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Midnight Call

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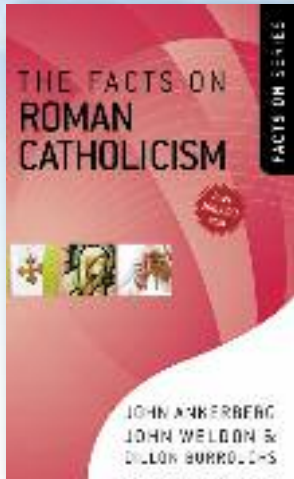
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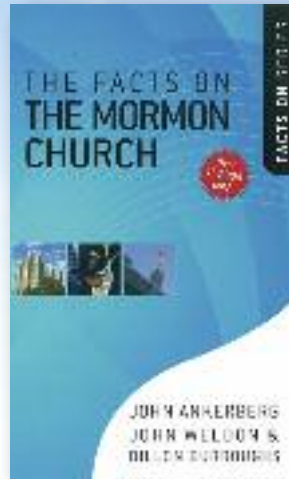
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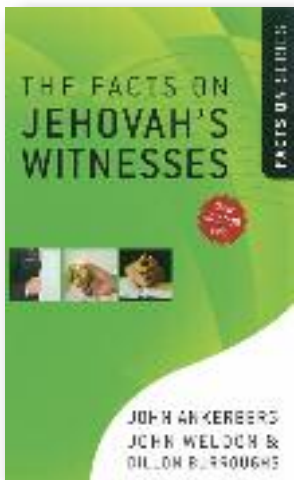
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“We respect and appreciate all brothers and sisters in the faith, who are devoted to Christ yet hold different opinions.”



By Norbert Lieth

Director of Missions, Midnight Call International

Dear Friends,

A year without equal has passed, and we do not know what may lie ahead. What happens next? Many questions remain unanswered, but one thing is certain: God will guide us according to His will and plan. The directions have already been given, and the destination firmly established. Jesus leads us through the chaos. He has promised it, and He is faithful. God says—and that is final—behold, I make all things new!

God called Abraham, who started out without knowing where to go (Hebrews 11:8). This was an unparalleled act of faith, a leap of trust, a conviction that one way or the other, the Almighty will make it right. Abraham's journey took him through highs and lows. His own failure sometimes tripped him up, but the Lord remained true to His promise.

Today, looking back to Abraham, we see what his step of faith has achieved for all of mankind. The people of Israel descended

from him; through him came the prophets, and the Bible emerged. But the most important result: Jesus, the Redeemer of the world, came to us through Israel. Abraham has also become the father of faith for believers from Gentile nations.

If we as Christ-followers want to accomplish something in this world, then we should continue in steadfast faith, let nothing slow us down, and concentrate on our actual mission. In a Christian video entitled “Light of This World,” it says: “Let us not lose hope, for even when masks hide our faces, we still are always a light in this world. We can trust and believe that our God sustains us. But why do we complain and mourn? We knew that it would happen, we know that it will get worse, yet we often get lost in fear. One day Jesus will return, and then everyone will bow down before the Lion and the Lamb, as prophesied from the beginning.”

Concerning the question of submission to the government, for example, there are

discussions and disputes, even divisions, among Christians. Thomas Lange writes: "Corona definitely has the potential to influence our thinking." Midnight Call Ministry does not argue. Rather, we respect and appreciate all brothers and sisters in the faith, who are devoted to Christ yet hold different opinions. What we deem important can be summed up by saying, "Keep Jesus in the center—despite corona."

The masks we have to wear must cover our faces, but not our witness. To the contrary; we should stand together all the more, pray together in our congregations, and speak out for Jesus. There is hope even in the midst of crisis. Every sunrise proclaims that in the end, darkness always remains the loser. Someone once said: "In the end all will be well, and if it is not well then it is not yet the end."

At this point, we want to thank all our friends for your commitment to our ministry. We thank you that for this new year, we may again depend on your prayers and support. We are always amazed at the goodness of our Lord. He who led Abraham will also guide His church. (MC)

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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 coming, 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 therefore in 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-tribulation 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.

When Christians Wage a Losing War

A golden sword is held by two hands, one from the left and one from the right, against a background of a blue sky with white clouds and a bright sun. The sword is positioned diagonally, with the hilt at the bottom left and the tip pointing towards the top right. The hands are clasped together, gripping the hilt. The sun is partially obscured by clouds, creating a lens flare effect.

René Malgo

Which principles should apply when Christians assert their interests through politics? A look into the present and the past.

Carl von Clausewitz – “War is only a continuation of State policy by other means.”



In the United States, many believers placed their hope in Republican President Donald Trump. He returned their devotion by appearing personally at a March for Life, the first US president to deliver an unprecedented speech against the killing of the unborn. Because most of his evangelical followers are also friends of Israel, his foreign policy also showed that he was probably the most Israel-friendly president the United States has ever had, despite already being traditionally pro-Israel. He nominated conservative candidates to the Supreme Court, in the face of strong opposition from his political opponents, just as Christians had wanted. Several evangelical pastors were enthusiastic that Trump has exceeded their expectations. In fact, no president before him seemed to have actually fulfilled so many of his election promises made to conservatives (who are usually also believers).

However, not every Christian is a fan of Trump. Many despise him because, despite his pro-Christian policies, he is anything but a model Christian. *Christianity Today* published an editorial urging evangelicals to turn away from Trump, because their public alliance with such a man would permanently damage their Gospel witness in the world. And the Ethics & Civil Liberties Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention (much to the chagrin of many Baptists) appeared to be using its resources to rail against Trump. Some of these determined Trump opponents would rather see a respectable Democrat in the White House, even if that could mean cutting back religious liberties, enhancing transgender rights, and legalizing abortion until the moment of birth.

Still other Christians are more matter-of-fact: they neither idolize nor hate Trump, but see him as a kind of *katechon*. This is the Greek word for “withholding” that the Apostle Paul uses, when he says that before the Antichrist seizes power, “what withholdeth” would have to be removed first (2 Thess 2:1-11). Interpreters, at least in the evangelical world, disagree on what is doing the “withholding”; is it the church, or governments? In any case, some believers regard Trump to be, if an indecent man, still a kind of *katechon* (but not Paul’s) that is to a small degree holding back the anti-Christian wave that will crash across America.

Either way, the hatred for Christians that is showing itself more strongly in the US (and in the Western world in general) can hardly be stopped. Believers themselves are at least partly to blame for this development. Trump may well be damaging Christianity’s public image, but it was hardly spotless before.

The church’s light has grown dim, its salt flavorless. The Apostle Paul’s bleak end-time prophecies regarding the church seem more accurate than ever before (cf. 2 Tim 3).

Christians joining forces with strong men in politics to strengthen their position is nothing new. The first strong man was Constantine the Great. Even Martin Luther’s Reformation would hardly have been as successful if German princes hadn’t lent him their political support. In its “best” times, the church dictated politics wherever it went, like when Ambrose of Milan forced the Roman emperor to engage in public penance for having caused a bloodbath among political opponents. In

When Christians Wage a Losing War

Still other Christians are more matter-of-fact: they neither idolize nor hate Trump, but see him as a kind of *katechon*, the Greek word for “withholding.”



their “worst” times, believers became a ping-pong ball for secular politicians, such as the Orthodox Church in Byzantium or under the Tsars.

Prussian officer and military scientist Carl von Clausewitz said, “War is only a continuation of State policy by other means.” An astute observation. Conversely, politics is actually a different form of violence in this world, in which those who have a say assert themselves at the expense of those who don’t. In this regard, political power is inherently always the opposite of what is modeled in the Sermon on the Mount and its Beatitudes (Matt 5:1ff.). That’s why it’s extremely precarious for Christians to seek their salvation in politics. The danger is inexpressibly great that the “Bride of the Lamb” will become the “Whore of Babylon,” if she no longer trusts in Christ alone, but instead relies on a “beast.”

On July 9, 1572, 19 Dutch believers from Gorkum were publicly executed on the gallows in Brielle because, even after long and painful torture, they refused to renounce their beliefs. It was the time of the Reformation, when Lutherans, Reformed, and Catholics clashed with each other, and

the Anabaptists were persecuted by pretty much everyone.

At least for Protestants, the thing that stung about this event was that the executioners were not, say, Catholics, but Calvinist Geuzen: Dutch freedom fighters who, in the name of religion, wanted to liberate their country from the Catholic yoke. Prince William of Orange, who was supposed to restore order to the Netherlands through their independence, even banned the murder of Catholic priests via letter. The Geuzen didn’t care. They hated the 19 priests, who steadfastly refused to deny Christ’s true presence in the Lord’s Supper and the primacy of the Pope. The Geuzen died like animals at the hands of their religious opponents.

Occasionally, Protestant historians like to point out the crimes committed by the Catholic Church, but they also tend to conceal the skeletons in their own closets. In the Dutch struggle for freedom, it was secular and humanist politicians like William of Orange, or the civic councilors who pacified the violent and sometimes religious extremism of their compatriots. (So, politics isn’t always bad; indeed, governments were even established by God and are willed by Him, so that evil in the world can’t spread unchecked.) Thus, the Dutch Republic, which developed to be relatively tolerant in matters of faith, became one of the few countries (if not the only one) that didn’t carry out any religiously-motivated and superstitious witch trials in the post-Reformation period.

Today, conservative Christians are quick to shake their heads in disgust at Islam’s violent followers. They forget that, unfortunately, shameful acts have been perpetrated

Politics is actually a different form of violence in this world, in which those who have a say assert themselves at the expense of those who don't.



by Christians on all sides in the name of the Cross, and all too often. The devil isn't interested in denominations and lip service. He likes to exploit anyone who is guided by the flesh and not the Spirit.

Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, who spent a long period in a Siberian penal camp, observed that evil cannot be neatly divided into different groups here on earth, but that its border runs through the heart of every human being. And Desert Father Macarius the Great remarked: "The heart itself is but a small vessel, yet there also are dragons and there are lions; there are poisonous beasts and all the treasures of evil. And there are rough and uneven roads; there are precipices. But there is also God, also the angels, the life and the kingdom, the light and the Apostles, the treasures of grace—there are all things."

In other words, we can let our hearts be ruled by evil, or by light through faith.

This is something that I fear we Christians are still forgetting too often. We split off into political factions and condemn everyone who doesn't belong to us, instead of bringing "the kindness and love of God our Savior" to everyone around us (cf. Tit 3:4). We're really seeing this in America presently, where many believers identify themselves as either pro-Trump or anti-Trump. They seem to be forgetting their true position in Christ.

Our kingdom is simply not of this world. God has indeed given the sword to the authorities (Rom 13), but not for us to "borrow" that sword, move the arm that holds it, or manipulate the head that controls it. Our basic law is the Sermon on the Mount, because our kingdom and citizenship are in heaven.

Many forefathers in the faith, as well as the Anabaptists, show us what this looks like in practice. For example, Maximus the

When Christians Wage a Losing War

We split off into political factions and condemn everyone who doesn't belong to us, instead of bringing "the kindness and love of God our Savior" to everyone around us.



Confessor opposed heresies in the Byzantine Empire and in the church. He did so not by gathering his friars and inciting violent uprising, but by meekly (but resolutely) advocating the truth. He was ready to die for it, but without dragging others to their deaths.

Several centuries later, the Anabaptists refused to take up arms to spread their view of the faith. They preferred to die rather than hurt a single hair on another's head. (Yes, there were the "Mad Men of Munster," who wanted to build God's kingdom on earth by force and were also called Anabaptists, but they were the exception. It's also significant that critics only ever mention the Munster sectarians to denounce Anabaptists; they struggle to come up with another example!)

One of the most famous examples is Dirk Willems, who belonged to the Anabaptists in the Netherlands. The "rebaptizers," as they were contemptuously called, suffered brutal persecution under the Catholic occupiers from Spain. Dirk Willems, a lay preacher, was imprisoned and sentenced to death. He managed to

escape from his prison tower and fled over a frozen pond. A soldier pursued him, but broke through the ice and was drowning. How did Willems react?

He could have taken it as a sign from heaven: God was freeing him from his persecutor, just as He had saved Israel from Pharaoh by allowing them to cross through the Red Sea. But no, he didn't, because he knew his Master and His love. He turned around and rescued his pursuer. Willems was re-incarcerated and, despite the good word the soldier put in for him, was burned at the stake on May 16, 1569 in his hometown of Asperen.

This is true Christian warfare: sacrificing ourselves to be a pleasant fragrance for Christ. Certainly, it's not at all easy, which is what makes Christian life such a struggle. Any other form of war, violence, and political pressure to assert the church's interests—even dressed in Christian clothing—doesn't come from the Lamb of God. It comes from the great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, who wishes to destroy us all regardless of our beliefs. (It's important to note here that I'm not concerned with the need to protect a society through order and the sword, but with us Christians and our personal behavior, if we ourselves are denying the principles of the kingdom of heaven in the name of the faith). We won't defeat the devil's violence through more violence, but by breaking the literal vicious cycle and letting our Lord's love speak. Because, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" (Song 8:7a).

