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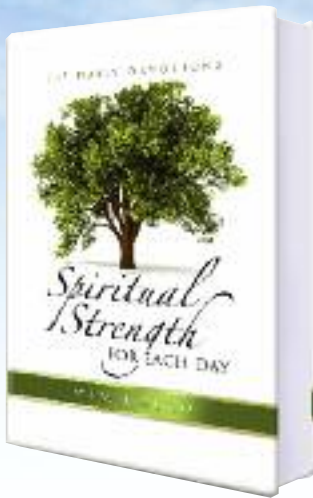
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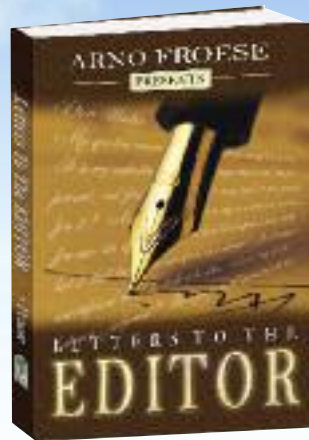


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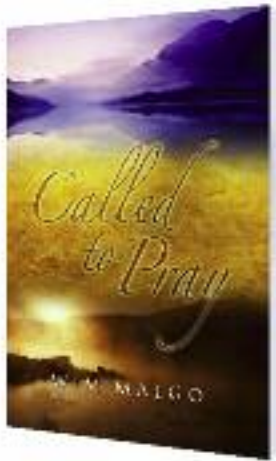


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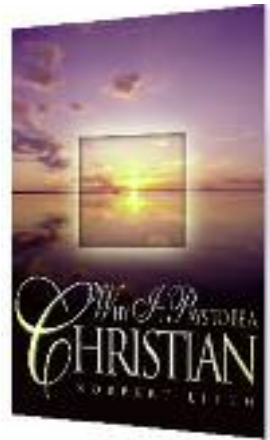
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Jerusalem



By Norbert Lieth

Director of Missions, Midnight Call International

Dear Friends,

A virus has dominated the world since 2020, and caused a depression to settle over all people. It brought fear, insecurity, loneliness, and all sorts of consequences. Material anxieties increased; bankruptcies and suicide rates went up, national borders were closed, and air traffic almost shut down.

In the midst of this oppressive time, a song burst forth “as if from heaven.” It crossed all borders, “flew” to the remotest parts of the earth, and dominated the world stage for many months. It penetrated all walks of life, and lifted the people’s mood. The song affected almost everyone: policemen danced to the melody, staff in hospitals and in airports, pious nuns, people in church congregations, the military, and sometimes individuals in the middle of the street. At least for a time, one could breathe easier and had a sense of relief.

The song is called “Jerusalem.” The composer, Moagi (known as Master KG), is a South African who professes to be a Christian. During an interview, he said he wanted to ask for God’s protection and guidance with this song. The title, “Jerusalem,” brings to mind that this is

God’s favorite city. It is the place of revelation of the Eternal: in Jerusalem, Jesus Christ accomplished salvation for mankind. Jerusalem stands for God’s dwelling place among men, for His presence: in Jerusalem stood “my Father’s house,” as Jesus emphasized (John 2:16). The Lord also called Jerusalem “the city of the great King” (Matthew 5:35). The Bible tells us of a coming new Jerusalem that will one day rule the world. In Revelation 21:10, it is described as the “holy city.” Jerusalem stands for past, present and future. Jerusalem points to the presence and faithfulness of God, and the fulfillment of His promises. It is not called “city of peace” for nothing. It is an image of the eternal, heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God.

The text in the Zulu language is therefore a synonym for the Eternal:

“Jerusalem, my home
Save me
Walk with me
Don’t abandon me here.
My place is not here
My kingdom is not here
Save me
Come with me.”

EDITOR'S NOTE

I am not interested in a biblical-dogmatic analysis. But that a song with this title would fascinate the world (apart from the Muslim one) and become an encouragement for many, somehow speaks for itself. Today's Jerusalem is the center of attention, with many not recognizing it as a Jewish identity. The very existence of a Jewish Jerusalem is an annoyance to many. Jerusalem is politicized and discussed, judged and torn apart—but is now a worldwide “hit” that is sung internationally. For many, it was a balm for the soul and gave relief in a difficult time. God allows such a thing, because Jerusalem automatically reminds one of Him.

I thought of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:15-17) when they preached to the idol worshipers: “...that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”

Jerusalem will still have to endure difficult times in the future. But the day is coming when Jesus returns triumphantly, and Jerusalem becomes His residence (Matt 25:31). The day of a new Jerusalem is also coming. Then, today's enemies of Jerusalem will also join the celebration: “When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday” (Psalm 42:4). (MC)

Correction: In Wilfred Hahn's article on page 10 of the August issue, the first sentence of the next to last paragraph should have read: For example, were Jews to study Daniel and accept Revelation also as inspired Scripture, they would not be so susceptible to being deceived by the False Messiah when he comes.

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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.



What Does It Mean to Be Led by the Spirit?

Johannes Pflaum

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom 8:14). What does that mean in practice?

When the Bible says that we should be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18), it's not talking about an ecstatic experience or “more” after new birth (such as an additional baptism of the Spirit or a “second blessing”). It establishes the fact that the Holy Spirit has full right to live and rule in and through us. Paul shows that being filled with the Spirit

is inconsistent with drunkenness (Eph 5:18). Being filled with the Holy Spirit relates to obedience (cf. Eph 5:8ff.).—“... The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32).

Some enthusiasts invoke Acts 2:13, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles at Pentecost: “Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.” But

this ridicule wasn't about the apostles' seeming ecstatic or stumbling around, but the different languages. Peter himself was clear about this (v. 15), and he hit the mark with his "stone-cold sober" sermon.

Paul calls the Holy Spirit a spirit of "sound mind" (discipline, or prudence—2 Tim 1:7). And in Galatians 5:23, he describes temperance (also translated as "self-control") as a fruit of the Spirit. It's a matter of being in control of oneself, of moderation, which is the opposite of drunkenness. In the Bible, a staggering state is a sign of God's judgment (Isa 19:13-14; 28:7; 29:9; Jer 25:16), and being drunk or intoxicated is a bad thing (Isa 51:21; 63:6; Nah 3:11; Hab 2:15; Jer 25:27).

The Holy Spirit's Guidance

The Acts of the Apostles calls Peter, Stephen, Barnabas, and others "full of the Holy Ghost." This applies to their preaching, ministry, and discipleship. The Holy Spirit led them on their way (cf. Acts 8:29; 10:19; 13:2, 4; 16:6-7). We don't find the phrases "Spirit-led" or "spiritual guidance" in the book of Acts, but we can see evidence of it in the different events recorded there.

We read of how the Holy Spirit spoke to send Paul and Barnabas out on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:2). The connection with Acts 13:1 suggests that this speaking was done through the prophets in that congregation. Regarding this, it should be noted that the role of the New Testament prophets (Acts 11:28; 20:23; 21:10), together with the Apostles, belonged to the foundation of the Church and cannot simply be carried over to the present day (cf. Eph 2:20).

But even if prophets in the New Testament sense no longer exist, the Holy Spirit is still using people to call others. But we're not gushing about a word from the Spirit,

or using it as a form of leverage. The Holy Spirit can use elders, praying brothers and sisters, or a church sermon to initiate a call to ministry.

Personal readiness and confirmation are always part of a call from others. Paul, for example, had had this since his conversion. It speaks to the Apostle's greatness that he could put his true life's mission on hold for so long, until he was sent out by the church in Antioch. God's Spirit is still calling through other people today. We could call this spiritual guidance.

Relying on What the Holy Spirit Is Saying

We read of the Holy Spirit speaking in Acts 1:16, 4:25, and 28:25. Each time, the Old Testament is referenced. This makes it clear how the Holy Spirit leads and guides through God's Word, because it is also speaking there.

Acts 20:28 records Paul's farewell speech to the elders of Ephesus. There he refers to them as overseers appointed by the Holy Spirit. It begs the question: how did the Holy Spirit do this? From Acts 14:23, we can see that Paul and Barnabas installed elders in the churches; that is, the elders were appointed by the people and by the Holy Spirit. Why? Because Paul and Barnabas asked for and acted on God's will. This is why 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 also mention spiritual qualifications for the office of elder. They were the standard by which Timothy and Titus could determine who was fit for ministry. Of course, choosing elders always involves prayer. But when the Holy Spirit appoints people, this shouldn't be confused with false, mystical notions of spiritual guidance. Rather, they are affirmed by the Word of God for this ministry.

But there are also passages in Acts where the Spirit of God speaks directly to people (Acts 8:29; 10:29). This is how the Lord

What Does It Mean to Be Led by the Spirit?

We don't find the phrases "Spirit-led" or "spiritual guidance" in the book of Acts, but we can see evidence of it in the different events recorded there.

can lead His children today, without it always having to be connected to a special experience of enlightenment. For example, someone may experience the peace of God and the associated certainty regarding a particular matter. Or, you may have an impression that you should call or visit a certain person, or pray for somebody. In preparing to preach, it's important to have a particular Scripture passage to speak about.

Now, it's important to be careful that we're not prematurely marketing subjective impressions as the Spirit's guidance. If the Lord has ordained something, it will always be confirmed in time. We're often not even aware of it, because we're simply doing the task set before us. Therefore, let's resist using the phrase, "The Holy Spirit told me."

Even in Acts, it is only directly stated that the Holy Spirit said something two times (cf. Acts 11:12; 21:11). This was during the time when divine revelation of canon hadn't been completed, and the New Testament prophets were still active. In a third passage, Paul records how the Holy Spirit warned him that he would be imprisoned (Acts 20:23). The disciples preach what the Holy Spirit has said, and relate it to what God has already revealed, in three other places (Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25).

Preaching and Speaking by the Holy Spirit

As we have seen, the Acts of the Apostles describes proclaiming God's Word as the Holy Spirit speaking. This is an essential feature. After the ministry of the Apostles and the New Testament prophets was over, and the whole Word of God as a divine revelation was complete, no additional revelation was needed. So, the Holy Spirit primarily speaks through the Word of God today. Therefore, a

prophetic word given through preaching isn't the spreading of supposed visions, dreams, or revelations. It's an interpretation of God's Word that speaks into the situation and strikes the audience. The preacher often isn't even aware of it; he's simply interpreting and applying God's Word. But someone sitting in the audience is asking himself, "How could he possibly know that about me?"

On November 4, 2012, theologian Rolf Scheffbuch led a Bible study with the subject, "On the Way to Heaven." In his message, he spoke so clearly and succinctly about today's spiritual situation, that a listener asked him what had caused him to say it all that way. Rolf Scheffbuch didn't know that this was to be his final act of service; he was called to eternity just six days later. His sermon became his spiritual legacy, and I've heard it many times myself. It's an example of how the Holy Spirit is speaking prophetically through the preaching of God's Word today.

As mentioned previously, Scripture tells us in various places that the apostles preached in the Spirit. The first time is Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts 2:4. What was the heart of this message? The unique significance of Jesus, and the salvation that is connected with Him. Even Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, pointed toward Jesus at the end of his Acts 7 message on redemptive history.

We find the same thing when Peter preached the Gospel to Cornelius and the Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10). Of course, the disciples also spoke about the Holy Spirit or quoted Scripture when doing this. But a Spirit-filled sermon was always about Jesus and His significance. It was probably Pastor Wilhelm Busch who once said, "The Holy Spirit works most strongly where Jesus is made great."

A prophetic word given through preaching isn't the spreading of supposed visions, dreams, or revelations. It's an interpretation of God's Word that speaks into the situation and strikes the audience.

Direct and Indirect Leading of the Spirit

Paul and Barnabas were set apart for their ministry by the Holy Spirit. The start of the first missionary journey was directly related to this message from God.

Paul set out on his second missionary journey after deciding on his own (Acts 15:36). We read the same of his third missionary journey in Acts 18:23. There is no mention of a special commission from God's Spirit in either case. Paul didn't sit there passively waiting for spiritual guidance; he made a decision and set off. We can be sure that Paul prayed a great deal and made his decision prayerfully before he left. But nothing is said of a special word from God or a special event.

