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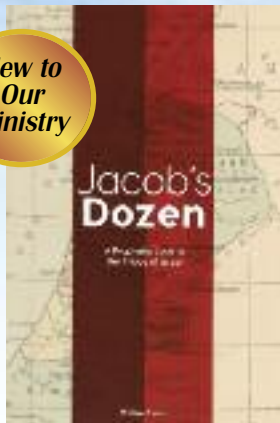
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Unity



By Norbert Lieth

Director of Missions, Midnight Call International

Dear Friends,

Increasingly, there are reports everywhere of dissension and disagreements. Society is divided on issues of law and freedom, and fronts are hardening. Also, in many places where people call themselves Christians, one finds the opposite of what Christ wants. There is no “oneness,” as He spoke of in His highly priestly prayer: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21).

So many are motivated by quarrels and mutual accusations instead of brotherly love. Society’s unrest does not stop at the church door, however. Christians are focused on themselves or their venerated preachers, teachers, and theologians—instead of on Christ. Man is center stage. The followers of the Lamb insist on their rights and charge like bulls into the fray. There is no longer any resemblance to the Spirit of the Lamb, their Savior. As Paul warned the Galatians: “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye not be consumed one of another” (Gal 5:15).

One wants to be more biblical than the other, and hardly anyone notices how unbiblical all of them are. Often, it seems

to be just as it was among the Corinthians long ago: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren...that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor 1:10-13). Here we can only be ashamed.

Heaven shows us what unity means. In the center of heavenly glory, surrounded by the angels and the 24 elders, stood the Lamb who was slain: “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain...” (Rev. 5:6a). Where Jesus, the Crucified One, is in the center, unity reigns. Where everyone aligns themselves with Him as the center; where His throne rules our hearts; where His sacrifice is the basis of our mutual forgiveness—there unity is possible. As Paul wrote: “With all lowliness and

EDITOR'S NOTE

meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (Eph 4:2). That is what we want to do.

Here a poem about what we should keep in our hearts and minds:

“The brother may not seem like you,
But our purpose is the same;
The scaffolding may vary some,
But kingdom builders we are all.
Thus, brothers, open wide your hearts
So selfishness will flee...
We'll sing for all eternity
The same song, all of us.”

Maranatha; our Lord, come! (MC)

Note: We apologize for the confusion concerning the title of Part 1 of Wilfred Hahn's series, "World Geopolitics by the Bible," which was in the June issue under the heading, "Modern World History Told by the Bible."

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Founder — Dr. Wim Malgo (1922–92)

International Editor — René Malgo

Executive Editor — Arno Froese

Contributing Authors — Norbert Lieth,
Wilfred Hahn, Dr. Ron J. Bigalke,
Johannes Pflaum, Samuel
Rindlisbacher, René Malgo,
Stephan Beitze and Thomas Lieth

Layout Designer: Michelle Kim • **Text Typists:** Joel Froese and Susi Steiger

• **Copy Editor:** Kimberly Farmer • **Customer Service:** Andrea

Giles, Kimberly Farmer, Debbie Hale

• **General Manager:** Simon Froese • **Production Manager:** Brian Corbett

• **Pre-Press:** Alec Rucker • **Pressroom:** James D. Bond, Jeff Bowers

and Chad Vining • **Post Press:** Teresa Vining, Melissa Martin, Andrea

Giles, Cyndal Sweet, Stone Hughes and Silas Steiger

• **Special Order:** Andrea Giles • **German-English Translators:** Barbara

Lavery, Melanie Makin and Helga Tirrell

• **Webmasters:** Ricardo Rempel and Matias Steiger

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PHONE

Toll free phone: 1-800-845-2420

Local and International: +1 (803) 755-0733

WEBSITE

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

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



Who Will Unravel the Gordian Knot? Part 1

Norbert Lieth

When we look out into the world or at our own life, we discover numerous unsolvable knots. We need to be looking to the One who can and will unravel every knot.

The tale of the Gordian knot comes from Greek mythology, but it makes for a good metaphor. Today, the phrase “to cut the Gordian knot” means to directly, forcefully solve a problem that is complex or practically unsolvable.

Gordios was the founder and king of the Phrygian Empire in Asia Minor, and he

named the capital—Gordium—after himself. The famous knot secured the yoke of the ruler’s chariot and was considered to be unsolvable. It was said that whoever could untie it would rule the world. When the conqueror Alexander the Great (333 BC) realized that he too could not loosen it, he simply dismantled it his own way: with his sword.

How typically human. We want to overcome problems and seize power violently, under our own power and our own means. It inevitably comes down to a violent solution in the end.

This world's great riddle is the knot of our entanglement with sin. Humanity's unsolvable problem is this cord of death. And so many other knots are entangled in it. But Jesus has long since undone them—not with force, but with love: through His coming, His Gospel, His Cross, His resurrection, His ascension, and His imminent second coming.

The following description of the prophet Daniel applies all the more to Jesus, of whom Daniel also prophesied: “Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in this same Daniel...” (Dan 5:12; cf. v. 16).

Markus Spiker sums it up in a straightforward way in his book *Jesus—A World History* [not available in English]. He says: “To me, Jesus is far more than just the most fascinating figure in the world. As crazy as it sounds, He’s the solution to all of your problems.”

When we look out into the world, what problems and knots need unraveling today?

The Knot of the Present

Over the last couple years, it’s become clear that the coronavirus pandemic and how it’s being handled, is entangling people and changing society. In the April issue, Thomas Lange wrote, “Coronavirus has the potential to overwhelm our thinking.”