(MR0320/1068)

Racism and the Bible

The subject of racism is on everyone's lips. How should we deal with it from a Biblical perspective? An appeal.

Thomas Lieth

In the past few months, there have been repeated anti-racism demonstrations, some of which have been connected to violent riots by those allegedly opposed to racism. There were true instances of lawlessness, where monuments and inscriptions were vandalized and destroyed.

All of this destructive fury was and is conspicuously directed toward conservative, center-right, or right-wing personalities. It's downright ludicrous that a monument to Joseph Stalin was being erected by Marxist-Leninist groups in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, at the same time. Sit with that for a moment: Stalin, who was no better than Hitler. Stalin, a dictator and a racist who couldn't have been worse; a barbarian responsible for the deaths of millions. So far, it hasn't occurred to anyone to vandalize this eyesore, and it hardly caused any outcry in the media, either. Not that long ago, a monument to Karl Marx was unveiled in Trier (Germany) without fear of graffiti, let alone destruction. Think what you will about Karl Marx, he was hardly an impeccable Democrat. Many streets are named for radical left, socialist, anti-Semitic and communist people, who were no better in their ideas than those now accused of racism, whose memories are being smeared and destroyed. [Editor's note: The author lives in Europe, which is why he cites examples there rather than the USA.]

This raises questions, such as: Who actually creates the standard to judge who and what is racist? Who has the authority to decide which names should and shouldn't disappear from the collective consciousness? Aren't many of the people who have revolted against racism in the past months at least partially racist themselves? Isn't it racist and discriminatory to universally accuse the police and



armed forces of racism and right-wing extremism? With the same kind of generalization, couldn't the climate movement be accused of left-wing extremism, or Planned Parenthood as having racist ideas? Be that as it may, I want to shed light on this subject from a completely different perspective, using the Bible.

First, let's ask ourselves: Does the term "race" even appear in the Bible? And we have to realize that it doesn't. The Bible speaks of the God who created mankind as male and female, and of His creation. In the course of time, there were obviously different ethnic groups, but all of them come from the first human couple created by God (or later, after the Flood, from Noah and his family). This means that, yes, there are different ethnic groups, nations, and peoples, but not in the sense of separate races, since all people have common ancestors (Gen 1:27-28; 3:20; 9:1, 18-19).

Accordingly, it should be clear that there is no justification for racism in the Bible. Whenever Christians believed that they could use the Bible to justify excluding and discriminating against certain

Racism and the Bible

God's standard for making distinctions isn't origin, skin color, language, religion, gender, inclination, occupation, or party affiliation, but position in Christ Jesus.

people, they were never in harmony with the Holy Scriptures. And there's no doubt that much injustice has been committed in the name of Christianity. Think of the United States or South Africa, where people with Bibles in their hands oppressed black people in particular. At times, the Bible was even used to justify and legitimize slavery. But, it should be emphasized once again: People were taking the Bible out of context in these cases and behaving unbiblically, even though they were invoking the Bible.

In addition to the aforementioned passages from Genesis, Acts 17:24-26 can be cited. It says, "The God who made the world and everything in it... And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth..." It should therefore be clear that a Christian is never permitted to marginalize, discriminate against, or insult others. The Bible clearly calls every kind of racism and discrimination sin (Jam 2:8-9 i.a.). There is no justification for elevating oneself above people of another faith, origin, appearance, etc. Nor is there a right to revolt against someone who is a police officer, a Christian, a conservative, a soldier, a traditionalist, a rightist, or who is pale-faced. And, destroying a monument is a crime; whether it is the image of George Washington or Karl Marx makes no difference.

That brings me to another, very important point: Not only are all people equal regardless of race, but also in the following way: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God...And the way of peace have they not known...There is no fear of God before their eyes...for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:10ff.).

What remains is the knowledge that all are equal before God. Namely, all are equally bad, equally corrupt, and equally lost. And only in Jesus Christ

are all people equally good, equally justified, equally redeemed, and equally pardoned. Acts 10:34-35 reads as follows: "So Peter opened his mouth and said: 'Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.'"

God's standard for making distinctions isn't origin, skin color, language, religion, gender, inclination, occupation, or party affiliation, but position in Christ Jesus: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus...There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26-28).

In this respect, I'd like individuals to take to the streets and publicly kneel in repentance; to testify to the Bible, and to show people that it is only in Jesus Christ—incidentally, a Jew in His incarnation!—that there is no racism, but real peace and redemption. As long as only Confederate generals, Columbus and company are being pushed from their pedestals, nothing will change (and especially not if Marx and Stalin are being worshiped at the same time). And, avoiding racist language doesn't make anyone a better person, so long as our heart is filled with selfishness and we fight against divine truth. "Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things" (Rom 2:1).

It's crucial and pressing that we push our pride, our lovelessness, our self-righteousness and, above all, our ungodliness from the pedestal. May our faithful God and Lord grant that the eyes of many are opened, that people still convert and turn to Jesus Christ: In this sense, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." (Rom 1:16).

(MR0920/1100)

The First Love

An interpretation of the last book of the Bible.
Part 16. Revelation 2:4.



The greatest significance of a grain of wheat doesn't lie in itself, but in its death.

Wim Malgo (1922–1992)

“**N**evertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (Rev 2:4). Doubtlessly, you love Him, but which place does this love for Jesus hold in your life? In Ephesus, there were so many important things, and the same was true for the believers. Ephesus was a wealthy commercial city, a hub of the Orient offering many possibilities. Over time businesses, work, relationships, and leisure activities began to occupy first place. Are you in the process of granting first place to something other than Jesus, and losing the first love? The first love is nothing more than the willingness to suffer. Suffering is greater than works. The greatest significance of a grain of wheat doesn't lie in itself, but in its death. Therefore, “first love” means the willingness to actually share in death; i.e., the love that was exhibited on the Cross. Which place, then, does love for Jesus, the Crucified One, hold in your life?

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love,” says the Lord. So-called infrastructure can swallow up so much in our lives. So many banal things come first. An illustrative example of this is the Olympic Games. These few weeks cost billions of dollars each time. One journalist rightly called this bordering on ridiculous. The outlay was and is, in increasing measure, far too great in proportion to the result.

What is the relationship between actual first love for the Lord, and the effort in your daily life? Will you be completely absorbed by the day-to-day, by the

hustle and bustle, and your material thoughts? Does love for the Lord Jesus rank toward the bottom, or has it disappeared entirely? Because so many lose their first love, we haven't yet had a sweeping revival. There are millions of people in eternal damnation because first love for the Lord is no longer burning, because the children of God aren't ready to do the full will of God. Obedience toward the Lord and love for Him are inseparable. The magnitude of God's will in relation to His great love emanates from His own cry in Hosea 14:5: “I will love them freely.”

Your sphere of action has shrunk so much because you're not ready to do the Lord's will; because your first complete love doesn't belong to Him. He Himself said, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (John 14:21a).

Why did the Word of God penetrate the first Christians—the first church—so powerfully? Did God grant them a special awakening? No. God is always the One who blesses, always the One who grants life. But the first Christians didn't love themselves, their property, their money. Quite the opposite: they shared everything between themselves; they gave everything away. They did the will of God to the fullest extent—and the Gospel spread.

But through the loss of our first love, the will of God will no longer be accomplished on earth. The Lord Jesus prayed for its fulfillment: “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:10).

(MR0720/1093)



RIPENING TIMES #9

GLOBAL DEBT OPPRESSION PROPHESED – PART 1



What came first—money or debt? Most anthropologists claim that money came first. As mankind became more sophisticated and “advanced,” money was invented. So go their theories, further adding that mankind originally was comprised of “hunter gatherer societies” that had no use for money. Such views are not Biblical. What came first? Without a doubt, debt.

By **Wilfred Hahn**

While there is no Biblical record of Adam having either borrowed or lent money, it can nevertheless be said that everyone is born with an innate sense of debt. From the beginning, we owe our Creator (this being called primordial debt). Mankind naturally has a sense of what others may owe to them. We all keep a private register in our minds as to who owes what.

So, it is not surprising that Assyriologists (these being anthropologists that study ancient Middle Eastern history) discovered that complex credit/debt systems existed well before the invention of money.

The topic of debt imbalances is therefore an old one. Living in a world of Mammon—the world of Money—and given the ingrained human proclivity to pursue riches and money, the topic of debt is a crucial one. It plays a key role in the cosmological story of mankind. It is therefore also a key topic of Bible prophecy.

In this two-part series, we will lay out the case as to why debt is a “ripening sign” of prophetic significance.

New Concepts of Debt in the Modern Era

An astounding philosophy is sweeping the world at this time. Global policymakers have found reason to want worldwide debt to soar. Actually, they are actively urging governments, corporations, and households to increase debts all at the same time ... virtually without abandon. We would say that these policies are both desperate and risible, were it not for the coming tragic consequences and nefarious agendas.

We have many times written about the new wave of policymakers who are promoting what has been dubbed “Modern Monetary Theory” (MMT). It is gaining many adherents these days. (The most recent article on this topic was published in the October 2019 issue under the title, “Prophecy and Future Cash Flow: The World Economic Saga.”)

What is MMT? Actually, it is not a new idea nor a sophisticated one.

The biggest motivating idea behind MMT is that the more people spend and consume with debt (whether consumer, corporate, government), the stronger will be the economy, household earnings,

As the situation exists now, with global debt levels already at all-time highs, the world finds itself reliant (addicted) upon continued borrowed economic growth. Why? Because there really is no possibility of reversal.

and corporate profits. It is even suggested that debt issued by governments (and bought by the central bank with fiat money) can be permanent ... without harm and never to be repaid.

Anyone with a bit of common sense will see through the MMT gambit right away. The whole program requires massive issuance of new debt and massive increases in government deficits. Yes, in short, this is the new wisdom according to its promoters.

Will this tactic of pump-priming economic growth work? For one, say the experts, the funds being borrowed will have a powerful impact upon spending. Second, there is no need to worry about soaring debts these days, because interest rates are very, very low, and population growth is flagging worldwide.

The usual side-effect of such reckless policies is rising inflation (possibly explosively). However, here we are told that this is not a serious risk. Were there to be a virulent outbreak of inflation, we are assured that policymakers will be on guard.

However, we have reason to be skeptical. Many classical economists have warned just how deceitful and invasive is the nature of inflation. Its many manifestations are difficult to discern ... if at all. The venerated economist Ludwig von Mises warned that inflation has all kinds of pernicious effects. It is like a chameleon.

As it is, economists have overlooked some of the biggest inflationary trends of all time. Consider the steep rise in the cost of retirement in recent years. Very few policymakers have recognized this to be a pernicious form of inflation. Yet, the proponents of MMT confidently coo and coax that they can foresee and forewarn of its dangers.

Admittedly, we have grossly simplified the nuances of MMT. Economists are still trying to agree on its common definitions. Nevertheless, the alluring core of MMT's supposed new wisdom is that



high debts are not to be feared. Rather, they are beneficial ... serving as a sort of economic savior for mankind.

In the face of criticism, MMT promoters make the case that debt increases are only intended for a short period of time. The massive debt hikes are being pitched as “temporary.” This reminds of a quip by the late Milton Friedman—a very influential economist: “Nothing is so permanent as a temporary government program.” The second reason has already been mentioned. We should not be troubled, apparently, because we can rely on wise policymakers to be on guard against any future harm.

Why this rapid shift in thinking? “There is no alternative” (TINA).

Consider that at the start of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) 12 or so years ago, many economists were still of the opinion that debts must first decline before new economic recoveries could begin anew. That was the typical pattern observed in past centuries following financial crises. But, worryingly, this did not occur in the post-GFC period. Viewed on a worldwide scale, debt levels did not decline. So, what to do?

This predicament spurred policymakers to find a solution that we see today: The most politically en-



ting option to deal with problems is to defer them into the future. And so, debt is now soaring higher. Only little more than a decade after the GFC, a completely opposite view is now being sanctioned and recommended by eminent economists.

As the situation exists now, with global debt levels already at all-time highs, the world finds itself reliant (addicted) upon continued borrowed economic growth. Why? Because there really is no possibility of reversal. The solutions to do so are much too unpalatable for politicians to carry out. And so, the world has entered upon a path of no return. This alone suggests prophetic significance: Today, there exists a world with record amounts of debt that is on an irreversible trajectory. Its final impact can only be of Biblical proportions, which aligns with Bible prophecy.

Can the MMT promoters instill any confidence? Would blind faith in their statements be warranted? One only needs to look at the track record of policymakers and central bankers over recent decades to answer this question. Was it not just a decade or so ago that the great Global Financial Crisis (GFC)—which ushered in the greatest economic recession since the 1930s—was blamed primarily upon over-indebtedness and the incompetence of macro-economists? How then do macro-economists and the promotion of even higher debt deserve any credibility today?

