tree of Hope serves to foreshadow the day when even the strong cedars will crash to the earth. Explaining that the last two harbingers are joined together as closely as the Sycamore and Erez trees, the prophet hands Nouriel the eighth seal which depicts a wide, low platform, but he warns that it is not like the other harbingers and yet like all of them. Additionally, Nouriel will not be able to see it since it is invisible.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 12: The Eighth Harbinger: The Utterance, Nouriel does not find the clues helpful as he searches for an invisible harbinger based on an unidentifiable image, but when he considers the first part of the prophecy, he recalls that it names Samaria, the capital of Israel, so he goes to Washington D.C., America's capital, where he encounters the prophet at the Lincoln Memorial. Reading Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, the prophet notes that the war was devastating and showed judgment, but behind that judgment was redemption in the form of the removal of slavery. The Eighth Harbinger, the Utterance, refers to when Isaiah 9:10 is spoken, being the vow itself as the spirit of defiance was given voice. The image on the seal is that of a speaker's platform. Three years after the initial calamity, all of the objects in the ancient prophecy had manifested in America, and three months later came the manifestation of the Eighth Harbinger when the Vice Presidential candidate quoted Isaiah 9:10 in his speech. The proclamation of the vow was not intentional, but it happened because it had to happen, and moreover, the entire vow revolved around the Biblical verse since it compared the fallen stones and tree to Ground Zero, alluding to America's campaign to defy calamity, like Israel. It ended with the vow, "The cedars will rise, the stones will go up, and this season of hope will endure" (page 110). The candidate meant to deliver an inspiring speech, but he had no clue that he was pronouncing judgment on the nation just as in ancient Israel, thus resulting in the manifestation of the Eighth Harbinger. The prophet exchanges the eighth seal for the ninth, telling Nouriel that it is both like and unlike the last harbinger because it is a summation of what comes after. The image on the seal depicts a document, but it is primarily about the prophecy, and he tells Nouriel that this seal will lead to the place where it all happened.



Chapters 13 & 14

Chapters 13 & 14 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 13: The Ninth Harbinger: The Prophecy, the prophet leads Nouriel to the reflecting pool and explains that the Ninth Harbinger is the manifestation of Isaiah 9:10 in the form of prophecy as the nation responds to calamity with a vow that sets them on a course of defiance which leads to judgment. The prophetic word was given in the wake of 9/11 as the next day, the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives convened to respond to the attack at Ground Zero. This was a critical response that determined the nation's future and ended with quoting Isaiah 9:10, as the Senate Majority Leader unwittingly identified America as a nation under judgment. Though the Senate Majority Leader is not a prophet, he spoke by virtue of his office, as occurred with Caiaphas in the Bible. Isaiah's prophecy that was addressed to Israel is now divinely sent to America, transforming Isaiah 9:10 into a vow as the speech ended with, "That is what we will do" (page 120). Everyone agreed with the vow, though they had no clue what they had really just heard, and after that, it would all come true because the prophecy was meant to foretell the nation's future course as prophesied on the morning after 9/11 when America responded to calamity in the same way as Israel did, by pursuing a course of defiance on the path to judgment.

The prophet then leads Nouriel to the Supreme Court where he notes that Biblical law states a truth or judgment can be established if confirmed by two witnesses. In this case, the Senate Majority Leader and the Vice Presidential candidate served as these two witnesses since they both spoke the same words; furthermore, the weight of their testimony was compounded by the fact that neither of them had any idea what they were saying.

Fearing the prophet will leave since this is the last harbinger, Nouriel asks how American can escape the same fate as ancient Israel if they are following the same pattern, and the prophet responds by noting that proclaiming the vow was the first stage of judgment for Israel, not the last, so he asks what the future holds for America.

In Chapter 14: There Comes a Second, Nouriel asks what happens after the last harbinger, and the prophet explains that the harbingers are a warning and a rejection of the warning, so the only hope for the nation is to alter its course, "But an unchanged course means an unchanged end" (page 125). The attacks on 9/11 symbolized the nation's fall, but more than one warning will be given if the first is ignored. The prophet hands Nouriel the ninth seal but forbids him from following, claiming their time is complete with the last harbinger. He instructs Nouriel not to forget and to go home and watch for the second before disappearing from sight. When Ana asks what happened next, Nouriel explains that he researched the prophecy further and found commentary that matched what the prophet said, "If Israel resisted one expression of the anger, another must be found" (page 128). The purpose behind the first calamity was to force the nation to return to God, but that purpose will not stop until it is fulfilled, so it will



manifest in another form since Isaiah 9:10 notes that the beginning leads to something else, meaning America will face a second warning. The collapse of the World Trade Center, America's symbol of global financial power, foreshadows the nation's economic collapse, going back to the prophecy and ancient mystery though no one realizes it. Nouriel admits that he only knows about this because he was told. This was the first time that the prophet left Nouriel without a new seal, so Nouriel assumes there is nothing more to be revealed and does not think he will see the prophet again; yet, the prophet reappears several years later when Nouriel has lost all hope of ever seeing him again. The prophet reappears to reveal the second part of the mystery, "Because there comes a second" (page 130).



Chapters 15 & 16

Chapters 15 & 16 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 15: The Isaiah 9:10 Effect, Ana and Nouriel take a walk as he tells her about the second part. While working on a project in Lower Manhattan, he stopped in front of the New York Stock Exchange where he heard the prophet's voice for the first time in several years as he announced it is time to begin the second part of the mystery. Isaiah 9:11 follows Isaiah 9:10, stating, "Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and spur his enemies on" (page 133). Since the nation does not return to God, a second shaking follows the first, ushering in the second by fulfilling the vow. The efforts to prevent a second disaster fail because the nation tries to solve the problem by dealing with its symptoms instead of the underlying problem; the problem is the nation's separation from God, so the only solution is a return to God, and the Harbingers lead to calamity or redemption, depending on whether the warning is heeded. When the nation rejects God's call to return by ignoring the Nine Harbingers, the second stage comes, and within it are contained four mysteries. The second part of the prophecy, the Isaiah 9:10 effect, shows that the nation's attempt to unrepentantly defy judgment leads to a chain of events to bring about the same calamity they sought to avert. Seven years after 9/11/01, the American economy collapsed, and according to the Isaiah 9:10 effect, the second calamity must be born of the first so it all goes back to 9/11. America reacted by strengthening their defenses but not by addressing the root of the problem, so the War on Terror taxes the federal budget. After 9/11, the New York Stock Exchange closed for six days and experienced the largest crash in history when they reopened. The nation's response to 9/11 would continue to affect their economy as 9/11 forced interest rates below the rate of inflation which led to credit bubbles, housing booms and exploding markets; however, these remedies only masked the problem, as with ancient Israel. People engaged in risky transactions leading to September 2008 when the American financial system began to implode because America resisted the first warning so a second was found.

