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Midnight Call

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December 2021—\$4.75

**World Geopolitics by the Bible:
America's Next Chapter? – Part 7**
P. 11

From the Depths to the Heights
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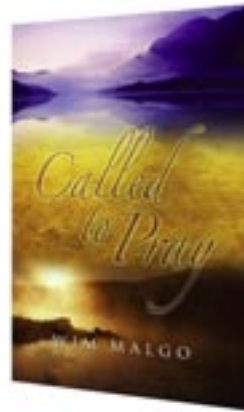
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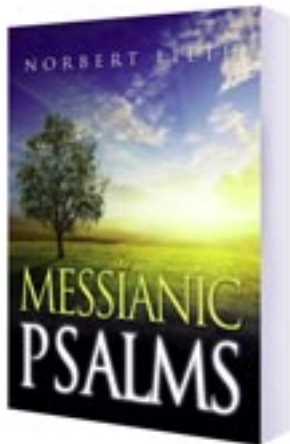
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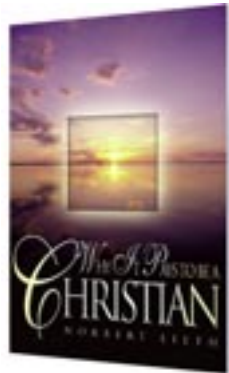
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“With God nothing shall be impossible.”



By Norbert Lieth

Director of Missions, Midnight Call International

Dear Friends,

About 2000 years before the birth of Jesus, God had chosen Abraham to bless the whole world through his lineage. His descendants were to become as numerous as the stars in the sky. In the beginning, Abraham believed, and this was counted unto him as righteousness (Gen 15:6; cf. Rom 4:3). However, time went by and reasonable doubts arose. He was now 100 years of age, and his wife Sarah was 90 years old. God had promised them a son, through whom the coming Savior would become a reality. Biologically, not logical! No wonder Abraham couldn't refrain from laughing: “Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?” (Gen 17:17). Sarah also laughed about such a seemingly ridiculous promise (Gen 18:12). But God's response to their laughter was: “Is any thing too hard for the LORD? (verse 14).

And then, dramatic events took place. Not only had the promise been delayed for so long; not only could biology simply negate the promise. But now, even an apocalyptic event occurred: because of sin

and injustice crying out to heaven, Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed. After this, Abraham made a very personal misstep in Gerar: fearing for his life, he pretended that Sarah was his sister, taking the risk of losing his wife to another man. All the promises seemed to hang by a thread. Really? No, that never happens!

Following all these events, we read: “And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him” (Gen 21:1-2).

2000 years later, a very similar situation: the birth of the Son of God is announced to Mary, a virgin. This will be the Savior, who was to come through the descendants of Abraham and Sarah. Mary expresses her doubts: “Then said Mary unto the angel, how shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (Luke 1:34). Biologically, not logical!—Yet not with God, who answers: “For with God nothing shall be impossible” (verse 37).

And again, some dramatic events occurred. For Mary, the fear of not being understood led to her seeking isolation with her cousin Elisabeth. Joseph in fact enter-

tained the idea of secretly leaving Mary. Then there were sudden political changes, such as Emperor Augustus' decree of a census for all people in his realm. The Romans were ruling the land and its people, and somehow everything seemed to be upside down. But what had Mary's relative Elisabeth already said? "And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45). And so it happened. God is faithful: human limitations do not stand in the way of His unlimited power.

And now, another 2000 years later, it is our present time, again marked by political upheaval and dramatic events. Our days have taken on an apocalyptic feel...The world mocks and laughs. Added to this are our own failures in life, all our doubts and shortcomings. Will God fulfill His promises? Of course!

Christian Fürchtegott Gellert put it this way: "God fulfills His promises, and that is my confidence."

We wish you a blessed Christmas season. (MC)

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- 32 pages • \$ 18 for a one-year subscription • 12 issues

☎ 1-800-845-2420

Published 12 times a year by
MIDNIGHT CALL, INC.

PO Box 84309

Lexington, SC 29073

Physical Location:

4694 Platt Springs Road
West Columbia, SC 29170

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

USA, \$28.95 • Canada, \$34.50 • All other countries, \$48

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OR SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRY**

Please send your new address and the name and address *exactly* as it appears on this magazine or envelope for best service. Please send all changes and inquiries directly to our US address.

MAILING ADDRESS

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PO Box 84309

Lexington, SC 29073

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INTERNATIONAL EDITIONS

"Mitternachtsruf" (German) Ringwiesenstrasse 12a, 8600
Dübendorf, Switzerland; "Middernachtsroep" (Dutch) Postbus
193, 3940 AD Doorn, Netherlands; "L'Appel de Minuit" (French)
Ringwiesenstrasse 12a, 8600 Dübendorf, Switzerland; "Chamada de
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OUR TASK

Midnight Call Ministries is a nonprofit missionary organization,
dedicated to proclaiming the entire Bible as the unfailing and eternal
written Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the unerring
guide for the Christian faith.

The object of Midnight Call is to call people everywhere to Christ,
to proclaim the return of Christ, to prepare Christians for His com-
ing, and to uphold the faith and warn of false doctrines. *Midnight
Call* magazine is available in twelve languages. All work done
through radio, literature and missionaries is supported entirely by the
gifts and free will offerings of God's people.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE in the divine inspiration of the whole Bible and there-
with the infallibility of the Holy Scripture, which is God's Word, and in
the eternal Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

WE BELIEVE Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was conceived of the
Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and shed His
blood to save mankind. He died and arose bodily the third day and
later ascended into heaven.

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ died in the place of each
individual sinner and that all who believe in Him as their personal
Savior are justified through His shed blood and have become
children of God.

WE BELIEVE that Israel is God's chosen people, and that the
restoration of the Jews to their own land is the fulfillment of the
Word of God.

WE BELIEVE in the pre-tribulational appearance of Jesus Christ for
the Rapture of His Church (all born again believers).

WE BELIEVE in the immortality of our souls and the resurrection of our
bodies, and in the resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting
blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost.



God's Longing for Mankind

Norbert Lieth

Boris Becker once said, “For 18 years I’ve had the feeling that journalists never ask the right question. It was always about the outcome, never about the people.”

It’s different with God. As far as He’s concerned, it’s only about the people—never about their successes or what they were able to produce. That’s especially clear at Christmas.

God is holy. And every person should know that he or she is sacred to this God. Christmas is an expression of God’s longing to connect with people. God’s longing is most clearly shown in Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son: the father waits every day for the son who turned his back on him, and rushes

to meet him when he returns in repentance. A fitting heading for the story could be: “The Parable of the Father’s Longing.”

Many people have the wrong impression of God. They only see Him as the strict, serious ruler and less as the loving Father who is reaching out to us full of longing.

I once had to wait for someone in a mall. In one of the store windows, there was a display of shorts

with various slogans printed on them. One read, “Life without nonsense makes no sense.”

The saying seemed pretty pointless to me. Basically, it’s saying that people are searching for the meaning of life, and when they don’t find it, all sorts of nonsense results.

All of life seems nonsensical until we recognize its true meaning and become absorbed in it. What is sense, and what is nonsense?

People are driven by existential questions: Why are we here? What was I created to do? Is the whole point of my life just to be born and eventually die? Is that all, maybe with a little joy, fear, worry, and pain in the middle? Did we just evolve from monkeys?

All of us have an unfulfilled longing within us, and nothing on earth can fill it.

One of the most famous paintings in the world is Michelangelo’s *The Creation of Adam*. It depicts God stretching out His finger toward the man’s limp hand. This touch awakens him to what God intended him to be.

We are created for God, to be His counterpart. He wants to fellowship and communicate with us, live among and with us, and work and walk with us.

None of us is the product of chance. God wanted each of us. The Creator has dedicated Himself to us, given Himself to us, and consecrated Himself to us.

We lose our meaning when we ignore God and attempt to take the life He gave us into our own hands to govern it ourselves. Then the nonsense really gets going...

We can twist it anyway we’d like, but one thing is certain when we look at reality: “Sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov 14:34b). Sin is everything that bypasses God. And that’s precisely what is separating us from a full life with God. Sin removes us from our Creator, alienating us from Him.

That is the reason for all senselessness, greed, egoism, cruelty, and misery (up to and including death).

It’s been described something like this: In the beginning, God created man. Man was happy with God, but broke away from Him. Since then, he has had a void in his soul. Man is trying to fill this void with any number of things, but he must realize that things are only getting worse. Only God Himself can fill the void.

Thank God that He does, and that He doesn’t give up on us. God is the beginning and the end. God is a God of new beginnings; He repeatedly starts over. He repeatedly consecrates Himself to us. He repeatedly goes after us, looking for connection with us, seeking a point of contact.

In the Bible, we repeatedly see God’s longing to live among His people. For example, at the beginning of the Bible, He said to the ancient people of Israel:

“And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest’s office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God” (Ex 29:43-46).

God had chosen a people to encounter mankind. He wanted to live among the people.

When we read about the aforementioned “tabernacle of the congregation” in the Bible, we find that God provided everything needed to dwell with His people. The Israelites then only needed to respond.

The people would be made holy by His glory. For example, God ordained that everything that touches His altar should be sacred to Him (Ex 29:37). This is a picture of Christmas: everyone who comes into contact with the God who reveals Himself at Christmas becomes holy to Him. God took care of everything, down to the last detail: anything that was needed for the redemption, reconciliation, purification, and anointing of those who came to Him (Ex 29; 31:1-11).

Where God sought to meet people, according to the Bible’s record, speaks volumes: in the middle of the desert, where it is hot during the day and very cold at night. Where it is barren, where scarcity prevails, where people are defenseless and at the mercy of their surroundings...that’s where God, whom the whole universe cannot grasp, wants to draw close to people.

While reading these chapters, I noticed something wonderful. God commands that a golden rim (a garland) should be placed all around when making the sacred implements for worship (such as a table or altar; Ex 25:11, 24-25; 30:3). This has a

God's Longing for Mankind

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symbolic meaning. The edging ensured that nothing fell off during transport through the desert, or during priestly use if it slipped.

Maybe you're in the desert right now. You're inwardly and outwardly troubled. The heat is making your soul throb. For you, it has become night. Cold and darkness are afflicting you. But if God is allowed to take up residence in your life, He will see to it that you never fall away from His grace on your way through the desert. We rest in Him, and His grace surrounds us.

"Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Is 46:3-4).

What Is Christmas?

It is the fulfillment of God's longing to dwell among men. He is driven by the love that He Himself embodies in His perfect person. The Bible describes the first Christmas with the mysterious words, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

As a child, I always wondered how all the pears actually get into the Kammer Williams brandy bottles. I discovered the answer later: the bottle is hung on a tree and a branch with a small fruit is stuck into it; this is how the pear grows in the bottle.

Christmas is God coming into the world. He became a man in His Son, Jesus Christ. One of the Jewish prophets announced this far in advance with the words: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Is 11:1).

This is Christmas: Jesus, who was with God and is God, became a man and lived among us. He, who lived in the desert in Israel, wants to be at home with everyone.

Yes, sin is the ruin of mankind. But with the coming of Jesus into the world, we learn that "This is a faithful

saying, worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..." (1 Tim 1:15).

That is the meaning of life: encountering the God who seeks us out, changes everything, and gives us full life. God fills the void in our soul. He does everything necessary to live among people, to give them love and salvation, and to give them a meaningful life.

A man who has since passed away confessed, "Today I've been free from drugs for 23 years. I don't have to strive for recognition anymore, because I'm loved by Jesus. It was the best decision of my life. God has entrusted me with a wife and two children. Thank you, Jesus."

That is the reflection of a meaningful life.

Christmas means that Almighty God has consecrated Himself to you, because He loves you and wants to live with you forever. Christmas means that God said "yes" to you. It doesn't matter how valuable you feel or how heavily guilt is weighing on you.

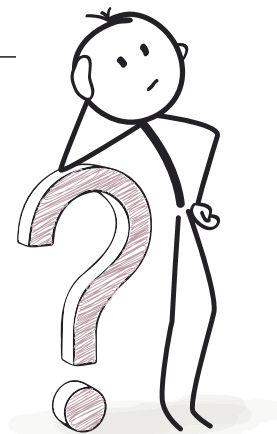
Christmas means the unlimited pouring out of God's love over the whole world through Jesus.

The African-American pastor S. M. Lockridge once described Jesus this way: "His life is matchless. His goodness is limitless. His mercy is everlasting. His love never changes. His word is enough. His grace is sufficient. His reign is righteous. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Well, I wish I could describe Him to you."