This revisionism of policies that is now underway, reminds of a parallel situation: when Apostle Paul commented upon people's preference: "[...] they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they [...] shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

In a sense, the same is happening in the fields of public financial policy globally. People (including proverbial Wall Street) will favor any policy that slakes their desire for short-term profits, financial prosperity, and deferring problems to the future.

The economic lockdowns triggered by the massive, fear-driven hysterics surrounding the Covid-19 outbreak, grease the slide into even more debt.

Increases have literally mushroomed since Covid-19 came on the scene. Government fiscal deficits are blowing out, and central banks are expanding (inflating) their lending to levels no one would have imagined just a year ago.

According to estimates from S&P Global Ratings, total global outstanding debt—including that of governments, corporations and households—is to rise 10% to \$200 trillion, peaking at 265% of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2020 year-end.

Can amounts this large be imagined? It will continue to rise rapidly as policymakers rampage ahead with MMT actions.

Debt: Reaping What Is Sown

We must collectively ask the following question: What will be the consequences of all the above-mentioned debt actions? Remarkably, very few of the promoters of MMT seem to acknowledge any serious dangers. This could not be more misleading.

First, one must recognize that for every lender there is a borrower; for every creditor a debtor; for every buyer, a seller. If debts are rising in a credit-based system, then so must also wealth (whether paper-based or tangible). For every person becoming more indebted, some other party is increasing its wealth.

Ultimately, therefore, high debt levels also produce a skewed wealth distribution ... namely, the rich becoming richer. On the other hand, the poorer (those relatively poor) become more "captive" over time. These imbalances are already at extremes and will continue to widen. (See the articles in August and September 2019, entitled "Ripening Times: An End-time Wealth Explosion.")

Prophetic Significance of Debt

We ask: Are the enormous debt developments that we see in the world today, part of an end-time footprint ... a "ripening" of the times? We must answer carefully, as prophetic interpretation down through the centuries has tended to be influenced by recency. Prophecy interpreters would often read their present era into the Bible.

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Purely on the basis of simple logic, we have already concluded that the world's debt imbalances are of "Biblical proportions."

We will answer further: Based on the evidence, we are definitely convinced that mankind's dealings with debt and credit have a cosmic timeline that will play (and are playing) a critical role in the Last Days.

If so, how close is the world to facing the economic and financial upheavals prophesied for the Last Days? Here we must provide a cautionary answer.

We can have no way of knowing the world's exact position on this prophetic debt timeline. When mankind gives himself over to delusion, there is no telling just how severe and bizarre conditions might yet become. In addition: "[...] God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie" (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

The Cosmic Timeline of Global Indebtedness

Is our era's explosion in worldwide indebtedness of prophetic significance? We have said yes. However, we have yet to fully provide our reasoning.

To begin, we must recall a bit of history.

Living in our current pocket of time early in the 21st century, we may like to think that conditions of today have always existed. We might also believe that our current political economics are so much more enlightened that they were millennia ago. We therefore may imagine that that the credit and debt dynamics of today have always been that way. But to believe this would be wrong.

Crucially, the basic creditor/debtor philosophies that dominate the current world system originated in the Roman Era. Indeed, much of the world today is modeled on Roman-based systems and philosophies.

Creditor relations were very different before that time.

In the Roman system, the creditor tended to come out on top. Roman laws protected the lender. Debtors were systemically oppressed in favor of the creditor.



When debts rise to such high levels that households become trapped and economies begin to falter, little relief is provided to the borrower. Eventually, a perpetual poor class would form.

But, as mentioned, this state of affairs did not exist from time immemorial. Indebtedness was handled very differently in earlier times. Whenever debts became unsustainable or oppressive, a debt forgiveness (Jubilee) would be announced by the ruler.

This is a new finding of great significance. Amazingly, Assyriologists in recent decades have discovered that debt forgiveness (also called a Clean Slate Law, debt amnesty, or Jubilee) was a normal practice in many societies before the Roman Era. Accounts from ancient Babylonia Akkadia, Sumer Ur, and other Mid-East societies all mention debt jubilees.

This debt reduction policy, archaeologists have learned, was more the rule rather than the exception. This would not be the first time that a commonly held belief is discovered to be wrong thanks to new archaeological discoveries.

In Part II of this series, we will prove why it is the Roman-based financial system that will be judged. Its growing global oppression is a ripening sign of prophetic significance. (MC)



The Message of Jonah – Part 2

Dr. Ron J. Bigalke

Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) was a Christian missionary and founder of the China Inland Mission. When he was sailing to China to begin his missionary work, his ship was in dangerous proximity to the north of New Guinea.

The wind had ceased, and a four-knot current was carrying them rapidly toward sunken reefs. As they drifted nearer to the shore, they were alarmed to see the natives building multiple fires. The captain's hornbook informed him that the natives were cannibals. The crew had earlier released the long boat in an attempt to direct the ship from the shore. Everything they tried was to no avail. In his journal, Taylor recorded what occurred next (*Hudson Taylor in Early Years*, 2nd ed. [1911; reprint, London: China Inland Mission, 1923] 197-98).

After standing together on the deck for some time in silence, the captain said to me: "Well, we have done everything that can be done. We can only await the result."

A thought occurred to me, and I replied, "No, there is one thing we have not done yet."

"What is that?" he queried.

"Four of us on board are Christians. Let us each retire to our own cabin, and in agreed prayer ask the Lord to give us immediately a breeze. He can as easily send it now as at sunset."

Taylor prayed briefly and did not continue to beseech God, because he felt assured that the Lord would grant the appeal for Him to send wind. Certain that the answer was coming, Taylor ventured again on deck and asked the first officer to lower the sails.

“What would be the good of that?” he answered roughly. I told him we had been asking a wind from God; that it was coming immediately; and we were so near the reef by this time that there was not a minute to lose.

Within minutes, the wind did begin to blow, and it carried them safely past the reefs. Taylor wrote:

Thus God encouraged me ere landing on China’s shores, to bring every variety of need to Him in prayer, and to expect that He would honour the name of the Lord Jesus and give the help each emergency required.

God’s people should know that “our Father who is in heaven” is a loving, prayer-hearing and prayer-answering Lord. God can satisfy any need, and when praying to Him, His people have confidence that He will hear and answer. Jonah 2 is only one example of answered prayers. Not only did the prophet pray for deliverance from his distress, but also promised to worship once the Lord answered. Jonah’s prayer of thanksgiving—from a most unusual place—is a guide for praying to God in any circumstance, location, or for any reason.

The Need to Pray

The reality that Jonah could pray “to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish” (Jon 2:1), emphasizes the truth that the Lord is omnipresent (present everywhere) and one can pray to Him from anywhere (cf. Ps 139:7-12). There is no need to pray superstitiously from a particular location, nor should one assume that circumstances are so distressful that prayer is extraneous and needless. Jesus taught to pray “at all times” and “not to lose heart” (Luke 18:1). Similarly, Ephesians 6:18 exhorts, “pray at all times in the Spirit,” and 1 Thessalonians 5:17 encourages prayer “without ceasing.”

What is also noteworthy regarding prayer, is that people mistakenly believe that God only hears and answers those who are “good people,” and refuses those whose life is characterized by rebelliousness or weakness. Certainly, it is true that the heavens may “be bronze” (Deut 28:23; cf. Jer 14:11) for persistent failure to heed God’s Word, yet the Lord is gracious and compassionate toward anyone who will express humility toward Him. Jesus said, “In the same way,

I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10).

Proverbs 28:13 declares, “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.” Scripture also promises, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). God desires “truth in the innermost being” (Ps 51:6). Many people struggle to be transparent in their actions, especially when sin is involved. Consequently, God will often compel people to admit the consequences of sinful choices (something Jonah learned the difficult way).

While the sailors could not make Jonah pray in chapter 1, the fish was able to accomplish this in chapter 2. The Hebrew verb for “prayed” means “to intervene,” in the sense of intercessory prayer (Gen 20:7, 17; Numb 11:2; 21:7; Deut 9:20, 26; 1 Sam 2:25; 7:5; 12:23; Job 42:8; Jer 29:7). Being in “the stomach of the fish” was an entirely unexpected place to pray, yet Jonah expressed his thankfulness to God for preserving his life. Jonah did not regard his being swallowed by the fish as divine punishment; rather, he understood it to be divine deliverance from drowning.

Jonah’s distress was so intense that he felt he was in the depths of the grave (v. 2). There was no boasting in his prayer, for he knew God was his only means of deliverance. The first dynamic for that rescue was a renewed relationship with God. Interestingly enough, there may be a parallel between Jonah’s experience and that of Israel. For instance, Israel “has been cast into the sea of the Gentiles” as a consequence of “their failure as God’s witnesses in the earth.” Nevertheless, “despite all of their vicissitudes, the Lord has marvelously preserved them, and they are yet to become His testimony bearers to the whole world” (H. A. Ironside, *The Minor Prophets* [1904; reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004] 136).

Notice that Jonah did not blame the sailors for tossing him into the sea, nor did he fault the storm or the great fish. Jonah described his trouble with extremely personal expressions. He confessed that God cast him “into the deep” (v. 3), which was the

The Message of Jonah – Part 2

The climax of Jonah’s prayer of personal confession, faith, and hope was his affirmation: “Salvation is from the LORD.”



Lord’s domain: “Your breakers and billows” (v. 3). Jonah knew he needed to answer to God alone. People make great progress spiritually when they cease blaming others for their problems.

Jonah expressed a tremendous confession of faith in the midst of his desperate circumstance (v. 4). Jonah sought to flee “from the presence of the LORD” (1:3), and it appeared he was indeed expelled from God’s sight (2:4). He realized now how awful it is to be separated from the Lord’s presence. Jonah was engulfed by the deep (v. 5) and seemed to be in the grip of death, as opposed to God’s hold. Though human deliverance was hopeless, God was able to deliver Jonah “from the pit” (v. 6; cf. Ps 49:15; 56:13; 103:4). Even though a person has rebelled against God and is fleeing from His presence, it is still possible to pray in desperation and seek the Lord’s deliverance.

Jonah’s disobedience made his circumstances progressively worse. His downward journey began

when he “went down to Joppa” and “went down” into the ship (1:3), and then went “below into the hold of the ship” (v. 5). He eventually was plunged “into the deep” (2:3), which was as low as he could go, having “descended to the roots of the mountains” (v. 6a). His journey downward that began in chapter 1 was completed. Jonah would be there “forever” (v. 6b) unless God brought him “up . . . from the pit” (v. 6c).

Jonah “remembered the Lord” even as he “was fainting away” (Jon 2:7; cf. Ps 107:5-6; 142:3-7). Remembrance of God and His past works resulted in hope. Picturing God in His “holy temple,” Jonah prayed to the Lord and found Him listening. No matter how desperate a situation may appear, remember that failure to pray is to deprive oneself of any hope that God will bestow His grace.

Everyone who trusts in “vain idols” forsakes the Lord’s grace (Jon 2:8). “Vain idols” (literally “empty worthlessness” or “worthless vanities”) refers to anything that has greater precedence in one’s life than the worship due God (cf. Ps 31:6; 1 John 5:21). The expression concerns what is “vanities of emptiness” or “worthlessness of nothingness.” Unlike those who cling to what is worthless, Jonah promised to sacrifice to God “with the voice of thanksgiving” (Jon 2:9).

The climax of Jonah’s prayer of personal confession, faith, and hope was his affirmation: “Salvation is from the LORD.” Whether it is physical or spiritual, salvation is ultimately from God and only from Him (cf. Ps 3:8; 37:39). The prophet’s statement also recognizes that God has the power to save whomever He will. What is ironic is that it was God’s sovereign grace in salvation that angered Jonah.

In response to Jonah’s prayer, God commanded the great fish to vomit the prophet “onto the dry land” (Jon 2:10). The only creature that disobeys God is fallen humanity (cf. Isa 1:2-3). No matter how desperate one’s circumstances might be, it is crucial to know that God hears and answers prayer, and He alone can bring deliverance.

(1110)

The Prophet Jonah and the Coronavirus

Johannes Pflaum

What does the prophet Jonah have to do with the coronavirus? It's not as if there are any hidden hints of the coronavirus to be found in the Book of Jonah. Such an oracle or a "reading between the lines" has nothing to do with a serious interpretation of Scripture. It's about our own lives.

While reading the book of Jonah, what moved me in regard to the coronavirus is the end of the story in chapter 4. In it, we find a prophet who is vexed about God's absent judgment on Nineveh. And that's not all. At the same time, his own wellbeing was more important than the deliverance of more than 120,000 inhabitants of that city. So first, he built himself a shelter—a form of "social distance," where he could view the coming judgment from a safe spot. In self-imposed quarantine under its shadow, he was able to feel better than under the scorching Assyrian sun. And then God even caused a castor oil plant with large leaves to grow, so the prophet had even more shade. There in his comfortable oasis, his emotional temperature rose from frosty to well-tempered on the spot. While

Jonah felt completely at ease and spiritually far enough away from the Gentiles in Nineveh, he kept waiting for God's judgment. But fire didn't rain down on Nineveh. Instead, the sun burned the prophet's head with all its power after God withered the shady tree with an oppressive east wind. Despite the high external temperature, the prophet's emotional temperature again sank suddenly into frosty territory. Even worse, after Jonah's comfortable oasis was destroyed and he felt the heat without protection, he became angry and wished that he would die. He was more concerned with the withered tree and his own well-being than with saving the people of Nineveh.