The crisis is changing Christianity. One example: In Romans 13:1-2, Paul writes: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.” A few lines later, he points out: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (v. 12).

It’s interesting that the apostle relates obedience to authorities directly to the end times; he’s addressing things that are very relevant to the present day. It’s precisely because of the issue of authority that people are discussing, arguing, speculating, and dividing today. I don’t want to get into the various viewpoints here. But I do believe that we need to submit to authorities, although we can also exercise our legal rights as citizens of a democracy and speak up.

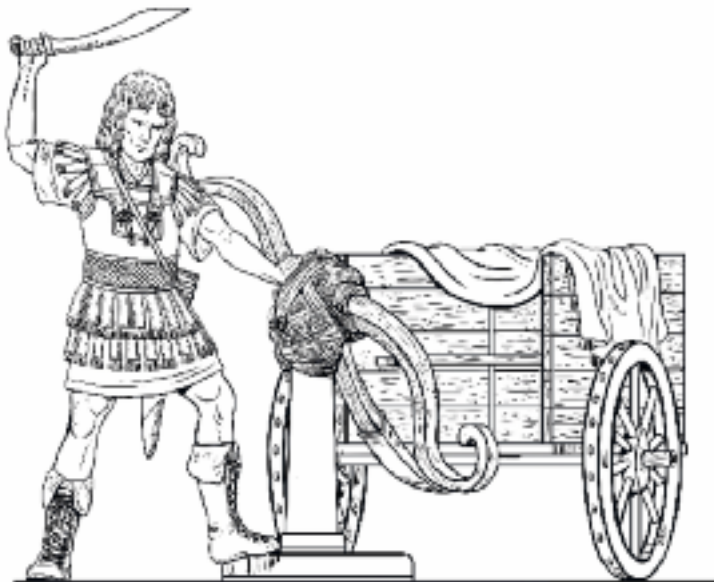
The coronavirus pandemic is changing people’s worldview. The prophet Isaiah once said: “And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof” (Isa 5:30). The atmosphere has never seemed so depressing. The world is becoming darker!

This age isn’t yet approaching its end, but is heading toward its ultimate goal. Even the media and the secular-minded are talking about an imminent turning point. This coronavirus pandemic spans the whole world and is turning it upside down. It could mark the beginning of a new era, one characterized by a new world order and total surveillance of all people (already ubiquitous in China). We seem to be living in a time when new foundations are being laid. And the anti-Christian empire will be the final act of seduction.

Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari mentioned in an interview that the technology already exists for establishing a perfect dictatorship. One example of this is Israel’s

Who Will Unravel the Gordian Knot? Part 1

When the conqueror Alexander the Great (333 BC) realized that he too could not loosen the Gordian knot, he simply dismantled it his own way: with his sword. How typically human. We want to overcome problems and seize power violently, under our own power and our own means.



implementation of a special “green passport” for the vaccinated. John MacArthur once remarked, “You don’t need an army to conquer a nation. All you need is fear.”

Nobody is sure what’s really going on, or who’s pulling strings behind the scenes. Why are things the way they are? And why is it like this worldwide? Everything seems so complex, knotted, shadowy, and self-contradictory.

This pandemic is even changing our impressions of the Middle East. Peace initiatives between Israel and the Arab countries were unthinkable not long ago. When interviewing the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Germany, someone said, “There’s certainly also a need for a vision of peace, which is seldom found in this part of the world.” To which the ambassador replied: “Not least because the Covid pandemic again made it clear

to us that we have to communicate. Nobody can say, ‘The coronavirus isn’t my problem.’ We’re part of a global community.” At the end of the interview, she uttered another remarkable sentence: “...it’s a start, and other steps will follow. Now is the time for the forces of light.”

Inevitably, when I’m yearning for peace, I remember the Bible’s warnings: “...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). And: “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thess 5:2-3).

The pandemic is changing attitudes. The August 21, 2020 issue of a German newspaper had an article entitled, “The Corona-Crisis Is an Opportunity.” In it, Bundestag [Parliament] President Wolfgang Schäuble is quoted as saying: “Europe as a whole needs to take on more responsibility, especially in security and defense policy.’ [...] At the same time, he describes the corona crisis as a ‘great opportunity’ for Europe. ‘Resistance to change decreases in a crisis. We’re now able to establish the economic and financial union that we haven’t achieved politically until now.’”

The aforementioned Israeli historian Harari has also said that if the population were given a choice between complete lockdown or digital surveillance, many citizens would choose surveillance from fear of the lockdown.

Wolfgang Schäuble: “Resistance to change decreases in a crisis. We’re now able to establish the economic and financial union that we haven’t achieved politically until now.”

Who Will Unravel the Knot?

Only the Bible sheds light on this. And whoever believes the Bible will find guidance and disentanglement. The Bible gives us light and perspective; it gives us answers. God’s Word gives us deeper insight into the future than any futurologist, physicist, or astronomer could ever possess.

What Light Does the Bible Give Us?

First of all, the Bible sheds light on the fact that spiritual powers are ruling mankind (Eph 2:2; 6:12). All of the events in world history have an invisible backdrop. Evil too must mature, and be exposed and repudiated. Satan (adversary) is called *Diabolos*, which means the confounder and confuser. He’s the one tying everything in knots. He is referred to as the god and the prince of this world, who blinds the minds of those who disobey God (2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

As a result, Paul calls our time “this present evil world” (Gal 1:4). John emphasizes that “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). The Bible also identifies Satan as the deceiver of the nations (Rev 20:3, 8, 10), and Jesus called him the father of lies (John 8:44).