World history's most important visitor came to us in Jesus. But very few seem to be home to open to Him.

"What's the point of the candles' light if your heart stays dark as night?"

Many Christians are familiar with this saying from Angelus Silesius: "If Christ were born in Bethlehem a thousand times and not in thee thyself: then art thou lost eternally."



None of us is the product of chance. God wanted each of us. The Creator has dedicated Himself to us, given Himself to us, and consecrated Himself to us.



Whoever lets Jesus Christ into their life will rise to higher things: “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27).

“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (2 Tim 1:14).

Christ in you means: riches of glory in your heart, here and now, through your faith. Christ in you means: expecting future glory and full life with God. Christ in you means: a good that is now hidden in your heart and can't be dislodged by anything on earth.

Christmas in a Maximum Security Prison

A moving true story shows us what can happen when Jesus comes into our lives (<http://www.courtofheaven.com/pdfs/books/5-OlmosPrison-16.pdf>):

One of the greatest and most dramatic transformations/miracles/ revivals in modern history has taken place inside the walls of a prison in Argentina. Olmos Prison is the largest prison in the nation, and is a maximum-security facility that houses about 3,000 inmates.

Until a few years ago, the prison was in total chaos. Crime was rampant. Riots, murders, sexual abuse, extortion and male prostitution were commonplace. The prison was so out-of-control, that by default the authorities turned the daily running of the prison over to the mafia and drug dealers serving time there. These de facto leaders chose to reside on the fourth of five floors, which came to be known as the ‘elephant’s floor’ since all the ‘heavy-weights’ lived there.

Imagine what this place became when the worst inmates were given the run of it! Even a Church of Satan was established on the premises and animal sacrifices were offered regularly. Olmos—as the prison is commonly known—was so impregnable that pastors from the nearby towns had great difficulty getting inside its perimeter.

Some inmates reported being tormented by demons which, according to reports, literally materialized in their cells. Satan was in control indeed.

Pastor Juan Zuccarelli writes of his experience serving in Olmos:

God showed me the potential of getting into Olmos Prison as an employee of the Penitentiary Service. But I was told that the process that would take many months. I applied, but my heart wasn't in it.

God's Longing for Mankind

We are created for God, to be His counterpart. He wants to fellowship and communicate with us, live among and with us, and work and walk with us.

Surprise! Only one week later, I was accepted! But still there were some doubts in my heart.

On my first day at Olmos, I was being instructed by a man named Nestor Papa. I asked Nestor if there would be a problem if I talked about religion in the Unit.

"What is your religion?" he asked. I answered, "I am a Protestant."

"So, you are a Protestant!" he said. "I hate Protestants. You will have a lot of problems with me!"

"Well, God thinks differently," I answered.

He looked hard at me and said, "For you, I *am* god. He persisted, "If you continue like this, you will be in a lot of trouble." He really had a thing against Protestants. That was my first day at Olmos. Now, a few years later, he is a member of my church and a deacon in the church!

At times, different music or theater groups came to the prison to perform. At those times, an officer would go through the prison shouting "Acto," and the prisoners would come out. However, when there were church groups that would come out, the officer would call out "Culto," and only about 10 Evangelical Christians would come out. However, on the day of our evangelistic campaign, the officer called out, "Acto y Culto," and about 300 came out. However, there was one restriction: Inmates would not be allowed to leave until the meeting was over; the doors were locked. And, yes, when they saw us carrying the Bibles, some tried to leave.

After some music and singing, Luis Tessi gave a message, and about 100 of the 300 men made a commitment to follow Jesus Christ.

Confession is a sign of weakness among prisoners, and the weak are always attacked by other inmates. Thus new Christians repenting and confessing their sins are exposing themselves to real danger. For this reason, we decided to request that all of our new Christians be placed in a sepa-

rate cell block. To everyone's surprise, our petition requesting an evangelical cell block for Christians was granted!...

Having an exclusive cell block allowed the brothers to pray in peace, read, study their Bibles, fast, and even have all-night prayer meetings without being harassed or disturbed. This worked so well, we began to implement it in other parts of the prison...before long we had a block on each floor.

In the Bible, God prophesies for His people: "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Ezek 37:27).

This prophecy is still yet to be fulfilled. It will be when God makes a new heaven and a new earth.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev 21:3).

The Lord God will come to dwell among all nations. The Lord and Creator won't abandon His longing until everything is fulfilled.

God has such a longing for His creation, and His love moves Him so strongly, that He does everything necessary to live with mankind. He brings them into His life.

That is Christmas.

Someone once said that "God Almighty bends His face to earth, becomes flesh and man, becomes like one of us...This isn't the stuff of legends and fairy tales. That's the immeasurable love of God for people."

He wants to live among us. He consecrates Himself to us because we are sacred to Him. He gives life its full meaning.

The only thing we have to do is accept this gift.

(MR1220/1177)



WORLD GEOPOLITICS BY THE BIBLE: AMERICA'S NEXT CHAPTER? – PART 7



We come to the end of our 7-part series. If readers have made it this far, they are to be congratulated. This topic was very complicated ... not to mention the difficult task of keeping all the facts straight, and condensing a massive amount of material on this topic into 7 columns.

By Wilfred Hahn

The goal of this short series was to legitimize the Bible's foreknowledge of more than 4,000 plus years (approximated) of mankind's world geopolitical history, following the calling out of a new people on earth founded by Abram.

We believe it will have been worthwhile. Why? We have reached some penultimate conclusions.

All throughout this 7-part series, we have referred to the question of America's geopolitical endtime roles according to the Bible. We will lay out our case.

But first, we must highlight the most urgent conclusion of all.

We are living in the very last of the pre-millennial end times.

This conclusion couldn't be clearer. We note a convergence of many "ripening" trends, as well as accelerating developments that are prophetically enabling.

Crucially, we are very near the emergence of the final Roman, 10-king geopolitical coalition.

Think of the lateness of the times being experienced right now.

Let us suppose that it takes another 50 years before the full 10-king coalition takes form and the Antichrist erupts onto the world scene. (Please note that 50 years is not a forecast, but rather an illustration only. Indeed, we must also acknowledge that this timeline could in fact play out more quickly.)

A remaining period of 50 years would mean that 98.75% of the Bible's revealed world geopolitical timeline has already played out (assuming a 3,500-year period).

Therefore, those who are alive today are privileged to live during a time when the "season" is so clear and imminent.

Another urgent marker that must not be missed is the rapidity of the final developments at the time of the 7th head ... i.e., the 10 kings. As the Bible indicates, the 10 kings are said to reign for a short time only. "The seventh head (ruler) "[...] must remain for only a little while" (Revelation 17:10).

Corroborating this rapidity, says Luke, the trap will shut suddenly once it is triggered (see Luke 21:34). "While people are saying, 'Peace and safety,' destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor



No other nation has been given the natural advantages of America.



Harvest season in Northern Indiana, USA

Moreover, it must also be concluded that America will no longer be the most influential power in the world. While the specific reasons for this shrinking are not known, in one way or another, this country will diminish. If it is not to be a member of the 10-king coalition, it will then surely be subject to its rule.

Just what type of geopolitical maelstrom or internal deterioration will America yet go through? Quite a bit, it would seem. But can this be? Isn't God on America's side? Isn't God blessing the United States?

pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape!" (1 Thessalonians 5:3). The OT prophet Daniel also backs this up, saying: "The end will come like a flood" (Daniel 9:26).

So here we have it: 1. We are in the very last of the last days pre-millennially; 2. The last of the prophetic developments speed up greatly; and 3. We can deduce that geopolitical volatility and changes of power will yet occur. This is the specter that is unfolding before our very eyes.

America in Prophecy?

But, what about the U.S.? Americans no doubt will have many questions about the prophetic role of their great nation.

Why is America not expressly mentioned in the Bible? One would think that its existence and actions would be worthy of mention. China is mentioned prophetically ... why not the U.S.?

In previous parts of this series, we have showed why the USA will not be one of the final 10 kings. Put simply, the glass slipper does not fit the foot.

Given America's status as a superpower and its huge economic influence upon the earth, it must be concluded that America today could not qualify as a member. It is just too large to be a big toe on either of the two feet that Nebuchadnezzar saw. A foot with such a large toe would not be functional.

America the Bountiful

The country of America is truly one of a kind—like no other. It is extraordinary in so many ways. From an earthly perspective, today it is still the most prosperous nation, the most powerful and the most influential. We all know this. For example, for some time, its defense expenditures had been greater than the combined outlay of the entire rest of the world. (This is rapidly changing, however.)

Its economy, popularly measured, is still the largest of all nations. (China is now in close pursuit.)

We could outline a long list of superlatives.

But, how did it get to this position? Surely, the pivotal factors that have shaped America were not accidental. Why have so many benefits and geographic advantages been given to this country? The answers are thought-provoking.

Advantage America

No other nation has been given the natural advantages of America. Let us count the ways. We borrow heavily from Stratfor's popular monograph, "The Geopolitics of the United States."¹

- No other nation in the world has as much arable land as the U.S. The American Midwest is the world's largest contiguous piece of farmland. In addition, there are other major agricultural areas,

There can be no doubt: God has blessed America. The rise of America on the world scene was not accidental. God has had His purposes for America. There can be no other candidate for the geopolitical influence and tasks that it may have fulfilled on the world stage.

namely in south-central Canada, the Atlantic Coastal Plain, California's Central Valley and others. These are significant compared to the agricultural capacity in the rest of the world.

- The Atlantic Coast possesses more major ports than the rest of the Western Hemisphere combined.

- The Greater Mississippi Basin together with the Intercoastal Waterways has more miles of navigable internal waterways than the rest of the world combined. In addition, the river systems of the Missouri, Arkansas, Red, Ohio and Tennessee are significant. Why are rivers so important? Navigable rivers have two banks, coasts only one.

- Adding to the power of America is the fact that it has a wealth of sheltered bays and extreme indentations allowing for ports—St. Lawrence Seaway, the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, San Francisco Bay and a number of others.

- A most important feature of North America is the river network in the middle third of the continent. Unlike major rivers in the rest of the world, vast tracts of America's rivers are navigable because few of their tributaries originate in high elevations. That has meant that America has had the cheapest and most efficient transportation system in the world for its products.

- The vast bulk of America's prime agricultural lands are within 200 kilometers of a stretch of navigable rivers.

- America has two coasts—the Atlantic and the Pacific. Moreover, it allows America to trade with these two major regions of the world—both Asia and Europe.

- From a national security perspective, America is naturally insulated from any invaders. The two major oceans of its coastline are a natural barrier to enemies. To the south there is desert, to the north timberland, mountains or lakes. Its geo-

graphic layout makes America very secure like no other its size.

- The United States is the least densely populated of the major global economies in terms of population per unit of usable land. (Russia, Canada and Australia may be less densely populated, but vast tracts of their land are economically useless ... i.e., Siberia, the Canadian North and the Outback, respectively.)

We could list many other factors. All the above translates into a low requirement for capital, cheap transportation, and low defense costs in its earlier days. These were major factors that enabled the rapid rise of America in world trade and influence.

Canada, on the other hand (to illustrate this contrast), needed to spend massively to develop the St. Lawrence Seaway and the required canals in the Great Lakes.

Just what other nation has been endowed with such wealth, resources and geographical features?

Could it be that the rise of America over the last 200 to 250 years was not significant in the prophetic timeline of the world?

The correct answer, we think, would be “no.” Is it simply circumstantial that such a large geopolitical power took form late in the premillennial era?

From Blessing to Judgment

As we have shown, the North American continent could not have been created more providentially. Many benefits and advantages were given to the people that would live on that landmass.

There can be no doubt: God has blessed America. The rise of America on the world scene was not accidental. God has had His purposes for America. There can be no other candidate for the geopolitical influence and tasks that it may have fulfilled on the world stage.



However, much of this role may now be in the past.

What about the future?

Nations are free to make their choices. They are free to choose whom they will serve and will bear the corresponding judgments in the last days.

Choices are indeed being made.

Consider that at one time—from the early 1800s—America sponsored waves of evangelism around the world. That is no longer the case. As a recent poll from Gallup reveals, for the first time on record, church membership plunged to less than 50% in 2018. In 2020, this ratio sank further to 47%. Compare this with attendance levels of 70% in 1999 ... only 22 years ago!

Foreign Affairs magazine recently published an article entitled, “Giving Up on God: The Global Decline of Religion.” We quote here one headline statement from this report: “The most dramatic shift away from religion has taken place among the American public.” As recently as 2007, the U.S. ranked as one of the most religious countries in the world. Since then, it has shown the largest move away from religion of any country that this survey covered.