Currently, the coronavirus has suddenly changed a lot in our affluent Western nations. The advanced medicine we're so grateful for hasn't yet offered a

The Prophet Jonah and the Coronavirus

Are we praying that people will be saved through the uncertainty and fear of the coronavirus situation? Or are we just praying that everything will get back to normal for us as quickly as possible?



panacea for Covid-19. This can be very distressing to people who are affected, and can even lead to death. But we haven't just become aware of the fragility of health and life. The economic impact of the coronavirus measures shows the vulnerability of our prosperity, which we had believed to be safe. Formerly taken for granted, freedom of assembly for the church of Jesus collapsed overnight. Due to the current situation, we ourselves are in danger of becoming ill-tempered. In the face of possibly losing our own "shady castor oil tree," we begin to grumble like Jonah at Nineveh.

What did God want to teach Jonah by withering the tree? Jonah was more concerned with his own well-being than God's concern for the lost. He was angry about the loss of his comfortable oasis, whose creation he owed solely to the undeserved kindness of God. And what about us?

Haven't the lost people around us faded into the distance, because of our prosperity and decades of religious freedom? We're occasionally concerned for them, but overall, our primary concern is ourselves and our own well-being. Has increasing ungodliness led us to pray for grace in salvation for people ahead of God's coming judgment? Or do we wish for God's judgment upon them, so that we can otherwise devote ourselves to our self-satisfied "oasis existence"?

What about the persecuted and suffering church of Jesus? Of course, comparing them to Nineveh's inhabitants would be extremely strange. Rather, it's more about our bubble of well-being that's now be-

ginning to burst, the seeming "shaded existence" that's threatening to disappear. We may have prayed for oppressed Christians occasionally. But were their difficult circumstances really ever a constant concern for us? And then there are the many forgotten war and disaster zones around our globe. We're occasionally touched and shocked by such reports, but we turn back to our self-satisfied "castor care" very quickly. Are we praying that people will be saved through the uncertainty and fear of the coronavirus situation? Or are we just praying that everything will get back to normal for us as quickly as possible?

When God let Jonah's comfortable oasis wither, it allowed the prophet's gaze to be redirected to God's concern for and mercy toward lost people. Let's consider the situation with the coronavirus in this context. Our deceptive world of wellbeing and "shaded existence"—being accustomed to prosperity—is suddenly beginning to wither. This should make the Lord Jesus' concerns also become ours again, bringing us out of the isolation of our preoccupation with ourselves. Instead of talking smugly about the coming judgment, let's do everything we can to see that people are saved. Hudson Taylor once emphasized the importance of the Great Commission in Matthew 28, by calling it the "last command of the risen One."

The book of Jonah ends with God's speech. We can assume that Jonah had to cope with his Lord's words and actions. His place in the sun probably helped him to see things in the right light again. In the end, the fiery heat of the east wind probably kindled a new burning love for the lost in his heart. The people of Nineveh had repented. It took more than another 150 years before the following generations finally fell under God's judgment, due to their renewed godlessness. If we watch the signs of the times carefully, it seems that we don't have much time left. Everything indicates that Jesus will return soon. Therefore, let's learn the "Jonah Lesson" that God's Word is teaching us.

(MR1020/1115)

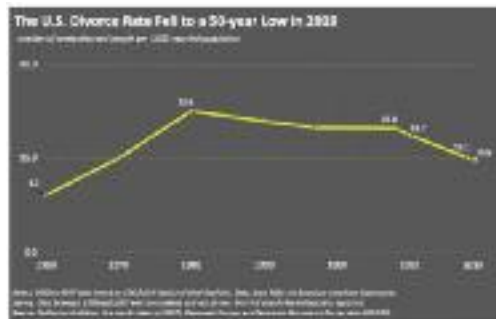


WORLD FOCUS



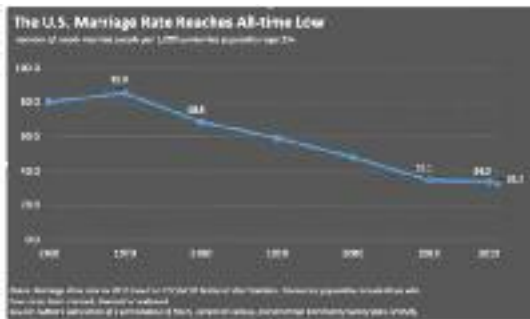
Divorce Rate Lowest in 50 Years

Divorce in America has been falling fast in recent years, and it just hit a record low in 2019. For every 1,000 marriages in the last year, only 14.9 ended in divorce, according to the newly released American Community Survey data from the Census Bureau.



be more stable, and their children will be more likely to grow up with two married parents, which provides them the best chance for success later in life.

Even so, fewer Americans are married today to reap the many benefits associated with marriage. Another piece of news coming out of the new Census data is that the U.S. marriage rate just hit an all-time low in 2019. For every 1,000 unmarried adults in 2019, only 33 got married. This number was 35 a decade ago in 2010 and 86 in 1970.



This is the lowest rate we have seen in 50 years. It is even slightly lower than 1970, when 15 marriages ended in divorce per 1,000 marriages.

A lower divorce rate means longer marriages. According to the new Census data, the median duration of current marriages in the U.S. has increased almost one year in the recent decade, from 19 years in 2010 to 19.8 years in 2019.

The drop in the divorce rate is likely to continue in 2020, despite the pandemic. When COVID-19 hit America in March, early signs suggested that the pandemic may have expedited divorces because of lockdown-related stress. However, new survey data finds that the pandemic has actually brought some couples closer together.

This is great news for Americans who are married. It means that their marriages will likely

What's worse, all signs point to a continuing downward trend for new marriages. On top of the already record high share of never-married adults, Americans are postponing their marriage plans because of the pandemic.

This sobering news about marriage puts a damper on our hope for the future of American families. With the rates of both divorce and marriage dropping in America, we expect to see the marriage divide deepen and poor and working-class Americans increasingly disconnected from the institution of marriage. The impact of this disconnection on our family lives can be destructive, which makes it an issue that policymakers, community leaders, and scholars should continue to pay attention to.

-ifstudies.org, 10 November 2020

Commentary: There are increasingly multiple reasons given for divorce. The decline is good news, but as the article indicates, it's only partially true.

From 1 Timothy 4, we learn that there will be apostasy, "some shall depart from the faith." There will be "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." And then in verse 3 we read: "Forbidding to marry..." That definitely fits our time; marriage is on the way out.

What about divorce? Here are the words of Jesus: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto

him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:5-9).




7385
(See *What Does the Bible Say About Marriage?* Item #1076, \$2.50.)

 GERMANY

BioNTech Nears Coronavirus Vaccine

Biontech and Pfizer have announced that they are on the brink of emergency-use approval for a coronavirus vaccine. The scientists responsible, Ugur Sahin and Özlem Türeci, are from Germany.

 In mid-November BioNTech and its US partner, Pfizer, plan to apply for emergency-use approval in the US. The data released by the pharma companies indicate that the vaccine is 90% effective in creating immunity to the coronavirus. If these results stand, this would put the companies well ahead in the race for a vaccine.

The European Medicines Agency initiated the approval process for the coronavirus vaccine from BioNTech and Pfizer in early October. The vaccine is currently being tested in a study involving tens of thousands of participants, according to the EMA. In order to speed up the process, interim results are constantly reviewed until there are sufficient findings to make a decision on approval.

Back in January, when the coronavirus was raging in China and hardly anyone in Germany was seriously worried about a pandemic, BioNTech CEO Ugur Sahin and chief medical officer Özlem Türeci, who are married, focused their research on a vaccine against the coronavirus. By spring, they had launched phase 1/2 trials.

Sahin and Türeci use the human body's ability to defend itself from bacteria and viruses. They aim to develop an immunotherapy that stimulates the self-healing mechanisms and triggers the body's own "internal police force" to render malignant tumors harmless.

Born in Turkey, Sahin was 4 when he and his mother moved to Cologne to join his father, who worked for the Ford company. After graduating from high school, he studied medicine



at the University of Cologne. "I was interested in immunotherapy," said Sahin, who is 54. He added that he is interested in how the immune system works and how it can be trained to identify and attack cancer cells.

A lecturer at the University of Mainz, Türeci is considered a pioneer in cancer immunotherapy. "Influenced by my father, who worked as a doctor, I could not imagine any other profession even when I was a young girl," Türeci told the online website wissenschaftsjahr.de. "My father's practice was in the family home. When we were kids we would play among the patients. There was no strict separation between work and life in our home."

By the time Türeci and Sahin married in 2002, he was already working at the University Medical Center Mainz. Even on their wedding day, Sahin spent some time in the lab—both before the couple went to the registry office and again afterward.

More than 1,300 people from over 60 countries currently work at BioNTech, and more than half of them are women. In October, the German biotech firm debuted on the US's Nasdaq exchange for technology stocks. The company has grown steadily through acquisitions.

-www.dw.com/en, 9 November 2020

Commentary: Two Turkish/Muslim immigrants have attained the praise of the scientific/medical field worldwide. Doubtless, many others will follow, producing successful research showing how to attack and defeat coronavirus.

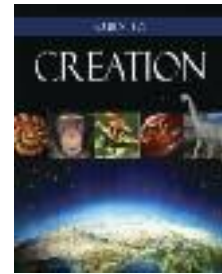
What's most interesting in this article is the multiplicity of nations involved. These

two Turkish scientists, now German citizens, are developing coronavirus vaccines for BioNTech, a partner of Pfizer USA. But that's not all; the article shows that over 1,300 people from some 60 countries are working for the German pharma company BioNTech.

This is further confirmation of the continuous, progressive globalization of planet earth. Nationality is not an issue, nor is religion or culture. Coronavirus is the adhesive that binds the nations of the world together. This type of super success will, in the end,

turn man against God the Creator: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" (Psalm 2:1). 7384

(See *Guide to Creation*, Item #2310, \$19.99.)



 ISRAEL

Innovation Startup Nation

Israel has truly earned its title of the "Start Up Nation." The Israeli innovation ecosystem has given birth to a unique environment, within which the Israeli entrepreneur flourishes and thrives.

 In 2019, Israeli exits were worth a staggering total of \$21.7 billion and high tech exports from Israel were worth \$46 billion—that's in one year alone! Mobileye—acquired by Intel for \$15.3 billion. Soda Stream—acquired by PepsiCo for \$3.2 billion. Wix—raised \$7.1 billion in its IPO. And this is just the tip of a very large iceberg.

Israeli startups are addressing pressing worldwide problems in fields as diverse as medical, Proptech and Contech engineering, Agritech, Foodtech and Fintech, with new solutions cropping up every day.

"Eighty Israeli companies have been launched in 2020 alone to work on solutions

(continued next page)

ASIA

World's Biggest Trade Bloc Formed

Fifteen Asia-Pacific economies formed the world's largest free trade bloc, a China-backed deal that excludes the United States, which had left a rival Asia-Pacific grouping under President Donald Trump.

 The signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) at a regional summit in Hanoi, is a further blow to the group pushed by former U.S. president Barack Obama, which his successor Trump exited in 2017.

Amid questions over Washington's engagement in Asia, RCEP may cement China's position more firmly as an economic partner with Southeast Asia, Japan and Korea, putting the world's second-biggest economy in a better position to shape the region's trade rules.

The deal was signed on the sidelines of an on-line ASEAN summit held as Asian leaders address

tensions in the South China Sea and tackle plans for a post-pandemic economic recovery in a region where U.S.-China rivalry has been rising.

In an unusual ceremony, held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic, leaders of RCEP countries took turns standing behind their trade ministers who, one by one, signed copies of the agreement, which they then showed triumphantly to the cameras.

RCEP will account for 30% of the global economy, 30% of the global population and reach 2.2 billion consumers, Vietnam said.

RCEP "will help reduce or remove tariffs on industrial and agricultural products and set out rules for data transmission," said Luong Hoang Thai, head of the Multilateral Trade Policy Department at Vietnam's Ministry of Industry and Trade.

-www.reuters.com, 14 November 2020

Commentary: China is considered the second largest economy in the world. Chinese sources reveal that they are number one already—and, we must add, they are significantly growing year by year.

Reuters, from its Zurich office, writes: "The number of rich Chinese has surpassed the count of wealthy Americans for the first time as both countries keep churning out millionaires, a study by Credit Suisse showed."

Interestingly, communist China is superseding all other nations when it comes to creating millionaires. Will that last? One thing is clear: Asia in the East will rise at a faster pace than America in the West. In between these two power structures lies Europe, which has not yet lived up to its full potential. Presently, the 27 member nations of the EU could increase to over 40 in the not-too-distant future.