Nothing makes for such a tangled, unclear, and deceitful impression as the current state of the world. It’s like a knot of lies. Satan acts through an innumerable army of “cosmocrats” (invisible world rulers) to influence world events (Rev 16:13-14). As the Bible reveals, the earthly kingdoms have a prince in the heavenly realms (Dan 10:10ff.). Whether or not we



want to admit it, we are living in a devilishly-ruled world system—as long as Jesus hasn’t yet come to put an end to it.

God’s Word predicts that demonic influence will increase as the age is coming to an end. We can only be freed and transferred into the spiritual kingdom through the Son of God (Col 1:13).

Satan’s goal is to be worshiped. He causes a common mindset and worldview that serve this diabolical goal. Scripture says, “These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast” (Rev 17:13). Satan is pushing the world powers toward Revelation 13. And something of that scope has preliminary stages that can be felt today. The questionable lockdowns, the worldwide impact, the approach to vaccinations, the peace efforts between Israel and the Arab world—these are like the starting blocks for the sprint that Revelation 13 and 2 Thessalonians predict for the end.

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WORLD GEOPOLITICS BY THE BIBLE: ON TRACK FOR THE PROPHESED 10 KINGS – PART 5



To this point in the series, we have tried to show the historical “geopolitical” timeline that the Bible lays out for the world in advance. Counting back to the date of Nebuchadnezzar’s first vision (603 BC), over 2,600 years of this prophecy have already played out on the face of the earth.

By Wilfred Hahn

According to the timeline laid out by John the Revelator (which goes even further back than the Babylonian Empire, to the time that Egypt ruled the world), we would deduce that more than three and a half millennia of prophesied history has passed.

As has been pointed out several times in this series, the Bible chooses to only lay out the world’s geopolitical timeline as it relates to the Jews. After all, the Bible’s main objective is to bear witness to and outline God’s plan of salvation.

As such, the Bible shows 7 world kingdoms (hegemons) that consecutively contribute to global geopolitical history. These ruler nations are all shown in symbols and visions—mainly as beasts but also in other images—primarily in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Many of these rulers are also named. As far as chronology is concerned, only a short countdown is now left before the Tribulation period begins.

To be sure, there is much debate on the topics of the 7 heads, the 10 horns and 10 toes, and much more. Were we to address all of these issues in this series, we would require many times the

space. We cannot cover all the debated views, but of course, stand ready to provide Biblical support for the views expressed here. It surely is a difficult subject that requires much humility ... many well-regarded prophecy expositors having different opinions.

A key matter to settle at the outset, before we move on to focus on the topic of 10 kings and 10 toes, is this: Why do Daniel and John see a different number of world hegemony (aka also RKs or Ruler Kings)? Apostle John sees 7 heads (world rulers), whereas Daniel only mentions 5. Why the difference?

The answer is straightforward: John’s calling was to write “[...] what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later” (Revelation 1:19). In other words: past, present, and future. He looks backward, while Daniel does not.

The Book of Daniel only concerns itself with Daniel’s experiences and the things “future” and “to come” (each term occurring 3 times in the Book of Daniel) for the Jews.

These two different mandates explain why Apostle John reports seeing 7 heads (world-rul-

Did you know that the distance between the rails of a standard railroad gauge track today is exactly 4 feet and 8.5 inches? Back in ancient Roman times, chariots wheels were exactly 4 feet and 8.5 inches apart.

ing, hegemonic rulers), and Daniel only mentions 5. Daniel writes between 605 to 534 BC, only looking forward; therefore, he would not have mentioned Egypt and Assyria (heads 1 and 2 as listed in John's 7-head sequence). Apostle John wrote late in the first century AD.

Now we jump tracks and begin to investigate the prophecies concerning the 10 kings (10K).

Tracks to the Prophesied 10 Kings

What Does Canadian Pacific Railroad (or any standard railway, for that matter) have to do with the Roman Empire? It is a specific measure—4 feet and 8.5 inches. The reader will likely not immediately understand this connection.

Did you know that the distance between the rails of a standard railroad gauge track today is exactly 4 feet and 8.5 inches? Why such an odd measurement? To be sure, it is an important one. Back in ancient Roman times, chariots wheels were exactly 4 feet and 8.5 inches apart. Again, we ask, why such an odd width?

It has to do with the average measure of a horse's rump. Two horse rumps could snugly fit between the wheels of a Roman chariot. This standard then came to be accepted with all horse-drawn carriages. Hence, when railroads were introduced (some of which were no longer horse-drawn), the same wheel width was adopted. Why?

With most wheel ruts being made by standard-sized axle widths, using any other width between the wheels would have caused a very rough ride ... potentially even breaking the wheels and axles. And so, we see that the transition to modern mechanized vehicles still retained an ancient influence from the Roman Empire.



As we have already outlined in this series, the signs and legacies of our ancient ancestors and previous ruler kingdoms (from Babylon to Rome) are still all around us. In this case, we show yet one more example evidencing that we today still live in the Roman Age. John the Revelator confirms this fact very clearly in Revelation 17. He identifies the 6th head on the beast as representing the Roman era: "They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come" (verse 10a).

And, as has been mentioned previously in this series, the period of the 6th head (the one that "is") corresponds to the 4th beast shown to Daniel (Daniel 7). Crucially, it is out of this Roman root that the 10 kings (horns), and then in turn the beast, find their origin.