Handing Nouriel the sixth seal, the prophet notes it has to do with the second shaking and there are two mysteries within the sycamore, one going back to the last days of ancient Israel and the other going back to the first days of America.

In Chapter 16: The Uprooted, the prophet notes that the wall to the left of the sycamore represents the wall God would break down until its foundation was uncovered, a word he sent through Ezekiel.

The nation's foundation is that upon which it stands, and following the same pattern from Isaiah 9:10, the breaking down and uprooting are two images of national judgment. From the 17th century, America used Manhattan as a trading post, but the wall was torn down when the Dutch lost the island to the British, and as America's financial power rose, New York became the nation's financial capital. In March 1792, twenty-four of the city's leading merchants gathered to sign the Buttonwood Agreement under a sycamore



tree, leading to the founding of the New York Stock Exchange, and though the World Trade Center became the symbol of their financial power, the sycamore symbolizes its origins. The events of 9/11 led to the Wall Street collapse seven years later, with the uprooting of the sycamore foreshadowing the uprooting of American economic power.

The prophet leads Nouriel to the courtyard of an old church to show him a bronze structure memorializing the fallen sycamore as a symbol of hope, but it is actually a signal of judgment and uprooting, representing the fall of America's financial power because the nation refused to return to God's ways. The prophet shows Nouriel the seventh seal, noting that it depicts six stalks of wheat in the background plus one that cannot be seen, and this opens another realm of mystery, joining the first and second shakings together and connecting 9/11 to the financial collapse because it indicates "an ancient mystery upon which the global economy and every transaction within it was determined, a mystery that begins more than three thousand years ago in the sands of a Middle Eastern desert" (page 152).



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 17: The Mystery of the Shemitah, Nouriel tries to figure out the mystery of the seal after the prophet leaves, but all he can determine is that it represents six of one kind and a seventh of another kind. Several weeks later, he drives through the country, past fields of grain where he finds the prophet who explains that the stalks of wheat represent six years of labor followed by a seventh year of rest when there is no harvest, and this seventh year is called Shemitah.

During Shemitah, the ancient Israelites did not labor, and debts were canceled at the end of the year, and it was meant as a blessing until Israel ruled God out of their lives, causing the blessing to become a curse so that Shemitah came as judgment instead of by choice. Shemitah is given as a sign to nations that have replaced God with idols and the pursuit of gain, and the mystery of Shemitah lies behind the collapse of Wall Street and the implosion of the American economy. The economic collapse of 2008 was set off by a series of events, beginning with the government seizing and nationalizing the two corporations that backed about half of the nation's mortgages. Then Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy, all in one week on the anniversary of 9/11. Seven years after 9/11, the Biblical period of time concerning the nation's economic realm, came remission and concerned the principles of Shemitah. The fall of Lehman Brothers set off avalanches of financial collapses around the world with the gains of the past seven years being wiped away with the stock market crash. The crash of 2008 was inextricably bound to the events of 9/11. The seeds of the second crash were sown on the day of the first crash, seven years earlier. The events of 9/11 had to happen when they did or the mystery of Shemitah could have never manifested.

The prophet tells Nouriel that Shemitah has another meaning, the fall, and that is what happened; only God could orchestrate and allow the collapse of the American economic system, triggered by 9/11. This is all art of the prophetic message that appeared to ancient Israel and again to a nation that had turned from God and would see its blessings become curses and their prosperity turn to judgment. Giving Nouriel the scroll again for the third time, the prophet notes that the mystery is in giving it for the third time because there comes a third witness.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 18: The Third Witness, with the only clue being the third witness, Nouriel returns to the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. since that is where the first two witnesses had been revealed, and he finds the prophet already waiting for him. Seven years after 9/11, the vow was undone with the economic collapse as the government decided to allow Lehman Brothers to fall. It happened on 9/12/08, the seventh anniversary of the vow proclamation. The Bible states that a matter can be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses, and the third witness confirms the connection of the ancient prophecy to 9/11. On February 24, 2009, the President came to the hill one month after his inauguration to repeat the vow to rebuild, and the three words, "We will rebuild," are linked to Isaiah 9:10 and were reiterated frequently in the media. The President prefaced his speech with, "I want every American to know this: we will rebuild" (page 186), addressing the ancient prophecy to every American as it was addressed to the Israelites; this identifies America as a nation estranged from God. As with the ancient vow, the President claimed the crisis would not determine the nation's destiny but America would be its own answer and would emerge stronger than before, paralleling the ancient prophecy.