What does it mean biblically? Unity at all costs. That's the only way the nations can avoid military conflicts on the one hand, and on the other, to create a world we read of in Genesis 11:4: "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." 7390

(See Exposing Mystery Babylon Part 1, Item #1078, \$4.50)

Startup (continued from page 24)

to COVID-19-related issues," explains Investination's CEO Oded Eliashiv. "That's the largest cluster of COVID-19-relevant companies from any one country in the world. It is the agility and ability of the tech entrepreneurs in Israel to pivot, to adjust and to be able to address a problem such as the pandemic in zero time, swiftly capitalizing on the opportunities in hand."

The disruption caused by Covid-19 reveals a need for a tokenization platform such as SolidBlock. SolidBlock enables investors to build a personal portfolio by choosing each investment, as well as to diversify and de-risk via lower minimum investment amounts. SolidBlock also improves the efficiency of fundraising by making real estate as liquid and tradable as stocks and by saving intermediaries' costs. These practices become ever more important in current tumultuous times.

According to the Global Real Estate Transparency Index, 2020 Transparency, Digitization,

Decarbonization, industry leaders feel that the COVID-19 pandemic could help to fast-track digitization and stimulate innovation in the use of technology. Certainly, the pandemic has highlighted the need for accurate, real-time tracking of activity on construction sites.

Despite Covid-19 posing many challenges for the global economy, 2021 is anticipated to be a record breaking year for Israeli innovation and we anticipate seeing more of the world's leading corporations integrating Israeli technology on a massive scale.

-www.jpost.com, 11 November 2020

Commentary: Experts have little to no doubt that Covid-19 is indeed a game changer for the world. For Israel, it's a plus point, as they indeed have earned the title "Startup Nation."

Covid-19 is a pandemic where no nation is exempt. Israel has led the world in

finding solutions, launching 80 companies related to Covid in 2020.

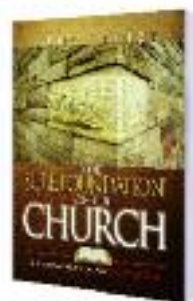
Doubtless, Israel's success is envied by those who have not reached their level, which in turn leads to an increase in anti-Semitism globally.

Our interest lies on the spiritual level. One day, Israel will experience—on the national level—what occurred almost 2,000 years ago on the local level: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem

greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

7386

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



USA

Micro-Robots in Your Veins

Scientists have created an army of microscopic four-legged robots too small to see with the naked eye that walk when stimulated by a laser and could be injected into the body through hypodermic needles, a study said.

The robots described in the journal *Nature* are less than 0.1 millimeter wide—around the width of a human hair—and have four legs that are powered by on-board solar cells.

By shooting laser light into these solar cells, researchers were able to trigger the legs to move, causing the robot to walk around.

“Fifty years of shrinking down electronics has led to some remarkably tiny technologies: you can build sensors, computers, memory, all in very small spaces, said the study’s co-author Marc Miskin. “But, if you want a robot, you need actuators, parts that move.”

“The next step is to build sophisticated circuitry: can we build robots that sense their environment and respond? How about tiny



The robots, seen here in a computer generated image, are around the width of a human hair © Christoph Hohmann

programmable machines? Can we make them able to run without human intervention?”

Researchers said that they were able to produce the components for the robots in parallel, meaning they could make more than one million of them in each four-inch wafer of silicon.

In a commentary also published in *Nature*, Allan Brooks and Michael Strano of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology said the concept of robots small enough to travel through blood vessels had been around since Nobel laureate Richard Feynman talked about the potential to “swallow the surgeon” in 1959.

“The authors’ robots, although not autonomous in their current form, can be seen as a platform to which ‘brains’ and a battery can be

attached,” they said, predicting the “hurdle of developing autonomous programmability for micro-robots will soon be overcome.”

-news.yahoo.com, 26 August 2020

Commentary: We may headline this and many other articles in the category: total dependence. That means man will find it difficult to exist outside the technological advancements, which seem to overtake each other almost on a daily basis. Needless to say, this could be very beneficial. These micro-robots could clean arteries, stimulate heartbeats, and regulate blood pressure. Frankly, very few would oppose such developments.

However, our question is: where will it lead? There is no end in sight to technological inventions. Realizing that this planet is dominated by the god of this world, we know his intention: to cause all people to be like-minded—thus avoiding conflicts, which often lead to war. Therefore, one can almost sense that in the not-too-distant future, the imitation of Christ will reveal himself in the flesh; namely, Antichrist.

7328

(See *Who Is the Antichrist?* Item #2254, \$13.99.)

ISRAEL

‘Mobileye of Social Distance’

As part of the coronavirus purple ribbon limitations, a group of entrepreneurs, including veterans of the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit and experts from Sourasky Medical Center’s Ichilov Hospital, has developed and patented a personal device that helps to maintain a social distance of 2 meters.



When one wears the Myzone device it serves as a living reminder of the importance of maintaining social distance. (photo credit: Courtesy)

After nine months of feverish work, the development team has created an efficient, convenient-to-use device that is suitable for anyone of any age.

The laser beam marks an arc on the ground and reminds those around it to keep their distance.

“The goal is to create a standard that can be applied in every multi-participant social gathering—shopping centers, schools, music performances, demonstrations and fairs. It’s the Mobileye of social distancing,” said Guy Dekel, one of the Myzone developers.

The Myzone device was tested for the first time at the Rabin Square commemoration rally to mark the 25th anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin’s assassination, and it allowed the rally organizers to help ensure that each participant had enough space around him.

-www.jpost.com, 11 November 2020

Commentary: Coronavirus has greatly contributed toward more information being accessible to various organizations and government entities.

How important is this? It guarantees a relatively accurate way to keep distance in public. But we think it is much more than that; namely, another chance to surveil individuals—the more the better.

A recent report by the BBC indicates that every British citizen is being recorded dozens, even hundreds of times each day. That too is



on the road toward the goal: researching and gathering information about every person on planet earth.


7394

(See *It Could Happen Tomorrow*, Item #2271, \$12.99.)

WORLD

Will All Languages Be Romanized?

Tajiki Persian and the Altaic languages of Central Asia suffered from the U-turns of Soviet linguistic policy, and have been written with several different scripts in less than a century.

 After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey proposed a shared Roman alphabet, but each newly independent country followed its own path to affirm its identity and sovereignty. This April Kazakhstan's president announced the adoption of the Roman alphabet by 2025.

India is unique in having two official writing systems at federal level—the Roman alphabet and Nagari—and 12 across its 36 states and territories. Anglo-Indian, using the Roman alphabet and viewed as more neutral than Hindi, is the shared language of the elite, but Nagari script, aggressively promoted by some Hindu nationalists, retains an important role as a marker of identity. Writing systems and religions do not necessarily coincide: the mostly Hindu Tamils of Sri Lanka differentiate themselves from the Buddhist Sinhalese, while Hindu West Bengal and Muslim Bangladesh use the same Bengali script. West Pakistan's attempt to impose Arabic script was a cause of Bangladesh's secession in 1971.

-mondediplo.com

Commentary: Will there be a unified language? Most likely not, because computer-based language recognition and translation are becoming more and more accurate. Nevertheless, the news media needs a more unified approach to report on events around the globe. There, the Romanized alphabet leads the way.

Here we are reminded of when Rome requested a census of its population just before Jesus was born. Communicating with the Roman alphabet seems to cast a shadow for the second coming of the Lord.


7391

(See *When?* Item #2340, \$24.95.)

 **CHINA**

'One Day Everyone Will Use China's Digital Currency'

Chandler Guo was a pioneer in cryptocurrency, the digital currencies that can be created and used independently of national central banks and governments.

 In 2014 he set up an operation to produce one of those currencies, Bitcoin, in a secret location in western China.

At its peak his machines were capable of mining 30% of the world's Bitcoin. He believed Bitcoin would one day change the world and replace the dollar.

But now he sees a new force emerging—a payment system created by the Chinese state and known as Digital Currency Electronic Payment (DCEP).

It's really a digital version of China's official currency, the yuan, and Mr Guo feels DCEP will become the dominant global currency. "One day everyone in the world will be using DCEP," he says.

China's digital payment systems are widely seen as the most advanced in the world.

The country is on the verge of becoming a cashless society. In 2019, four out of every five payments in China were made through either Tencent's WeChat Pay or Alibaba's Alipay.

"America is the leader of the global financial system. But they don't have the motivation like China to make the change [to a digital currency]," says an anonymous Chinese cryptocurrency observer known as Bitfool.

Many Bitcoin enthusiasts fear that DCEP will be used as a tool by the Chinese Communist Party to exert greater control over their citizens through surveillance. The authorities will be able to monitor how money is spent in real time. They will also have the same controls over DCEP as with the yuan.

The yuan is tightly controlled by Beijing and its exchange rate is the source of much tension between the US and China. The US accuses China of keeping the yuan weak to benefit its economy.



The new digital yuan will be controlled by the People's Bank of China



Chandler Guo at one of his cryptocurrency mines

"DCEP is the antithesis of Bitcoin. The ultimate goal of a cryptocurrency is the separation of money and state," says Stewart Mackenzie, a cryptocurrency expert based in Hong Kong. "It's easy for them to say that it's like Bitcoin when it's worlds apart."

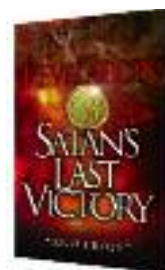
-www.bbc.com, 25 September 2020

Commentary: The fact that local currencies do not have a future is confirmed in Scripture. Revelation 13:17 reads: "And 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." That is the ultimate currency, and this license to buy or sell is closely connected to the worship of the image of the beast, as documented in verse 15: "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

7353

(See *Revelation 13: Satan's Last Victory*, Item #1067, CLEARANCE


\$3.)



+ SWITZERLAND

\$25 an Hour Minimum Wage

The Swiss city of Geneva is to introduce a minimum wage of 23 Swiss francs (\$25) an hour, equal to roughly 3,772 Swiss francs (\$4,100) a month for a 41-hour working week.

 Nearly two-thirds of the canton of Geneva voted in favor of introducing the minimum wage, which is reported to be the highest in the world.

Geneva is known as one of the most expensive cities in the world and ranked ninth on HR consulting firm Mercer's 2020 global cost of living survey.

Michel Charrat, president of the Groupe-ment transfrontalier européen, told the *Guardian* that the vote to pass the measure represented a "mark of solidarity" with Geneva's poorer residents.

"Covid has shown that a certain section of the Swiss population cannot live in Geneva," he said.

Geneva's new minimum wage is more than triple that in the U.S., at \$7.25 per hour and more than double the U.K.'s highest basic hourly rate of £8.72 (\$11.20).

-www.cnn.com, 1 October 2020

Commentary: Outside Israel, Switzerland can be categorized as an exceptional country. This landlocked, mountainous country is fiercely independent, as evidenced by their neutrality. The last war they fought was in 1847—a civil war.

Interestingly, this high-cost and high-wage country has no problem selling their products. Exports stand at \$313.5 billion, and imports \$264.5 billion.

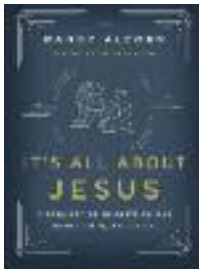
Another very unique attribute of Switzerland is foreign visitors. Per 1,000 in population, 1,359 foreign visitors are registered. There is more: the 10% lowest income of its population consumes 7.5% of



Geneva.Allan Baxter | Getty Images

the national GDP, while the highest 10% consumes 19%. By comparison, in the USA, the lowest consumes 2%, and the highest 30%.

Switzerland is the envy of the world. Nevertheless, the end will be the same. Second Peter 3:12 declares: "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" Then the warning for us believers: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (verse 14). 7357




(See *It's All About Jesus*, Item #2369, \$18.99.)

WORLD

Post-Corona World Order

There have been a handful of key events over the last century that fundamentally altered the world order: World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the Fall of the Iron Curtain, September 11.

 Each of those events triggered changes that altered the world, creating new situations whereby the world everyone returned to after the formative event was not like the world they knew before it.



Passengers, including Russian citizens, who are evacuated by train to Russia after Ukrainian authorities shut the country's borders amid the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), queue outside the Central Railway Station in Kiev, Ukraine (photo credit: REUTERS/GLEB GARANICH)

"Everything will be different," Amos Yadlin, head of Tel Aviv's Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), said during an online panel on the world order after corona his think tank hosted. "How different, and in what directions, we don't exactly know. But what was is not what will be. We will return to a different world, where the corona impact will be on everything."

In trying to judge how the world order will change, it is worth noting, as political philosophy professor and former education minister Yuli Tamir pointed out, that in the face of the crisis, states around the world did the most instinctive thing possible: They closed their borders and said they needed to deal with their own problems.