Here again, we see that there are actually 3 stages of Roman lineage in the last days: first the beasts (shown in Daniel 7 and Revelation 17), then the 10 horns (shown in both Daniel 7 and Revelation 12, 13, and 17). Following comes the 3rd Roman stage, this being shown as the "little horn" (Daniel 7), and to John as the beast which "[...] is an eighth king [who] belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction" (Revelation 17:11).



Admittedly, this is all very complicated. However, it all connects. And so, here we find ourselves ... very late in the Roman lineage (the time of the 6th and 7th heads) and the Roman 10-king phase.

We therefore now return to the topic of the 10 kings.

Ten Kings and Ten Toes

As already introduced, our study of Bible prophecy takes us to podiatry (the study and treatment of feet). Why? Because 10 toes figure prominently in future geopolitical prophecy. Readers will recall that Nebuchadnezzar (the Babylonian king during the time of the prophet Daniel) had a vision of a statue that, among other features, had feet and toes made of a mixture of clay and iron (See Daniel 2:41).

As it turns out, Nebuchadnezzar's vision proved to be an accurate prophecy of future world geopolitics—the timeline of which would extend right to the return of Jesus Christ (and the eternal reign). Of great significance is the fact that the 10 toes that Nebuchadnezzar saw on the image in the vision, were related to the “10 horns” shown to John the Revelator (three times—Revelation 12, 13, 17). Daniel himself, in a later vision of the terrible beast mentioned in Daniel 7, saw these same 10 horns.

It must be noted that these 10 kings/toes are either shown or mentioned a total of 10 times in the Bible (these references mainly found only in the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation). The future 10 kings must therefore be an important prophecy, given that so much emphasis is placed on this topic in both Bible testaments.

Daniel also corroborates this view with respect to the 10 horns. He himself is shown the 10 horns several times in his visions. Again, it states: “The ten horns are ten kings” (Daniel 7:24a).

Apostle John is told that these 10 horns are 10 kings. Specifically, he writes: “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast” (Revelation

17:12). This is an important verse, the implications of which are sometimes overlooked. We will return to this verse to examine it further.

But how can we know that the imagery of the 10 toes that Daniel saw, points to the same 10 kings as found in Revelation 17? The simple answer is that they match on three significant counts. The 10 toes of Daniel are shown as being part of a divided “kingdom”; they are both of Roman lineage, and both lead to the same endpoint—that being the eternal kingdom.

We would like to amplify one of these alignments. The 10 toes are presented as somewhat of an oddity; a kingdom that is made of non-binding elements. How can this be a working model for world-spanning rule? The same oddity is presented in Revelation 17. There we find an exact counterpart of 10 kings (here shown as horns) situated on one head (this being the 7th head). Here again we see the historical oddity of 10 kings/rulers being part of one greater kingdom (this represented as the 7th head on the beast ridden by the Harlot).

Again, undergirding our viewpoint is that all the chronology of the successive ruler kings and their identity (the 7 heads on the beast) matches up. The 10 toes and 10 horns are also shown to have correct and matching chronology. All of the timelines converge upon the same outcome—the return of Jesus and the setting up of the eternal kingdom.

It is very likely, in this writer's view, that the appearance of these 10 horn rulers is very near. They could be at the very doorstep.

But, how can that be? Just where might one find 10 kings in our day and age? This question merits two entire chapters in a current book project on this subject. It is a critically important question. May it suffice to say here that the word “king” in the Bible (whether Hebrew or Greek) always (with a handful of exceptions out of over 2800 references) refers to a male, in-the-flesh, sovereign leader. Nothing less, nothing more.

Where then do we find the “absolute” kings of yesteryear today? Answer: the concept of a sover-

eign leader has changed over the millennia. Transmogrifying this concept to our day, when the Bible uses the term “king,” this could just as well equate to a democratically elected president in our day ... such as Joe Biden, President of the United States.

The key things to know about this 10-nation coalition are these: 1) they will emerge very quickly; 2) together, they will have world-spanning power; and 3) they will reign only for a short time. “They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast” (Revelation 17:13) that comes out of the Abyss (verse 8).

Also, it is important to note that this 10-nation coalition will come on the world scene BEFORE the Antichrist is identified. Their emergence will surely be of geopolitical significance. It is also possible that these events may be visible before the Rapture.

Points to Ponder

We can therefore know that the world is yet to experience some volatile geopolitical and economic power shifts. Many tremors likely lie ahead.

Daniel also makes this clear. “The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this [Roman] kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones [...]” (Daniel 7:24). Here we see only “after” the 10 kings are on the scene, that “another king”—the Antichrist—will arise. This must occur before the final endtime events described in the Bible can happen.

One reason why the time of the 10-king rule may be near, but not necessarily yet is that the formation of the 10 toes that fits the “endtime shoe” has not yet emerged ... these namely symbolizing the 10 kings, as we have reviewed.

The great danger, however, to those who might smugly think that the end-time clock has yet a long time to run, is that events do speed up greatly as the last days approach.

Their appearance may be very, very close ... but this group does not yet exist. The 10-toed feet are not yet on the scene today. At the same time, it is very possible that some or all of the 10 nations may already exist today. Nevertheless, the glass slipper does not yet fit, as we will show in Part 6 of this series.

The great danger, however, to those who might smugly think that the end-time clock has yet a long time to run, is that events do speed up greatly as the last days approach.

As the Bible indicates, the trap will shut suddenly once it is triggered (Luke 21:34). “While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape!” (1 Thessalonians 5:3). The OT prophet Daniel also backs this up, saying: “The end will come like a flood” (Daniel 9:26a).