At the onset of the second and third missionary journeys, we see that God's Spirit also indirectly guides people who live in their Lord's presence, dependent on Him. By "indirect," I'm not implying an inferior leadership, but spiritual guidance without an extraordinary event or God explicitly speaking. Of course, the precondition is that we're ready to align ourselves with God's Word and will.

An Important Example of the Holy Spirit's Guidance

Acts 16:6-10 describes a special event related to the Apostle Paul's spiritual guidance. He and Silas were on the second missionary journey, and then the Holy Spirit twice prevented them from preaching God's Word. We don't know how it happened, but Paul and his companions realized that the Lord was thwarting their no-doubt prayerful plans.

Paul doesn't simply attribute this hindrance to the devil. This facile, seemingly pious explanation is often used. If we don't get what we wished for or our plans don't work

out, we blame the devil for it. But sometimes it can also be the Lord Himself who nullifies even righteous plans and desires, because He has something completely different in mind for us.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:18, Paul speaks of Satan having prevented him from coming to Thessalonica twice. In the case described in Acts 16, however, he recognized that it was the Lord who was hindering that progress and its associated ministry, through His Spirit. It is interesting how Paul and his companions dealt with it. Some misconceptions about leadership can be corrected through their example.

When the Lord denied Paul and Silas' plan, they didn't sit idly by or passively wait for a revelatory experience. First, they intended to go west to the province of Asia to preach the Gospel, but the Holy Spirit denied them. Paul and Silas didn't just twiddle their thumbs; they moved on to Mysia and tried to advance east to preach the Gospel. Again, the Spirit didn't allow it. So they moved on to Troas. That's where they received the order to go to Macedonia, by means of a face in the night.

John MacArthur describes this incident as an example of recognizing God's will in his book, *Found: God's Will*. He compares the Christian to a 30-ton truck. At rest, it requires a truck-mounted crane to move it. But when it's already in motion, it's much easier to steer. So many Christians sit and ask for God's will instead of moving. But the Lord wants to guide us while we're in motion, as we see through Paul and Silas' example. MacArthur writes:

"Keep moving—what a principle! So many people sit around waiting for that celestial

What Does It Mean to Be Led by the Spirit?

crane to move them, saying, 'I don't know what God wants me to do.' They need to start moving so God can steer them to that area of service He has planned. Knowing God's will may mean pushing down a narrow line until you hit a dead end. At that point, God will open a door so wide you won't be able to see around it—only through it!

“What was Paul's response? It is recorded in the book of Acts: 'When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them' (Acts 16:10).

“Paul responded immediately, and that is the only reaction when a persistent heart meets an open door [. . .] You may bounce off a lot of closed doors, but that is God's way of forcing you into His open one. Get rolling! Be persistent.”

John Heading sees threefold guidance in the Apostle's life regarding the events of Paul's second missionary journey. First, Paul was guided by “personal means.” He made a personal decision in Acts 15:36, to visit the brothers he had preached the Gospel to on his first missionary journey. This was his personal mission. Second, the “spiritual means” which prevented Paul and Silas from continuing, and which then led to their call into Europe at Troas. Third,

after having ministered at Philippi, Paul followed the east-west road in Macedonia to Thessalonica. This is where the north-south and east-west routes crossed. This was a “natural means.” This shows how the Lord's guidance included personal, spiritual, and natural elements. The church there came into being through the preaching in Thessalonica.

These insights from MacArthur and Heading are very helpful in protecting against misconceptions about spiritual guidance and the associated recognition of God's will. Of course, if we're not yet clear about our calling, there can be situations where we truly do have to wait until we have recognized God's will. When it comes to making important decisions, we don't have to rush in, or do what someone else wants. This doesn't contradict Paul and Silas' behavior. They knew their calling, and they kept moving until the Lord directed them to where He wanted them.

We can't always derive corresponding rules for the present day from the events of the Apostles' day. But every follower of Jesus must desire to be filled and guided by God's Spirit. It has little to do with extraordinary events, but more to do with a daily life spent in God's Word, in fellowship with the Lord, doing His will in everyday things.

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The Lord wants to guide us while we're in motion, as we see through Paul and Silas' example.



WORLD GEOPOLITICS BY THE BIBLE: WHITHER AMERICA? – PART 4



We continue our quest for the identities of the 7 Ruler Kings, which represent the geopolitical history of the world in that they circumnavigate the fate of the Hebrews.

By Wilfred Hahn

Why are we pursuing this study? Importantly, it allows us to determine the times and the seasons. There can be no doubt: We are living in an interesting time ... likely a sliver in duration ... as some major prophetic events are at the very door. These will have an enormous impact upon the world ... expressly so also America.

In Part 3, we noted that all of the Ruler Kings that Daniel saw in his visions, have left significant legacies for the world today. We last discussed the connections of ancient Babylon with our current times. Readers will likely have been surprised.

Next, we consider Medo-Persia (depicted as a bear in Daniel 7). The most significant contribution of the Medes was the principle of tolerance. The figure of Cyrus has survived throughout history as the role model of an ideal ruler.

Though a conqueror, he was tolerant and magnanimous. In like fashion, Darius I and Xerxes I, and later Persian rulers were considered to be liberal.

The attitude of tolerance is evident in the Bible's account of Cyrus. He was moved to fund the rebuilding of the Jewish temple (Ezra 1:2). He provided a grant for this humanitarian project, involving a different people with another religion (Ezra 3:7). Cyrus even returned some of the temple treasures that had been carted out of Jerusalem decades earlier.

What reigning powers in history ever considered offering recompense to those that they conquered? If that is the key characteristic symbolized by the Medo-Persian "bear," then it certainly does apply to our time.

If it were not so, how could it have ever been possible for the Jews to again be restored to their own land in 1948, after almost two thousand years of dispersion? This is one of the greatest confirmations that the "bear" depicted in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 is indeed upon the scene today.

Most readers will agree that Greece has left a big stamp upon the world. It is shown as a leopard in Daniel. Greece is the source of much humanism. Its ancient society placed a



high value upon human reasoning and philosophy. That was certainly the case during New Testament times. Paul often debated Greek thinkers; notably, for example, at Mars Hill (Acts 17).

He later tells us that “Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:22). Here we see Apostle Paul confirming that the god of the Greeks was human logic (humanism). Paul also held “discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9) for over two years. Tyrannus was a Greek teacher and sophist whose school was in Ephesus.

To the Greeks, the very fact that something might be incomprehensible could only be referred to the Unknown God. Paul showed them that all ways higher than man’s were attributable to God (Isaiah 55:9). This Hellenistic emphasis upon science and naturalism rules our society today.

There are other Greek cultural legacies that still mark our world. Democracy is the prevalent organizational form politically worldwide today (its origin found in ancient Greece). Democracy, assuredly a human system with many good facilities, still harbors the fatal flaw that will enable a spiritually blind world to willingly allow the Antichrist to come to

power. And, of course, we cannot forget the Olympics, the highest celebration of human physical achievement.

Today we live in the Roman Head era. Its signs are all around us. Western society and culture can find much of its root in the early Roman Empire. From Roman law, civil organization, military techniques, and creditor philosophy, to many other influences, Western society today remains quintessentially Roman.

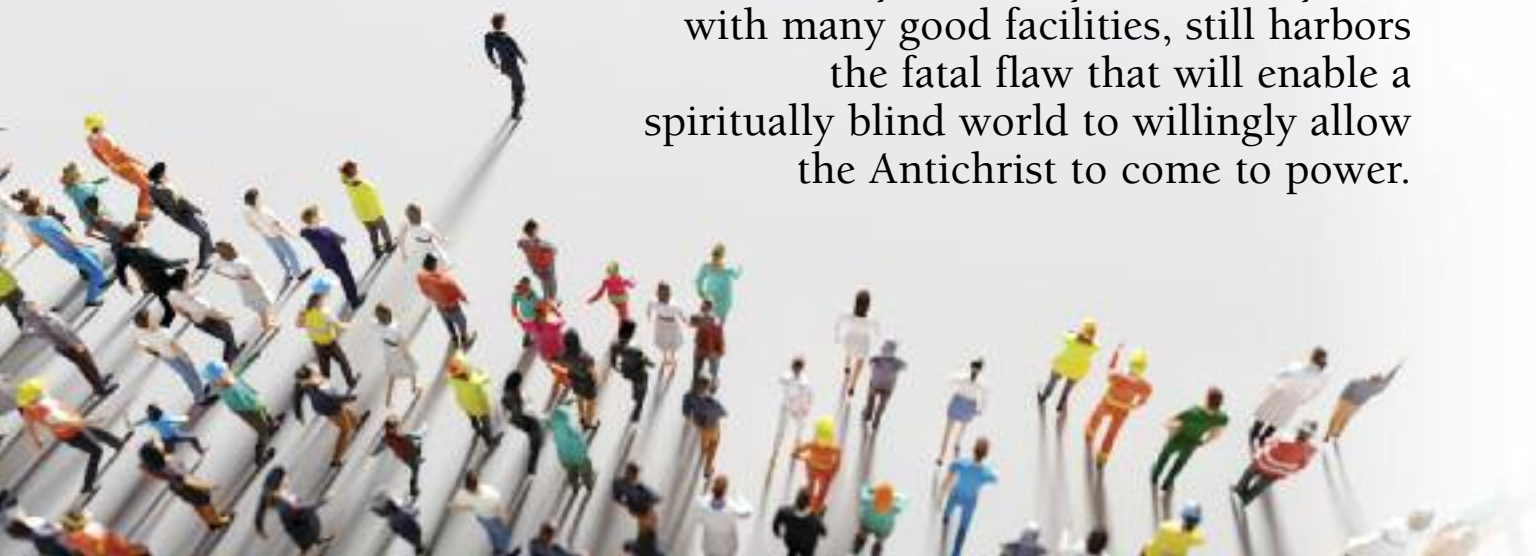
We need not spend much time documenting this phenomenon. Rome was a ferocious military beast two thousand years ago. The new Rome, both militarily and economically, is an even more ferocious beast, one that certainly is stamping much of the world under its feet (Daniel 7:7, 19).

How to Line Up the Ruler Kings

All of the Bible’s prophecies about the 7 Ruler kingdoms (individually or collectively) lead to the same ending scenario. In every case, these visions end up pointing to the same final kingdom. It is the messianic kingdom. Following all the beast (Gentile) kingdoms, it is shown to be eternal.

Daniel informs us that the time of the messianic kingdom comes after the feet and the toes. The stone cut out without hands dashes

Democracy, assuredly a human system with many good facilities, still harbors the fatal flaw that will enable a spiritually blind world to willingly allow the Antichrist to come to power.



Daniel shares visions that look forward from his time, while John's visions encompass past, present, and future. We observe that all five of these Ruler Kings can indeed be named.

apart the statue (Daniel 2:34). After this, “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”

Furthermore, we know that the 4th beast of Daniel 7 (the 6th by Revelation's count) is vanquished by God. After this arises His dominion, “[...] an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14).

The same is revealed in the beast visions of Daniel 8, showing that these kingdoms are destroyed, “but not by human power” (Daniel 8:25). Revelation provides much rich detail on the eternal kingdom that follows the beast of Revelation 17.

Knowing this, a simple way of corroborating the identity and chronological order of all the Ruler Kings (whether mentioned in the Old or New Testament) is to simply count back from the messianic kingdom.

We know that the kingdom “that is” (Revelation 17:10) must be Roman. It must be as Apostle John explains. Rome was the world hegemon at the time of his prophecies. He tells us it is the 6th in the lineage of 7.

“Five have fallen ... one more is to come, and that one but for a little while” (Revelation 17:10). We also know that Daniel's 4th beast (Daniel 7) was Roman. This can be proven in a number of ways.

First, we are told specifically that the first of the five kingdoms, represented by the image with the golden head (Daniel 2), was Nebuchadnezzar. If we count the number of world kingdoms that follow him (Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome), Rome is the 4th that

he sees. We conclude that Daniel's 4th kingdom is the same as John's 6th.