-www.jpost.com, 30 March 2020

Commentary: Indeed, borders were closed, and nations were categorized in many cases between red and green countries: red lacking controls, and green meaning excellent control over Covid-19. Borders will again open, yet next time more stringent measures will be implemented by the respective health authorities. That simply means additional information will be gathered from each traveling person. When the next pandemic breaks out, travelers from certain hotspot countries will be quickly identified and denied entry.

(continued next page)

Post-Corona *(continued from page 28)*

What next? All countries will have to correspond to some type of international law, similar to the airline industry. The leading authority, the International Air Transportation Association (IATA), was founded on 19 April 1945 in Havana, Cuba, and is presently headquartered in Montreal, Canada. It has a membership of 120 countries and 290 airlines. In its 75 years of existence, noticeable changes have transpired. In previous years, baggage security was virtually non-existent; today, suitcases are x-rayed and often carefully searched, while the passenger must subject himself to full-body scan. That was unthinkable just 50 years ago. Now it has become routine, and the success rather amazing. Wikipedia lists hijack incidents globally in 1993 as 50, decreasing to 7 in 2003. The last listed hijack was Bangladesh Airlines Flight 147 on 24 February 2019. This proves that regulation and security implementation work rather

well, and are just another step toward cementing total control in the not-too-distant future. 7342

(See *The Non-Prophet's Guide to the End Times*, Item #2353, \$16.99.)



UK
Gene-Edited Animals to Boost Food Production

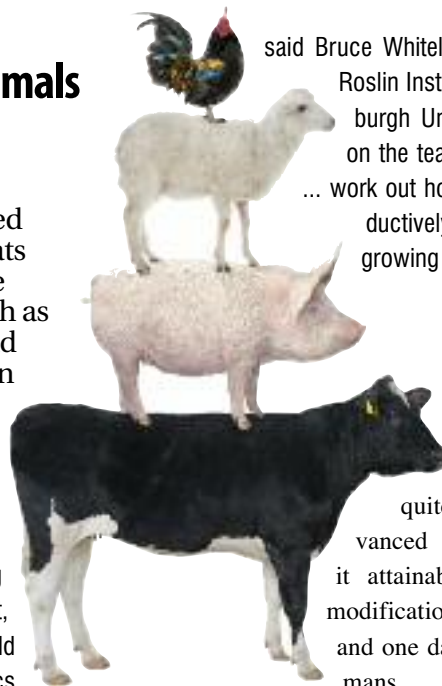
Scientists have created gene-edited pigs, goats and cattle to produce sperm with traits such as disease resistance and higher meat quality in what they say is a step towards genetically enhancing livestock to improve food production.

Yet gene-editing has long been a contentious subject, and the latest advance could face resistance from critics opposed to the genetic modification of animals, which they regard as dangerous tampering with nature.

The researchers stressed that the gene-editing process they used was designed only to bring about changes within an animal species that could occur naturally.

This research was a “proof of concept,” they said, and showed that the technique could work. Current regulations, however, mean that gene-edited surrogate sires could not be used in the food chain anywhere in the world, even though their offspring would not be gene-edited, the researchers added.

Reproductive biologist Jon Oatley’s team used CRISPR-Cas9 to knock out a gene specific to male fertility in the animal embryos that would be raised to become the surrogate sires. The male animals were then born sterile, but began producing sperm after researchers transplanted stem cells from donor animals into their testes. “This shows the world that this technology is real. It can be used,”



said Bruce Whitelaw, an expert at the Roslin Institute at Britain’s Edinburgh University who worked on the team. “We now have to ... work out how best to use it productively to help feed our growing population.”

-news.trust.org,
14 September 2020

Commentary: “Tampering with nature” has become quite popular, and advanced science has made it attainable. Thus, “genetic modification” will continue and one day be applied to humans.

We read at the beginning of the article, “Scientists have created...” Actually, there is no such thing when we view it from Scripture. Real creation is the result of the spoken word. John 1:3 proclaims: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

But the tendency is clearly revealed: mankind will never cease to invent things, which on the surface are very helpful for society. Yet viewed from Scripture, we recognize the hidden desire—man wants to be God. He desires to “create.”

Already at the beginning, in Genesis 11 we read of the people planning to build a tower, “whose top may reach unto heaven.” That is the same spirit dominating planet earth today. In the Tower of Babel case, God made this statement:

“and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do” (verse 6b). 7344

(See *New Babylon Rising*, Item #2359, \$16.99.)



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“Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid” (Jeremiah 30:10).

BY ARNO FROESE

The Gathering of the Seed of Israel

It was almost 140 years ago, when in 1888 approximately 35,000 Jews arrived at the Port of Jaffa. The majority of the immigrants came from Eastern Europe, and a small number from Yemen. The first Aliyah was defined as “the political, national, and spiritual resurrection of the Jewish people in Palestine.”

During the first few years after the arrival of this first wave, almost half of them returned (left the country).

In the second Aliyah, some 40,000 Jews, mainly from Russia and Eastern European countries, came. Most of them were young people inspired by socialist ideas; thus, they established communal agricultural settlements called “kibbutzim,” after the Russian “kolkhoz.” In 1909, Kibbutz Degania was established.

During the third Aliyah, again some 40,000 Jews arrived, primarily from Russia. That was between 1919 and 1923.

The fourth Aliyah, from 1924 to 1929, brought some 82,000 Jews, mainly Polish.

The fifth Aliyah, between 1929 and 1939, saw almost a quarter of a million Jews arrive in the Promised Land.

Aliyah Bet, from 1939 to 1948, was greatly hindered by the British issuance of the White Paper, which permitted only a very limited number of Jews—75,000—to migrate to their ancestral land.

At the proclamation of the State of Israel, the population stood at about 600,000. Today, Israel’s population is approaching 9 million.

Why did the Jews come to the land Eretz Israel, after almost two millennia? The answer is simple: fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

When we read the very comforting words of God to the people of Israel, we notice that the last part is not yet fulfilled: “and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.”

Today, Israel has many reasons to be afraid. In the south, Hamas rules Gaza and has sworn not to rest until Israel is destroyed. In the north, particularly in the land of Lebanon, Hezbollah is the largest non-governmental military force anywhere to be found. Hezbollah’s ideology can be summarized as “Shi’ite radicalism.”

Wikipedia has this to say about Hezbollah:

In a 1999 interview, Nasrallah outlined the group's three "minimal demand[s]: an [Israeli] withdrawal from South Lebanon and the Western Beqaa Valley, a withdrawal from the Golan, and the return of the Palestinian refugees." An additional objective is the freeing of prisoners held in Israeli jails, some of whom have been imprisoned for eighteen years.

"Our goal is to liberate the 1948 borders of Palestine ... The Jews who survive this war of liberation can go back to Germany or wherever they came from." He added, however, that the Jews who lived in Palestine before 1948 will be "allowed to live as a minority and they will be cared for by the Muslim majority."

Again, nothing will change the fulfillment of the prophetic Word. The time will come when Jacob shall be at rest and quiet.

UN Resolutions

The UN has become famous, or better yet, infamous, for lopsided condemnation of Israel. UNwatch.org/2019 reports:

In the current 74th session of the UN General Assembly (2019-2020), all EU member states

voted for one resolution each to criticize (1) Iran, (2) Syria, (3) North Korea, (4) Myanmar, and (5) the U.S., for its embargo on Cuba, and two resolutions on Crimea.

By contrast, EU states voted for 13 out of 18 resolutions singling out Israel. Yet these same EU states failed to introduce a single UNGA resolution on the human rights situation in China, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Belarus, Cuba, Turkey, Pakistan, Vietnam, Algeria, or on 175 other countries.

Israel indeed is singled out, but it's important to emphasize, by God Himself. Jeremiah in the same chapter writes about the Great Tribulation: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it" (verse 7). Note carefully the words, "he shall be saved out of it." That is Israel's hope; that is Israel's future. Along with Israel, the Church of Jesus Christ cannot be conquered; it cannot be annihilated. The Church Jesus is building will be prayerfully completed in the not-too-distant future. That will be the time when we shall be raptured from planet earth to be with our Lord forever and ever. (MC)



MIDNIGHT CALL

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 GERMANY



Glad News in the Darkness of This World

The gospel changes lives. Testimonies from service among Arabic-speaking people worldwide.

BY ELIA MORISE

Three weeks after I replied to a brother's request from prison, I received the good news that my mail had reached him safely. The package contained CDs and various Arabic-language literature, as he had requested. The brother writes:

"I was very happy to receive mail from you! It was like cool water for my thirsty soul. But another reason for happiness is that I've never received any of my mail in

its entirety before. Three months ago, two packages addressed to me were returned instead of given to me. It really made me sad. But your package and letter reaching me is a miracle of God; also the fact that it was in its original packaging. You asked in your letter whether I could learn German in prison. To be honest, life in prison is very hard, and there's no motivation to do something like that. But it's a good idea, and I'll try. I'd like to thank you, as well as



“I was very happy to receive mail from you! It was like cool water for my thirsty soul.”

Midnight Call Ministries. I was so happy that people are thinking of and praying for me. That’s rare. My former friends and relatives aren’t thinking about me, but it gladdens me that a missions organization is. I would be so happy to receive a visit. Please keep trying to get permission. I know it’s not easy in my case. I can’t say more, but the faith I gained from your radio programs has given me new hope.”

I had written him concerning how he could go about everyday life while in prison. At the end of his letter, he wrote: “I would be very grateful for more letters with similar practical tips. Please give my best regards to your whole team. Your brother in the Lord.”

“Cast Thy [CD] Upon the Waters: For Thou Shalt Find It After Many Days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

In Poland, a young man received a CD from a convert. It had been distributed in

Arabic and was entitled, “The King of the Refugees.” He then wrote me an email: “My name is Adam and I come from Libya. I received your CD with the title, ‘The King of the Refugees.’ I listened to it several times. I really liked it. I am currently in a refugee center in Poland, and am trying to attend Bible classes on Christianity. There is an Arab pastor there.” This pastor is yet another convert from an Islamic background, to whom I once gave the CDs. “Now I feel a great inner peace. I will be baptized in the future, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please write me with your advice on how I can grow in faith. Thanks a lot. Your Adam.” I sent him a reply with a link to the message, “My New Homeland.”

(You can find the English translation of the message here:

<https://midnightcall.com/articles/fellow-laborers/my-new-homeland.html>)

(MR0520)



“To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever” (Jude 25).

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

MC0121

After prayerful consideration, I/we have decided to support “Fellow Laborers.”

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“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all” (Psalm 34:19).



By **David Phillips** *Project Manager*



Dear Family of the Ebenezer Home,

Greetings from all residents and the team in Haifa.

This past year has been one of the more challenging years for all of us.

Many lost their jobs, experienced hard times, illness, financially cutting back, and

having a lack of faith in the government's social contract—quite depressing if looking at it from this viewpoint.

But for us at Ebenezer, it has been a faith strengthening year because of all the events; especially looking back to see how the Lord took care of us and blessed us with an extended family globally! You all became very dear to us. Ebenezer's new van has proved to be a milestone. (See the pictures you have been waiting for; not all



residents could be in the picture, due to Covid-19.) But already, the van has been a tremendous blessing to the Home!

For us at Ebenezer, we believe and pray that you too, whatever the circumstances may be, can sing this wonderful hymn together with us (forgive me for not having the space to quote all the verses):

Count your blessings;
Name them one by one.
Count your blessings;
See what God hath done.
Count your blessings;
Name them one by one.
Count your many blessings;
See what God hath done.

Yes, sing the entire song and let us all be blessed by this powerful hymn.

Together, we thank our Heavenly Father for ALL the blessings we received in 2020! We thank HIM for every one of you whom He has led on our path, and for the way YOU blessed us with your prayers and support.

We pray that the Holy One of Israel, our Messiah Yeshua, will be with you and bless you in 2021 in a special way, as only He can do.

Let us lift up our hearts and be encouraged...**Maranatha**; He is coming soon!



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

MC0121

Yes, I wish to support the Ebenezer Home Project.

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Letters to the Editor

Address letters for publication to: Letters to the Editor, Midnight Call, PO Box 84309, Lexington, SC 29073. Include full name, address, and daytime phone number or email. Without name and address, letters will be discarded unread. All material is subject to editing. Midnight Call assumes all publishing rights on letters sent to the Editor.

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

FALSE RELIGION... REPENT... ANGEL'S MESSAGE

False Religion

Dear Mr. Froese,

I was shocked by the letter you received from that Arizona subscriber (October *Midnight Call*, p. 41). I was raised in the Catholic religion, going to Catholic schools and saw things that were not normal there.

My father sent my brother to a Catholic place for boys run by priests, and everyone in it was sexually abused for years.

I left that fake religion after reading books about it. From its beginning, over 50 million people who left or refused to join it were tortured and burned alive by the church.

-M. Arsenault, MA

Answer: There have been horrible crimes committed against children within the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church, but that can also be said about the evangelical church. The issue was my objection to the claim that the Catholic Church

was "the only one founded by Christ." The Church which Jesus testified about, when He said, "I will build my church," was founded on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and from there spread all over the world. We notice in Acts 2:47b: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." All other church denominations or individual congregations are founded by man and duly registered with the government. In most countries, they are subsidized by tax exemptions. Don't confuse any church, institution, or denomination by whatever name with the spiritual one consisting exclusively of born-again believers.