All the above-mentioned trends do not invalidate that God has used America in the past to bring about His purposes in the world. Did not God have America in His eye (though not the “apple of His eye,” as in Zechariah 2:8) from the beginning of time?

Since Bible prophecy clearly outlines that there will be a 10-nation power coalition, not a foot with one big toe, we can conclude that this big toe (the U.S.) must then become comparatively smaller. While the British Empire has been removed from the pinnacle of power more than a century ago, its younger cousin, the U.S., now may also face a relative decline.

By whatever means—whether the Rapture, self-inflicted policy errors, deserved or divinely willed—this has to happen if the Bible is to be proven correct. In fact, viewed against the pace of

past human history, it must be said that this downward shift of America relative to the rest of the world has likely begun.

Less than 25 years ago, though the seeds of America’s moral and economic decline had long been evident, the U.S. was still seen as an invincible, world-dominating power in every sense.

At the time, geopolitical analysts were still actively debating the question of whether the United States should really be considered an empire in the classical sense. Many analysts ridiculed any notion that America might be vulnerable, maintaining that the 21st century would belong to the U.S., as did the 20th.

What does the Bible say? For the last three centuries, there has only been one big toe ... first Britain, then America. But this cannot continue if prophecy is to be fulfilled.

Prophecy in this case can be fulfilled in a number of ways. A coalition of 10 other kings (nations) could become powerful enough to supersede the geopolitical position of the U.S. Or, could the opposite extreme play out? Could America be downsized ... deteriorate from the inside out ... or become one of the 10 kings, or not at all? Which will it be?

According to Bible prophecy, every avenue and every possible scenario for the United States seems to lead to some form of diminution on the world stage.

Can you see this?

Indeed, the times are short, and history will speed up dramatically.

What choices will America and the nations make?

What should the Saints do?

We look up and await the Rapture and the return of Jesus Christ: “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28). ^{MC}

ENDNOTE

- 1 Stratfor: “The Geopolitics of the United States, Part I: The Inevitable Empire; Part II: American Identity and the Threats of the Future,” August 24, 2011, www.stratfor.com

In the middle of the fifth century, Patrick (the patron saint of Ireland) was to baptize King Aengus of Munster. As usual, Patrick carried the iron spiked Bachal Isu (the so-called “staff of Jesus”) in his hand. Sometime during the ritual, Patrick leaned on the staff and unintentionally stabbed the king’s foot.

Once the baptism was completed, Patrick noticed the blood. Realizing what he had done, he begged for the king’s forgiveness. Patrick asked why the king suffered the pain in silence. The king replied, “I thought it was part of the ritual.” In comparison to the joy of his baptism, Aengus considered the pain to be of little consequence.

Psalm 40 is a prayer song of David. A notable quality of this category of psalms is the plea of the psalmist to be rescued from distress and suffering. David experienced many difficulties with both individuals and nations, and therefore, his

expressions of the depths of distress are somewhat expected.

Psalm 40 shows how God’s people can experience joy even in the midst of the most difficult circumstances. Psalm 40 was, therefore, composed as an encouragement for those who trust in the Lord. The particular details in David’s life that led to the composition of Psalm 40 are not known, yet it is evident that his present ordeal was extremely agonizing.

David lamented his distress and prayed for salvation. He expressed his faith in God by waiting “patiently for the Lord” to hear his plea for

A person stands on a rocky peak, looking out over a vast, misty landscape. The scene is illuminated by the warm, golden light of a sunrise or sunset, creating a serene and contemplative atmosphere. The person is silhouetted against the bright light, emphasizing their presence in the vastness of nature.

From the Depths to the Heights

DR. RON J. BIGALKE

From the Depths to the Heights

Psalm 40 shows how God’s people can experience joy even in the midst of the most difficult circumstances. Psalm 40 was, therefore, composed as an encouragement for those who trust in the Lord.

deliverance. Psalm 40 is a combination of thanksgiving (vv. 1-10) and lamentation (vv. 11-17). The psalm anticipated the coming of the Messiah (vv. 6-8; cf. Heb 10:5-9), whose willing self-sacrifice completely satisfied God. To outline Psalm 40 in reverse parallel indicates the emphasis.

- A Salvation Experienced (vv. 1-3)
- B God’s Providence Is Blessed (vv. 4-5)
- C Commitment to the Will of God (vv. 6-8)
- D Proclamation of God’s Uprightness and Faithfulness (vv. 9-10)
- D Prayer for God’s Compassion and Lovingkindness (v. 11)
- C Confession of Sin against the Will of God (v. 12)
- B God’s Providence Is Sought (vv. 13-16)
- A Salvation Needed (v. 17)

SALVATION AND PRAISE

(40:1-3) The term salvation is defined broadly in the context of Scripture, to include God’s action on behalf of His creation, and especially the accomplishment of His eternal decrees. More specifically, salvation refers to God’s deliverance of fallen humanity from the penalty, power, and presence of sin—by grace through faith—in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Salvation is to experience the fullness of life that God intends for creation generally and for humanity in particular.

Psalm 40 begins with personal testimony to an experience of God’s salvation. “I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me and heard my cry.” The Hebrew word *qāwāh*, translated “waited,” means waiting with assurance that God will hear the cry for help, thereby conveying patient confidence in God (cf. Ps 25:3; 27:14; 37:8-9; 69:6; Lam 3:25). Verses 1-3 report an evident progression of God’s actions in response to waiting patiently: “inclined ... heard ... brought me up ... set ... put.” As a result of God’s providence, “many will see and fear and will trust in the Lord.” The praise of God’s salvation is not com-

plete until many “see and fear” the providence of the Lord, and are drawn by the same grace of God to “trust in the Lord.”

SALVATION THROUGH TRUST

(40:4-5) Everyone who trusts in the Lord is blessed (and happiness and joy is the result). God will intervene in favor of the one who trusts in Him, as opposed to those who are proud and deceptive (or who lapse into idolatry). Trust in God is the antithesis of the proud, who are reliant upon self and live without trust. Divine grace belongs to the one who is confident in God, whose “wonders” are “too numerous to count.” The wonders that David referenced are not the actions of self, but refer to the providential interventions of God (cf. Rom 8:28). The Lord’s providence has a wonderful effect upon the one who experiences the omnipotent intervention of God.

RESPONDING TO LIFE'S CHALLENGES	
focus: self and problem	UPWARD CALL Belief / Joy
⬇️ Conformity ⬇️ (Rom 12:2)	⬆️ Concentration ⬆️ (2 Cor 10; Phil 4:8)
⬇️ Contrivance ⬇️ (1 Sam 27; 2 Cor 2:6-8)	⬆️ Commitment ⬆️ (Ps 37:5; 1 Pet 2:21; 5:9) ⬆️
⬇️ Contempt ⬇️ (Numb 14:1-2, 11, 23)	⬆️ Consideration ⬆️ (Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-9)
⬇️ Concentration ⬇️ (Numb 13; 1 Sam 27:1-2)	⬆️ Confess ⬆️ (Ps 32:1-5; 1 John 1:9)
DOWNWARD SPIRAL Unbelief / Depression	focus: Jesus Christ and remedy

SALVATION IS A RESOLVE

(40:6-8) Saul was made king before the Lord in Gilgal (1 Sam 11:15). King Saul, however, did not lose the kingdom because he failed to offer burnt offerings and sacrifices. He lost the kingdom be-

The psalmist's needs, however, were urgent ("do not delay"). Nevertheless, he would wait patiently for the Lord's salvation. Regardless of life's challenges, God's people may be confident that there is an eternal purpose in the difficulty, and the Lord will not withhold His compassion.

cause he was not obedient to the Lord's commands (15:10-11, 22-23). David's words in verses 6-8 were not opposing the sacrificial system, but the mere formalism of those who are not eager to delight in God's commands.

Sacrifice is not entirely unimportant, but it is less important than obedience. David confessed that God opened his ears to the Law for the purpose of commitment to the Lord (cf. Isa 6:10; Jer 6:10). His eagerness to obey is expressed by his preparedness: "Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart." Obedience to God was the resolve of David's heart, which was also true with regard to Christ's obedience unto death (Heb 10:5-7).

SALVATION IS THROUGH GOD'S PERFECTIONS

(40:9-11) The psalmist's gratitude for a salvation so great caused him to proclaim God's perfections to the congregation gathered for worship. David spoke eagerly with regard to God's salvation for others: "Behold, I will not restrain my lips." The psalmist could not be silent having received so great a salvation. He was compelled to testify with regard to God's righteousness and faithfulness. David's proclamation of God's perfections was to "the great congregation."

SALVATION NECESSITATES PRAYER

(40:12-16) The celebration and proclamation of God's perfections are the basis for David's prayer. Although he experienced God's salvation, David was aware that life's challenges are always near. Therefore, he prayed, "You, O Lord, will not withhold Your compassion from me," requesting that God's compassion and lovingkindness preserve him. David found himself surrounded again by difficult situations; however, on this occasion, the

trouble was the result of his own sin. David's knowledge of the Word of God (v. 7) resulted in a true understanding of God's righteousness and his sinfulness. Obedience to God coexists with acknowledgement of sin.

The psalmist understood that God alone was his salvation (vv. 13-15). David "waited patiently for the Lord" (v. 1), but also prayed for Him to "make haste" according to His will ("be pleased," v. 13). Knowing the justice of God, the psalmist prayed for shame and humiliation for those who sought to bring him harm. The request was not failure to love one's enemies (Prov 25:21; Matt 5:44); rather, the enemies who shouted, "Aha, aha!" were contemptuous toward God, and therefore, judgment was appropriate (2 Thess 1:9-10). However, for those who seek God, there is encouragement and rejoicing. Those who trust in the Lord will "be glad" in Him (Ps 40:16).

SALVATION IS JOY IN THE LORD

(40:17) The psalmist concluded with a confession of his personal need for salvation: "I am afflicted and needy." David understood his helplessness in the presence of his enemies. He did not presume upon the grace and power of God, but simply confessed, "Let the Lord be mindful of me." He knew God as his "help" and "deliverer."

The psalmist's needs, however, were urgent ("do not delay"). Nevertheless, he would wait patiently for the Lord's salvation. Regardless of life's challenges, God's people may be confident that there is an eternal purpose in the difficulty, and the Lord will not withhold His compassion. God's lovingkindness and truth will preserve His servants, according to His perfect will. Those who seek God will not be disappointed, but may rejoice and be glad in His salvation. "The Lord be magnified!" (40:16).

(1188)



How Can I Discern God's Will for My Life?

René Malgo

In everyday life or when making difficult choices, how can we identify whether something aligns with God's will? Different pastors have taken different principles from God's Word, which will help us ask ourselves seven questions when faced with a decision.

The New Testament teaches us that the children of God allow themselves to be guided by God's Spirit (Rom 8:14). If they lack wisdom to make a decision, they should ask God for it in faith and without doubting. God will give it to them, since He "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" (Jas 1:5).

That should put the matter to rest, but it's not always that simple in our everyday life. We don't want to be caught in a trap, disappoint God, fall for the enemy's whispers, or let our own deceitful hearts fool us... There are so many things that can go wrong when we stop and think about it! Our whole life can become paralyzed when we get caught in a web of questions, worries, doubts, and objections.

Thank God, His Word doesn't fail us. There are many cues to point us to the unsearchable riches of Christ, but I'd like to single out seven questions we can ask ourselves in order to make the right choices in life. I've taken these questions from various Bible scholars and pastors, and they've also been a great help to me.

1. Does my decision align with God's Word?

This simplest of questions is the foundation of decision making. The teaching of our Lord and His Apostles explicitly commands and forbids certain

things. G. K. Chesterton compared the divine commandments and prohibitions to a fence surrounding a playground high atop a mountain. The children can play happily and freely if they remain within the fence. But if they were to climb over it to see what fun there is to be had outside the playground, things become dangerous.

It's the same in the Christian life. God's Spirit will never lead us to do anything that opposes God's will as it has been revealed in Scripture and His Church. That would harm us and our neighbors. No matter how strongly you may feel about it, God will never call you to an extramarital affair, to neglect your spouse or children, to cheat your employer, to provoke your neighbor, or to do anything wicked.

2. Does my decision foster love?

Love for God and man is God's highest commandment. What is love? One apt definition says it is wanting the good of the other person. So in this case, love isn't warm fuzzy feelings but a heart attitude, a choice.

This means when we're considering a life question from the perspective of God's will, we must ask ourselves honestly: In choosing this path, am I in-

Our whole life can become paralyzed when we get caught in a web of questions, worries, doubts, and objections.

creasing my love for God and people? Will choosing this path let me love better in word, deed, and truth? Or will my love lessen as a result?