In view of the prophecies of Daniel, it can be shown that he is referring to the same first four kingdoms in his visions. He identifies Babylon as being the first in this line. Daniel 7 (this prophecy being uttered before the Medo-Persians had conquered Babylon) specifically identifies four kingdoms that will rise from the earth (Daniel 7:17). Then, in chapter 8, it is revealed to him that two of the kingdoms (also providing details about some of the individual kings) would be Medo-Persia and Greece (mentioned by name).

Not much later, Daniel himself witnessed the fall of Babylon (Head #3) and then served Cyrus the Mede (a part of Head #4). Taking all observations together, there is no question that Babylon is followed by Medo-Persia (#4), then by Greece (#5). None of the Ruler Kings are shown to occur thereafter other than the 4th Beast Daniel saw. Again, this can only be Roman.

We can deduce that the five beasts and/or horns that Prophet Daniel sees are the very same Ruler Kings #3 to #7 that Apostle John sees. Daniel shares visions that look forward from his time, while John's visions encompass past, present, and future. We observe that all five of these Ruler Kings can indeed be named.

The Identity of the First Two Heads

Now that we have all the foundations in place on the last five Ruler Kings, we can turn our attention to the two earliest ones. We have yet to provide proofs of the identities of RKs #1 and #2.

As it turns out, the identity of the first two RKs of the 7 heads, have assuredly been the subject of much debate. Just what qualifying



Based on the weight of Scripture, we conclude that Egypt and Assyria, respectively, are the 1st and 2nd heads of the 7-headed beast. There are no other viable candidates in our view.

criteria should one use to identify a “major world rulership” in the geopolitical arena, to discover the identity of these seven major kingdoms in the Bible?

Earlier in the series, we had listed 7 criteria shared by the 7 RK. The first common characteristic of all of them is their persecution and oppression of the Hebrews.

Frankly, the Bible only offers three plausible candidates that were in power before Babylon in the Bible: Egypt, Assyria and the Philistines. However, only two meet all of the 7 traits common to the rest of the Ruler Kings; most expressly, oppressing Israel. (Another nation candidate mentioned often in the Bible is Tyre.)

Much of Scripture is preoccupied with the three nations of Egypt, Assyria and Philistia and their interactions with Israel. For example, the word Philistine (and its derivatives) is mentioned 276 times in the Bible; Egypt (and its derivatives) 793 times; and Assyria, 144 times.

But which two of these three nations qualify as the 1st and 2nd heads of the 7-headed beast shown in Revelation? Just what additional indications does Scripture provide? Consider the following statements:

1. “For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them’” (Isaiah 52:4).

2. “Therefore, this is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: ‘My people who live in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians, who beat you with a rod and lift up a club against you, as Egypt did’” (Isaiah 10:24).

3. “We submitted to Egypt and Assyria to get enough bread” (Lamentations 5:6).

4. “Israel is a scattered flock that lions have chased away. The first to devour them was the king of Assyria; the last to crush their bones was Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” (Jeremiah 50:17).

In these verses (and a number more that could be cited), we see Assyria and Egypt being jointly referenced as oppressors and persecutors of the Hebrews. The Philistines are not in this same company. Why? The Philistines, though they had been a frequent foe of Israel, were not in the same league as Egypt and Assyria at their apex. Wars with the Philistines were not much more than territorial skirmishes.

The Philistines never completely vanquished the Israelites nor controlled the Middle East. They were considered “sea peoples” and were never rulers of the then known world. Moreover, King David and his troops were at one time even mercenaries on behalf of Philistia, supposedly fighting against Judah.

In short, Philistia does not appear to qualify as one of the 7 heads.

Based on the weight of Scripture, we conclude that Egypt and Assyria, respectively, are the 1st and 2nd heads of the 7-headed beast. There are no other viable candidates in our view.

When the 10 Horns Arrive on the Timeline

In the next issue, we will turn our focus from the 7 Ruler Kings to the 10 horns (10K). They represent a coalition of 10 rulers (or nations) that is formed just before the start of the Tribulation period. Just what are the 10 kings destined to do? Will America be one of these ten nations? ^(MC)



Is Hell Eternal?

– Part 3

Dr. Ron J. Bigalke

Part II of this series concluded with discussion of Abraham’s bosom (Paradise) as the place of blessing, in contrast to the place of torment for the unbeliever.

The great chasm separating Abraham’s bosom from the place of torment (*hadēs*), is likely the heavens themselves. The notion that Old Testament saints were captives in Abraham’s bosom, and they needed to be released and carried with Christ in triumph to heaven, is derived from certain passages: Luke 16:19-31, Ephesians 4:8-10, and 1 Peter 3:18-20. The present article will consider the validity of this understanding.

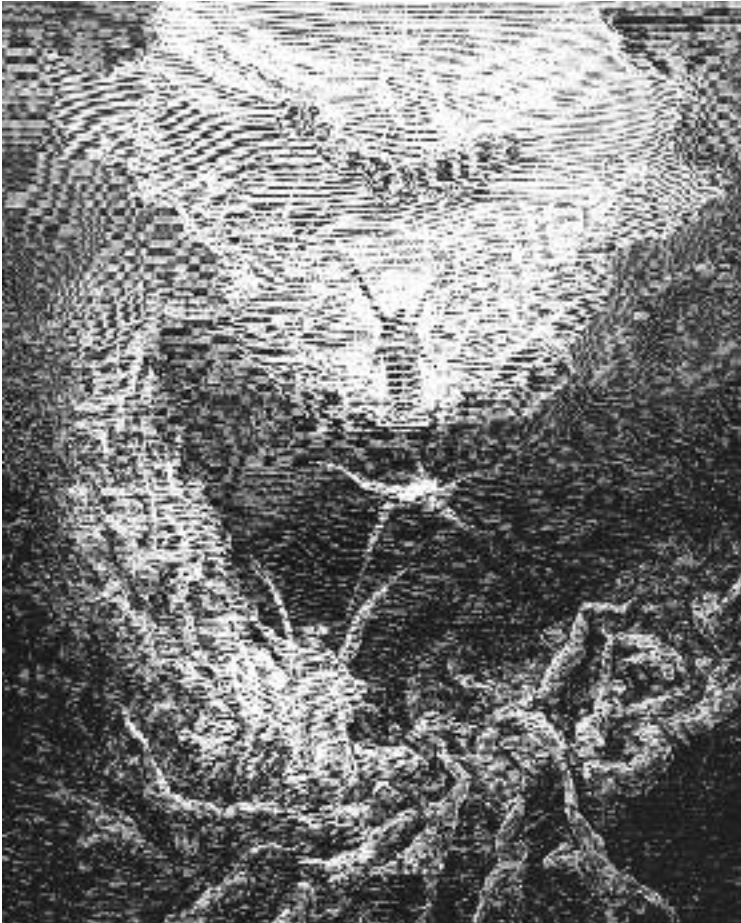
First Peter 3:18-20

The fact that Christ is said to have “made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison” (1 Pet 3:19), has led some to conclude that Christ descended to the place of torment (*hadēs*) and preached to the spirits there: either to offer a sec-

ond chance to any who would repent, or to proclaim their eternal condemnation in His triumph over them. Peter was specific with regard to who received the message of proclamation: those “who once were disobedient . . . in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark” (v. 20). The notion that Christ would descend to *hadēs* and there make proclamation to such a limited audience, does seem peculiar. Moreover, if the Lord did descend to *hadēs* to proclaim His triumph, certainly He would have declared that message to all the sinners there. Even more problematic is the idea that Christ would offer a second chance to sinners, when Scripture indicates the impossibility of repentance after death (Luke 16:26; Heb 9:27).

Is Hell Eternal? – Part 3

The final sentencing to hell occurs when the dead stand before the “great white throne” and are “judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds” (Rev 20:11-12).



While it is possible that Christ truly descended to the place (Tartarus) where demonic spirits are confined, to make proclamation of His victory accomplished on Calvary's cross (1 Pet 3:18-20), there is no reason to conclude that Christ descended into any compartment of *hadēs* for the purpose of releasing Old Testament saints from captivity. The purpose of Jesus' instruction in Luke 16:26 was to indicate that upon death, a person would either go to a place of everlasting blessing or eternal torment. The place of blessing for the Old Testa-

ment believer would be where Abraham is, and unbelievers would experience torment in *hadēs*, until their final sentencing to hell at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15).

Revelation 20:11-15 reveals the final judgment awaiting those in prison (*hadēs*). Hell is the ultimate destiny for the unbeliever; it will be an eternal torment “with fire and brimstone” (Rev 14:10-11; cf. 19:3; Isa 34:10). The unbelieving do not cease to exist through annihilation, for this would contradict both the experience of torment stated in Revelation 14:10, and the very next line in verse 11, where it says, “they have no rest day and night.” The experience of torment continues perpetually. The depiction of the final judgment in Revelation corresponds to Matthew 25:46, where the unbeliever will “go away into eternal punishment,” and “the righteous” are brought “into eternal life.”

The final sentencing to hell occurs when the dead stand before the “great white throne” and are “judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds” (Rev 20:11-12). Salvation has always been by grace through faith; thus, the judgment “according to their deeds” is to determine where in hell the unbeliever will be, since there are degrees of suffering, even though hell is a place of torment wherever one may be.

Luke 16:19-31

Luke 16 reveals that unbelievers will be jailed in *hadēs* until being imprisoned for life. At the most basic level, the fundamental difference between jail and

Jesus was the first to receive a glorified body, yet it was not required for Him to be the first to ascend to heaven. All believers who have died enter heaven; however, their experience is an intermediate state, while awaiting the glorification of the body.

prison is the length of stay for detainees. *Hadēs* is a place of fiery suffering, yet it is the temporary residence of the lost. The unbeliever's final judgment and sentencing to hell will not occur until a future time. Consequently, the grim reality "is a great chasm fixed" between heaven and hell (Luke 16:26).

Subsequent to Jesus asserting "that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us," the rich man begged for someone to warn his five brothers, so that they would not enter the "place of torment" (vv. 26-28). No one would be sent to them because, "They have Moses and the Prophets" (v. 29). The Word of God is sufficient for salvation: someone being raised "from the dead" is unnecessary, for it would trivialize Christ's resurrection and the lost would "not be persuaded" (vv. 30-31). Even two millennia after Christ died and was raised from the grave, people remain unconvinced. Individuals have the opportunity to hear, and still choose to be disobedient.

Ephesians 4:8-10

Ephesians 4:8 refers to the fact that when Christ "ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES." The image is that of a conqueror who, as a display of victory, leads the defeated in a triumphal procession. The same expression of "captives" was used in Judges 5:12, where Barak was urged to "take away your captives." Psalm 68:18 refers to how God led captive His captives. The Lord entered Zion when David moved the ark to Jerusalem

(an event attended by "myriads, thousands upon thousands," v. 17). God "ascended on high" in triumphal ascent. He was victorious over His enemies, and took as "captives" those who were "rebellious" toward His rule. Ephesians 4:8 quotes Psalm 68:18, in reference to Christ's triumphant ascension to His Father's throne subsequent to His resurrection. (Jesus' prohibition in John 20:17 likely has nothing to do with the nature of His resurrection body; rather, the Lord was instructing Mary not to cling to Him since He might disappear imminently and return to heaven.)

The imagery of leading captivity captive does not refer to believers being freed from Abraham's bosom in *hades* and then being led in triumph to heaven, because that interpretation does not correspond to the biblical usage or the idea being conveyed. Abraham was never a captive, for he is the very example of righteousness through faith (Rom 4)! The Old Testament souls in Paradise were not enemies of God. Old Testament believers were just as redeemed as New Testament believers, for salvation has always been on the basis of Christ's substitutionary atonement.