Yet, the answer to the nation's problem lies in a Power much higher than its own, and prophecy and the progression of judgment must proceed until the answer is found, ending with judgment if the nation does not heed God's call. The prophet hands Nouriel the first seal which opened the first mystery of the harbingers and will open the last which is unlike all of the other revelations and yet joined to them. Its mystery lies hidden in the foundation of America, in mystery ground.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 19: The Mystery Ground, Nouriel inspects the first seal with a magnifying glass, finding a crown on a box in the right-hand corner of the wall, and though his research is futile, a documentary on television informs him that the symbol is for the Temple of Jerusalem. He cannot find anything about a comparable holy place in America, but just as he gives up, he dreams about King Solomon addressing the crowds in front of the Temple. Solomon turns into George Washington who plucks a paper from the sky, tucking it between two stones before disappearing, but Nouriel wakes before he can read the paper. After weeks of fruitless searching, Nouriel encounters the prophet who explains that the Temple of Jerusalem was the house of God's glory but was allowed to be destroyed in judgment in 586 B.C. after years of apostasy. Solomon reminded the nation of the importance of their devotion to God when he dedicated the Temple of Jerusalem. He foresaw the removal of their blessings, but spiritual darkness eventually engulfed the land and judgment fell. When Nouriel asks how this is related to America, the prophet explains that the Senate and House of Representatives came into existence in 1789 when Washington was inaugurated, and there is a connection between that day and the day Solomon led Israel in prayer as Washington dedicated America to God on April 30, 1789. Furthermore, his inauguration took place at a stone church when New York was the nation's capital. The prophet leads Nouriel to a statue of Washington which faces a small church, St. Paul's Chapel where the inauguration took place. In the back, he shows Nouriel that this is the corner of what would become Ground Zero; thus, the "ground of dedication becomes the ground of calamity... the judgment returns to the ground of consecration" (page 207). The prophet shows Nouriel what is left of the sycamore which was struck down inside the courtyard on the same ground where America was dedicated to God, showing that the First Harbinger manifested on the nation's ground of consecration. Nouriel asks about the paper in his dream, and the prophet explains that it was a message from God which was meant to be revealed, and the prophetic message is hidden in America's foundation. Before revealing the message, the prophet tells Nouriel that America was dedicated to God on this ground, but it was founded in Federal Hall, joining the two places together on April 30, 1789 and again on 9/11/01 because when the towers fell, a shock wave reached Federal Hall, cracking the foundation. This is where Washington spoke the prophetic word in the first Presidential address, "The propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself hath ordained" (page 213), meaning God's blessings would be removed if America turned from His ways, and they would be withdrawn on the site connected to America's foundation. The prophet notes that only St. Paul's Chapel escaped the fallout of 9/11, shielded from the calamity by the sycamore, "So too redemption comes only apart from calamity, but also through it" (page 215). After 9/11, people were drawn to the site to offer prayer, returning to the place where the nation was dedicated because return is the message behind the Nine Harbingers as God calls out for the nation to return to Him.



Chapters 20 & 21

Chapters 20 & 21 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 20: Things to Come, the prophet leads Nouriel to Ground Zero where he points out that America's progression of warnings and judgment will continue as long as the nation continues its descent away from God, calamity coming if they fail to heed His call. He reiterates that the fall of the World Trade Center foreshadowed the fall of American economic power as prophesied in Isaiah 9:10 which was followed by Isaiah 9:11 which foreshadows the beginning of the nation's destruction, ushered in by the proclamation of the vow. Israel's defiance led them to rise up against the Assyrian Empire, but when the Assyrians invaded to destroy Israel, their only hope lay in God's mercy. The prophet alludes to many stories from the Bible as examples of God's mercy, including the story of Sodom, King Josiah and Jonah. He insists that America still has hope, but that hope is dependent on their response to God's call to return as God's favor will be removed from a nation that turns. Quoting 2 Chronicles 7:14, the prophet insists that the call for repentance is sent for the righteous and unrighteous alike, but believers must be the first to repent for their complacency and failure to fulfill God's call to be the light of the world, but God will be merciful if the nation returns to him; however, their fate rests on the word "if." Announcing that their time together is nearly at an end, the prophet tells Nouriel that they have come to the end of the matter, that which comes after.

In Chapter 21: Eternity, the prophet asks what Nouriel would do on the Day of Judgment if he heard the voice of the prophets, reminding him that he does live in such a time and has heard the voice of the prophets. He notes that Nouriel would not escape judgment because God must judge every man, else there is no hope of heaven. Additionally, man must be judged by God's ways, because, "All the ways of a man are right in his own eyes" (page 228); luckily, God is merciful because only the infinite mercy of His infinite love can answer His infinite judgment. The prophet tells Nouriel that God's message is about love, not religion, and he encourages Nouriel to seek salvation, describing the relationship between God and man as being like that of a bride and bridegroom, noting that Nouriel has time to decide up until the minute he dies since Nouriel is unable to make such a large decision on the spur of the moment; however, he notes that man is always only one heartbeat from death. After Nouriel returns the seal, the prophet tells him that the time of revealing mysteries is complete, so he returns the seal that Nouriel first received in the mail, but before Nouriel leaves, the prophet asks why Nouriel was given the seal. Nouriel asks if this is the last mystery, but the prophet responds that he will know when he answers the question.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 22: The Last Seal, Nouriel explains to Ana that he was too preoccupied with the matter of eternity to worry about why he was given the first seal. After getting his life right with God, Nouriel tries to make sense of everything that happened to him, finding it impossible to return to his former life when he is burdened by the knowledge and feels the need to warn others. Examining the seal, he notices that it appears to have letters, not images, so he translates the Paleo-Hebrew writing into Hebrew and asks a friend to translate it for him, ending up with "Blessed of God is the son of the Light of God, the declarer" (page 240), but he still does not understand what it signifies. Luckily, Nouriel runs into the prophet who explains the translation is not perfect; what his friend translated as "Blessed of God" is actually a name, Baruch, and Baruch was the scribe of the prophet Jeremiah. Furthermore, a scribe is another name for a writer which is Nouriel's occupation. Nouriel is a writer because he was chosen for God's purposes, plus he is born of a priestly line and his birth name is actually Baruch Nouriel Kaplan. Nouriel is the final mystery! He must write it all down and make the message known. Ana realizes that the prophet appointed Nouriel and this is why he came to her, and she agrees that the message must get out, suggesting Nouriel write it down as a narrative, like he told her, revealing it in the same way that it was revealed to him. The last time that Nouriel saw the prophet, the prophet asked if he was ready to fulfill the call, assuring him that he would be led to do what is necessary because things would happen as needed as long as Nouriel followed God's will. The prophet anoints Nouriel with oil and prays for God to guide him, and before he leaves, he admits that Nouriel, as a messenger, will be attacked and discredited as it is meant to be. When Nouriel asks why he was so blessed, the prophet describes how watchmen kept guard in ancient times, pointing out that it was better to sound the alarm and irritate people rather than allowing their destruction for fear of their hatred; Nouriel is likewise a watchman as he has seen the signs and must awaken the people for their redemption. The prophet ends with, "So, then, take up your trumpet, Nouriel, Set it to your mouth and blow, Let the sound of the watchman be heard in the city, Let the call of redemption cover the land; let the word go forth and have its way, And let those who have ears to hear it... Let them hear it, And be saved" (page 253).