When taken seriously, this principle of love has kept me from falling into idol worship or doing irrational things. For example, Paul writes, “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim 5:8).

If I feel obligated to do something that would make me unable to care for my family or fulfill the work I’m being paid to do, then I can assume that it isn’t God’s will. It would violate the principle of love. This is also crucial when it comes to things that appear righteous. We should note that our Lord Jesus always equates love of neighbor with love of God when mentioning the highest commandment, because our neighbor bears the image of God. As John writes, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20).

No matter how devout an action may seem, it cannot be God’s will if it causes me to neglect my obligations and duties, or harm my neighbor. Of course, we can’t see the future, nor are we perfect. But if we’re honestly asking ourselves the question of love and acting prayerfully, the Holy Spirit (who is a Spirit of love) will also grant us the correct impulses.

3. Will my decision help me grow in sanctification?

“For this is the will of God,” writes Paul, “even your sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3a).

When we’re faced with a decision or a fork in the road and don’t know what God wants, the question of love can lead us to the question: Will my decision



help me grow in sanctification? Or will this path hinder my sanctification? Does it attest to my soul’s salvation, or put it in danger? Am I becoming more or less holy?

In the same vein, love asks: Am I promoting the salvation of the relatives entrusted to me, and the neighbors whom God has put in my path? Will my choice draw me and my neighbors closer to God, or push us further away?

Again, we can’t see the future, and are often not saints in practice. But if this concern is on our hearts, then we are in harmony with the Holy Spirit within us, who intercedes before the Father on our behalf “with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom 8:26). Then we are inhabiting the attitude that constitutes the essence of the Holy Spirit. He is, after all, a *holy* Spirit.

Holiness, like love, is not an abstract emotion but a choice. Just as I choose to want what is good for someone else, I can also choose to do everything with the goal of becoming more like my Lord Jesus and drawing closer to Him. That’s what sanctification is. It’s not about our own perfection, but about what we desire in our hearts and reach out for in our weakness.

4. Does this choice align with the way of life that God has already called me to?

Paul says, “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk” (1 Cor 7:17); and, “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called” (v. 20).

God calls us through circumstances, through neighbors He sends our way, through our own character, our strengths and weaknesses, our talents, our marital status, and our general life circumstances. This doesn’t mean that spectacular changes aren’t possible in our lives, but our God isn’t a God of dis-

How Can I Discern God's Will for My Life?

If I feel obligated to do something that would make me unable to care for my family or fulfill the work I'm being paid to do, then I can assume that it isn't God's will.

order. He won't lead us in a way that contradicts everything that previously governed our life as Christians. To put it bluntly, God doesn't suddenly ask a father of seven to become a lonely recluse. Yes, we can trust God to do the impossible; with God, all things are possible. But the principle remains that we can't ignore where God has already led us through years of life with Him, and the place in life He has assigned us. That's wisdom.

5. Is there validation of my decision?

We can't assume that external success is confirmation of the correct decision. If that were the case, then prosperity gospel televangelists and religious charlatans could be said to always be aligned with God's will. Jesus would have to assume that His crucifixion meant He had failed. But both are far from true!

It's not a matter of receiving spectacular signs like Gideon's fleece, even if that were to really happen! No; confirmation means, to some degree, what Paul experienced. We read in Acts 16 of how the Holy Spirit prevented him from preaching in certain areas, and how he was instead led elsewhere to preach. Paul's desire was always a good one: to preach the Gospel. But by means of circumstances, obstacles, or open doors, Paul received divine rejection or validation of his decisions.

There is no shame in fulfilling every spiritual principle, trying something, and still not receiving confirmation because God has a better plan. Paul experienced this and was redirected.

Confirmation can be subtle, and is often unnoticed by anyone else. For example, Paul was given a dream. It isn't that everything goes smoothly or everyone agrees with you. No, good and worthwhile decisions especially are often accompanied by difficult challenges.



6. Do I have God's peace in my decision?

God is a God of peace, not a God of disorder, chaos or unrest. There is peace where God rules. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink," writes Paul, "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom 14:17).

Peace is a fruit of the Spirit. When we're faced with a decision and are asking whether a conclu-

sion is God's will, we would do well to also pay attention to whether God's peace settles the matter.

Paul writes, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6-7).

In the context of our topic, this means that of course we are praying fervently if we want to know God's will in a matter. And when in prayer, if our hearts are filled with joy and the peace "which passeth all understanding," we can take this as a good sign.

The connection between prayer and peace is important, since prayer is the lived expression of our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Without prayer, we can fabricate a natural peace that is temporary but could even have fatal consequences, depending on the circumstances. This could happen on one hand through meditation and emptying of the mind, or on the other through constant distraction with pleasure. But if we instead stand before God in prayer, seeking fellowship with Him, then we will receive supernatural peace regardless of the circumstances, as we will be in harmony with His will.

Let's say I have something on my mind, or a decision to make. I pray and plead with God, asking for wisdom and His Spirit's guidance. I receive in-

If we stand before God in prayer, seeking fellowship with Him, then we will receive supernatural peace regardless of the circumstances, as we will be in harmony with His will.

ner joy, peace, and tranquility every time I pray for this cause. If this is the case, I can assume in faith that it's truly God's Spirit urging me and not the spirit of the adversary. This is because the devil, demons, and our own pride are unable to bring us peace. Conversely, if I'm praying about something and remain restless every time, possibly grumbling or even angry, then I have to assume that I'm not receiving the urging of God's Spirit.

In practice, however, it's critical to distinguish prayer from the rest of our inner workings. Our emotions can be a roller coaster—at times completely at peace, and other times completely falling apart—sometimes over the same issue! That's why regular prayer is so important. Jesus promises that our Heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to all “that ask him” (Luke 11:13). But we do have to ask for it.

7. What does my heart say about my decision?

Let's assume that there are two potential paths ahead of us. When we pray about it, lo and behold, the peace of God which surpasses all understanding rules our hearts for either choice. Why? Because in this case, either way is good. What now?

Paul writes, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal 5:13-14).

You're free! Augustine once said, “Love and do what you will.” And it's really true. The Christian life is a life of freedom. There isn't just one way and if you stumble or make a tiny mistake, you're caught in a dead end and have missed your destiny forever. No, the psalmist promises, “Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart” (Ps 37:4).

Taking the first six questions to heart—especially the first three—is “delight in the Lord” put into practice. And here is the wonderful highlight,

the liberating thing for us as believers: Under these circumstances, you'll receive what your heart desires. Your heart is stretching out according to the will, love, holiness, and peace of the Holy Spirit. That's why your heart will also desire what is right for you.

This doesn't mean that we won't be wrong, that we won't ever stumble and have to get back up again; that we'll never have difficulties, or that our life will be a walk in the park. But it does mean that as Christians, we truly don't have to live in fear and panic. God is for us, not against us. Even in the midst of unpleasant and difficult things, He gives us the will and the fulfillment (Phil 2:13). We just have to ask sincerely for His will. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is joy and peace (Gal 5:22). And so, if we can answer the first six questions in the affirmative, our heart's yes to a certain plan of action isn't a pitfall but an affirmation!

Conclusion

The devil wants to whisper to us that God is the big spoilsport, a sadist who torments us and a tyrant who orders us around. The one who is never pleased; the one who hides His will from us, and then reproaches us when we're wrong or fail. But God isn't like that.

God's will isn't just for insiders, those who are particularly enlightened, or those who have already achieved perfection. For the sake of His name, He wants to lead all of His children—even the weakest—on the right track, gladly and without reproach. The seven questions are no guarantee that we'll never make another mistake. Even without these questions, we can be certain that in communion with Christ, we will never be separated from God's love. And with these questions, based on God's Word, we have help at hand to put into practice the wisdom that God wants to grant us.


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WORLD FOCUS

URUGUAY

Green Energy Leader in Latin America

Over the past 10 years, Uruguay has gone from being dependent on fossil fuel imports for power to a renewable energy pioneer. How did the country do it?

 Uruguay's natural resources are limited, but the Latin American country has plenty of sun, water and wind. And in the last decade, it has taken advantage of these riches.

Nearly 100% of Uruguay's energy now comes from renewable sources. The route to a cleaner energy supply is down to political will—and getting the country's residents on board.

Cattle rancher Pablo Capurro, for instance, initially rejected the idea of having wind turbines on his farm. The sound of the blades would be too noisy for his animals, he thought. But Capurro changed his mind after speaking to other wind park operators, and he now receives a payment for the turbines on his land.



The transition to green energy has made Uruguay less dependent on fossil fuel imports from abroad

To secure its clean energy future, the country is keeping up with the latest research and is training engineers to specialize in renewables.

Project goal: Reducing carbon dioxide emissions, achieving energy independence and producing enough green energy to export to other countries.

Project partners: Uruguay is being supported by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Environment Ministry, as well as private and public partnerships in the country.

-www.duw.com, 14 October 2021

Commentary: Uruguay is a country not often in the news, primarily because of a small population of only 3.4 million. While the country has an excellent healthcare system, with life expectancy reaching 78.2 years, the gross national product per person is only \$23,000 annually.

Midnight Call's branch in Uruguay was established in 1979. Today, the main work there consists of a radio studio located in the capital city of Montevideo, supplying more than 300 radio stations on the continent with Spanish-language Christian programs.

The word of God is going out; the seed is being sowed based on the promises of Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me




void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." 7623

(See The Bible Is True, Item #1059, \$3.)

AUSTRALIA

262-Day Lockdown Ends

Melbourne, which has spent more time under COVID-19 lockdowns than any other city in the world, is set to lift its stay-at-home orders.

 The Australian city of 5 million people will have been under six lockdowns totaling 262 days, or nearly nine months, since March 2020.

Australian and other media say this is the longest in the world, exceeding a 234-day lockdown in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

While coronavirus cases keep rising in Victoria state, of which Melbourne is the capital, the state's double-vaccination rate is set to reach 70%, allowing for the ease in restrictions.

"Today is a great day," said Victoria premier Daniel Andrews while announcing the lockdown. "Today is a day when Victorians can be proud of what they have achieved."

Australia, once a champion of a COVID-zero strategy of managing the pandemic, has been moving towards living with the virus through extensive vaccinations, as the Delta variant has proven too transmissible to suppress.

The new strategy makes lockdowns highly unlikely once 80% of the population is fully vaccinated. Around 68% of eligible Australians have been fully inoculated.

Despite the rise in cases in recent months, Australia's coronavirus numbers are low compared to many other developed countries, with just over 143,000 cases and 1,530 deaths.

Neighboring New Zealand, which is also learning to live with COVID-19 by accelerating inoculations, reported 51 new cases, 47 of them in the largest city Auckland, which has been in a lockdown since mid-August.

(continued next page)

Lockdown *(continued from page 22)*



People wear protective face masks in the city center during a lockdown to curb the spread of a coronavirus outbreak in Sydney, Australia REUTERS/Loren Elliott

-www.reuters.com, 17 October 2021

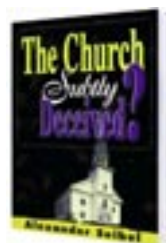
Commentary: Australia is the envy of the Western world when it comes to Covid-19. With 65 deaths per 100,000 population (and New Zealand only 6), the result is quite favorable compared with countries such as the USA (2,231), UK (2,081), and even Canada (766). What is the reason for their success? Strict implementation of medical-science-based policies—in this case, lockdowns, masking, social distancing, and vaccination.

In the Old Testament, it was said to King Saul, “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” (1 Samuel 15:23a). Here we are reminded that God, “changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding” (Daniel 2:21). Paul admonishes Titus,

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work” (Titus 3:1).

7624

(See *The Church Subtly Deceived*, Item #2091, \$9.99)



IRELAND

Chairperson Warns of ‘Jewish Supremacy’

Israel is trying to “accomplish Jewish supremacy,” deputy chairperson of the lower house of Ireland’s parliament Catherine Connolly wrote in a parliamentary question.

The term “Jewish supremacy” is an accusation lobbed at Israel by its opponents, with ties to centuries-old antisemitic accusations of Jews trying to take over the world, similar to the notorious libel *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Connolly presented Israeli “Jewish supremacy” as a fact, asking Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney if by his ministry’s “indicating support for the Jewish character of the Israeli state agrees with the treatment by Israel of Palestinian communities in its attempts to accomplish Jewish supremacy.”

Coveney said that Ireland often raises its concerns about Israel’s treatment of Palestinians.

Ireland is one of the countries most critical of Israel in Europe and was one of only two EU countries to participate in the anti-Israel Durban Conference at the UN.