Jesus was the first to receive a glorified body, yet it was not required for Him to be the first to ascend to heaven. All believers who have died enter heaven; however, their experience is an intermediate state, while awaiting the glorification of the body. Moreover, the tombs opening when Christ died (Matt 27:52-53) were not resurrections but resuscitations (similar to Lazarus). Though he was resuscitated, Lazarus would grow old and die again,

Is Hell Eternal? – Part 3

When the Lord Jesus returns, those who have died in Christ will be reunited with their bodies and be raised to glorification (while the living will be immediately transformed).

for he returned to the same life he had prior to dying. When the Lord Jesus died, some tombs were opened (probably of those who had died recently) so they would be a testimony to the power of God, just as Lazarus was.

The expression “LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES” is simply an idiom meaning that Christ defeated His enemies. Thereafter, He was free to give “GIFTS TO MEN.” The captive being led captive was Satan and his demonic hosts. Colossians 2:15 is a parallel passage to Ephesians 4:8 (Ps 68:18), which declares of the death of Christ (Col 2:13-14): “When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.” At the cross, the Lord Jesus divested Himself of the wicked powers that had opposed Him so obstinately throughout His ministry. The “public display” refers to Christ disgracing the powers of evil when He died on the cross. Jesus “triumphed” over Satan and his demonic hosts with His sacrificial death. He accomplished the victory that rendered “powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb 2:14).

No Old Testament saint was ever held captive in *hadēs*. Satan had no power over Abraham, because God declared him righteous through faith (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3). There was no reason for Abraham or any Old Testament saint to be held captive in *hadēs* for any period of time. They would have gone immediately into the presence of God in heaven upon death. Scripture gives no indication that fullness of access to the blessings of being in God’s presence in heaven, was withheld from

any Old Testament believer when they died. There is every indication that believers who died prior to Christ’s death entered the presence of God immediately, because their sins were forgiven by God’s grace and their faith in the Messiah who was to come.

Conclusion

When the Lord Jesus died, His experience was the same as those of believers throughout the ages who die. His departed body remained on the earth buried in the grave, yet His incorporeal being (soul/spirit) immediately entered God’s presence in heaven. On the third day of His burial subsequent to His death, the Lord Jesus rose from the dead; it was then that His spirit was reunited with His body. Similarly, when the Lord Jesus returns, those who have died in Christ will be reunited with their bodies and be raised to glorification (while the living will be immediately transformed).

Revelation 6:7-8 prophesies the breaking of the fourth seal. The horse that will emerge is “ashen . . . and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him.” The ashen horse rider has the ability to claim the physical lives of earth dwellers. Consequently, their incorporeal being (soul/spirit) will be confined to “Hades” to await the final judgment. *Hadēs* is the prison and temporary location for the unbeliever, between their death and the time of the Great White Throne Judgment. *Hadēs* is the compartment called “torment” in Luke 16:23, and is where all unbelievers remain until the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20. (1168)



What Should I Do?

The coronavirus, perplexity, fear, and existential worries... These all beg the question: “What should I do?” An answer with a heavenly frame of reference and an eternal time frame.

Norbert Lieth

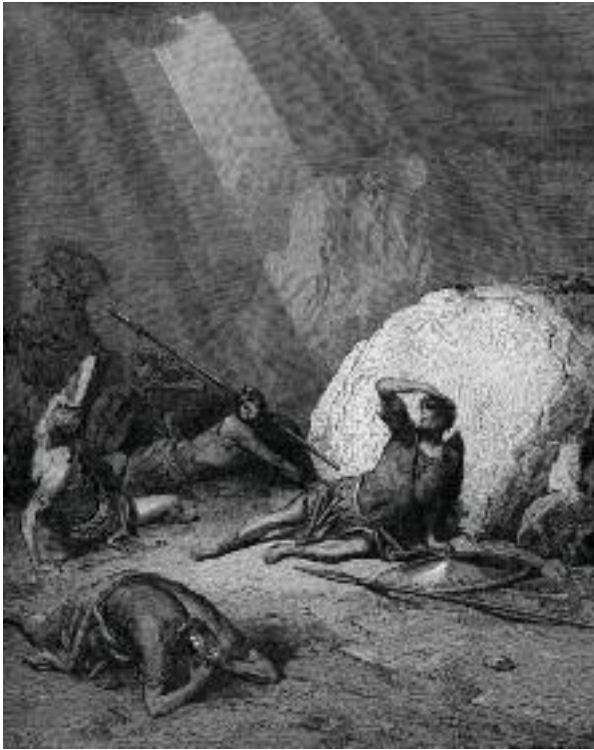
The question “What should I do?” is as old as conscious thought itself. The famous philosopher Immanuel Kant asked himself similar questions around 1770: “What can I know? What

should I do? What can I hope for? What is man?”

Man may search all over, but he’ll continue to search until he reaches for the Bible. It is the only source for a conclusive

What Should I Do?

But one day, the Lord confronted him. Overwhelmed by this supernatural event, Saul asked the all-important question, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).



answer to what we should do and what we're meant to be.

The Lord Jesus was once asked, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” (John 6:28). He replied, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (v. 29).

The greatest misery is unbelief in Jesus. There is no greater omission! By contrast, all other negative experiences are trifling. Anyone sitting in a dark place will do anything just to get out. People will take the greatest risks just to be alright again, even resorting to committing small evils. But the solution to life's original problem is faith in Jesus Christ.

On the day of Pentecost, the Jews realized that things weren't really going well

for them in spite of all their compliance with the law. As a result of Peter's Christ-centered message, this happened: “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter gave them the only correct answer: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (v. 38). The result was inevitable: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls” (v. 41).

Saul of Tarsus was a man who passionately hated Jesus and His church. In his rage, he tried everything to destroy the Christian church. But one day, the Lord confronted him. Overwhelmed by this supernatural event, Saul asked the all-important question, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). The Lord forgave Saul's sins and chose him to be an apostle to the nations. He was also given a new name: Paul.

The prison guard in Philippi was given the task of guarding two prisoners: the Apostle Paul and his companion Silas. This brutal prison warden was already accustomed to the responsibility. He did his job strictly by the book, but it brought him no satisfaction. He had time to watch Paul and Silas, so he heard how they didn't complain about their suffering, but instead began all at once to sing, and even to praise God. Suddenly, an earthquake shook the prison, causing the doors to burst open and the

You can know that Jesus is the hope for every life. For Him, there is no such thing as a hopeless case. You can also know that He has the power to forgive sins, and to give you life that is not only new, but also eternal.

prisoners' bonds to be loosed (Acts 16:26). The prison guard awoke from his sleep, became aware of his fatal situation, and tried to kill himself with his sword (v. 27). Perhaps he'd been questioning his life for some time and was frustrated by everything in and around him. Paul noticed this and spoke comfortingly to him. Then the man asked the essential question: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (v. 30). Paul answered without hesitation: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (v. 31). Belief in this message turned the prison guard's life completely upside down, and he literally became a new person: "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (vv. 33-34).

Now let's take a closer look at the aforementioned questions from philosopher Immanuel Kant.

What Can I Know?

You can know that Jesus is the hope for every life. For Him, there is no such thing as a hopeless case. You can also know that He has the power to forgive sins, and to give you life that is not only new, but also eternal. You can also know that Jesus offers a security that will continue to endure beyond tomorrow. The Apostle Paul's spiritual life began with the question, "Who art thou, Lord? ...What wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:5-6). As an old man shortly before his death, he was able to

testify with great certainty, "I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim 1:12b).

What Should I Do?

The previous examples show us that a person must choose Jesus because, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29b). Those who heard Peter's sermon at Pentecost willingly accepted the proclaimed Word of God. The prison guard in Philippi was delighted that his whole household had become believers—it was a decisive act. He gave himself to the Lord willingly.

What Should You Do Now?

Accept the invitation that God issued through His prophet: "Seek ye me, and ye shall live" (Amos 5:4b).

What Can I Hope For?

Those who earnestly seek God will find Him, receive forgiveness from all sins, and live! Any such person has hope that the Lord will never let go of him, and will carry him through for all eternity. With Jesus, burdens fall away, hope arises, prayers are answered, and existing difficulties overcome. You are no longer on your own; Jesus is there!

What Is Man?

Without Jesus he is hopeless, prey to Satan and sin. But with and through Jesus, man receives a new position: child of God and co-heir with Jesus, and thus an heir of the Father in heaven. Then this is true: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor 5:17). (MR0221/1136)



The Mystery of the Next Step of Faith

Wim Malgo (1922-1992)

An interpretation of the last book of the Bible. Part 23. Revelation 2:13.

The Lord can praise the church in Pergamos because they hold firmly to His name: “thou holdest fast my name” (v. 13). What name? The wonderful name that God gave us for salvation: the costly name of Jesus! Located at the center of Satan’s strategy, this church hasn’t let its gaze be obscured by pagan splendor, carnal lust, or the lust of the eyes. That would easily have been possible, since the entire population was enthusiastic about the snake cult and emperor worship.

The phrase that is used here, “holding fast,” is actually too weak and colorless. You could also phrase it as digging in and holding on for dear life. In Pergamos it truly was a matter of life and death, because something that belonged to the believers was being snatched at. That is always the enemy’s goal: He wants to snatch what we have from us. That’s why the letters repeat the admonition, “But that which ye have already hold fast till I come” (Rev 2:25). Or, “hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev 3:11).

So, it really is a matter of holding tight. Life in Pergamos demanded letting go of Jesus’ name, because Satan lived there. But Satan cannot with-

stand a confrontation with Jesus’ name. This is the tremendous struggle we’re facing.

“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21b), the Scriptures say. As soon as the name of Jesus is mentioned in faith, the satanic darkness is shattered. Anyone who clings to this name can do no harm. Then, as overcomers we cry, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil 4:13).—Oh, that we would make more use of Jesus’ name!

In Antipas’ case, the struggle led to death. The Lord Himself says this: “...Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you...” (Rev 2:13). In our case, Satan’s attacks aren’t yet so severe. It’s more civilized. His methods are more subtle, but his goal remains the same. He wants us to deny the name of Jesus in everyday life, by asserting ourselves and being egoists, envious, and slanderers. He wants us to be silent when we should speak, so that our attitude corresponds to Peter’s: “I know not this man of whom ye speak” (Mark 14:71b).

The Lord continues to praise His church in Pergamos, because He never forgets anything. He says, “thou...hast not denied my faith” (Rev

Located at the center of Satan's strategy, the church in Pergamos hasn't let its gaze be obscured by pagan splendor, carnal lust, or the lust of the eyes.



2:13). This is significant because there is faith, and then there is *faith*. Jesus says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36a). This is the first step: faith in Jesus Christ as the personal Savior. But we shouldn't stop at this first step. People who do remain stuck in spiritual infancy. They may believe in the Lord Jesus, but they don't actually have *faith in* the Lord Jesus. And that's precisely what the secret is. Paul understood this. He says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). By "in the flesh" he means: I still live in my sinful flesh and "know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18a).

In other words, "I live and believe just as Jesus lived and believed, and I keep denying the claims of the flesh like self-righteousness, impurity, and all sinful impulses. I offer myself up completely, as my Savior did. I'm following exactly the same path that my Lord took. I'm remaining on the cross as my Savior stayed on the Cross." Living in the faith of the Son of God is an essential step beyond believing in Jesus.

The believers in Pergamos understood this, and they didn't deny their faith. The faith of the Lord Jesus endures, even when everything collapses; when body and soul faint, and every circumstance seems to have conspired against you. To deny him is to refuse to confess Him, as Peter did. Denying one's faith is sustaining oneself, at the expense of professing to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can the Lord say of you, "Thou hast not denied my faith"? Or have you denied it? It's a wonderful testament to Pergamos when He adds, "thou...hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth" (Rev 2:13).

The name "Antipas" has several meanings. One of them is, "like his father." As a faithful witness, he gave his life for Jesus. We haven't had to pay for our testimony with our lives, as martyrs do. But there is already a spiritual martyrdom that consists of not forsaking the testimony of Jesus in our everyday lives, but dying to the self. Paul testifies, "I die daily" (1 Cor 15:31b).