In the next issue, we will deal with the question of China. What role will this country have in the end times? Will China triumph over America? The Bible does indeed mention this nation.

Also, we will answer this question: What qualifications are required for a nation to be eligible to be a member of the 10-nation coalition?

We are moving closer to dealing with our final questions that relate to the United States. The 10-nation coalition—will America be a part of it or not? Has the Lord had His eye on America and given it favor? (MC)



Is Hell Eternal?

– Part 4

Dr. Ron J. Bigalke

The notion that there is a place of conscious, eternal punishment is not a delightful thought. The doctrine of hell is probably the most difficult teaching of the Bible for many people to accept. Even demons abhor its reality (Matt 8:29; Jas 2:19).

Nevertheless, the Bible reveals that all people will live forever somewhere. To be a Christian is to confess (at the very least) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and to make this confession is (at the very least) to submit to the Lord's teaching, since Jesus especially taught the doctrine of eternal retribution.

The biblical revelation concerning hell cannot be denied, without assuming either that the Lord Jesus was not knowledgeable regarding the abode, or that He affirmed its reality in error. If the Lord did not have complete knowledge concerning hell, then how would He have enough to warrant trust in His ability to save? If the Lord knew hell was not everlasting yet still affirmed its reality, such deception would mean He is not holy enough to die for sinners.

The doctrine of eternal retribution was taught more by Jesus than any other person. He referred to those who “will go away into eternal punishment,” in contrast to “the righteous into eternal life” (Matt 25:46). The Lord either proclaimed a state of conscious, eternal punishment or a permanent cessation of conscious existence. God's wrath upon the unbeliever is either irrevocable in its length or in its effect.

The Doctrine of Eternal Retribution

Jesus frequently used the Greek word *gehenna* to warn of the consequences of sin (Matt 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5). He described *gehenna* as the place where the “WORM DOES NOT DIE AND THE FIRE

The terms “lake of fire” and “second death” describe the eternal state of the lost, as forever separated from God and consigned “into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt 25:41).

IS NOT QUENCHED” (Mark 9:48; cf. Isa 66:24). Jesus associated the punishment of *gehenna* with “eternal fire” (Matt 25:41). *Gehenna* is the transliteration of the Hebrew phrase *gē hinnōm* (“the Vally of Hinnom”). The Valley of Hinnom is south of Jerusalem and was where the ancient (heathen) Israelites offered their children to the Canaanite god Molech (2 Kgs 23:10; 2 Chron 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31; 19:2-6). In later years, *gehenna* served as an unclean place for all varieties of putrefying matter and anything that would defile the city of Jerusalem. Consequently, it became representative of the place of everlasting punishment, especially since its fire was never quenched as it was always burning with dead bodies and rubbish.

Gehenna is not to be confused with *hadēs* or *sheol*, which is the intermediate state of the lost prior to the Great White Throne Judgment and the eternal state. *Gehenna* is identical in meaning to the term “lake of fire,” which the Apostle John used in the book of Revelation (19:20; 20:10, 14-15). The lake of fire is the final destiny of those not in vital union with Christ Jesus. The idea that there is an ultimate place of eternal punishment by fire is frequent in the Old Testament (cf. Lev 10:2; Deut 32:22; Ps 50:3; Isa 30:27). All the dead in *hadēs* will be resurrected for judgment at the Great White Throne, and then be ultimately cast into the lake of fire. Confinement to the lake of fire will be “the second death” (Rev 20:14). The terms “lake of fire” and “second death” describe the eternal state of the lost, as forever separated from God and consigned “into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt 25:41).

The language of Revelation 19:20 and 20:10 indicates that annihilation is foreign to the concept of the “second death,” for the beast and the false prophet still exist undestroyed in the lake of fire even when 1,000 years have passed. The lost are tormented “day and night” (Rev 20:10), which means no intermission. The same phrase is used of the eternal state of the redeemed (4:8). As the bliss is eternal, so is the anguish and misery of the devil and the lost. Moreover, the phrase “forever and ever” (20:10) literally means “to the ages of the ages,” and is as definite an expression for the absolute and endless punishment of the lost as could be made. The same phrase is used in Hebrews 1:8 of the duration of God’s throne, which is of perfect administration and constitution and of eternal continuance.

The Greek in Hebrews 1:8 is *aiōna tou aiōnos* (“forever and ever”) and *aiōnas tōn aiōnōn* (“forever and ever”) in Revelation 20:10. The same Greek word, *aiōnios*, is used in both verses. The root word for *aiōna* and *aiōnos* in Hebrews 1:8—and *aiōnas* in Revelation 20:10—is *aiōn*, with the essential meaning of “an age.” Thus, the idea is of an unending age (viz. eternity or time without end) in Hebrews 1:8 and Revelation 20:10. The basic meaning of *aiōnios* in Revelation 20:10 (which is translated “eternal” in regard to the punishment of the accursed in Matt 25:46) is “agelong” or “eternal.” *Aiōnios* (“eternal”) can have another meaning, such as “the age to come” or pertaining to “the next *aiōn*” (“age”), yet even this understanding would be an unending age to come. The notion that the age to come is eternal for the redeemed, while the punishment will

Is Hell Eternal? – Part 4

Scripture teaches that both the saved and the lost will have resurrected bodies. The present bodies of the saved and the lost are temporary (2 Cor 5:4).

cease (which is the doctrine of the annihilationist) is foreign to New Testament usage. The annihilationist engages in *petitio principii*, which is the logical fallacy where one assumes in the premise of an argument what one desires to prove in the conclusion (hence, a begging of the question or circular argument). Annihilationism uses circular reasoning by assuming the punishment of the lost is not sustained indefinitely; rather, that “eternal” means the enduring consequences of the punishment in the age to come.