Characters

Baruch Nouriel Kaplan

Baruch Nouriel Kaplan is the main character and narrator of most of this narrative. He is a journalist who approaches Ana to share the message of the Nine Harbingers after learning about them from the prophet. Nouriel approaches Ana, an important publisher, to share a mystery that explains all that has happened since 9/11/01 in America and will happen, as well as how it relates to the nation's future. After anonymously receiving an ancient seal in the mail, Nouriel goes for a walk where he encounters the prophet who is sent to teach him about the mysteries of the Nine Harbingers and how the ancient prophecy sent to Israel applies now to America. The prophet tells Nouriel about how ancient Israel was a nation blessed by God, but when they turned from His ways, the Nine Harbingers manifested as a warning of their pending destruction. The prophet produces the seals of each of the Nine Harbingers, revealing their meanings to Nouriel and showing how the harbingers that manifested as a warning to ancient Israel have now appeared in America since the attacks on 9/11/01. All of these connect to show that America will fall and has already begun to fall as a result of their failure to follow God's ways as prophesied in Isaiah 9:10; the nation's only hope to avert judgment is to repent and return to God's ways.

The prophet teaches Nouriel about how 9/11 is related to America's financial collapse of September 2008, just as ancient Israel suffered financial crises as part of their warnings. Nouriel also learns how this is all related to the Shemitah, the seventh year designed for rest, and he finds that America's crises began on Shemitah with the attacks at Ground Zero just as the financial collapse occurred on Shemitah. The prophet teaches Nouriel about the three witnesses and how their proclaimed vow to rebuild after the breach demonstrates their defiance according to the ancient prophecy, while simultaneously foreshadowing their fall. Nouriel also learns that the attacks of 9/11 took place on the same ground where America was consecrated and dedicated to God, another aspect adhering to the prophecy. The prophet urges Nouriel to repent, and Nouriel turns his life over to God, accepting his role as the scribe sent to warn America of the danger it faces, and this is why he contacts Ana. Through Nouriel's narrative, Ana's skepticism transitions into belief, and she agrees that it is important for Nouriel to share his message with the entire nation. After warning Nouriel that he will be despised for his message, the prophet reminds him that this outcome is better than having the nation's destruction on his hands, so he urges Nouriel to sound God's alarm.

The Prophet

The prophet is one of the main characters, and he reveals the mysteries of the Nine Harbingers to Nouriel. The prophet's name is never revealed, emphasizing the fact that the message is what is important, not the messenger. After anonymously receiving an ancient seal in the mail, Nouriel goes for a walk where he encounters the prophet who is



sent to teach him about the mysteries of the Nine Harbingers and how the ancient prophecy sent to Israel applies now to America. The prophet tells Nouriel about how ancient Israel was a nation blessed by God, but when they turned from His ways, the Nine Harbingers manifested as a warning of their pending destruction. The prophet produces the seals of each of the Nine Harbingers, revealing their meanings to Nouriel and showing how the harbingers that manifested as a warning to ancient Israel have now appeared in America since the attacks on 9/11/01. All of these connect to show that America will fall and has already begun to fall as a result of their failure to follow God's ways as prophesied in Isaiah 9:10; the nation's only hope to avert judgment is to repent and return to God's ways.

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Mrs. Ana Goren

Ana is an important publisher in New York whom Nouriel approaches to share the mysteries of the Nine Harbingers. At first, Ana is skeptical and believes Nouriel is crazy, but as he tells his story, she begins to believe what he tells her.

God

God allows the Nine Harbingers to manifest in ancient Israel and in America because both nations dedicated to Him turn from His ways. The Nine Harbingers are sent as a warning for the nations to return to God, but failure to heed His alarm foreshadows the nations' destruction.

Senate Majority Leader

The Senate Majority Leader is the second witness who gives a speech in response to the attacks on 9/11/01. This speech centers around the prophecy of Isaiah 9:10 and



serves as the Eighth Harbinger as the vow is proclaimed, indicating the nation's defiance to God's warning.

President Obama

President Obama is the third witness whose speech after the financial collapse of September 2008 alludes to Isaiah 9:10 thus further fulfilling the prophecy.

King Solomon

Nouriel dreams of King Solomon dedicating Israel to God in front of the Temple of Jerusalem. Solomon foresaw the nation's deviance from God's ways and tried to warn them of the importance of faithfulness, but after his death, the nation forgot to heed his warning.

George Washington

As the first American leader, George Washington dedicated America to God at St. Paul's Chapel which happens to be the future site of Ground Zero where the First Harbinger manifests in America. In Nouriel's dream, King Solomon turns into George Washington who plucks a piece of paper from the sky and hides it between bricks.

King Josiah

King Josiah was the King of Judah who tried to reverse Israel's spiritual descent, but the nation resumed their downward course after his death.

Baruch

Baruch was the scribe for the prophet Jeremiah, and the first seal that Nouriel receives anonymously in the mail belonged to Baruch. The fact that Nouriel receives this seal indicates that he is the scribe for modern America, thus paralleling Baruch's role in the prophecy of Isaiah 9:10.



Objects/Places

Manhattan

Manhattan is where Nouriel lives, and he encounters the prophet in the city several times.

Hudson River

Nouriel first meets the prophet on the banks of the Hudson River after anonymously receiving a seal in the mail, and this is where the prophet first tells him about the ancient mystery.