Your martyrdom may consist of being connected with someone through marriage, family, or work, who has Satan's throne in their heart. May we all strive to have Antipas' attitude and not deny His faith—the faith of Jesus. So many are despondent in our day, even within the church of Jesus. They're giving up and surrendering in the good fight of faith. But outside of the church, there will be despondent people, those who give in to the demands of a person or of the flesh (in whatever form). Peter was induced to deny the Lord Jesus and the Cross. But the Lord said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Mark 8:33).

Isn't it moving that the exalted Lord gives Antipas the same title that He Himself bears? He calls him "Antipas, my faithful martyr." This is how the Lord Jesus Himself is named: "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness..." (Rev 1:5a). Faithful witnesses are those who endure to death.


(MR0221/1137)

WORLD FOCUS

 EU

Bitcoin Transfers Must Be Identified

Proposed changes to EU law would force companies that transfer Bitcoin or other crypto-assets to collect details on the recipient and sender.

 The proposals would make crypto-assets more traceable, the EU Commission said, and would help stop money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

The Commission argued that crypto-asset transfers should be subject to the same anti-money-laundering rules as wire transfers.

Under the proposals, a company transferring crypto-assets for a customer would be obliged to include their name, address, date of birth and account number, and the name of the recipient.

David Gerard, author of *Attack of the 50 Foot Blockchain*, told the BBC: "This is just applying existing rules to crypto. This has been coming since 2019."

He said that although these were European proposals their impact would reach much further.

"If you want to make real money, you have to follow the rules of real money," he said.

-www.bbc.com, 20 July 2021

Commentary: We can see how slowly but surely, any attempt to make financial transactions anonymous will be met with regulation by governments. The EU is again taking the lead by imposing its regulatory powers on matters of international

finance and economy. As David Gerard states, "although these were European proposals their impact would reach much further." Namely, the Roman dominance will extend to planet earth, as Bible prophecy states.

The time is not too far when the final regulatory authority will exert his control over worldwide transactions: "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" (Revelation 13:17).


(By K. Farmer) 7558

(See *Revelation 13: Satan's Last Victory*, Item #1067, CLEARANCE \$3.)

 CANADA

Tax the Ultra-Rich

Jagmeet Singh says the New Democrats would tackle the country's multi-billion deficit through the party's long-standing promise to tax extremely wealthy Canadians and corporations.

 The NDP blueprint focuses heavily on past promises, including better supports for workers through a national pharmacare program, 10 days of paid sick leave, and higher minimum wages.

He added he would target web giants such as Google, Netflix, and Amazon.

"Our plan is to make the ultra rich, the ultra rich people, and the ultra rich corporations, pay."

In its April budget, the federal Liberal government projected the deficit to be \$154.7 billion

this fiscal year, after a record-smashing \$354.7 billion last year, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

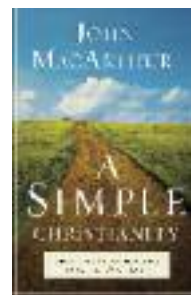
-www.fox5ny.com, 15 July 2021

Commentary: Canada, the second largest country in the world after Russia, is only thinly populated at 40 million people, with a life expectancy of 83.6 years. It is considered one of the super-rich countries, with great natural resources. But the bottom line always is: does the government have enough income to pay for its infrastructure?

Canada follows in the footsteps of Europe, where the super-rich pay super-high taxes. It is of interest that, for example in 2002, Nokia director Anssi Vanjoki was clocked driving 47 mph in a 31-mph zone in Finland; the fine was \$103,000. This fine was calculated based on the percentage of income of Mr. Vanjoki.

While this is an exception, the tendency toward having the super-rich carry a little more of the burden is definitely in the works.

What does the Bible say? When searching for the word "rich" in the New Testament, we find it appears 40 times. Of these, over 30 times the rich are viewed in a negative way. The word "poor" appears 35 times, but in virtually all cases the poor are comforted. James starts chapter 5 with



these words: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you" (James 5:1).


7554

(See *A Simple Christianity*, Item #2324, SALE \$12.)

WORLD

5-Day Workweek Is Dead

More livable schedules have had success elsewhere in the world. Companies in Japan, New Zealand, and elsewhere have experimented with shorter workweeks in recent years, often reporting happier workers who are actually better at their jobs.

 But one of the largest and most high-profile recent experiments took place in Iceland, where local and federal authorities working with trade unions launched two trials of a shortened workweek, one in 2015 and one in 2017. In the trials, workers shifted from a 40-hour work week to 35 or 36 hours, with no cut to their pay. It wasn't just office workers who participated—the trials included day care workers, police officers, care workers for people with disabilities, and people in a variety of other occupations.

The results were impressive, according to a report on the trials published in June by Autonomy, a UK-based think tank that helped analyze them. Workers reported better work-life balance, lower stress, and greater well-being. "My older children know that we have shorter hours and they often say something like, 'Is it Tuesday today, dad? Do you finish early today? Can I come home directly after school?'" one father said, according to the report. "And I might reply 'Of course.' We then go and do something—we have nice quality time."

Encouraged by the results of the trial, many Icelandic workplaces have embraced shorter hours, with 86 percent of the working population either working shorter hours already or on contracts that will phase in the reduction in the coming years. The Autonomy report has also generated global interest at a time when workers and companies alike are rethinking what jobs should look like. For example, the shift to remote work over the last 15 months has shown that "quite drastic changes in working practices can happen quite quickly," said Jack Kellam, an Autonomy researcher. Now his work on the Iceland trials has gotten news coverage in countries from Australia to Germany, and several companies have



Long and unpredictable work hours leave many Americans with little time for anything but their jobs.
d3sign/Getty Images

approached Autonomy for advice on implementing shorter hours for their employees.

But making something like the Icelandic trials work in the United States would require major changes. For one thing, unions in Iceland, which represent 90 percent of workers, played a big role in negotiating both the trials and the long-term adoption of shorter hours that resulted. But union density is much lower in the United States, with just 10.8 percent of workers represented.

-www.vox.com, 13 July 2021

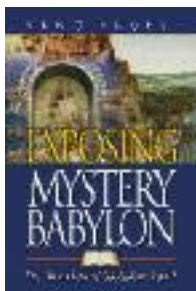
Commentary: The Biblical standard, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work" (Exodus 20:9), has been buried long ago.

Is this a conspiracy? The answer is yes. It's taking place in the invisible world—the powers under heaven.

If we were to compare 2021 with 1821 or even 1921, we will immediately realize the virtually unthinkable luxury mankind has created for himself. We are reminded of Biblical examples: after the seven glorious, productive years in Egypt, catastrophe came. That was also the case with Sodom and Gomorrah, and so it will be in the end stages of the end times. The ultimate goal? Revelation 17:14: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he

is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." 7557

(See *Exposing Mystery Babylon Part 1*, Item #1078, **SALE \$2.50**)




 **SLOVAKIA**

First Flight of Flying Car

A prototype flying car has completed a 35-minute flight between international airports in Nitra and Bratislava, Slovakia.



 The hybrid car-aircraft, AirCar, is equipped with a BMW engine and runs on regular petrol-pump fuel.

Its creator, Prof Stefan Klein, said it could fly about 1,000km (600 miles), at a height of 8,200ft (2,500m), and had clocked up 40 hours in the air so far.

It takes two minutes and 15 seconds to transform from car into aircraft.

Prof Klein drove it straight off the runway and into town upon arrival, watched by invited reporters.

He described the experience as "normal" and "very pleasant."

In the air, the vehicle reached a cruising speed of 170km/h.

It can carry two people, with a combined weight limit of 200kg (31 stone).

But unlike drone-taxi prototypes, it cannot take off and land vertically and requires a runway.

Dr. Stephen Wright, senior research fellow in avionics and aircraft, at the University of the West of England, described the AirCar as "the lovechild of a Bugatti Veyron and a Cesna 172."

(continued next page)

Flying Car (continued from page 25)

"I have to admit that this looks really cool—but I've got a hundred questions about certification," Dr. Wright said.

"Anyone can make an aeroplane but the trick is making one that flies and flies and flies for the thick end of a million hours, with a person on board, without having an incident.

"I can't wait to see the piece of paper that says this is safe to fly and safe to sell."

-www.bbc.com, 30 June 2021

Commentary: While the success of this air-car is quite amazing, Dr. Wright has doubts that it will eventually be approved so that it is, "safe to fly and safe to sell." Flying in the air requires significantly more knowledge, talent, and training than driving a car on the street.

It is of interest that this originates from Slovakia, a nation not well known. The *CIA Factbook* records the population as 5.5 million, with a life expectancy of 78 years and an excellent credit rating.

Slovak Štefan Banič is credited with inventing the parachute, and Ján Bahýľ is the inventor of the helicopter. The Catholic priest Jozef Murgaš, on 27 April 1905 was the first in the world to transmit the spoken word over the radio.

Today, inventions are skyrocketing, and the latest report is that communist China is leading the way.

Looking at the Bible, inventions are pictured in a rather negative way. Ecclesiastes 7:29 states: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." We know from the prophetic Word that the ultimate invention will be the image of the beast.

7543

(See *The Remarkable Wisdom of Solomon*, Item #2223, \$12.99.)




NEW ZEALAND

Will Open Travel Be Closed Again?

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern warned people to prepare for their travel plans to be disrupted if there is a coronavirus outbreak.

© Provided by Daily Mail



 "Those undertaking travel on either side of the ditch will do so under the guidance of flier beware," she said, using a colloquial term for the Tasman Sea that separates the two island nations. That could include an unexpected stint in mandatory hotel quarantine if conditions change midflight.

Passengers traveling to New Zealand in the bubble will be required to have spent the 14 days before the flight in Australia. Airline crews will be required to work only on routes considered low-risk.

Australia and New Zealand owe their success in suppressing the coronavirus in large part to having some of the strictest border controls in the world. In Australia, state governments have snapped their borders shut at short notice in response to outbreaks in neighboring regions, splitting families and stranding travelers en route.

Australia's half-bubble with New Zealand has been halted twice so far due to virus concerns, and authorities in both countries have said the same may happen again if new cases spread.

Palau, one of the few nations not to have recorded any cases of covid-19, was so far only allowing travel from Taiwan, where domestic transmission of the virus had been tightly controlled. Palau has also moved swiftly to vaccinate its small population of 18,000.

Taiwanese Health Minister Chen Shih-chung said that the travel bubble was only possible because "both sides have controlled the epidemic well."

Australian and New Zealand officials hope their bubble arrangement will revive tourist businesses that have been hit by the border closures. Australia was New Zealand's largest source of international tourists before the pandemic.

-www.msn.com, 6 April 2021

Commentary: While this reports dates back to April 2021, we know that Covid-19 is not over yet. Again, it is emphasized by various international news sources that New Zealand and Australia applied some of the strictest prevention methods available, and thus have suffered the least infections and deaths.

Here are the figures from Statista.com. Coronavirus deaths per 1 million population as of 28 June 2021:

• Peru	5,893
• Brazil	2,432
• USA	1,831
• Israel	710
• Australia	35
• New Zealand	5

There are multiple other reasons for the low death rate in some countries, compared with many European and North and South American countries, but one thing becomes clearer every day: restrictions strictly implemented clearly demonstrate the best results.

We again point to 1 Peter 2:13: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme."

From Revelation, we know that horrendous catastrophes will break forth on planet earth. When the sixth angel sounds his trumpet, we read: "By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths" (Revelation 9:18). The most horrible statement, however, is verse 21: "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

7546

(See *You Can Understand the Book of Revelation*, Item #2306, **SALE \$12**)

ISRAEL

Cybersecurity Blessings and Curses from Israel

Microsoft and Citizen Lab said that an Israeli company named Candiru is behind two Windows zero-day exploits that have been used to infect and deploy a never-before-seen spyware strain on the devices of at least 100 victims, including politicians, human rights activists, journalists, academics, embassy workers and political dissidents.



IMAGE: ALEXANDER ANDREWS

Founded in 2014, the company is part of Israel's burgeoning cybersecurity scene, where it has provided offensive capabilities to governments across the world.

Named DevilsEye, this tool is a Windows malware strain with spyware capabilities that can allow Candiru's clients full access to an infected device once the tool has been deployed on a target's Windows system.