Repent

Arno Froese,

Regarding the word "repent," could you tell me what the Bible says about it? The actual, real meaning of it, according to Yeshua.

Also, in the *News From Israel*, August 2020, p. 19, an article appears:



“Seven Nations Warn Israel Against Annexation.” Is that what Jesus means when He talks about a trench around Jerusalem, as in a siege (Luke 19:43)? The Bible mentions it, but this sounds like a verbal one, not war.

-A. Carr, MT

Answer: The Hebrew word for repent is *nacham*, an implication of sorrow. In the Greek it is *metanoeō*, to think and act differently. Billy Graham’s often repeated explanation was “turn around.”

The seven nations mentioned in the August 2020 issue of *News From Israel*, gave their opinion regarding Israel’s annexation of parts of Judea and Samaria; particularly the land along the Jordan River from the Dead Sea to the Galilee.

However, we must realize that whatever politicians do or don’t do is not decisive. To Abraham and his descendants, God gave the land from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates River. That’s an unconditional covenant and will be implemented one day in the future.

Angel’s Message

Dear Arno Froese,

I have been subscribing to *Midnight Call* since 1994, and have especially been impressed by articles of Wilfred Hahn.

Daily events in the news on TV are deeply troubling. Without my faith in Jesus Christ, I would be fearful of/for our nation.

There are many excellent articles and many very dedicated Christians who write for *Midnight Call*.

My question is, have any of the writers or you yourself ever had angels sent by God that actually tell you who they are and who sent them; and that in turn, the one to whom these angels are

talking knows for certain they are sent by God?

I appreciate being able to address such questions to you, since I have great respect for you and for *Midnight Call*.

-R. Briggs, SC

Answer: Several decades ago, I remember asking a similar question to our late founder Wim Malgo, to which he replied: “Those who did, will not tell; those who tell, did not meet.” There are a number of books written by people who claim to have been in heaven or have been visited by angels; others claim to have been in hell. I pay little to no attention to such. The apostle Paul seems to allow for the possibility of angel visitation, but they can do no more than what is already written in the Gospel: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8).

Guns

You had an article about gun violence in Europe in a recent issue of *Midnight Call*.

I am seriously concerned about gun violence in the USA, just like 71% of Americans who say gun violence is a major problem in a recent Fox poll. I believe it is time to think outside the box. I have a gun proposal, which I believe will make both sides in the gun debate happy. I trust you will seriously consider it and do what you can to get it enacted in the USA.

Reinterpret the 2nd Amendment to mean only stun and/or laser guns set at the low stun setting, and not guns that use the very ancient method of gunpowder and bullets.

-L. Yarnell, FL



Letters to the Editor

Answer: Jesus' words to Peter are appropriate: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52).

Wikipedia lists countries by number of firearms and deaths per 100,000 population:

Country	Guns per 100 inhabitants	Death rate per 100,000
USA	120.5	12.21
UK	2.8	0.20
Australia	13.7	0.88
Two countries are of special interest:		
Switzerland	27.6 – 41.2	2.64
Israel	7.3	1.38

One must take note of the fact that Israel and Switzerland have compulsory military ser-

vice; subsequently, the relatively high rate of gun ownership, with resulting higher death rate. It must also be noted that these firearms are government-issued and strictly forbidden to be used for any other purpose, even self-defense.

It is not our intention to be pro or con regarding firearm ownership, but to simply present facts in numbers.

Incidentally, Europe's gun deaths are extremely low, and so is crime; particularly when compared with North and South American countries.

It is such wonderful assurance to read, to hear, and to behold the precious words of God: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1). (MC)

A perfect gift for all who love Israel!

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The Gift of Unsearchable Riches

Norbert Lieth

It is the crown of Paul's letters. In it, we find glories that defy the imagination. A brief insight into the inexhaustible wealth of Christ in Ephesians.

A son sits on his father's deathbed and asks him, "Father, is there anything you'd like me to do for you?" And the father answers, "My son, please read Ephesians to me again." They only make it to the second chapter before the father dies. But these first two chapters contain the essence of the eternal state of the Christian.

John MacArthur says of Ephesians: "[...] that the church is Christ's present spiritual, earthly body [...] Christ is the Head of the body, and the Holy Spirit is its lifeblood [...] Another prominent theme is the riches and fullness of blessing to believers." "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph 1:13-14).

Ephesians could be called the "crown" of all the apostolic letters. In it, all the blessings of Jesus Christ are presented in their highest form. Along with the letters to the Philippians and the Colossians, Ephesians is described as the "centerpiece" of New Testament literature. Others also call these letters "perfection epistles," because they "complete" what was stated as fundamental truth in Paul's earlier letters.

Arno C. Gaebelein remarks: "The highest and most glorious revelation, which the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has been pleased to give, He communicated through the Apostle Paul. The two prison Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians embody this completion of the Word of God. The Ephesian Epistle holds the place of pre-eminence. The revelation which is given in this Epistle concerning believing sinners, whom God has redeemed by the blood of His Son, and exalted in Him into the highest possible position, is by far the greatest revelation. God is revealing His own loving heart and tells out

The Gift of Unsearchable Riches

In the darkness of prison, Paul received the supreme light of heavenly truths. In the confines of his personal surroundings, God gave him the widest space of knowledge.



by His Spirit how He loved us and thought of us before the foundation of the world. He shows forth the riches of His Grace and now makes known the secret He held back in former ages. How rich it all is! Like God Himself, so this revelation, coming from His loving heart, is inexhaustible. We may speak of Ephesians as the rich Epistle of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, rich in mercy, tells us of the exceeding riches of His Grace in kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. But even this definition does not tell out half of all the Glory this wonderful document contains. It is God's highest and God's best. Even God cannot say more than what He has said in this filling full of His Word."

And Henry Alford, whom Gaebelien also quotes, states: "The student of the Epistle to the Ephesians must not expect to go over his ground rapidly; must not be disappointed, if the week's end find him still on the same paragraph, or even on the same verse, weighing and judging—penetrating gradually, by the power of the mind of the Spirit, through one outer surface after another—gathering in his hand one and another ramifying thread, till at last he grasps the main cord whence they all diverged, and where they all unite—and stands rejoicing in his prize, deeper rooted in the faith, and with a firmer hold on the truth as it is in Christ. And as the wonderful effect of the Spirit of inspiration on the mind of man is nowhere in Scripture more evident than in this Epistle, so, to discern those things of the Spirit, is the spiritual mind here more than anywhere required."

The key verse of the Epistle is Ephesians 3:8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

The letter, written around 60-62 AD while Paul was in prison, was likely a circular that was distributed beyond Ephesus into the churches of the province of Asia. Therefore, it doesn't contain a personal address or special greetings for fellow believers, as is the case with other letters written by the Apostle Paul. In some significant older manuscripts, the greeting line "which are at Ephesus" (Eph 1:1) is also missing. However, all of the Greek manuscripts are titled "To the Ephesians." In addition to the letters to the Philippians and the Colossians, Ephesians is one of Paul's prison epistles, written by him from Rome (Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Although the letter to Philemon was also written from prison, it has a different purpose and is very personal.

Apparently, there was no negative reason that triggered the letter to the Ephesians. It isn't a letter of correction like Galatians; it isn't a reply to problems or questions such as Corinthians or Thessalonians; he doesn't target a particular church situation or warn against special dangers as in Colossians; nor is it a personal letter like those written to Timothy, Titus, or Philemon. The letter to the Ephesians is general, suitable for every situation and in all circumstances. He proclaims the highest truth about the church of Jews and Gentiles as the body of Christ, with Christ as the head (Eph 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 15; 5:23, 29-30).

Paul conveys a twofold burden in Ephesians: First, he wants to remind Christians of their immeasurable spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph 1:3). Colossians, for example, emphasizes Christ's greatness and glory, so Ephesians emphasizes the greatness and glory of those who believe in Him. Secondly, Paul wants to encourage believers to devotedly put their faith into practice. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph 4:1). If the first three chapters (1-3) deal with the will and counsel of God for salvation,

PAUL IN EPHESUS

the last three chapters (4-6) deal with man's calling of obedience.

A key theme is "in" or "through" Christ and election in Him (1:3-13, 20). It concerns the heavenly blessings of the church, God's eternal counsel regarding the church, His secrets about the church, and the heavenly position of the church. Paul reveals five special truths about the heavenly regions: they are a region of blessing (1:3), power (1:19-20), rest (2:6), rally (3:10) and victory (6:12).

Ephesians is less concerned with the local church (as in pastoral letters), but much more with the universal church as the body of Christ. Therefore, Paul hardly talks about community standards at all.

At the time of Paul's imprisonment, he was writing the "most glorious" letters with the deepest truths and revelations to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Although physically trapped, Paul lived in absolute freedom of mind. "I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly" (Eph 6:20). That's a message in its own right. Paul once wrote, "Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound" (2 Tim 2:9). Everything must serve to glorify God. Jesus says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him" (John 13:31). He even emphasized to Peter that his death would glorify God (John 21:18-19).

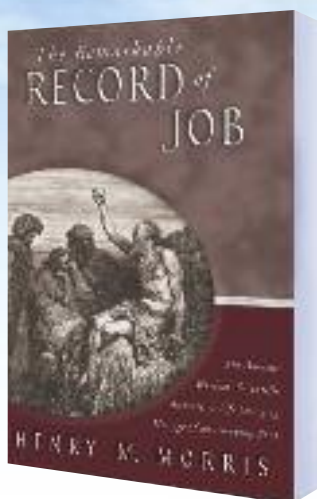
In the darkness of prison, Paul received the supreme light of heavenly truths. In the confines of his personal surroundings, God gave him the widest space of knowledge. In captivity, the Lord revealed to him the supreme freedom of the children of God. This is certainly also a state that the Holy Spirit intended and used, to indicate to us that Christians have no earthly promises (in contrast to the Old Covenant and Israel), but spiritual and heavenly ones. Very little is said in his teaching letters about everything going well for us, but lots about suffering, persecution, hunger, nakedness, scarcity, death, hostility, and temptations. The intent of the promises isn't to make us feel good here on earth. Instead, they speak mainly of the spiritual good and blessings in the heavenly realms and

On his second missionary journey, Paul came to Ephesus, but only remained for a short time (Acts 18:19-21). As always, Paul visited the Jews in the area first. It was a mission strategy, of course. The Jews knew the Old Testament. Based on this foundation, Paul was able to proclaim Jesus as the promised Messiah. With the Jews who were converted, he had a good foundation to continue evangelizing. During his third missionary journey, Paul remained in the city for a full three years. He taught daily for two years (Acts 19:1-20, 31). Remarkable things happened during that time: John the Baptist's disciples were converted (vv. 2-7). Extraordinary miracles occurred (vv. 11-12). Even the demons recognized the Apostle's authority, in contrast to the nominal Christians (vv. 13-16). A revival broke out, and the occultists publicly burned their spellbooks (vv. 17-20). The devil's backlash followed immediately afterward: Demetrius, the silversmith who produced silver shrines for the idol of Diana, rioted against Paul and his associates (vv. 23-32). After that, Paul left Ephesus and traveled to Macedonia (20:1). From Miletus, Paul summoned the Ephesian elders and gave them a moving farewell address (vv. 17-38). He reminded them once more of his example, his struggle, and his devotion (vv. 17-21, 33), and of the whole counsel of God that he had taught them (vv. 20, 27). He declared that they would not see him again (vv. 25, 37-38), spoke of the elders' responsibility to the church, and warned that Satan was not asleep (vv. 28-31). Paul delegated responsibility, directed practical matters, and trusted in God through everything (v. 32). Finally, the men gathered for a touching farewell scene and kneeling prayer (vv. 36-38).

eternity. Someone once aptly said, "Christianity doesn't belong to this creation. It belongs to eternity."