Ancient Israel

The Nine Harbingers first manifested in ancient Israel to foreshadow their fall after the nation turned from God's ways.

America

When America turns from God's ways, the Nine Harbingers manifest again to foreshadow the nation's destruction. Nouriel is sent to warn America.

Nine Harbingers

The Nine Harbingers manifest first in ancient Israel and again in America as an alarm to warn the people that their nations will be destroyed if they do not return to God's ways.

Battery Park

The prophet explains the mystery of the First Harbinger: The Breach to Nouriel at Battery Park.

Metropolitan Museum

The prophet explains the mystery of the Second Harbinger: The Terrorist to Nouriel at the Metropolitan Museum.



New York Public Library

When Nouriel attempts to research the Third Harbinger: The Fallen Bricks at the New York Public Library, the prophet intervenes because Nouriel is on the wrong path, and he redirects Nouriel to Isaiah 9:10.

Empire State Building

Nouriel learns about the Fourth Harbinger: The Tower on top of the Empire State Building.

Freedom Tower

Freedom Tower is planned as a symbol of America's rebuilding after 9/11, but it is actually an icon of the nation's defiance and plans to build the Freedom Tower are thwarted.

Isaiah 9:10

Isaiah 9:10 is the prophecy concerning the Nine Harbingers which appear in ancient Israel and again in America after the nations turn from God's ways.

Bethesda Fountain

The prophet explains the Seventh Harbinger: The Erez Tree to Nouriel at the Bethesda Fountain.

New York Stock Exchange

At the New York Stock Exchange, the prophet tells Nouriel about the Isaiah 9:10 Effect, and he describes how the attacks of 9/11 are connected to the financial collapse of September 2008.

Shemitah

Shemitah is the seventh year when God orders the Israelites to rest, but this blessing becomes a curse when unobserved. The New York Stock Exchange falls on the last day of Shemitah.



Capitol Hill

The three witnesses manifest and proclaim the vow to rebuild at Capitol Hill.

Temple of Jerusalem

Israel is dedicated to God at the Temple of Jerusalem, and its fall occurs in the same place. Nouriel dreams of seeing King Solomon addressing the crowd in front of the Temple of Jerusalem before Solomon turns into George Washington.

St. Paul's Chapel

America is dedicated to God on April 30, 1789 at St. Paul's Chapel, and the grounds are right next to Ground Zero, so the sycamore falls on the same grounds as the nation was dedicated on 9/11.

Federal Hall

America was founded at Federal Hall, and Federal Hall is again joined to St. Paul's Chapel when the shock waves from the World Trade Center falling reaches Federal Hall and cracks its foundation.



Themes

The Message

From the beginning of this novel, Nouriel emphasizes the importance of the mysteries he will reveal, but he also stresses that the message is what is important, not the messenger. When he first begins learning from the prophet, the prophet tells him that, "It's all about finding out what it's all about" (page 12), again indicating the importance of the message that he will reveal. The prophet also tells Nouriel that there must be a message where there is a seal, and furthermore, the prophet has a message for Nouriel. Because ancient Israel and America both turn from God's ways, He sends a message urging them to return lest they face judgment, but when his warning falls on deaf ears, the alarms sound louder. The prophet informs Nouriel that America is in danger of judgment because the Nine Harbingers have manifested, and all of the harbingers are related to the prophecy given to Israel in Isaiah 9:10. The Nine Harbingers warn of pending destruction, and the nations' only chance to escape is by returning to God. America follows the prophecy of Isaiah 9:10 in the same way that ancient Israel did, ushering in destruction.

The first alarm were the attacks on 9/11/2001, and since America does not heed God's call, a second alarm sounds in September 2008 with the country's financial collapse. American leaders show their spirit of defiance when they boast of their resolve to rebuild, ignoring the root of their problem. The events of 9/11 are connected to the financial collapse by the mystery of Shemitah. The attacks occur on the same grounds where America was dedicated to God, revealing his displeasure with their deviation from His ways, so He allows the Nine Harbingers to manifest as a message to the nation to repent and partake of God's mercy which is the only way for them to avert disaster. Eventually, the prophet tells Nouriel that he is the scribe who must convey God's message to the nation, and Nouriel contacts Ana as part of his acquiescence to his destiny as he begins to plan how to share his message. Sharing God's warning is the reason that Nouriel creates The Harbinger in order to convey the message to America.

Defiance

The theme of defiance appears repeatedly throughout The Harbinger as the prophet explains to Nouriel how Israel and America both react to God's call to return with defiance. After announcing that it is time for America to hear the ancient prophecy, the prophet explains to Nouriel that Israel defied God by turning from His ways and worshiping idols, and the same thing has happened in America. Both countries face judgment because God's warning falls on deaf ears, so His alarm must become louder. In response to the First Harbinger: The Breach, both nations strengthen their national security, and instead of answering God's call to return, they boast their resolve to rebuild, ignoring and rejecting God's warning. This defiance results in the manifestation of the prophetic message of Isaiah 9:10 which foreshadows the fall of each nation as



they fail to heed God's call to return to His ways. Defying God always leads to disaster, and America's promise to rebuild parallels Israel's boasts to rebuild with stronger buildings, symbolizing the defiant nation as described in Isaiah 9:10. Isaiah 9:10 shows Israel's initial response to the removal of God's hedge of protection, and it sums up the nation's spirit of pride and defiance, sealing their course and foretelling their future. Instead of answering God's call to return, they boast of their resolve, ignoring the alarm and rejecting God's calling.