In a separate blog post, Cristin Goodwin—General Manager, Digital Security Unit, echoed Microsoft's previous call to action against companies like Candiru, which have been observed selling cyber arms to abusive regimes for years. These governments have often been seen using these hacking tools against civil society members instead of espionage or tracking criminals.

-*therecord.media*, 15 July 2021

Commentary: We continually note the many blessings the world receives from industrious Israelis. Over and again, Israel's advances in agriculture, healthcare, disaster recovery, intelligence, and the defense industry (to name a few) have benefited countries around the world.

Lately, we are seeing the ascendancy of Israel's cybersecurity industry. Technology developed in Israel is protecting computers all over the world. However, this article and a recent article on the Committee to Protect Journalists' website titled, "Botswana police use Israeli Cellebrite tech to search another journalist's phone," as well as other reports of the misuse of the technology from Israel's NSO Group by repressive governments, all demonstrate that these tools are not always used for good.

We do well to remember the lesson of Balaam: "thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed...I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more" (Numbers 22:12b, 18b).
(By J. Froese) 7552
(See *Israel and the Church*, Item #2376, SALE \$14.)



USA

Brain Chip Allows Paralyzed Man to Write

Paralyzed from the neck down, the man stares intently at a screen. As he imagines handwriting letters, they appear before him as typed text thanks to a new brain implant.

The 65-year-old is "typing" at a speed similar to his peers tapping on a smartphone, using a device that could one day help paralyzed people communicate quickly and easily.

The research could benefit people suffering spinal cord injuries, strokes or motor neurone disease, said Frank Willett, a research scientist at Stanford University and lead author of the study published in the journal *Nature*.

"Imagine if you could only move your eyes up and down but couldn't move anything else—a device like this could enable

you to type your thoughts at speeds that are comparable to that of normal handwriting or typing on a smartphone," he told AFP.

The researchers found that handwriting generates distinctive brain activity that proved easier for an implant to detect and a computer program to interpret and translate into text.

The research involved a man nicknamed T5 who was paralyzed from the neck down after a spinal cord injury in 2007.

He was fitted with two aspirin-sized brain-computer interface (BCI) chips on the left side of his brain that could detect neurons firing in the motor cortex that governs hand movement.

Sensors transmitted the signals to a computer for translation by an artificial intelligence algorithm into typed text.

Over time, T5 was able to produce 90 characters or about 18 words a minute when copying sentences, and around 74 characters or 15 words a minute when replying to questions.

-*www.france24.com/en*, 12 May 2021

Commentary: Nearly every day, we read something in the news about medical advancements due to cutting edge technology. It is incredible that this machine can help a fully paralyzed man "write" simply by imagining handwritten letters.

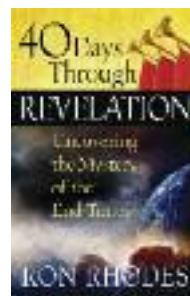
However, there is also something sinister that one can imagine arising from technology like this: "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would

not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Revelation 13:15).

(By K. Farmer)

7507


(See *40 Days Through Revelation*, Item #2301, SALE \$12.)



 **FRANCE**

French as the EU's Common Tongue?

When Emmanuel Macron's government takes over the rotating EU Council presidency next year, its mother tongue will be used in meetings, it's claimed.

 France will also plough cash into free language classes for foreign diplomats to learn French, a source told the *Daily Telegraph*.

Clement Beaune, France's Europe minister, said: "Even though the French language is alive, flourishing, and its teaching is developing around the world, it is at home, within the European institutions, that it suffers."

Like many of his predecessors, Macron has pushed initiatives to boost French learning across the world.

French is one of the EU's three working languages, which also include English and German among 24 official languages spoken in the bloc.

-*www.the-sun.com*, 7 June 2021



Emmanuel Macron wants the EU to speak his language Credit: REUTERS

Commentary: France's attempt to reduce the use of English as Europe's most common international language, will probably run into a dead end.

There is something about English that has an advantage; namely, its simplicity and practicality. Most other European languages have a higher cultural level and are more difficult to learn as a second language. For example, when it comes to the distinction between male and female

and formal versus informal in the second-person pronoun, English is super-simple: "you." This singularity of usage is also applied to the animal world. For example, dogs eat and drink, just like humans; not so in other languages.

The other virtually insurmountable obstacle is the entertainment and communication fields, which are dominated by the USA—thus, English.

Languages will continue to be practiced in each respective country. Acts 2 tells of Jews from 16 different nations hearing the apostles speaking in their very own tongue. Whether the disciples were speaking these 16 different languages, we do not know, but what is reported is clear: "And

how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:8). 7532


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



 **CHINA**

Afghan War Withdrawal Worries

The Chinese government rarely passes up a chance to accuse the United States of military adventurism and hegemony. In the case of Afghanistan, though, it has changed its tone, warning that Washington now bears the responsibility for the hasty end to its two-decade war there.

 "The United States, which created the Afghan issue in the first place, should act responsibly to ensure a smooth transition in Afghanistan," China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, said at a forum in Beijing. "It should not simply shift the burden onto others and withdraw from the country with the mess left behind unattended."



Kabul, Afghanistan. Statements by senior Chinese officials made it clear that they would blame the United States for any insecurity that spreads in the region. Credit: Jim Huylebroek for *The New York Times*

With only a residual military contingent left to protect the American Embassy in Kabul, the Taliban have been steadily expanding their political control as Afghan government forces crumble or retreat. Taliban forces seized Badakhshan, the province that reaches the mountainous Chinese border through the Wakhan Corridor.

While that narrow territory poses little direct security threat, China fears that the breakdown of order in Afghanistan could spill out of the country to other neighbors, including Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

-*www.nytimes.com*, 15 July 2021

Commentary: It was Christmas Eve of 1979 when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. After experiencing significant losses, the USSR departed on 15 February 1989. Then, after 11 September 2001, the US invaded Afghanistan with the declared aim to oust the Taliban regime. Between the Soviet and American invasions of Afghanistan, more than 2 million people have lost their lives, and an unconfirmed 8 million Afghans fled the country. The result was, in both cases,

(continued next page)

War Withdrawal (continued from page 28)

the same: defeat, with the Taliban as the clear winner.

Now China, which rarely gets involved in military conflicts, is greatly concerned. However, their statement, “The United States...created the Afghan issue in the first place,” is incorrect, since the Soviets were there before. But, military conflict was also a reality before the Soviet invasion.

What is the significance? This shows that weapons of war can no longer solve political conflicts. Communist China is carefully analyzing recent history and taking calculated steps. One of them is the “Belt and Road Initiative”: building connections over land and sea to other Asian countries, Africa, and Europe. Instead of force, they use their economic power to dominate nations by investing excessive amounts of money in roads, railways, airports, seaports, and manufacturing facilities.

A real challenge has developed for the Western world. It almost seems like the communists have turned capitalist. That is not surprising because, in the end, there will be one global system. Military force will play a minor role, as the 7 billion plus population of planet earth wants more, not war, but merchandise. At this point in time, China is playing the winning hand. In summary, we see that capitalism, socialism, and communism have blended, causing countries to erase their borders and truly become global.


We again point to the end, namely the total collapse of the global economy. Revelation 18:10 speaks of the world’s leaders, who lament and bewail the collapse of the final system: “Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.” 7556

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



RUSSIA New Fighter Jet Displayed

Russian President Vladimir Putin inspected the prospective warplane displayed with much fanfare at the MAKS-2021 International Aviation and Space Salon, which opened in Zhukovsky, outside Moscow.



The prospective warplane, marketed under the project name Checkmate, has one engine and is designed to be smaller and cheaper than Russia’s latest Su-57 two-engine stealth fighter, also built by Sukhoi. It can fly at a speed of 1.8-2 times the speed of sound, has a range of 3,000 kilometers (1,864 miles) and a payload of 7,400 kilograms (16,300 pounds), the jet’s makers said.

Industries and Trade Minister Denis Manturov said that the prospective fighter was being developed to compete with the U.S. F-35 Lightning II fighter that entered service in 2015, a new Chinese fighter, and other designs. “We must join other nations that sell such aircraft,” he said.

“What we saw in Zhukovsky today demonstrates that the Russian aviation has a big potential for development and our aircraft making industries continue to create new competitive aircraft designs,” Putin said in a speech at the show’s opening.

-apnews.com, 20 July 2021

Commentary: At this point in time, Joel 3:9 is valid: “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up.” However, that will change when the law goes out from Zion: “And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar



A prototype of Russia's prospective fighter jet is displayed at the MAKS-2021 International Aviation and Space Salon in Zhukovsky outside Zhukovsky, Russia.
(AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko, Pool)

off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Micah 4:3).

In the meantime, the nations continue to produce more and more dangerous and destructive weapons the world over. Yet, as many reports indicate, these weapons of war will be vulnerable to computer hacking, which Israel allegedly used against Iran’s nuclear facilities. Wars, as we have known them to this day, have been characterized by visible destruction of life and property. But the invisible wars can do likewise and more, although mostly hidden from the public and even many intelligence agencies of the world. The future is here: battles are being fought silently, often unnoticed, but they can be more destructive. 7560

(See *Northern Storm Rising*, Item #2294, \$15.99.)

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“But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine” (Isaiah 29:23-24).

BY ARNO FROESE

Jacob is the beginning of Israel. His name was given by God. This occurred after “Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him” (Genesis 32:24). Jacob was separated from his family and the riches he had accumulated. It was the time when he received notice that his brother Esau was on his way to meet him: “he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him” (verse 6b).

In his great need, he prayed, “Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children” (verse 11).

We know that Jacob earned the blessing of the firstborn from his father Isaac by deception. Now the time of reckoning had arrived, which resulted in the confession of his name: “What is thy name? And he said, Jacob” (verse 27). What does the name mean? To supplant, circumvent, overreach.

It is of interest that although it was clearly stated, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob,” when we continue reading Scripture, we find that the name Jacob appears about 300 times later on.

Doubtless, this is a prophetic picture showing the old creation—Jacob, the man of

flesh and blood—and the new one—Israel: “for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men” (verse 28b).

When attempting to understand this nation Israel and the land, we must first realize that they are distinctly different from all nations on planet earth throughout human history.

Only one nation is called by His name. King Solomon’s prayer has been answered, is being answered, and will be answered in the future: “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Rosh Hashanah

The Hebrew Standard, 7 November 1919, speaks of this Jewish holiday:

An old tradition has come down to us in the pages of the Talmud that the three great mothers in Israel who were at first without child gave birth to their sons on Rosh Hashonah, Sarah, the wife of Abraham; Rachel, the wife of Jacob, and Hannah, the wife of Elkanah—these noble and pious women who so longingly prayed to God that He should bless them with child, see at last

When attempting to understand this nation Israel and the land, we must first realize that they are distinctly different from all nations on planet earth throughout human history.

the answer to their prayer, when on a certain Rosh Hashonah day Isaac, Joseph and Samuel appear in this world. And it is in keeping with this tradition that we read in the Torah and in the Scriptural portions of these two days the chapters that speak of these three great women in Israel and their offspring, to remind us of today what we may learn from their life, their deeds, their acts. Aye, each of these sons, whose birth we recall today, represents a certain type, a certain ideal towards which we must strive, if we truly desire that Israel shall live and thrive and prosper and succeed. Review their lives and—you will find that their own characteristic features, when taken together, are in keeping with the Rabbinic maxim: "The Torah, the Holy One Blessed be He and Israel are One."

Rosh Hashanah begins the evening of 6 September 2021, and ends the evening of 8

September 2021. It's the first day of the seventh month, which some rabbis identify as the day of creation; thus, it's happy birthday earth!

We understand the unity between the God of creation and His people Israel. What He has begun, He will fulfill. We pray that in the not-too-distant future, verse 24 in our introduction will be fulfilled: "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." Zechariah 12:10 is also forthcoming: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." ^{MC}

Action
for Israel



"I will bless them that
bless thee..."
(Genesis 12:3).

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

MC0921

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Leaping Over Hindrances

By David Phillips *Project Manager*

“For by You I can run against a troop, By my God I can leap over a wall. As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him” (Psalm 18:29-30).