The annihilationist recognizes the Bible uses “fire” to describe hell (*gehenna*), yet assumes that the lost will cease to exist because a lake of fire would consume those cast into it. Scripture reveals that hellfire is eternal (Matt 18:8; 25:41; Mark 9:48; Jude 7). The fire of hell is a furnace and unquenchable (Matt 13:42; Mark 9:44); it is a place of “agony” and “torment” (Luke 16:24-25, 28). Certainly, the fact that Scripture reveals the fire to be unquenchable means it does not cease from existence. It blazes without “rest day and night” (Rev 14:11; 20:10), which would mean it is endless and eternal.

The lost are “tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb” (14:10). The “smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever” (v. 11). Smoke necessitates fire, and this requires a catalyst; namely, the “forever and ever” lost. There is “no rest” for the unsaved; the torment continues “day and night,” meaning annihilation is not possible. The annihilationist wrongly judges the nature of God’s eternal fire, in addition to the nature of the resurrected body.

Scripture teaches that both the saved and the lost will have resurrected bodies. The present bodies of the saved and the lost are temporary (2 Cor 5:4). The resurrection body of the redeemed will be entirely different from the present mode, for it is “imperishable” and thereby adapted to the heavenly realm (1 Cor 15:35-49). Nevertheless, the resurrection body will have a relationship to the present form, at least in regard to identification. “This is the first resurrection”; and, “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in [it]” (Rev 20:5-6). A millennium will transpire between the resurrection of the just and the unjust (vv. 4-6). The lost will experience resurrection (John 5:29), yet it is revealed to be the “second death” (Rev 20:6, 14). The lost will receive some type of body in which to stand before the Great White Throne, and will then be “thrown into the lake of fire” (vv. 11-15).

Jesus said, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt 10:28). Jesus introduced a set of contrasts: (1) fear of a person versus fear of God; and, (2) kill versus destroy. In the present world, people can “kill the body” yet cannot “kill the soul.” God, however, “is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” The Lord is able to destroy the two essential parts of a person: both soul and body. Jesus did not say “to kill,” because the soul is immortal. The temporal body and its death are not significant in comparison to the soul and eternal death. Jesus warned that temporal death should not cause terror; rather, one should fear God, who can destroy both soul and body forever.

The love of God is not contradictory to His wrath. The wrath of God toward sinners is consistent with His love. His wrath is not the consequence of capricious anger; rather, God's wrath is the expression of righteous indignation for His holiness and honor.



God will resurrect the bodies of the lost to be punished eternally.

Conclusion

In every place the word *gehenna* is used, it properly means hell. Therefore, it would be accurate to conclude that *gehenna*, hell, and the lake of fire refer to the very same place. All the unsaved dead suffer the same degree in *hadēs* until the Great White Throne Judgment. Hell is the place of future punishment; it will be a place of conscious, eternal suffering. Matthew 25:46 speaks of the time when the lost “will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” The phrases “eternal punishment” and “eternal life” parallel each other and indicate that while the destinies of the lost and the redeemed will be quite different, the future for both will be “everlasting.”

Perhaps the greatest difficulty with the traditional doctrine of an eternal hell arises from an incomplete concept of God. For instance, the Lord is not only holy and loving, but also wrathful against all sin. Thus, His anger must be propitiated if the sinner is to be forgiven. God lovingly made provision in the substitutionary atonement of Jesus

Christ. His wrath abides eternally upon those who persist in sin and reject the divine remedy for sin. The holiness and justice of God must be satisfied (propitiated). God's love will never permit what His righteousness condemns.

God's wrath, of course, must be distinguished from pagan notions of divine wrath that are arbitrary and capricious. The wrath of God abides upon the one who does not trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and propitiation is the means by which His wrath is averted. God is not arbitrary; rather, He is a principled sovereign (cf. Tit 1:2; 2 Tim 2:13; Jas 1:17). He is not bound by any rule higher than Himself; therefore, all His actions are consistent with His immutable character. Scripture reveals the love of God as both diverse and dynamic, as opposed to being abstract and somewhat impersonal. The love of God is not contradictory to His wrath. The wrath of God toward sinners is consistent with His love. His wrath is not the consequence of capricious anger; rather, God's wrath is the expression of righteous indignation for His holiness and honor. (1172)



The Church: God's New Dwelling Place

Rainer Wagner

Something completely new emerged at Pentecost: the Church and the Age of Grace began. What does it mean, and what is the Church's mission today?

Even though Jesus' sacrificial death is the prerequisite for God's saving action in our age (the Age of Grace), the actual Age of Grace doesn't begin until after Jesus is no longer physically on earth. The Age of Grace is the age of peoples or nations, because it is when the Gospel is offered to all people. But Jesus was initially sent only to Israel (Matt 15:24). However, Jesus clearly says, "...I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16). These other sheep were only brought in after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2).

The Age of Grace, i.e. the age of peoples, began at Pentecost. In the Old Testament, God's earthly dwelling place was the temple. After God had left the temple in Jerusalem, He built a new temple for Himself. The stones of this new temple are living souls, and God dwells in the midst of them (1 Cor 3:16). Jesus is present in the Church through the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:20). We, the Church, are the temple of the New Covenant.