In the Fourth Harbinger: The Tower, the nations' promises to rebuild, meant as a symbol of hope, are actually an icon of their defiance. The boast would be thwarted, but it began with Israel's vow to rebuild a tower after the bricks had fallen, a testament of their defiance. Concerning the Fifth Harbinger: The Gazit Stone, the intent to rebuild with stronger materials also sends the message of defiance and foreshadows the nations' judgment. This message of defiance embodied the nation's misplaced confidence in their own power to emerge stronger than before, manifesting their spirit of defiance. The decision to plant the Seventh Harbinger: The Erez Tree in the place of the fallen sycamore signifies the nation's false hope and defiance of God's message. The Eighth Harbinger, the Utterance, refers to when Isaiah 9:10 is spoken, being the vow itself as the spirit of defiance was given voice. With the Eighth Harbinger: The Utterance, the proclamation of the vow was not intentional, but it happened because it had to happen, and moreover, the entire vow revolved around the Biblical verse as it compared the fallen stones and tree to Ground Zero, alluding to America's campaign to defy calamity, like Israel. The Ninth Harbinger: The Prophecy is the manifestation of Isaiah 9:10 in the form of prophecy as the nation responds to calamity with a vow that sets them on a course of defiance which leads to judgment. The vow to rebuild shows the pursuit of a course of defiance leading to the path of judgment. The second part of the prophecy, the Isaiah 9:10 effect, shows that the nation's attempt to unrepentantly defy judgment leads to a chain of events to bring about the same calamity they sought to avert. Israel's defiance led them to rise up against the Assyrian Empire, but when the Assyrians invaded to destroy Israel, their only hope lay in God's mercy. America faces the same call, but if they allow their defiance to stand in the way, they will face judgment, as ancient Israel did, and the nation will fall.

Parallels Between America and Ancient Israel

An important theme in *The Harbinger* is the parallel between ancient Israel and modern America as this serves to prove the narrator's beliefs concerning how the Nine Harbingers are foreshadowing the destruction of America as they did for Israel several millennia ago. To begin with, both countries were dedicated to God, but when they turned from God's ways and began worshiping idols, the Nine Harbingers started to manifest, thus a prophet and scribe were sent to sound the alarm and attempt to call the nations back to God. There are parallels between these two nations for each of the harbingers. During the First Harbinger: The Breach, the Assyrians invaded Israel just as America was invaded by Iraq, and furthermore, the Second Harbinger: The Terrorist shows that those who invaded America, al Qaeda, are the spiritual children of the Assyrians, coming from the same country where ancient Assyria once stood. In the



Third Harbinger: The Fallen Bricks, the fallen bricks and the remains of the World Trade Center serve as a symbol of the Breach, but when each nation attempts to rebuild with stronger materials, the Fourth Harbinger: The Tower, their plans are thwarted. The Fifth Harbinger: The Gazit Stone shows how both Israel and America began rebuilding with gazit stone, rock from a mountain, because it was stronger than the bricks which had fallen. In the Sixth Harbinger: The Sycamore and the Seventh Harbinger: The Erez Tree, both nations saw their sycamores felled in the Breach, foreshadowing the uprooting of the kingdoms, but they each responded by replanting the stronger Erez tree in the sycamore's place.

The Eighth Harbinger: The Utterance saw both Israel and America vowing to rebuild, their vow centered around the prophecy of Isaiah 9:10, as they began their campaigns to defy calamity, thus pronouncing judgment on the nation. In the Ninth Harbinger: The Prophecy, the Utterance sets the nations on courses of defiance; though Isaiah 9:10 was a prophecy initially addressed to ancient Israel, it has now been repurposed for America as demonstrated by the manifestation of the Nine Harbingers. Because Israel and America ignore the warnings of the harbingers, there comes a second in the form of a financial collapse because the alarms must sound louder since neither nation returns to God. This occurs during the seven year period related to Shemitah. The foundations are uncovered and uprooted as a sign of judgment. Both countries have witnesses who vow to rebuild, and in Israel, the Temple of Jerusalem, where the nation was dedicated to God, falls just as the attacks at Ground Zero occur on the same site where America was originally dedicated to God. The message behind all of these warnings is to return since the only hope for salvation can be found in God's mercy. An additional parallel is found in the fact that Nouriel's first name is actually Baruch, just like the scribe who wrote for Jeremiah, thus showing that Nouriel is the modern day scribe who must share God's message with America to warn them of their pending destruction in hopes of convincing them to avert their path.



Style

Perspective

The Harbinger is told from the perspective of Nouriel, the main character and the man called as the scribe for the novel's unnamed prophet. Nouriel seems to be the fictional version of the author, Jonathan Cahn, as he mentions his intention to write his story in the form of a narrative, indicating that this book is the narrative he has written to share the message he received from the prophet concerning the Nine Harbingers. The author uses Nouriel's perspective to tell the story because only Nouriel knows the details of the time he spent with the prophet, and as such, only he can report on the meanings behind the seals of the harbingers. Additionally, his narrative is set in a frame story centering around his retelling of his story to Ana, and this serves to allow him to answer Ana's questions and dispel her doubts in place of the reader.

The intended audience is Americans, and the narrative is intended to inform and convince the reader of the veracity of Nouriel's story. It is also intended to persuade readers to believe in the manifestations of the Nine Harbingers as well as to encourage them to heed God's call and return to His ways. The fact that Nouriel was not raised as a Christian yet still believes the prophet's message serves as evidence of the indisputability of the prophet's message. Likewise, Ana's transition from skeptic to believer mirrors the author's intent for his readers.

Tone

The tone of this novel tends to be informative but a bit preachy. The reason for this is that it is written as a warning to Americans to return to God's ways in order to avoid judgment. The frame story regarding Nouriel and Ana prevents the novel from becoming too preachy despite the intensity of its message as it serves to admit that the message seems bizarre and unrealistic while simultaneously confirming the accuracy of the prophet's claims. By doing this, the author allows the reader to identify with these characters as they overcome their own skepticism. Both Nouriel and Ana begin as skeptics when they first hear of the mystery of the Nine Harbingers, but their faith increases as they are provided with more proof of the accuracy of these claims, and this serves to present and dispute any arguments that the reader may have.