We are very thankful for your contributions toward the Emergency Fund for the Ebenezer Home in June. It was beyond our expectation!

Seeing people in need of personal items like dentures, hearing aids, eyeglasses, medications, etc., and being unable to acquire them simply

because of the high expense, is very painful and often gives me a feeling of helplessness. But with your grateful help and loving donations, we can now meet these extra expenses and fill in the gap for those who require it. The residents who receive help through this emergency fund wish to tell you how much they love and pray for you! Toda raba!

This month's donations we are dedicating toward new residents who are from low socio-economic backgrounds. They cannot come up with the needed entrance fee, since there is no government help for that. This will help ensure that those who have limited family or relatives to help care and provide for them, can still join the Ebenezer family.



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

MC0921
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Yes, I wish to support the Ebenezer Home Project.

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

EVIDENCE FOR THE EXODUS... CREMATION FORBIDDEN?... HOSEA'S THIRD DAY

Evidence for the Exodus

Mr. Froese,

My pastor, during a sermon concerning Moses and the Exodus, stated that other than the Bible, there is no evidence recorded [that] there was a Moses or there was ever an Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. I disagreed but had no counterpoint.

My question: does any evidence exist other than the Bible? Did Egyptian historians record anything to indicate there was a Moses [who] led a group of Hebrews out of Egypt? Is there any record of Egypt losing a large part of their army when God parted the Red Sea? It seems that Egypt, being the advanced nation they were, would have recorded these happenings. If not Egypt, did any historians from anywhere record any of it?

Help! That I [may] have a counterpoint.

-J. Gore, IN

Answer: Your pastor is correct: historical and archaeological evidence do not conclusively support the Exodus account in the Bible, but that does not change anything. We know that Jesus and the disciples believed in and confirmed the story of Exodus. The word "Egypt" appears in the New Testament 24 times, and Egypt is mentioned with Sodom in Revelation 11:8.

Why did scientifically advanced Egypt not mention the Hebrews? The Bible answers: "because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians" (Genesis 43:32b). The Israelites were a despised, rejected, and mistreated people, just good enough

to do the most menial manual work. That, incidentally, is a hot issue in American historical education; slavery in America was real before the 13 colonies changed their name to the USA. This is how national histories are written; the unpleasant parts are left out or conveniently brushed aside. That's why Egyptian historians did not record it, but the Bible does and that is our ultimate authority.

Cremation Forbidden?

Dear Mr. Froese,

I have been having conversations with my in-laws over the issue of cremation, and was informed that Scripture prohibits the practice of cremation. I challenged his perspective by naively asking, "Really? I wasn't aware that the Bible prohibits it. If you can find something to support that, I would be happy to read it." He handed me a copy of your tract, "Burial or Cremation." I have read it thoroughly and am concerned about the many statements of dogma and certainty you put forth as biblical truth. I am basing this upon the fact that nowhere in Scripture does the Bible overtly or even mildly suggest that the practice of cremation is against God's will and plan for our bodies. In the second paragraph, you declared that you would "use the Bible as our only reliable source," yet Scripture seems to be quite silent on the issue.

When the Apostle Paul states that our bodies are the "temple of the Holy Spirit," he was speaking of us in the living form. The Holy Spirit is active in the



living body. Under any form of orthodox theology, the Holy Spirit is no longer active in the corpse. Therefore, I'm not sure how 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 applies to your argument.

You are right that cremation has traditionally been an Eastern practice and has roots in Hinduism and Buddhism. As I stated earlier, many of our practices regarding funerals have roots in pagan traditions. I might refer you to 1 Corinthians 8, and what Paul says about food offered to idols. I think that for those who oppose cremation, what is most disturbing to them and considered abominable, is that it has been most often practiced by Eastern cults. This would be an honest admission.

I have written to you, not to offend or make light of your views, but to try to put into perspective the way families choose to care for the bodies of their deceased. It's a sensitive and difficult decision, and I think adding an extra burden of guilt to grieving people is not helpful. If Scripture was actually clearer on the subject, then your views might provide a more firm foundation for families who must choose their course of action.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

-S. Wisthoff, NE

Answer: You are right: the Bible does not specifically forbid cremation, but it gives us a clear example of how the saint is to be buried.

The Bible speaks of burial, but not of burning. That for me is sufficient. The issue of finances is a nonstarter when dealing with our temple of the Holy Spirit. Six years ago, I buried my wife at a green/natural cemetery called "Dust to Dust." The total cost was only \$1300.

Incidentally, there is ample documentation on the Internet regarding the origin of cremation.

I rest my case: the Bible teaches burial.

Hosea's Third Day

Dear Editor,

I would like your opinion on the meaning of Hosea 6:2 and the timing described in it. The Apostle's verse in 2 Peter 3:8 must have some implication for the Jewish people, who are addressed in his epistles. There could be the question, "Are we in the

third day mentioned in Hosea 6:2?" Thank you for your observation on this verse.

-J. Dalton, IL

Answer: Between 1882 and 1903, a large number of Jews returned to the Promised Land after being absent for about 2,000 years. Suddenly, on 14 May 1948, the nation was proclaimed. The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writes about modern Israel: "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:25b-26a). One day, Ezekiel 36:27 will be fulfilled: "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

Is there a prophetic meaning to Hosea 6:2? Considering that one day is as 1,000 years and 1,000 years as one day, it is my understanding we are in the third day.

King David in Jerusalem

To the Editor:

Your alert to the fact you no longer will do Message of the Month (CDs) motivated a long overdue note of appreciation for your clear-headed teaching on the prophetic relevance of current events. A thank you to all contributors to the magazines, who help greatly in seeing through prophetic hysterics and sticking to solid Biblical teaching.

My question: 1) What is your take on King David's role in the kingdom (reference: Ezekiel 34:23-24)? 2) Also, do you see the Church inhabiting the earth or new Jerusalem during the millennium?

-C. Kohne, CA

Answer: Based on Ezekiel 34:23-24, David will rule the people of Israel on earth. Jeremiah confirms this: "But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them" (Jeremiah 30:9).

The Church will take up residence in the new Jerusalem. Keep in mind the distinction between heavenly reality and earthy (physical) reality; they are not always expressed in definite words. From Revelation 21, we learn that "there was no more sea...no more death...no temple," because "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple." In summary, we—the Church—are in the presence of the Lord forevermore; where the Lord is, there we are. (MC)

Position on Millennial Residents

Wilfred Hahn

Recently, I noted the reference to my articles on the Rapture in the June *Midnight Call* in the “Letters to the Editor” section. The reader had asked a question about who would end up populating the Millennium if all “Tribulation Christians” are slaughtered during that period.

I have often received this question in a number of forums, and believe that I have successfully defended my position. It is both Scriptural and logical.

As to the matter of just who and what groups populate the Millennium, a common error is to overlook the First Resurrection promised to all Tribulational martyrs. All Christians who die in the Tribulation are resurrected.

Here are the main Bible references that clearly state that there is a First Resurrection of Tribulational Christians. There are two:

Revelation 20:4: “[...] And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. **They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.**”

Revelation 20:4-5 clearly identifies the First Resurrection and to which group it applies.

Here is another reference to these souls:

Revelation 20:6: “Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”

These souls mentioned above (which are Tribulational Christians) will reign with Christ on earth in the Chiliasm for its requisite thousand years.

This group of souls is a vast number, according to Scripture.

Consider Revelation 7:9: “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.”

All of these saints and their brethren came out of the Tribulation. This is stated in Revelation 7:14a: “I answered, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said, ‘These are they who have come out of the great tribulation.’”

Revelation 6:11 is also instructive: “Then each of them [the first of the Tribulational Christians received in heaven] was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.”

The “full number” ends in a multitude of saints living on earth during the Chiliasm, that could not be counted.

In conclusion, there will be different groups that go into the Millennium period. Most likely, the largest and most populous group will be resurrected Tribulational Christians.

As the case may be, pre-tribbers should be inclined to rejoice about this position. It produces a “killer” refutation of there being a Rapture at any other time than the start of the Tribulation period. (MC)



 **BOLIVIA**



Progress on New Boarding School's Construction

“When do we get to move into the new boarding school?” the children often ask us. The first building is looking so nice that it’s practically inviting you to move in.

BY OBED AND REBECCA HANISCH, RIBERALTA



Boarding school students

A lot has happened since the groundbreaking ceremony in December of 2018—especially a lot of manual labor. Tree trunks were felled to construct the scaffolding, carpenters had to make a mold for the staircase, and the location of the stainless steel washbasins had to be planned out first. A lot of the materials were trucked and flown in from the larger cities, so all of this took time.



Boarding school

The girls' boarding school is complete, and with a rainbow besides!



Girls' Boarding School

Nonetheless, the girls' building is now standing. The Lord has granted a lot of grace in everything! We're grateful for God's faithfulness, and overwhelmed that He made it possible. We would like to extend our very sincerest thanks to everyone who supported the project in prayer and through such generous gifts. We're also rejoicing in the help from some of our brothers and sisters in the faith from the Midnight Call congregation in Dübendorf (Switzerland), who are helping with the painting, tiling, and electrical work.

There were opportunities for deeper conversations with construction workers like Darwin (seen in the photo wearing creative sun protection). Additionally, everyone was miraculously protected from accidents, which never goes without saying.

A few minutiae are still missing (some outlets, lamps, faucets, and of course interior furnishings such as beds and desks).

People make a house a home, and the children here are turning the new building into a boarding school. That's why we want to bring

you into the joys and sorrows of everyday boarding school life, and tell you about the children entrusted to us.

Girls' Group

Emilie Bergen reports of her group of girls:

"One of the little girls wouldn't ever go to sleep unless I personally prayed with her in bed. When I came to her bedside yesterday, she told me, 'You don't have to pray with me today. I can do it myself now!'—'Great,' I said, 'good night, then!' Then I left the room and heard the little one's voice: 'Please God, help me not to miss my mom.'"

"There was a power outage right at bedtime. Equipped with a flashlight, I had just shown the last girl to her bed and helped her crawl under the mosquito net, when we suddenly



Scaffolding



Constructing the staircase



Darwin wearing a "hat" made from a tile box



Fellow Laborers



MIDNIGHT CALL



Practical helpers



Painting



Inspection by the site manager

had lights again. Since we hadn't flipped the switches, there was full lighting in all the rooms. To my surprise, a 16-part girls' choir shouted, 'Thank you God for answering our prayers and turning the lights back on.'

"Luna (name changed) loves to play, 'I spy with my little eye.' The absolute highlight of the game was when she saw something that was 'about the color of an electrical outlet.' I earned an admiring 'wow' when I guessed on the first try that she meant the outlet. Luna's Papa is much older than her Mama, and Luna tells us that they often fight. That's why she's always happy

when the weekend is over and she's able to return to boarding school."

Our prayer is that the new boarding school will be a home for many more children, and even more so: that heaven would also one day be their home.

Kitchen Construction

Before we start on the second house for the boys, we next want to build the boarding school kitchen beside the one we just built. In the future, we will use gas to cook instead of an open wood fire as we have in the past. This will also be a great relief to the cooks. (MR0721)



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

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It's Always Been Like This

The Apostle Paul explains that the “last days” will be characterized by “perilous times.” What does that mean when we consider the state of affairs in society today?

Norbert Lieth

What about our faith? Are we just ruled by fear, like the disciples back then on the churning sea, or do we look with faith at Him who does not stumble?



The “last days” doesn’t mean the end of the world, but the time before Jesus’ second coming. It pertains to the entire Church Age (1 Cor 10:11; 1 Pet 1:20; 4:7; Heb 1:1-2; 10:25). It goes without saying that the apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit, but the early church probably didn’t expect this time period to last for so long. However, Peter already pointed this out when he wrote, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Pet 3:3-4; cf. Jude 17-18).