What God does, He does out of love and grace. And He wants to give us encouragement for our life here on earth through these revelations in Ephesians. We should already be getting a taste of eternity, like an appetizer before a meal. And the Holy Spirit is already given to us as a pledge and guarantee of this coming glory. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph 1:13-14).
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Midnight Call's **January Resource Guide**



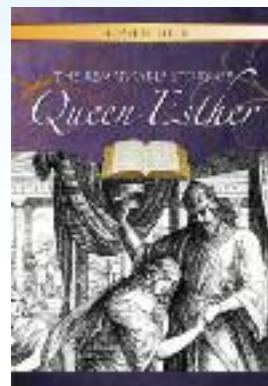
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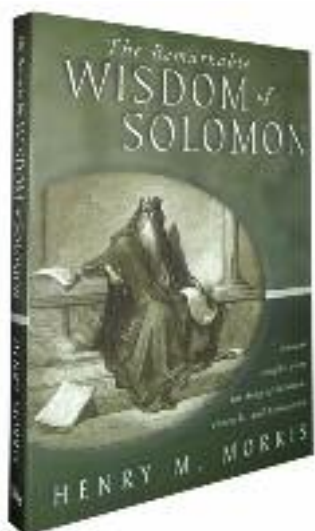
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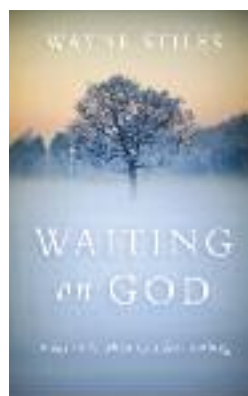
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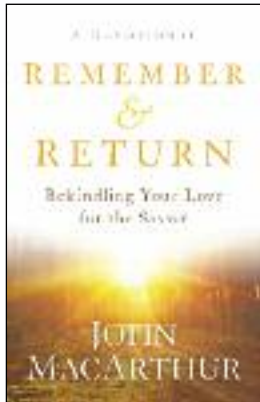
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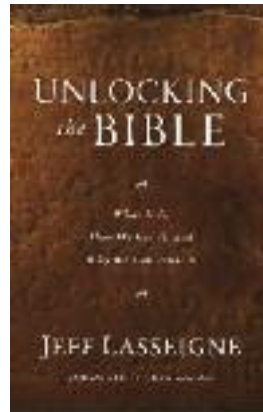
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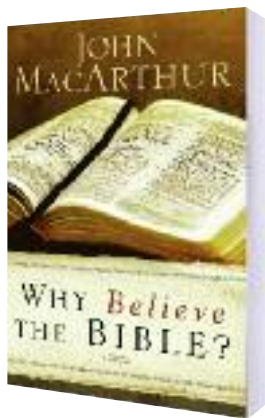
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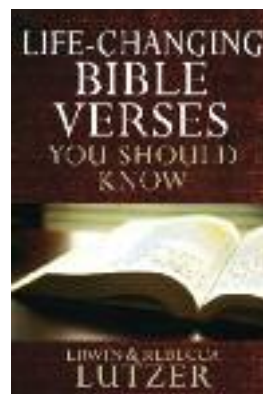
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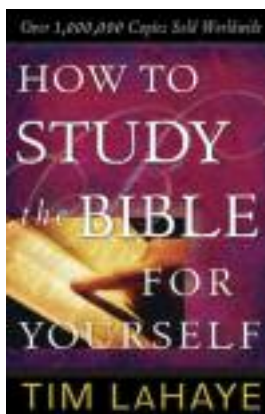
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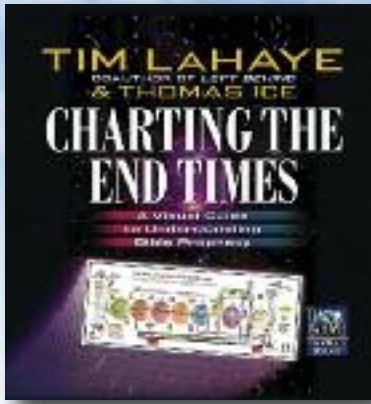
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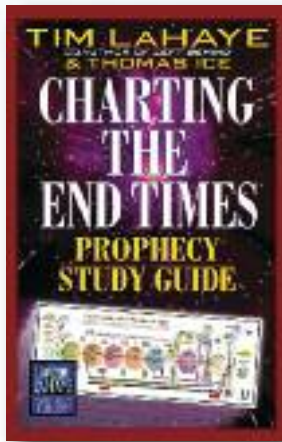
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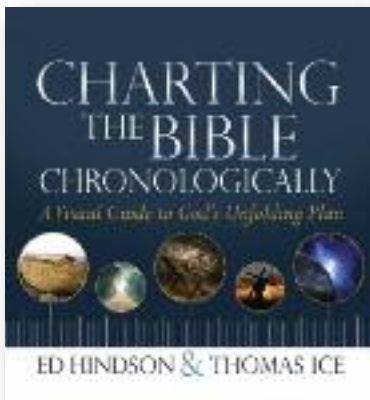
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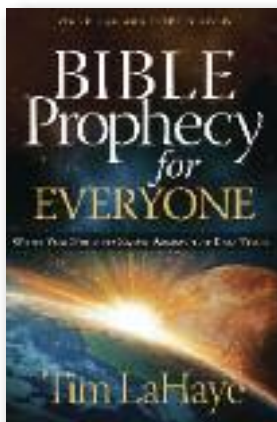
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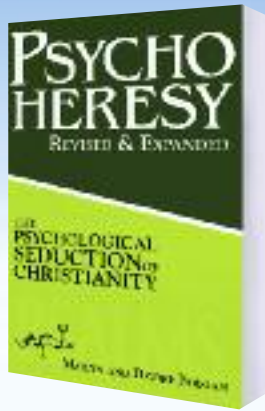
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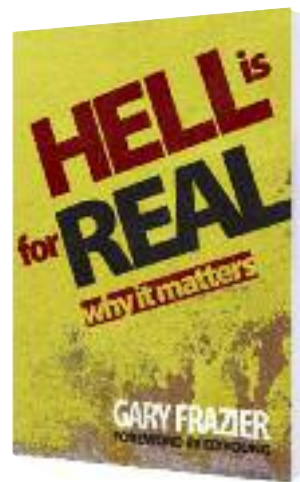
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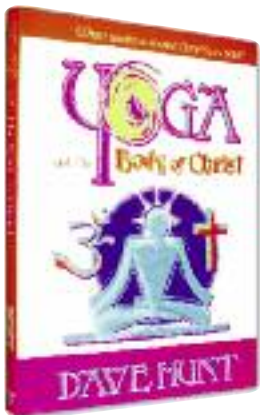
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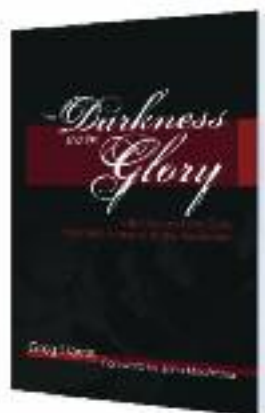
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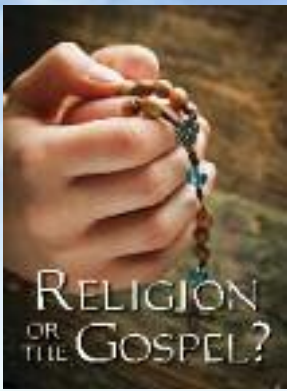
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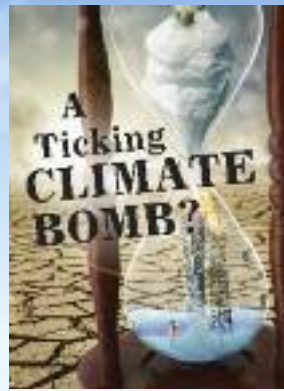


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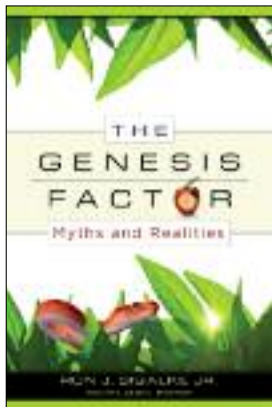


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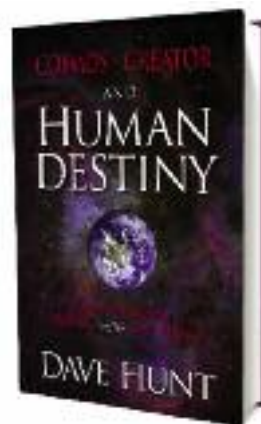
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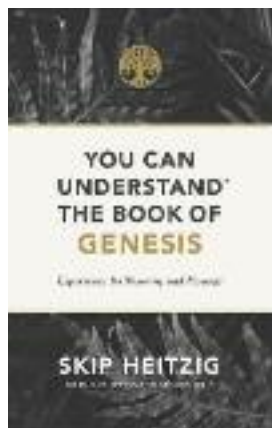
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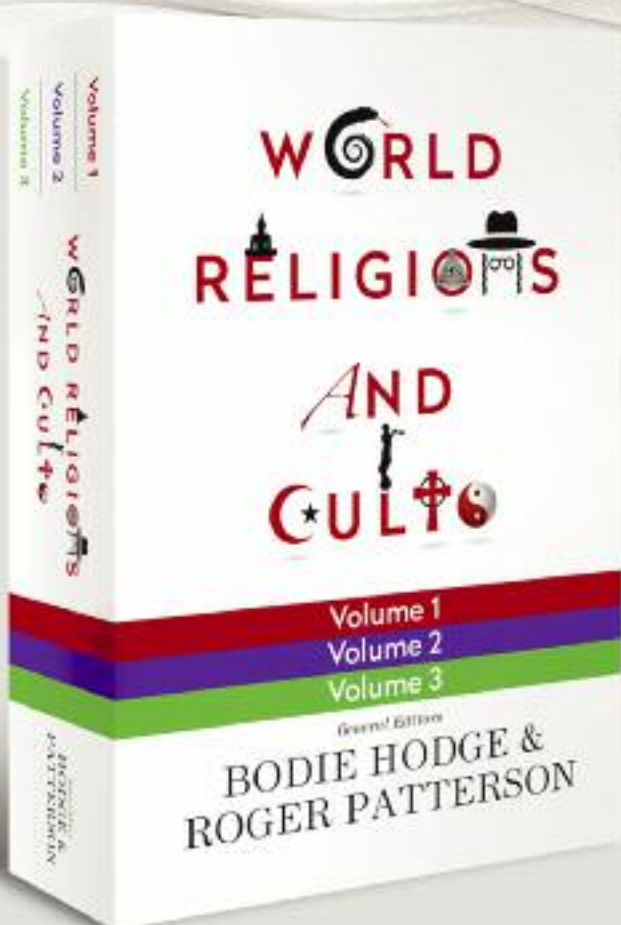
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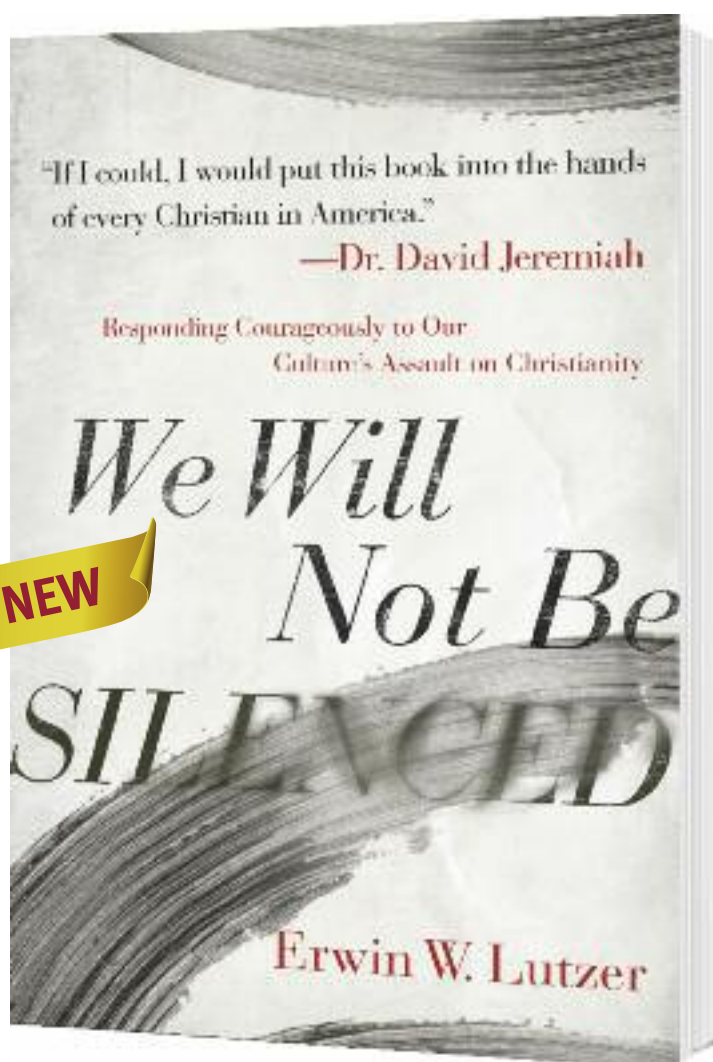
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Each day, you watch America turn further from Christian values and the core principles of liberty. It's frustrating to feel you can't assert biblical truth without facing condemnation, and frightening to witness outrage and victimhood replace respect and reason. Amidst this dissent, how can you not only stay rooted in your faith but continue to publicly testify for Jesus?

In *We Will Not Be Silenced*, Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer prepares you to live out your convictions against a growing tide of hostility. Gain a better understanding of nonbelievers' legitimate hurts and concerns regarding issues like racism, sexism, and poverty—and identify the toxic responses secular culture disguises as solutions. In the process, you'll see how you can show compassion and gentleness to those outside of the faith without affirming their beliefs.

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