Another means of sharing the message is found in the lack of identity given to the prophet which emphasizes the concept that the message is what is important, not the messenger. This lends reliability to the message as it becomes apparent that the message is not being shared to acquire fame or glory, especially as Nouriel and the prophet note that the messenger will be despised and ridiculed, thus indicating Nouriel's acceptance of this treatment in favor of sharing the message. Though the message conveyed in this novel is very intense, the tone used helps to reduce the reader's



discomfort with the topics as they are eased into the message and provided with a plethora of proof to support the claims made by the prophet and later by Nouriel.

Structure

The Harbinger is comprised of 253 pages, divided into 22 chapters which average approximately 15 pages in length. These chapters are numbered and titled according to the content that is the focus of each of them. The true narrative concerning how the prophet taught Nouriel about the mysteries behind the Nine Harbingers is set in a frame story centered around Nouriel sharing this message with Ana. The purpose of the novel is to warn America of their pending destruction because the nation which was once dedicated to God has turned from His ways and must be judged as a result. The Nine Harbingers manifest as a warning for the nation to return to God and thus avoid this judgment.

The Harbinger by Jonathan Cahn is an intriguing non-fiction book that compares the parallels between ancient Israel and modern America to demonstrate America's pending destruction. After anonymously receiving an ancient seal in the mail, Nouriel seeks answers from the prophet who tells him about the Nine Harbingers and how these have manifested in America since 9/11/2001, foreshadowing the nation's fall as a result of turning from God's way. The Harbinger is intriguing but disturbing since it provides evidence to demonstrate how the Nine Harbingers have manifested to warn Americans to return to God, else they will face the demise of their nation. Overall, this novel is interesting and informative as it details the uncanny relationship between ancient Israel and modern America.



Quotes

"It's not my mystery. It's much bigger than me. You have no idea how big, or what it involves... Everything. It involves everything, and it explains everything... everything that's happened, that's happening, and everything that's going to happen... An ancient mystery behind everything from 9/11 to the economy... to the housing boom... to the war in Iraq... to the collapse of Wall Street. Everything in precise detail... Affect your life? Your bank account? Your future? But it does. And it holds the key to America's future... to the rise and fall of nations... to world history. And it's not only a mystery, it's a message, an alarm." Nouriel, Chapter 1: An Ancient Mystery, page 3

"It wouldn't have mattered who said it. It's not about the messenger; it's about the message." Nouriel, Chapter 1: An Ancient Mystery, page 6

"It's where most of the Bible came from, the kingdom of Judah-Israel. There was never a people for whom the authenticity of a written word meant so much. For them, it was a matter of life or death. You see, God spoke to them. He sent them words, prophetic messages of correction. Messages to save them from calamity. If they ignored such a message, the result would be catastrophic." Prophet, Chapter 2: The Prophet, page 9

"It's the appointed time, but not for an ancient nation. It's time for the word to be given... for the mystery to be revealed... for the message to go forth. It's the appointed time- but not for an ancient nation." Prophet, Chapter 2: The Prophet, page 13

"They had no idea what was coming. They thought it would all go on as it always had, as if it would never change. They had no idea what was about to happen or what it was all leading to. Everything they had ever known, up to that point, their entire world, would vanish... An ancient people... an ancient kingdom. Israel, the northern kingdom, eighth century B.C. They should have known. It was all there from the beginning, but they forgot... Their purpose, their foundation, that which made them unique. No other nation had been called into being for the will of God or dedicated to His purposes from conception. No other people had been given a covenant. But the covenant had a condition. If they followed the ways of God, they would become the most blessed of nations. But if they fell away and turned against His ways, then their blessings would be removed and replaced by calamity, as they did, and as it was." Prophet, Chapter 3: Kingdom's Eve and the Nine Harbingers, page 16

"There's no simple answer. In America's greatest moments there was always sin, and in its worst moments, greatness. But there are critical junctures. In the middle of the twentieth century America began officially removing God from its national life. It abolished prayer and Scripture in its public schools. As ancient Israel had removed the Ten Commandments from its national consciousness, so America did likewise, removing the Ten Commandments from public view, banning it from its public squares, and taking it down, by government decree, from its walls. As it was in ancient Israel, so too in America, God was progressively driven out of the nation's public life. The very mention of the name God or Jesus in any relevant context became more and more taboo and



unwelcome unless for the purpose of mockery and attack. That which had once been revered as sacred was now increasingly treated as profanity. And as God was driven out, idols were brought in to replace Him... No, they just don't call them idols. As God was expunged from American life, idols came in to fill the void- idols of sensuality, idols of greed, of money, success, comfort, materialism, pleasure, sexual immorality, self-worship, self-obsession. The sacred increasingly disappeared, and the profane took its place." Prophet, Chapter 3: Kingdom's Eve and the Nine Harbingers, pages 20-21

"When calamity came to ancient Israel, both the righteous and the unrighteous were touched by it. Both perished alike. The judgment was upon the nation. But that the innocent and righteous also perished in those calamities was not a matter of judgment but of sorrow. But for the nation, the fact that such calamities could have happened in the first place was a matter of both warning and judgment. Each took place in its own realm. So it was with 9/11; the calamity took place in two different realms- the private realm of individuals and the public realm of the nation. In the first realm is only sorrow, and the magnitude of the calamity is secondary. And for those touched by it, the loss of one life is the loss of an entire world. The charge here is to bind up the broken, to comfort, to support, and to never forget the wounded and the bereaved. But the second realm is distinct and separate, centering not on the individual but on the nation as a whole. It's in this second realm that the matter of judgment remains." Prophet, Chapter 4: The First Harbinger: The Breach, page 30

"But Israel would ultimately discover that the danger it faced could not be solved by the power of its weapons or the thickness of its walls. The real danger was not outside the gates but within them. When the nation turned from God, it lost its protective covering. Apart from a return to God there would be no safety. But by the time they realized it, it would be too late. The chance was lost." Prophet, Chapter 5: The Second Harbinger: The Terrorist, page 40

"This is Israel's response to that first invasion, the first calamity. These are the words that sum up the nation's spirit- a spirit of pride, defiance, and arrogance in the face of the calamity... Because these are the words that seal the nation's course and foretell its future." Prophet, Chapter 6: The Oracle, pages 46-47