The tale is told of a rabbi who was earnestly seeking forgiveness for his sins. He researched the ancient Jewish traditions, and found faith in Jesus when it became clear to him through the Talmud and the Zohar [the chief text of Kabbalah, or Jewish mysticism] that God had departed the old Temple at the moment Jesus was crucified. The Talmud and the Zohar describe the Jewish ordinance of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The high priest only entered the Holy of Holies to offer the animal sacrifices on that day (Heb 9:6-7). He asked God for forgiveness for the sins of the Israelites. In the Zohar's commentary on Leviticus, it says: "He atones for him, for his household, for the priests, the Temple, and the

whole of Yisrael...if he came out in peace, it was known and recognized by the crimson strap that turned white."

When the red cord turned white, there was jubilation among all the people. If it remained red, there was universal dejection, for it was a sign that the high priest's sacrifice and prayers were not accepted by God. The Talmud reports that this great miracle of divine validation of the high priestly sacrifice, along with the forgiveness of sins, ceased forty years before the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed:

"At first they would tie a strip of crimson wool to the opening of the Entrance Hall of the Temple on the outside. If, after the sacrificing of the offerings and the sending of the scapegoat, the strip turned white, the people would rejoice, as this indicated that their sins had been atoned for. If it did not turn white, they would be sad [...] During the forty years before the Second Temple was destroyed, the strip of crimson wool would not turn white; rather, it would turn a deeper shade of red."

The Jerusalem Talmud reports the same thing in the Mishnah of Yoma 6:3, 43c.

Earnestly seeking forgiveness, the rabbi was interested in what must have happened 40 years before the destruction of the Temple. Then he came across the information that Jesus was crucified the same year that the Christians reported the Temple curtain had been torn (Luke 23:45) and Jesus rose from the dead. This convinced him that Jesus is the Messiah. He understood that forgiveness is only through Jesus, so he accepted Jesus as his personal Lord.

GOD'S MISSIONS PLAN

It was God's will that the Gospel—the good news of the forgiveness of sins—be proclaimed worldwide. Jesus commissioned His disciples to bring this message into the

The Church: God's New Dwelling Place

The word “witness” comes from the term “martyr” in New Testament Greek. Jesus’ disciples are called to make the Gospel of their Lord known in the world, even to the point of martyrdom.

whole world: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20).

Jesus described how the Gospel would come to mankind: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The prerequisite for missionary work, and for the life of the believer in general, is the power of the Holy Spirit. Everyone who believes has been sealed by Him since Pentecost (Eph 1:13). The Spirit becomes the driving force in the believer’s life (Rom 8:14). This Spirit works powerfully by preaching the Gospel (Acts 2:14-21); convicting the world of unbelief (John 16:8-9); revealing the Lord Jesus as the One who offers forgiveness and righteousness from heaven (John 16:10); and by revealing God’s strength and Satan’s weakness (John 16:11).

The Spirit grants believers assurance of salvation (Rom 8:16)—they know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God loves them and that they belong to Jesus. It enables believers to love God and their neighbor (Rom 5:5). The Spirit creates fruit in believers’ lives (Gal 5:22) and gives gifts that build the Church (1 Cor 12:7). It is impossible to do real missions, church building, or anything else for God without that Spirit. Such service is, at best, pious busywork.

In Old Testament times, attaining salvation was apparently dependent on the people’s ability and loyalty. But people failed over and over, and there was no way to be saved

through one’s actions. In the New Testament, everything depends on God’s actions. Jesus wants to lead the world to the knowledge of the truth and to salvation, specifically through one person of the triune God: the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

What’s more, the Holy Spirit could be understood as the church’s “elixir of life”—everything that involves service in general. God could have spread His Gospel without human participation. He could have had angels preach the Gospel. But God wants to give our lives depth and meaning, so we are allowed to participate in the building of the spiritual temple, the Church. However, this can only happen under the Holy Spirit’s guidance. The best effort we can give as believers is our testimony of Jesus. That is why the disciples are told, “You will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8).

Witnesses report what they have experienced. Peter confessed, “...we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). Yet only those who have experienced something with God can be a witness of Jesus. The word “witness” comes from the term “martyr” in New Testament Greek. Jesus’ disciples are called to make the Gospel of their Lord known in the world, even to the point of martyrdom.

THE CHURCH’S DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

In the Great Commission, Jesus announced the stages of the Gospel’s journey through the world: from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). And that’s how the Gospel spread.

There was a revival in Jerusalem at Pentecost. 3,000 people found Jesus (Acts

Today, our “Judea and Samaria,” our primary mission field is: our surroundings, beginning with our relatives and acquaintances. It’s often particularly difficult here, because they know us. But it’s where God placed us.

2:41). As a result, the so-called early church, the foundation of the Church of Jesus, was created. Conservative estimates say it grew to as many as 5,000. Its members had to leave Jerusalem due to persecution, and moved into Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1, 4). Simple Christians, who had just lost their homes for Jesus’ sake, preached the Gospel there. Through their testimony, others found faith. There were even occasional small revivals in which many believed (Acts 8:12). And finally, God called a man to conversion, to bring the Gospel beyond Israel’s borders into the world of nations: Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:15). Although a few non-Jews had come to believe before this (Acts 8:37; 10:44-45), there wasn’t a systematic mission to Gentiles until Paul and Barnabas were sent out from the church of Antioch (Acts 13:3).

Paul himself traveled most of the world that was accessible at that time. Today’s missions mirror the tradition of these first apostles. This biblical mission strategy isn’t just a directive that church history has fulfilled, but is still of great importance to us today.