Forty-seven countries signed a UN Human Rights Council pledge to fight antisemitism, but Ireland was not one of them, and Dublin has not yet appointed an envoy on antisemitism to the European Commission, despite the EC requesting it do so years ago.

-www.jpost.com, 12 October 2021

Commentary: For a northern European country, Ireland was always considered one of the poorest.

However, that changed when Ireland’s population voted 83% in favor of joining the European Union. They were accepted in 1973. An official said, “The impact on our development as a nation not even the

most optimistic observer of the time could have predicted.”

This country of 5.2 million has reached a life expectancy of 81.5 years. Ireland is listed as the third richest country in the world, at \$94,500 GDP, behind only Switzerland and Luxembourg.

However, antisemitism is real and very much alive in Ireland, whose super success seems to be contrary to the often-quoted Scripture, “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). Evangelicals, particularly those who concern themselves with eschatology, often apply this promise collectively to political nations. That obviously is not the case. Note the words, “curse him that curseth thee.” That’s not collective, but individually applied.

An interesting statement from the article is, “Jews trying to take over the world.” It’s not the Jews, but God the Creator Himself. For example, Deuteronomy 15:6: “For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.” Zechariah 8:23 adds: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

7627

(See *Prophecy for Judah*, Item #1084, \$17.50.)

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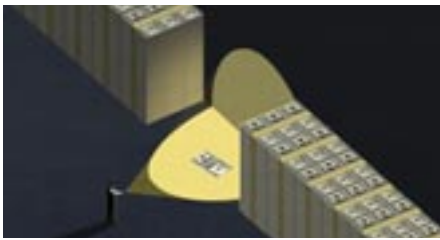
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Cash Still King

Cash seems to have been doing fine without pedestrian consumers...in fact it has been booming. According to the National Audit Office, which scrutinizes public-sector accounts, the value of all the sterling-denominated notes in existence has tripled in the past 20 years. It now totals around £75bn.



It's not just Britain that's struggling to understand illicit cash movements across its borders. Billions of dollars' worth of bills are circulating outside America, and €750bn outside the euro zone. This will not all be used for nefarious purposes. But it is clear that there is a vast global shadow financial system over which the authorities have almost no oversight.

Printing a \$100 bill—a decorative piece of paper that is worth \$100 only because the American government says it is—costs just 14 cents. And every time the Fed sends one out of the door it can invest the remaining \$99.86 in something which pays it interest. Printing money, at the risk of stating the obvious, gives central banks a license to print money.

Why don't most rich countries want to get rid of high-denomination banknotes? ...The answer, as with many aspects of regulating the international financial system, lies in the difficulty of persuading everyone to act together. If either the Fed or the ECB committed itself to abolishing its large-denomination banknotes, for example, transnational criminals and kleptocrats would switch to operat-

ing in another currency. That would mean all the profit from printing banknotes would accrue to whichever central bank continued to issue those notes—and the other ones would see little benefit from a global reduction in crime. In the absence of a miraculous effort of multilateralism, the current system is likely to persist for the foreseeable future.

-*www.economist.com*, 18 October 2021

Commentary: The counterintuitive growth in cash holdings described in this article demonstrates that the global movement toward a cashless society is not a linear progression, but rather it is proceeding in fits and starts. Likewise, we have seen other aspects of tighter international cooperation lag and then race ahead. On 8 October 2021, 130 countries agreed to a minimum tax rate of 15% to combat global tax avoidance.

With increased revelations of corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion—such as those revealed in the recent “Pandora” release of secret documents—we expect a more robust global response to stem the flow of illicit money. This naturally means more control and oversight, eventually fulfilling the prophecy of Revelation 13:17, “...that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

Finally, as a practical application, we note elsewhere in the article that holding large amounts of cash at home can erase life savings “...by a house fire, burglary or infestation of rodents.” This reminds us of Matthew 6:19: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon



earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.”

(By J. Froese)

7622

(See *End-Times Super Trends*, Item #2342, \$15.99.)



Largest Population Decline Ever Recorded

In the past year, Russia had its most significant peacetime population decline of all time.

“[The] overwhelming share of this decline is associated with an increase in mortality, which is also reflected in the dramatic drop in life expectancy that fell by about 4 years,” Alexey Raksha wrote in a Facebook post about the change, per the *Post*. “In turn, an overwhelming share of this increase in mortality is due to Covid-19.”

Despite a rising death toll and reports that 11 percent of the country's COVID-19 patients were in serious condition, the country has refused to lock down.

Some Russian regions, however, have imposed vaccine mandates for people in certain industries like health care, education, retail and government. “Any measure that can encourage more people to get vaccinated is good because only vaccination saves from death.”

-*thehill.com*, 13 October 2021

Commentary: Russia's coronavirus deaths per 100,000 population stand at 1,568, compared with 2,230 for the US. The failure to implement strict rules as urged by the World Health Organization, is the reason for the high death toll, which is expected to rise.

However, the population decline is not only due to Covid-19. Russia also registered a lower annual birth rate, at 9.7 births per 1,000 population, compared with 12.3 for the USA.


Although somewhat belated, Russia now acknowledges the threat of Covid-19, but faces extreme difficulty because it is the largest country in the world, with a population density of only 9 people per square kilometer (USA, 35 per sq. km; Israel, 380).

We are reminded of Proverbs 14:12: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” 7626 (See *Preparing for Eternity*, Item #2268, \$15.)

 ISRAEL

2000-Year-Old Balsam Tree Seal Found

In the last decades before the destruction of the Second Temple, someone—a Jew, possibly a pilgrim—walked on the imposing road that connected the Shiloah Pool at the outskirts of Jerusalem with the Temple Mount.

 For the important occasion, he wore his most precious clothes and ornaments, including a delicate ring bearing an engraved lilac amethyst stone. But in the crowd, the ring broke, the stone slipped on the floor and then into the underground drainage channel.

Some 2,000 years later, the tiny artifact was retrieved by volunteers sifting through soil dug during an archaeological excavation in the area.

Known as “balm of Gilead” (*tzori* in Hebrew), balsam tree (*nataf*) or “persimmon” later in the



Amethyst stone depicting balsam tree.
(photo credit: ELIYAHU YANAI/CITY OF DAVID)

Mishnaic period, the plant, whose modern scientific name is *commiphora gileadensis*, was used to produce perfumes, incense and medicines.

“This is an important find because it may be the first time a seal has been discovered in the entire world with an engraving of the precious and famous plant...,” said archaeologist Eli Shukron.

-www.jpost.com, 21 October 2021

Commentary: The word “Baca” (Psalm 84:6) in Scripture is translated as “mulberry trees” or “balsam trees.” The simple word in Hebrew ap-

parently has no equivalent word in European languages. StudyLight.org states: “Neither the balsam nor mulberry tree has been known to grow around Jerusalem, making the identification of the tree uncertain.”

Arab sources state, “The balsam, carried originally, says Arab tradition, from Yemen by the Queen of Sheba, as a gift to Solomon, and planted by him in the gardens of Jericho.”

Jeremiah, often described as the weeping prophet, concludes chapter 8: “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?” (Jeremiah 8:22).

What this article clearly shows: Israel cannot be separated from the past, from the Bible, or from their land. The continual archaeological discoveries clearly testify of Israel’s presence from about 3,500 years ago.


7628

(See *The Red-Haired Archaeologist Digs Israel*, Item #2384, \$15.99.)

 TURKEY

1,000-Year-Old Jewish Books Seized

Gold-embossed parchment manuscripts written in Hebrew that are believed to be about 1,000-years-old were seized by police in the city of Mardin in southeastern Turkey after they were illegally imported.

 The books and the case in which the scroll was kept were all adorned with the Star of David and one of the books also had a menorah on its cover.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that sources had informed it that the manuscripts seized by Turkish authorities had been stolen by the al-Rahman Legion, a Syrian rebel group, from the Eliyahu Hanavi Synagogue in the Jobar neighborhood of Damascus, and were smuggled to Turkey.

The Eliyahu Hanavi Synagogue was bombed and looted during the Syrian Civil War, according to Diarna, a digital database about Jewish heritage in North Africa and the Middle East. The site is traditionally believed to be where the prophet Elijah hid from the Israelite king Ahab after declaring a drought. The site is also believed to be where Elijah’s successor, Elisha, was anointed.

On March 26 this year, Turkish security forces seized a 2,000-2,500-year-old Torah with golden inscription in northern Samsun province.

-www.jpost.com, 3 November 2021

Commentary: According to the *Irish Times* (5 November 2021), the Syrian Jewish community once numbered about 100,000. Today, there are fewer than 100 Jews in Syria. The World Jewish Congress estimates that between 15,500-21,000 Jews remain in Turkey.

We note that Turkey was the first Muslim country to recognize the State of Israel in March 1949. Despite a strained relationship,

Turkey’s exports to Israel have increased, from under \$3 billion in 2015 to \$4.7 billion in 2020.

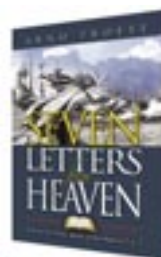
Brenda Shaffer of the Atlantic Council Global Energy Center says, “There is a window of opportunity for 2025 and 2026, when most of Turkey’s gas contracts with Russia and Iran expire, to reduce those imports and replace them with Eastern Mediterranean gas.” Energy is the uniting adhesive bridging over soured diplomatic relations.

In our Bible, we see Turkey playing a prominent part: all seven churches mentioned in the first three chapters of the book of Revelation were located there.

We note that Turkey’s population of 85 million is 98% Muslim.

7632


(See *Seven Letters from Heaven*, Item #1081, \$4.50.)



 **USA**

Muslim Prosperity

The past 20 years have mostly been golden for America’s Muslims. The community has more than doubled in size, to 3.5m. And its prominence in American life has increased exponentially.

 Traverse the overpasses of any big city and you will see metallic domes sparkling below. The number of mosques has also more than doubled since 2001. The minority’s secular growth is even more striking. Muslims are one of America’s most educated religious groups. More than 15% of doctors in Michigan are Muslim, though less than 3% of the state’s population is. And Muslim artists, journalists and politicians are catching up.

And yet the Islamophobic backlash the community suffered after the twin towers fell has increased. Half of Americans, including a large majority of Republicans, say Islam encourages violence. That is twice the number who held that view in early 2002. “Though we try to integrate, these are things we live with,” Ali Dabaja, an emer-



gency-care doctor from Michigan, told [this] columnist.

Indeed, it is striking how many Muslims, especially younger, America-born ones, responded to the discrimination they faced after 9/11 by citing America’s promise of liberty. Mr Minhaj, whose hit Netflix show was called “Patriot Act,” describes his father’s and his own conflicting responses to the thugs who smashed their car windows; the older man fearful and resigned, the younger one astonished and incensed.

-*www.economist.com*, 11 September 2021

Commentary: The excerpt we publish from *The Economist* is not pro or con Muslim; it simply shows that discrimination and re-

pression of certain groups within a society can actually have the opposite effect: adherence to the Islamic religion has doubled, and so has the number of mosques.

What is our take on this issue? The answer is always the Gospel. Truth will always expose lies. Light is stronger than darkness,

and true freedom is only obtained through Jesus Christ, who said: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

We receive good news from various parts of the world: reliable reports show that God is adding Muslims to His Church. Let us continue to pray that the Lord will use circumstances (often beyond our control) to lead to a life-changing true faith in Jesus Christ—not religion. He has promised: “I will build my church,” and: “I will come again.”


7616

(See *The Sure Foundation of the Church*, Item #1066, \$18.50)

 **CHINA**

Residents Testing Digital Yuan

This digital yuan test was organized by Hainan’s Treasury Department and the People’s Bank of China (the country’s central bank).

 The donated funds can be spent on 1,300 businesses on the island, including supermarkets, hotels and duty free stores. The financing for this event was provided by Sanya’s government. As the organizers noted, the tests themselves do not yet mean the launch of a program for the free use of the digital yuan on Hainan.

China began implementing a national virtual currency at the end of 2019. The digital yuan is electronic money centrally issued by the People’s Bank of China. They cost the same as regular Chi-



nese paper banknotes. According to the plans of the country’s central bank, over time, the digital yuan should replace part of the cash in circulation.

It is planned that during the Winter Olympic Games in February 2022, athletes and guests will be able to pay in digital yuan.

-*tass.com*, 5 October 2021

Commentary: Digital currency is definitely the future. While paper currency is still king, as

the article on page 24 indicates, its days are numbered.