"As I was before except then I didn't realize I was going nowhere. This time I was going nowhere and knowing I was going nowhere. I guess it was some sort of improvement, but it's easier to go nowhere when you don't realize that's where you're going." Nouriel, Chapter 8: The Fourth Harbinger: The Tower, page 57

"As it was with ancient Israel, the quarried stone would become the embodiment of a nation's misplaced confidence in its own power to emerge stronger than before. And the act of laying down the quarried stone would be a manifestation of what the commentaries call the spirit of defiance." Prophet, Chapter 9: The Fifth Harbinger: The Gazit Stone, page 75

"There were several other boats in the water that day, but from the moment he joined me, everything else faded into the background as the focus turned to an ancient



mystery and the future of a nation. We could have been anywhere." Nouriel, Chapter 10: The Sixth Harbinger: The Sycamore, page 80

"Bethesda means the house of mercy or the place of loving-kindness. Khesed... mercy... love. It's God's nature, His essence. Don't forget that, through all this, don't forget that. Judgment is His necessity, but His nature and essence- His heart- is love. He's the one always calling out to the lost to be saved." Prophet, Chapter 11: The Seventh Harbinger: The Erez Tree, page 88

"It's stunning enough for Isaiah 9:10 to appear in a speech centered on 9/11. But that wasn't the end of it. It wasn't only that the ancient prophecy appeared in the speech... It was that the entire speech actually emanated out of the ancient prophecy and revolved around it." Prophet, Chapter 12: The Eighth Harbinger: The Utterance, pages 108-109

"What happened after that... After that, it would all come true. It was a prophecy. It foretold the nation's future course. 'That is what we will do.' America would choose the same course as that of ancient Israel, enact the same strategy, and walk in the same footsteps. It was all prophesied on the very morning after 9/11." Prophet, Chapter 13: The Ninth Harbinger: The Prophecy, page 121

"The prophet spoke of the Harbingers as symbols. That was a clue. The World Trade Center was a symbol of America's global financial and economic power. So what would such a fall foreshadow?... As in a financial and economic collapse... It all goes back to the prophecy... everything- the collapse of Wall Street, the rise and fall of the credit market, the war in Iraq, the collapse of the housing market, the foreclosures, the defaults, the bankruptcies, the government takeovers- everything- politics, foreign policy, world history- everything that happened after. It all goes back to the prophecy and to the ancient mystery." Nouriel, Chapter 14: There Comes a Second, page 129

"If a nation rejects the call of God to return, and if the Harbingers aren't heeded, then comes a second stage. So we move now to the second stage, within which are contained four mysteries." Prophet, Chapter 15: The Isaiah 9:10 Effect, page 135

"It's one of the key signs of judgment- the laying bare of foundations. The Lord said this through the prophet Jeremiah: 'Behold, what I have built/I will break down,/And what I have planted/I will pluck up.' That which is built up is built up from the foundation. And that which is broken down is broken down to the foundation. So the Lord built up Israel as one builds a house and planted it as one plants a tree. But in the days of Israel's judgment, that which was built up would be broken down and that which was planted would be uprooted. Two images of national judgment- the breaking down and the uprooting." Prophet, Chapter 16: The Uprooted, page 146

"For the nation that attempts to rule God out of its existence, the Shemitah changes from a vessel of blessing to a vessel of judgment- the judgment of a nation's prosperity." Prophet, Chapter 17: The Mystery of the Shemitah, page 159

"The progression of judgment is only a reaction to the progression of a nation's apostasy, its progressive severing of its connection to God and to the biblical foundation



on which it was established. If the first progression doesn't end, then neither can the second." Prophet, Chapter 18: The Third Witness, page 189

"America was committed to God at the corner of what would become Ground Zero. It was here, at Ground Zero, that they all gathered- George Washington, John Adams, America's Founding Fathers. They all came here to the corner of Ground Zero to pray on the day that America's foundation was laid... as the consecrating act of that foundation. It was here that they came to commit the nation's future to God's holy protection. And it was here where that holy protection would be withdrawn." Prophet, Chapter 19: The Mystery Ground, pages 207-208

"You see, the one who wills for judgment is man, not God. The heart of God wills for salvation. Greater than His judgments are His compassions." Prophet, Chapter 20: Things to Come, page 220

"Judgment isn't ultimately about nations- but people. As its written: 'It's appointed for man once to die and then judgment.' After the end comes the Day of Judgment, in light of which all other judgments are only foreshadows. And no one is exempt. Each must stand before Him." Prophet, Chapter 21: Eternity, page 227

"There was another matter, more pressing, that I had to deal with... The matter of eternity. It haunted my thoughts. It was the one thing on which everything else stood or fell. If I didn't get that part right, the rest wouldn't matter, my life, everything. Everything would come to an end, and then... eternity. Everything would end with eternity- the one thing that wouldn't end, the only thing that would be left when everything else was gone... and so the only thing that would matter. I had to get that part right. I had to get my life right with God." Nouriel, Chapter 22: The Last Seal, page 238

"I commit into Your hands Your servant. In his weakness, be to him a strength. In his not knowing, be to him his assurance. Cause him to walk in the footsteps You've prepared beforehand. Pour out upon him the Spirit of Your anointing that he might fulfill Your charge. Guide him. Protect him. Prepare his hands for battle. Bless and keep him. Cause the light of Your countenance to shine upon him. Spread over his life the tabernacle of Your glory, and shelter him in the covering of Your grace, in the name of the Anointed One, the Glory of Israel, the Light of the World." Prophet, Chapter 22: The Last Seal, page 250



Topics for Discussion

Describe and analyze at least three parallels between the harbingers in ancient Israel and modern America.

How and why does Nouriel receive the first seal?

Who is "the prophet," and why does he meet Nouriel so many times? How does he meet Nouriel?

Describe the manifestations of the nine harbingers as they appeared in America.

Why does Nouriel tell his story to Ana?

How is 9/11/01 related to the harbingers and their mysteries?

How does Nouriel's feelings about the harbingers change throughout the novel?