That’s why there have repeatedly been time periods like this over the course of two millennia. This seems to be referring to the time Timothy was living in, since he is being called to separate himself from such people. The zenith and end of the Roman Empire were characterized similarly. Or consider the two World Wars, the anti-war movement, etc. But also note that the Bible speaks of times (phases) and deadlines. This indicates that from the

Apostolic Age until shortly before the return of Jesus, there will always be phases as described here. These trends will repeat and intensify until Jesus’ return; the only difference being that these bad phases (“perilous times”) will have reached Christianity by then and transformed it into something anti-Christian. It will have a form of godliness, but deny its power. It will be Christian in name only.

According to Warren W. Wiersbe, “perilous” is “the same Greek word used to describe the demon possession in Matthew 8:28 and translated ‘exceedingly fierce.’” The demonic influence on the world increases the closer it is to Jesus’ coming. The incident of the demons in the Gadarenes could well be a metaphor for the end times: Jesus came to Gadara to free the possessed individual(s) and to cast out the demons. Shortly before Jesus arrived, the Sea of Galilee was turbulent, certainly with the aim of preventing Jesus from landing at Gadara. The Lord rebuked the small faith of his disciples. When He finally arrived, the demons screamed and begged Him not to torment them “before the time.”

It's Always Been Like This

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

If we applied this story prophetically, we'd get the following: Jesus will come again to deliver the world from Satan (Rev 20). In the last days, Satan will disturb the sea of nations of this world (Luke 21:25). During this time, the faith of God's children will be particularly challenged and tested (1 Cor 16:13, 22). Finally, He will arrive to free the world from diabolical influence by binding Satan and his demons in the abyss (Rom 16:20).

Are we on the cusp of these dramatic events? Isn't our world increasingly under the influence of God's adversary? What about our faith? Are we just ruled by fear, like the disciples back then on the churning sea, or do we look with faith at Him who does not stumble?

Today, evil is generally accepted by society; people have strayed more than ever before from biblical norms in nearly every sphere. The protest against these developments is growing weaker. You could say that the whole world is in upheaval and revolt against God, especially in the “Christian West.” Paul warns in 2 Timothy 3:13 that wicked people and deceivers will become worse in their deception, because they themselves are deceived. Paul had already prophesied in 1 Timothy that in the last days, apostasy would increase due to deceitful spirits and the teaching of demons (1 Tim 4:1). Is it any wonder that all morals and ethics are turned upside down today? That theories are being presented as absolute truths, in opposition to what the Bible proclaims? That good is becoming evil, and evil good?

Our society is also sick in other areas: we read and hear about attacks on first responders. Local residents get upset about ambulances passing through or blocking areas to save lives. Emergency vehicles are being damaged, and fire hydrants are being turned off while they're in use. Aggression on

roadways and even bike paths is increasing. It seems like evil is noticeably spreading. The Apostle's statements hit the nail on the head.

Jesus said to the church in Pergamos, “I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is...” (Rev 2:13). The world is the place where Satan extends his rule; it is the realm in which he rules. In the last days, Satan (also called the dragon) will give his throne (that is, his power) to the beast that rises from the sea of nations: “...and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (Rev 13:2).

Satan is doing everything he can to achieve this goal as quickly as possible. Therefore, it's unsurprising to us that chaos on our earth is increasing so much. These are all clear indications of the truth of biblical prophecy...And that's why we look through the mist of time to the sun of eternity. Jesus will come again, and all things will be made new.

It seems high time for the Lord to enter “the country of the Gergesenes”—that is, to return to earth and intervene in the destiny of humanity, thus putting an end to evil. Paul writes about this after warning Timothy about the perilous times of the last days: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim 4:1).

The Apostle's reminder about this solemn time applies to us Christians now more than ever: “But thou hast fully known my doctrine...” (2 Tim 3:10). Yes, that's what we want: to hold on, keep praying, keep loving, keep bearing witness, believe, and watch. Jesus will enter the world again (Heb 1:6; 2:5). He will put an end to injustice and bring the justice we're longing for. Therefore, let's pray daily: “Maranatha; come, Lord Jesus!”

(MR0221/1134)

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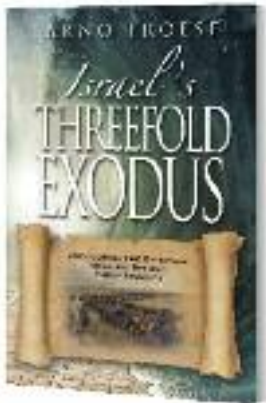
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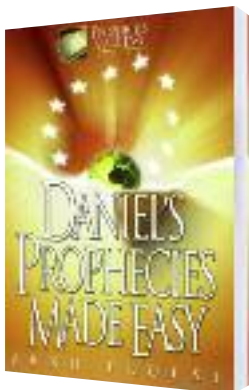
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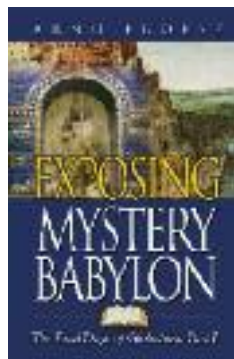
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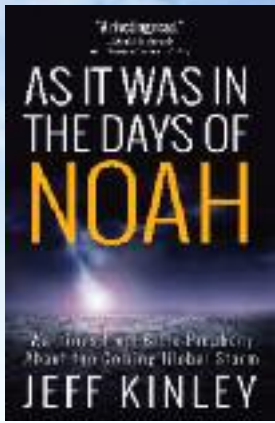
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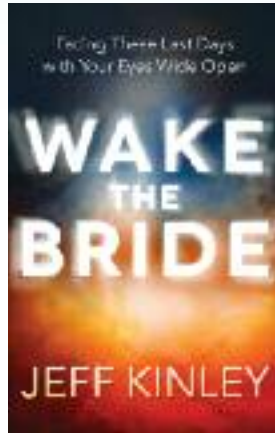
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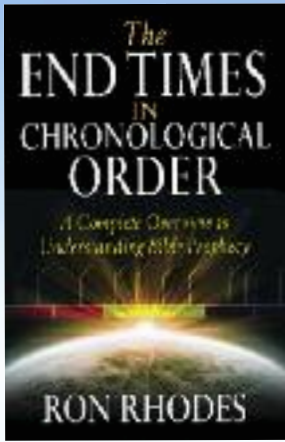
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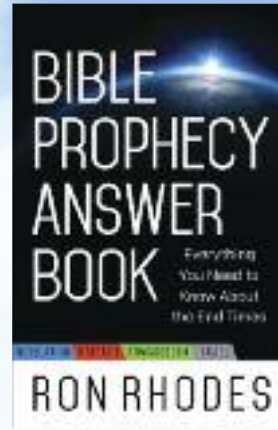
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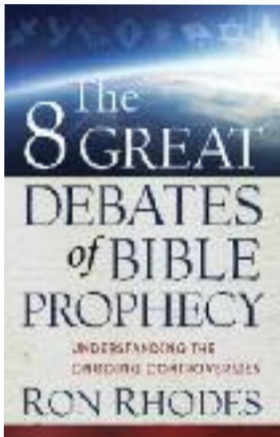
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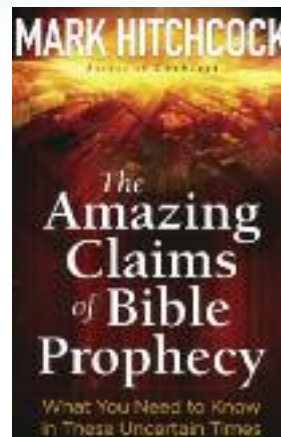
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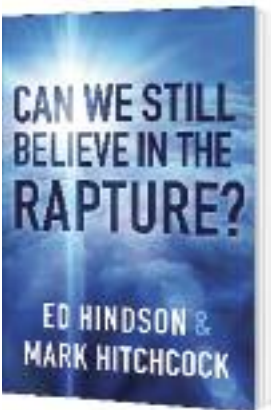
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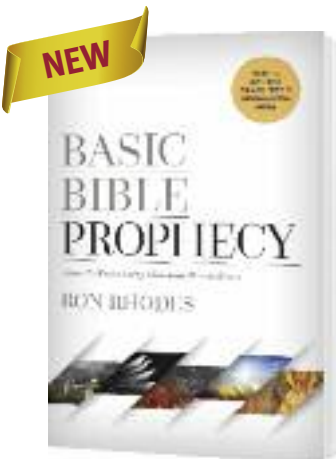
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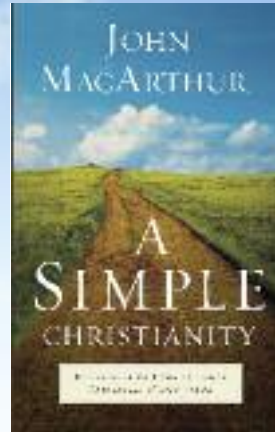
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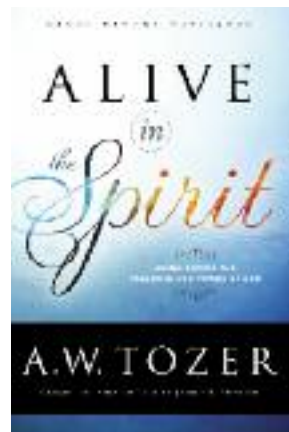
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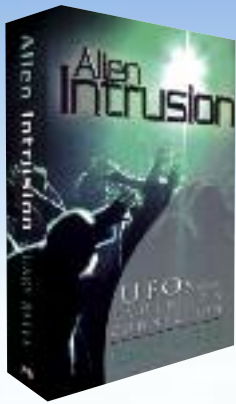
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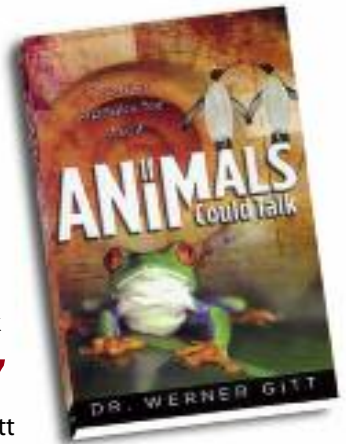


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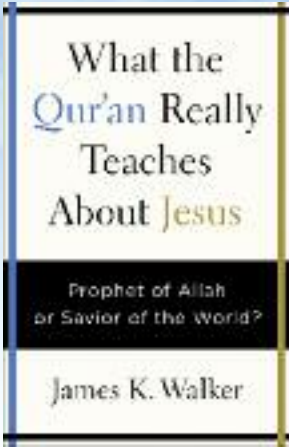
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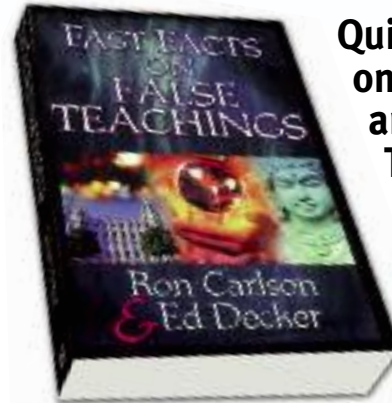
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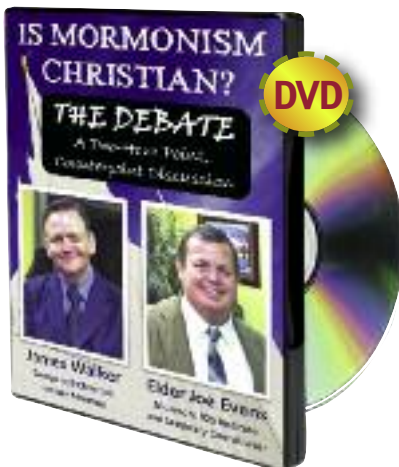
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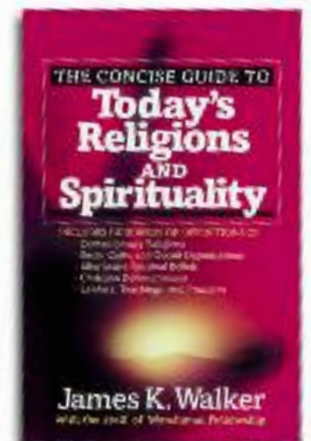
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