Remember the old days, when one wrote a check to pay a bill? The merchant had to endorse it and carry it to the bank. The bank’s employee had to enter all the pertinent information and transport the physical check to the originating bank. That cost time and money. Daily, checks by the planeload were flown from the east to the west and from the north to the south. Finally, the person who wrote the check received it back from his bank with the monthly statement. That we may call ancient history.

Here at Midnight Call, checks received go through a digital scanner, and the money is deposited in the ministry’s bank account in short order. The scanner captures an im-

(continued next page)

Digital Yuan (continued from page 26)

age of both sides, which is digitally stored in the bank, and the original check is destroyed after seven days. We are obviously grateful for this development, as we no longer have to go to the bank every day as we had done for over 40 years.

The reason we explain this matter is to show that there is no other way in the end but for each person to be assigned an account number. That is practically already the case in virtually all countries; in the US, for example, a person receives their Social Security number at birth. But in the final days, in order to access one's account, authorization will have to come from the mark of the beast. 7625


(See Progressive Globalism, Item #1092, \$5.50.)



WORLD

Unions Seek Waiver for Covid Vaccine Patents

A global coalition of more than 350 trade unions is renewing calls for politicians to waive the patents on Covid vaccines.

 They say that failing to do so would compound supply chain crises and inflict "economic self-harm."

It comes as the World Trade Organization (WTO) tries to broker a compromise at a meeting in Geneva.

Critics argue that accelerating the rollout of vaccines is more complex than just the waiving of patents.

The dilemma being discussed at the WTO meeting centers on finding the best way to ensure the most widespread and equitable way of vaccinating the whole world from coronavirus and ending the pandemic. Successfully doing so would allow the

removal of restrictions that have impaired economic growth.

They believe doing so would accelerate vaccine rollout. The UK, Germany, Switzerland, and the European Union are amongst those who are opposed to a waiver.

The coalition is concerned that many of the 11 million workers they represent across 113 countries don't have sufficient access to vaccines. They warn that the global transport system faces the imminent threat of collapse if not enough workers are vaccinated.

One reason supply chains are vulnerable is that only 31% of the world's 1.4 million seafarers have been vaccinated.

-www.bbc.com, 14 October 2021

Commentary: Coronavirus is drawing the nations closer together. Quite interestingly, "only 31% of the world's 1.4 million seafarers have been vaccinated." That could have catastrophic effects.

A Google search tells us that an estimated 90% of the world's goods are transported by sea. A major outbreak of Covid-19 within the 69% of unvaccinated seafarers could be catastrophic. This clearly shows how interdependent the nations of the world are, which is accelerating year by year.

There are presently thousands of cargo ships facing a near record backlog. One reason: most US ports are not operating at maximum capacity. Supply chain snarls are expected to create major issues for holiday shoppers, the article states. Executives have warned the shipping crisis will continue into 2023.

Revelation 18:17 reports of the future: "For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off." Thus, the tiny, invisible to the naked eye, coronavirus has severely affected the world economy; in this case, shipping. We expect more to come.

7619

(See Exposing Mystery Babylon Part 2, Item #1080, \$4.50.)

ESTONIA

Replace Lithium, Cobalt, and Nickel with Peat?

Peat, plentiful in bogs in northern Europe, could be used to make sodium-ion batteries cheaply for use in electric vehicles, scientists at an Estonian university say.



Sodium-ion batteries, which do not contain relatively costly lithium, cobalt or nickel, are one of the new technologies that battery makers are looking at as they seek alternatives to the dominant lithium-ion model.

Scientists at Estonia's Tartu University say they have found a way to use peat in sodium-ion batteries, which reduces the overall cost, although the technology is still in its infancy.

"Peat is a very cheap raw material—it doesn't cost anything, really," says Enn Lust, head of the Institute of Chemistry at the university.

Sodium-ion batteries using peat will need to prove they are commercially viable and can be scaled up, Lukasz Bednarski, a market analyst and the author of a book on batteries, told Reuters.

China's CATL in July became the first major automotive battery maker to unveil a sodium-ion battery.

"I think that companies will increasingly try to commercialize the sodium-ion battery, especially after the CATL announcement," said Bednarski.

-www.reuters.com, 13 October 2021

Commentary: Estonia, a member of the European Union with a population of 1.2 million, has reached the rather remarkable per capita GDP of \$36,927.

While Estonia's import and export balance remains relatively equal, it is of interest how diverse the countries of import are: Russia 12%, Germany 10%, Finland 9%, Lithuania 7%, Latvia 7%, Sweden 6%, Poland 6%, China 6%. This too shows how even small nations are totally integrated in the global economy.

Will the peat battery come to fruition? Time will tell. As the article notes, China is already ahead in that development. Based on history, we may safely assume it will be successful.

Speaking of batteries and energy for the future, we have this admonition in Hebrews 4:16: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." 7619

(See Spiritual Strength for Each Day, Item #1062, \$16.95.)

“And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem” (Ruth 4:11).

BY ARNO FROESE

It was the Gentile widow Ruth who received the wonderful promise, “The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel.” These words were uttered by the people and the elders.

Later, when Boaz married Ruth and a son was born, the women of Bethlehem made this prophecy: “that his name may be famous in Israel” (verse 14b). The women enlarged the promise from “famous in Bethlehem” to “famous in Israel.”

Almost 600 years later, we read another prophecy: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). While Bethlehem is somewhat insignificant when compared to other cities in Judea, the promise is irrevocable: the Ruler of Israel shall come forth, and His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting”—meaning eternity.

Insignificant, little Bethlehem became the territory where God revealed Himself in the flesh.

Speaking of Rachel, she died when she gave birth to Benjamin. We read in Genesis 35:18: “And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.” For Rachel, it was Benoni, “the son of my sorrow,” but Jacob changed the name to Benjamin, which means, “the son of my right hand.” Benjamin was the first tribe integrated into the tribe of Judah, hence became Jews.

Before Jacob died and before he blessed his son, he speaks of the death of Rachel: “And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem” (Genesis 48:7). That burial place, called Rachel’s Tomb, is located at the northern entrance of Bethlehem. It is part of Palestinian territory and difficult for visitors to access. That is another tragedy for Israel.

In the New Testament, we read the genealogy from Abraham to Joseph, the husband of Mary. Ruth is mentioned: “And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse” (Matthew 1:5).

To visit Bethlehem as a tourist, one needs to go to an exchange point located outside the city. There you must disembark the Israeli vehicle and board a Palestinian bus or taxi, which takes you into Bethlehem.

Bethlehem Today

The Arab name for this city is *Bayt Laḥm*, which means “house of meat.” In Hebrew it means “house of bread.” Today, this little town is located in the Judean hills some 8 kilometers south of Jerusalem. It is no longer considered part of Israel.

To visit Bethlehem as a tourist, one needs to go to an exchange point located outside the city. There you must disembark the Israeli vehicle and board a Palestinian bus or taxi, which takes you into Bethlehem.

Cities of Refuge

We know from Joshua 14:3-4, 21:1-45, and Numbers 35:6-15, six cities were ordained to be cities of refuge. Three—Hebron, Shechem, and Kedesh—are in what is now called Palestinian territory. To the east of the Jordan, there are the cities of Bezer, Ramoth in Gilead, and Golan in Bashan; subsequently called Jordanian territory.

When one views today’s political reality, there shockingly seems to be no refuge for Israel as outlined in Holy Scripture.

Bethlehem today has a population under 30,000, of which about 17% are adherents to the Christian religion, although not necessarily believers.

In summary, today virtually no Jews live in Bethlehem or in the six cities of refuge. For Bible believers, that sounds rather hopeless. But it is not, for the prophetic Word proclaims: “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon” (Hosea 14:4-7). (MC)

**Action
for Israel**



MIDNIGHT CALL

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bless thee...”
(Genesis 12:3).

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MC1221

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Preparing for the Upcoming Conflict or Natural Disaster

By David Phillips *Project Manager*



“He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday” (Psalm 91:4-6).

In recent months, you have probably followed the news and what has been going on in Afghanistan, as well as what has been happening all around us here in Israel. A stream of refugees fled into Turkey and Europe, and some into Iran, joining forces there. We are aware of this situation and thus have kept an even closer eye on our neighbors, to keep abreast of what they’re planning and what their next move will be. All of our neighboring countries are Muslim and are still on our watch list, especially Lebanon. At present, it is on very shaky ground. Over the last decades, Lebanon has grown more and more unstable, and right now there is great tension. Our enemy Hezbollah is attempting to usurp rulership in Lebanon, and we do not know where this will lead.

While writing this article, all is quiet, but we realize this could change in the blink of an eye and at any moment. We appreciate and ask for your prayers, especially during times like these.

Israeli officials, including the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Welfare, and the Home Front Command, have urged us to upgrade our protection for the Home, to prepare for any upcoming events. We need to ensure (to the extent we can) that the residents and those who are visiting the Ebenezer Home will be safe and will have fewer chances of being injured, in the event of a missile attack with explosions nearby.

It required us to cover all our glass windows with a transparent, 200 micro-millimeter polymer sheathing that sticks onto the glass. This would prevent glass shards from flying onto the nearby residents and/or staff if an explosion happens.

It’s an enormous burden on us, as we have many, many windows, but we understand the absolute necessity of complying with these newest requirements! We will continue to do whatever is within our power to seek the safety and protection of our residents and team.



◀ Protected window stays put with no flying glass

We don't know of another material that could provide protection from flying glass shards as this specially designed polymer does. Yes, we realize that ultimately, our protection and help comes from our Savior Yeshua: as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob says in the above verses, HE will cover us! But we also must be prudent and do whatever is within our power to care for those whom HE has entrusted to Ebenezer.

For this reason, we are dedicating this month to raising the needed finances to cover the cost of this project. We have put together a video for you about it, which you can view on our YouTube channel: Ebenezer Senior Citizens Home.

We are in need of 3665 square feet of this polymer sheathing for our glass windows. For every 50 sq. ft covered, it costs \$145. Will you join us in helping with the expense of this task?

Thank you for your support, and for helping us save and protect lives in the event of an emergency. During past wars, we have seen shards of glass from windows flying around, and we would like to prevent this from ever happening again in the event of any upcoming future conflict. Not to mention the potential for a nature disaster such as an earthquake, as we are also in an earthquake zone.

This polymer sheathing will go a long way in preventing injuries and saving precious lives!



Note: Donations for the project by check/money order should be made out to Midnight Call, and specify Ebenezer Home in the memo line.

Mail to: Midnight Call Ministries, PO Box 84309, Lexington, SC 29073

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Yes, I wish to support the Ebenezer Home Project.

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Note: All letters will be answered by the Executive Editor, Arno Froese.

BIRTHDATE OF JESUS... INTRIGUING NEWS... DANIEL OR REVELATION?

Birthdate of Jesus

Dear Editor,

In the December 2020 *Midnight Call* magazine, page 37, R. Cleveland wrote concerning the date of Christ's birth, citing technology and Jewish festivals to establish the date.

He is in error by historical fact!

Herod 'The Great' (73-4 BC), the King Herod the wise men visited—who ordered the killing of all male infants under 2 years of age, after the wise men bypassed him on their way home—died in 4 BC (*Webster's Dictionary*).

So, this would place the year of Jesus' birth around 5 BC. Beyond this, there is NO means today to precisely tie our calendar to the 1st century calendars, so the exact month and day cannot be determined. A probable month of birth has been presented by some in analyzing the time of year seemingly presented in the Gospel accounts.

-B. Rex, IN

Answer: I appreciate your alertness. You have answered the Christmas issue in an excellent way. Thank you very much.

Intriguing News

Dear Arno Froese,

After reading your recent comment on China's predicted reaction to the pullout in Kabul, I would say that you have an intriguing perspective on the

news. Please be kind enough to take a bit of time to elaborate on that.

-B. Tobin, NY

Answer: My worldview is based on the prophetic Word. There is only one nation that counts: Israel. The other nation is the Church, the body of Christ. The Church has no country, no language, no capital city, no earthly government, but can be found in all of the 200+ nations on earth. We are the only perfect nation. One day, when this nation is completed—meaning when the last one is added—she will be raptured into the presence of the Lord. Then, total darkness will prevail on planet earth.

The various systems and ideologies, be it capitalism, communism, socialism, monarchy, dictatorship, etc. are designed to separate the nations of the world. However, in these end times we see the nations coming together through the avenue of merchandise. The USA depends heavily on China, and China in turn depends on the USA.

Dominance by military force is coming to an end. Merchandise is king. In the end, according to the Scriptures, buying and selling (merchandise) will be globally regulated (Revelation 13:16-17). Armageddon, for example, is the total collapse of global merchandising. Read Revelation 18, and note that the world is lamenting the loss of merchandise: "Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate" (verse 19b).

The unity-forming spirits have been at work for about 2,000 years. Why? Because the god of this world mimics the perfect unity of the Church. Remember, Satan's beginning was his de-



sire to be equal to God; his ultimate intention is “showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4b). Interestingly, on some airlines, “ladies and gentlemen” is being replaced with “dear passengers.” Why? Some people do not wish to be identified as male or female. Thus, this is mimicking the Church in Galatians 3:28b: “there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

What the USA, China, the EU, and others do is of little to no significance for the true Church. We are in the world but not of the world. When our nation is completed, the Lord will take possession of His spiritual temple.

Daniel or Revelation?

Dear Mr. Froese,

The book of Daniel is the only place in the Bible where end-time prophecies have intervals, from the beginning of Daniel’s 70th week to the millennium. Prophecy teachers that use Revelation to sequence the Rapture, the Second Coming, and the millennium are guessing. Jesus and I are considered heretics for going against the main religious teachers of our days. His message was rejected 2,000 years ago, as it is today.

If you add a Rapture at the beginning of Revelation chapter 4, a 7-year Tribulation, and judgments to the seal and trumpet prophecies, are you violating Revelation 22:18-19? These verses warn about adding or taking away words of the prophecy of Revelation. Also read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4.

-R. Catlett, TX

Answer: The Rapture must take place before the Great Tribulation. Why? The Great Tribulation is the result of the taking away of the light of this world: “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14a). From that point on, total darkness will prevail over planet earth.

The additional reason for the imminency of the Rapture, is the repeated admonition that we should be waiting for the Lord. If any teaching indicates that I must first wait for the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, etc., then it means I do not have to wait for Jesus.

Is Hell Eternal?

Dear Editor,

This is a tough question. As a Catholic, I have to agree with the Church and Scripture that says or im-

plies hell is eternal—or does it really say that? I for one am not an expert, but for your own information I quote Cardinal Danielou:

“Too often we think of hope in too individualistic a manner as merely our personal salvation. But hope essentially bears on the great actions of God concerning the whole of creation. It bears on the destiny of all humanity. It is the salvation of the world that we await. In reality hope bears on the salvation of all men—and it is only in the measure that I am immersed in them that it bears on me.”

In the past, at least two prominent Saints said that they believed that eventually all will be forgiven and let into heaven. These Saints were told to recant their position or leave the Catholic Church, which they did and so they were able to stay in the Church.

We can’t and don’t have assurance of salvation. People who really believe it invariably stay away from the book of James, because they can’t answer it. The book of James really says we can’t have the assurance.

-E. Corcoran, OH

Answer: John 3:36 speaks of the necessity of the rebirth and concludes: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Regarding eternal life or eternal hell, it’s forever and ever. That’s clear Bible teaching. See also 1 John 5:13: “that ye may know that ye have eternal life.”

Now to James. My understanding of this book, particularly chapter 2, is that he is stating true faith produces true works. “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” (verse 21). He adds in verse 22: “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” Clearly, faith leads to works. Verse 23 states, “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness”—that is, saved by faith. Believing leads to action, not vice-versa.

The two prominent saints who believed in universalism simply contradicted Scripture. Note the often-quoted John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Whosoever” is singular, not plural. (MC)



Did You Know?

Did you know that you are God's much-wanted child?

Norbert Lieth

Who among us can say whether they resulted from a wanted pregnancy? Was their birth really desired? Which of us feels indispensable to others? Do we have people in our lives who love and appreciate us just because we exist? Nothing is worse than feeling unwelcome or out of place. On the other hand, is there anything more beautiful than knowing that you are loved and wanted? God wanted you; that's why you exist! Did you know?

God's Son, Jesus, became human in Bethlehem. That was His and His Father's wish. But to what end? So that everyone who believes in Jesus would become children of God. God doesn't want anyone to be lost. God is the Creator of all of us; He doesn't love *everything*, but He loves *everyone*. He sees everyone through the lens of salvation, from Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's cross.

To commemorate Jesus' birth at Christmas, we should recognize that everyone is on God's wish list: the

Jewish literature of the time describes the status of shepherds as very despised. The religious upper class portrayed them as thieves and liars, sinners of the worst sort.

grocery store clerk, the police officer, the drug addict, the prisoner, the illegal immigrant, the billionaire, the unpopular president, the homeless person, the person with a different lifestyle than yours ... every man, woman, and child. The Bible says: "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit 3:4-5). You too are invited to stop, repent, and turn to Jesus.

Did you know the role the shepherds played? It's impossible to have Christmas without shepherds. It says in God's Word, "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8).

But what was the significance of the shepherds back then?

Jewish literature of the time describes the status of shepherds as very despised. The religious upper class portrayed them as thieves and liars, sinners of the worst sort. The shepherds were among the rabble, with no knowledge of the Law. Their testimony was inadmissible in court. They were deprived of civil rights. The Midrash says, "There is no more disreputable occupation than that of a shepherd."

Shepherds were unable to fulfill the religious purification requirements, and therefore could not wor-



ship in the temple. They mostly slept in the fields or in caves; they were unfamiliar with luxury. They were people who lived far away from both God and others.

It was to these people that Jesus' birth was first announced, and by an angel no less. The bright light of God's glory didn't appear in the stable with Mary and Joseph, nor in the temple with the priests, but among the shepherds. They lived only a small, simple existence, and yet God came into their lives.

No one is insignificant before God.

Did you know what Jesus did for you?

"And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12).

Like every year, their aunt had sent her usual Christmas package. Probably another box of chocolates. The wife sized up the box and said ironically to her husband, "Give it to the refugees across the way." A few days

Did You Know?

Plenty of people think about God, heaven, and forgiveness during the Christmas season. When God begins speaking in your heart, don't let it be buried again and forgotten. Respond, pray to Jesus, and ask Him to save you. There is only one divine answer to this prayer: "Yes, you've been saved!"

later, the family from another country stood on the front step. They offered their sincere thanks for the chocolates and the 2,000 euros (about \$2,320) that were inside the box. The couple had scorned the true value of the contents by overlooking it.

The Bible says of Jesus: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col 1:16-17).

Jesus is the Creator through whom God made everything. He became human, wrapped in swaddling clothes. What was the reason for it all? So that we can go to heaven.

Unfortunately, many people respond to Jesus like the married couple responded to their gift. They hardly pay attention to Him or despise Him; they thoughtlessly overlook Him. In doing so, they don't know the eternal value that Jesus brings, or what they will miss without Him.

Jesus said it Himself: "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:23b).

Did you know that you have to decide?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that

heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

You have to decide whether to accept a marriage proposal.

You have to decide whether to accept an offer.

You have to decide whether to accept the terms of a contract.


God chose us. He chose you.

Now we have to decide.

Plenty of people think about God, heaven, and forgiveness during the Christmas season. They remember or hear the tale of the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. And at some point, they notice how God has started to quietly speak to their hearts. They notice that God is inviting them. When God begins speaking in your heart, don't let it be buried again and forgotten. Respond, pray to Jesus, and ask Him to save you. There is only one divine answer to this prayer: "Yes, you've been saved!"

The Word of God says: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved ... For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (from Rom 10).

(MR1220/1179)



The Wordless Preaching of a Man with Dementia

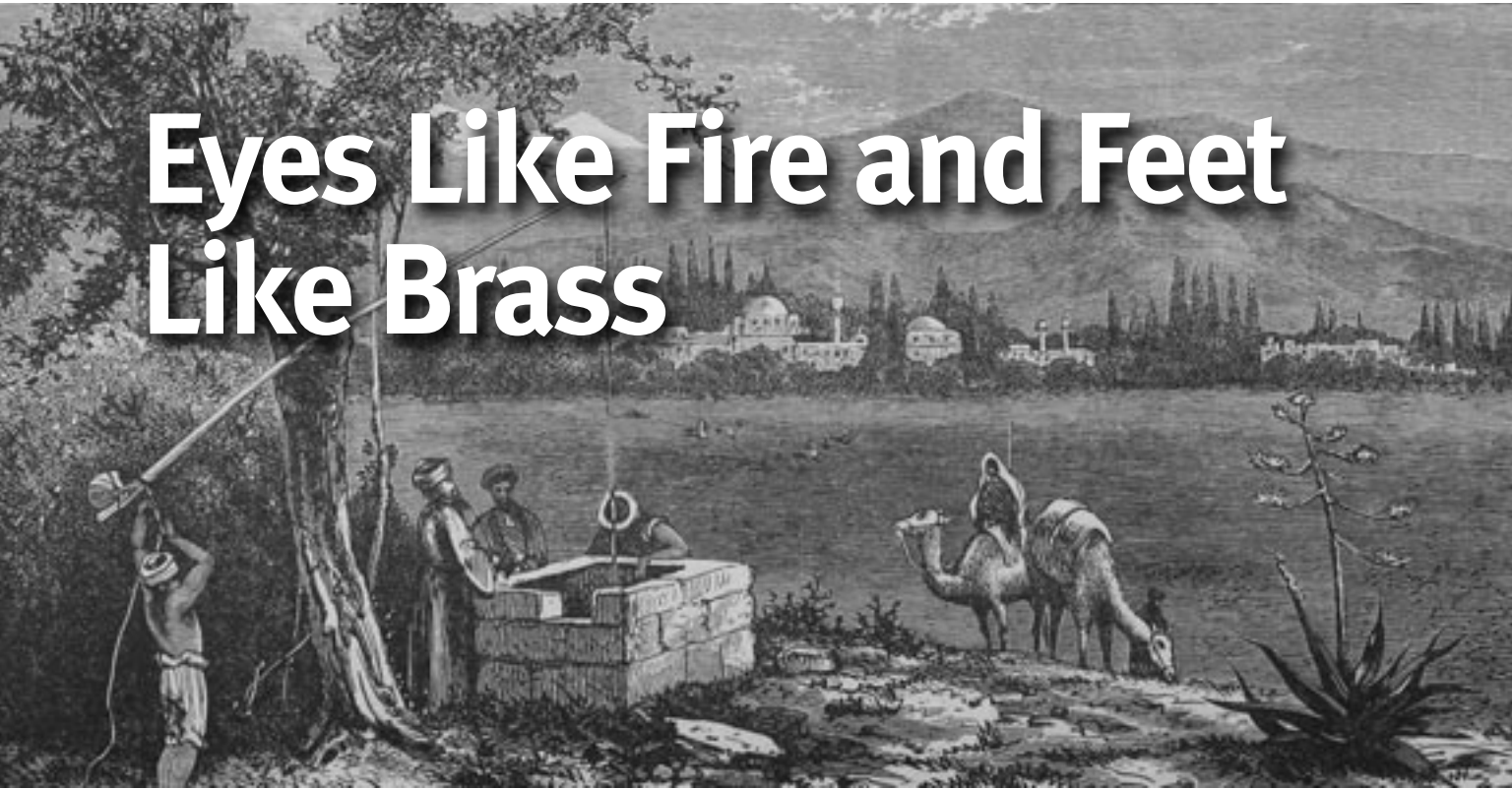
By Midnight Call International Staff

Mr. H. has been under state care for dementia for a long time, and can only recognize his family to a limited extent. When Mr. H. was still healthy, part of his daily routine was to go into his prayer closet after breakfast, kneel before his armchair, and pray. He wasn't able to have any visitors during the coronavirus pandemic, so his wife called to check on how he was doing. The nurse informed her that he wasn't doing very well; records indicated that he had fallen 50 times.

A few days later, his daughter-in-law also called to ask about him, and there had been an improvement. The nurse, who is not a believer, asked whether Mr. H. had a place

in his home where he would regularly kneel to pray. The daughter-in-law confirmed that he did. The nurse then said that she had recently begun to suspect that to be the case. Since then, whenever it was possible, she had been accompanying Mr. H. to his room after breakfast, kneeling with him to pray the Lord's Prayer, and then helping him rise again. Afterward, Mr. H. beamed with pleasure. It's safe to assume that he hadn't actually "fallen" as many times as the log recorded, but had been kneeling as usual and couldn't get up on his own. These incidents had made the nurse reflect, and she told the daughter-in-law on the phone, "Maybe I should pray like Mr. H. too." (MR1220/1180)

Eyes Like Fire and Feet Like Brass



Thyatira (from an original sketch by Arundell)

Wim Malgo (1922-1992)

An interpretation of the last book of the Bible. Part 26. Revelation 2:18.

The letter addressed to Thyatira is the longest one. Thyatira was a small town in Asia Minor in present-day Turkey. The name is often translated as “burning incense.” But it has also been interpreted as “odor of affliction,” which indicates the paganism which prevailed there. The city was in a valley of a lovely area. But Thyatira was also a garrison town for the Roman militia and, like the other cities mentioned, was known as a trading town. It was on a large thoroughfare. The city was also famous for its first-rate craftsmen.

Thyatira has survived to the present day. It's now called Akhisar, meaning “white castle,” after the numerous marble quarries that gleam from the nearby mountains. In the 1930s, Akhisar was notorious for its opium trade. Until the 20th century, there was a small community of Christians there with a good reputation. Thyatira must have

developed a very lively and healthy church, which was of some importance in the city at the end of the first century. Even before the church of Jesus came to exist in Thyatira, there was a godly woman there. She was Lydia, a merchant of purple goods. When Paul came to Philippi to preach the Gospel on his second missionary journey, she was also there. The Lord opened her heart and she was converted (Acts 16:14). She and her household believed and were baptized. This account can help us relax a bit if we preach God's Word or try to win souls for the Lord Jesus in some other way, because we're not the ones who open people's hearts. It is the Lord alone! And He has people everywhere whose hearts He wants to open. So, we just have to tell them the Word of the Cross. The Lord is willing if we are!

The way the Lord reveals Himself in this letter is profoundly important. We read in verse 18, “These

His feet are like fine brass—this means that the Victor over sin no longer tolerates any victory of evil, no power of sin over His blood-bought people.

things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.” Remember that it’s not just anyone speaking! No, it’s the Son of God, who is Himself the Word. He isn’t an absent Lord but the present Judge, even now. “These things saith the Son of God...” He not only spoke, but is speaking. He sees through the well-concealed and disguised darkness in the Thyatira church: “his eyes like unto a flame of fire.”

When He introduces Himself—not only as the Son of God who is speaking, but also as One who has eyes like a flame of fire—He is emphasizing His determination to uncover what is hidden. We also read this in Hebrews 4:13: “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

You too are exposed and uncovered before the eyes of the Son of God, which are like a flame of fire. His eyes roam the whole earth: “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (2 Chron 16:9a).

His eyes stay on you, looking into your heart. So, don’t act as if the Lord doesn’t see everything in your life.

“...And his feet are like fine brass” (v. 18). The feet that were pierced on Calvary’s Cross for the sake of our sins are like shining brass. This is the realization of Hebrews 2:8 and Ephesians 1:21: “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him...Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.”

His feet are like fine brass—this means that the Victor over sin no longer tolerates any victory of evil, no power of sin over His blood-bought people. Nothing escapes the flame of His gaze; His brass step crushes all evil. So, we don’t want to grieve and offend the Lord—who struggled on the Cross and bought us so dearly—when we give sin the power in our lives despite His victory. Rather, Paul says, “Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Rom 6:12). (MR0521/1164)



THE FOURTH LETTER FROM HEAVEN

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of

their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev 2:18-29).

2021

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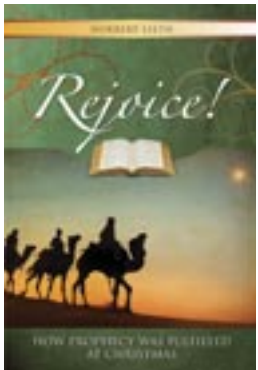
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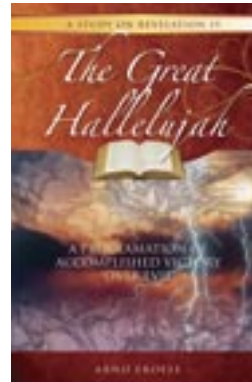
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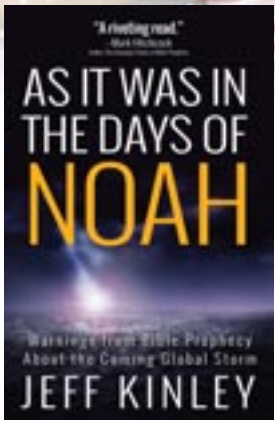


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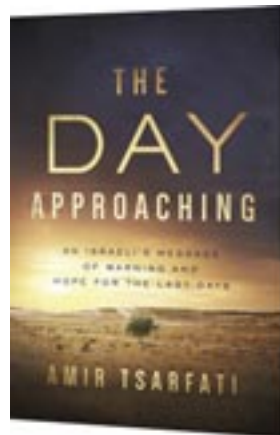
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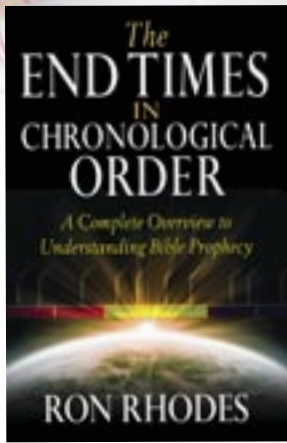
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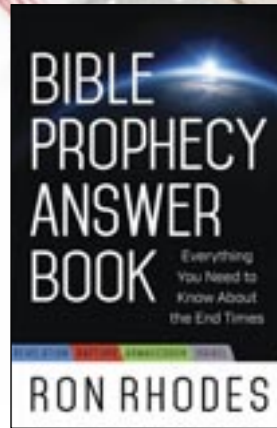
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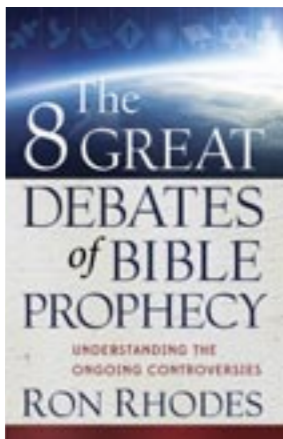
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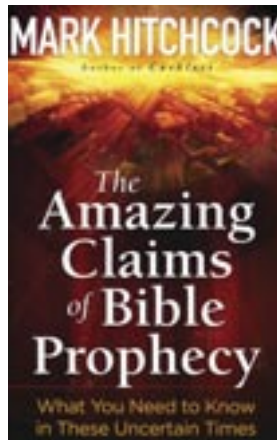
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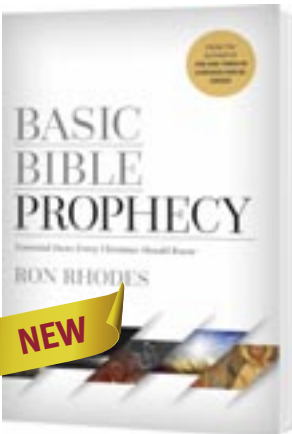
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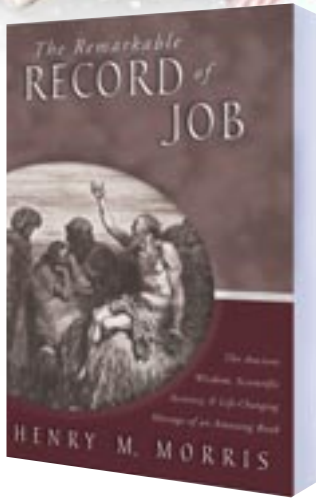
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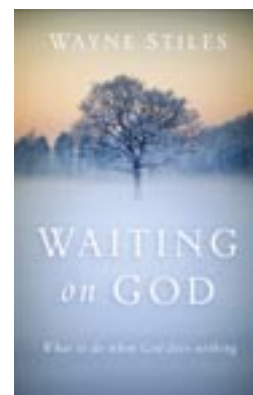
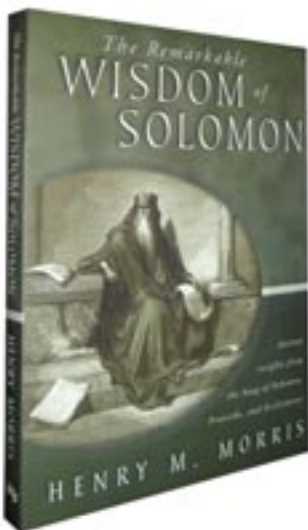
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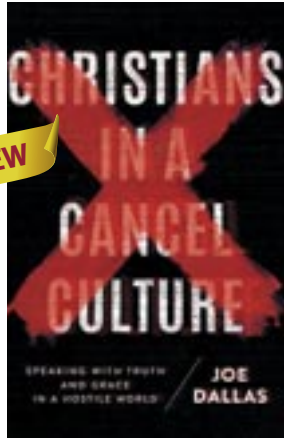
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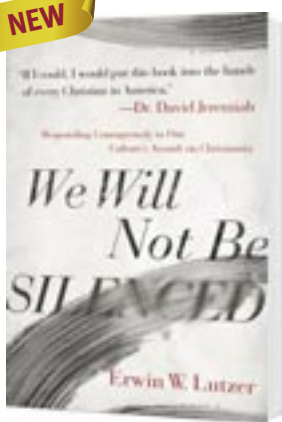


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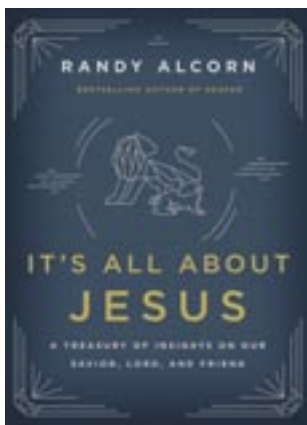
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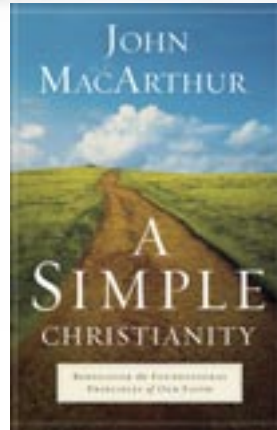
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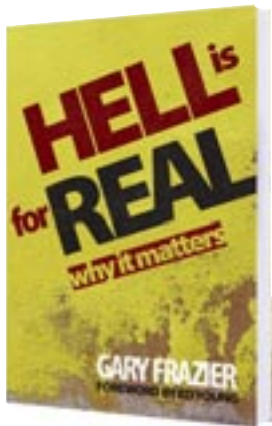


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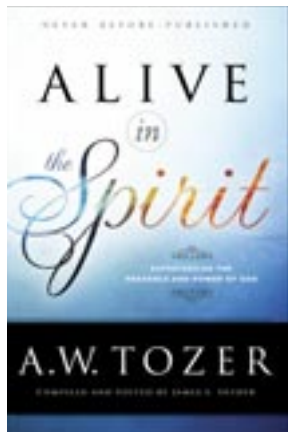
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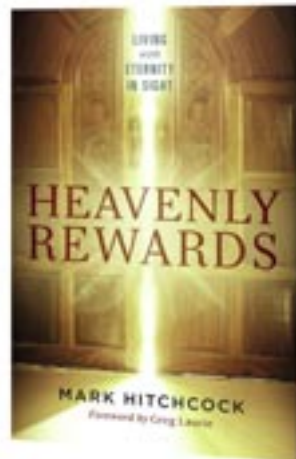
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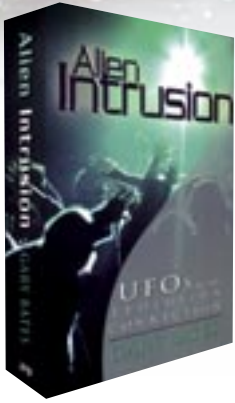
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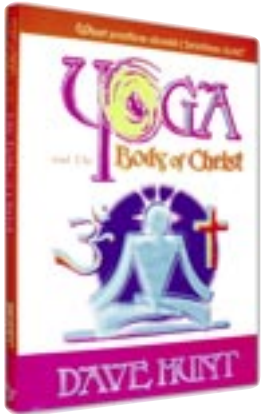
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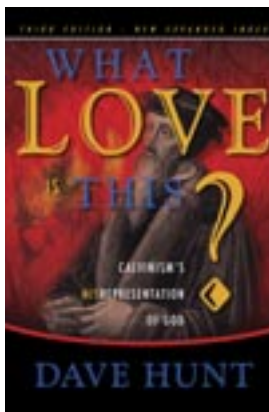
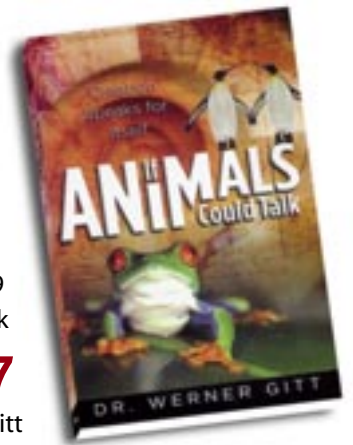
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