Let’s take our cue from Jerusalem, the place where the believers gathered. It doesn’t matter whether a person is nominally a member of a church or not; we owe the Gospel to everyone. When a member of our church comes to faith through the work of another and joins them, we shouldn’t be sad or upset.

Although the first Christians remained steadfast in fellowship (Acts 2:42), it’s better for an unconverted visitor to come to faith in another church and make his home there, than to remain with us and

increase our numbers. Better to go to heaven with a different hymnal than to hell under our pulpit. But this isn’t justification for believers repeatedly “church hopping,” and even less, poaching members from other congregations. However, the World Council of Churches’ 1961 statement, “Christian Witness, Proselytism and Religious Liberty in the Setting of the World Council of Churches,” which forbids missions among members of another WCC church, is also contrary to the Gospel and our commission.

Today, our “Judea and Samaria,” our primary mission field is: our surroundings, beginning with our relatives and acquaintances. It’s often particularly difficult here, because they know us. But it’s where God placed us. Our unconverted relatives are just as lost, and need Jesus just as much, as distant people who are reached by missionaries in the field.

Then comes our service to the ends of the earth. This is our mandate to external missions, which remains our assignment until Jesus returns. Meanwhile, Christians in the so-called Third World, who have only heard of Jesus in recent generations, are taking this missionary mandate seriously. They’re doing missionary work in countries where faith has been diminishing, like in Europe.

The mandate to bring the Gospel to the entire world is one of the Christian’s enduring duties. The Christian’s field for work and harvest is the whole world. In our time, when large numbers of immigrants are coming to our country, we have a special assignment here: declaring the Gospel to the Gentiles in our own nation.

(MR0521/1162)



The Doctrine of Balaam

Wim Malgo (1922-1992)

An interpretation of the last book of the Bible. Part 24.
Revelation 2:14-16.

After the Lord's praise of the church in Pergamos, a stern rebuke followed: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev 2:14-16).

The persecution from the authorities and the Jews was unspeakably difficult for the believers in Pergamos. But they were able to persevere, because they had put on the full armor of God, held fast to the name of Jesus, and did not deny their faith. The Lord Himself is the One who wields the sword that pierces the Adversary's armor. And whoever has this Lord in his heart cannot be defeated. In Christ Jesus, he rises above the throne of Satan and conquers, indeed over every temptation.

Yet, the Lord had "a few things" against them. So, it would seem to be a



The “minor matter” was a deadly danger for Pergamos, just as the “harmless” dialogue between Eve and the serpent in Paradise was a trap with terrible consequences.

minor matter, even though it's so serious; believers can be so fond of downplaying things, to trivialize their inner defeat and failure. But therein lies the shocking seriousness: while the children of God in Pergamos were victoriously resisting the external enemy, they were giving in to the internal enemy. We can see that fatal mixture of victory and defeat; following Jesus to death, and yet surrendering to the inner demands of the flesh. We need to consider verses 14 and 15 in this light.

The doctrine of Balaam had taken hold. Balaam's doctrine consisted of the counsel that Balaam gave to King Balak (Num 22—25; 31:16). Balaam wanted to curse the people of God, but failed. He realized that Balak wouldn't achieve anything with his army because Israel was invincible, so he stopped him from fighting them. But he also wanted to destroy the people of Israel. He managed to do so by seducing them to participate in idolatry and the usual connected fornication.

The “minor matter” was a deadly danger for Pergamos, just as the “harmless” dialogue between Eve and the serpent in Paradise was a trap with terrible consequences. And this sexual permissiveness had been elevated to doctrine there in Pergamos, probably through the influence of highly respected church members: “that hold the doctrine of Balaam” (Rev 2:14). That is why this terrible mixture came about in Pergamos: their resolute external adherence to the name of Jesus

(v. 13), but then again, their dogged adherence to the teaching of Balaam (v. 14).

Not everyone was joining in. The Lord expressly said, “So hast thou also...” You have a number of people who have succumbed to the inner enemy! But although the others were resolutely following the Lord Jesus, a mixing had arisen in their church structure, because they were tolerating the fleshly ones. Their power was lost. And this has been repeated thousands of times up till today.

The Lord wants to divide with His sharp sword (His Word), because He doesn't desire fleshly permissiveness, but rather for our flesh to be crucified with Christ. Fleshly fornication was occurring in Pergamos, because they had already been committing spiritual fornication. And this spiritual fornication was expressed through the church's neutral attitude toward the ones who were straying.

The Lord says of the Ephesian church, “thou hatest the deeds...” (Rev 2:6). They took a clear stand against all heresy and carnal lust. However, in the case of the church in Thyatira, He says, “Thou sufferest [sin]” (Rev 2:20), meaning that it was tolerated. In Pergamos, these two groups and these two teachings (resolutely following Jesus and compromising with the flesh) were simply coexisting. And thus, the Lord judges this church's inner neutrality most sharply.

(MR0321/1149)




WORLD FOCUS

 SPAIN

Plant-Based Fish Rattling Seafood Industry

The Madrid-based startup's Tunato product, fabricated from a specialty tomato variety grown in southern Spain that resembles sliced sushi-grade tuna in shape and size, is part of a growing class of food innovations fighting for the last empty shelf in the booming plant-based protein market: seafood.

 The potential market could be huge: Beyond vegans and flexitarians, faux fish might also be a welcome addition to, say, a pregnant woman avoiding high-mercury swordfish or a consumer with a shellfish allergy. And big corporations have taken notice.

In Thailand in March, Thai Union Group PCL, which owns the Chicken of the Sea brand, introduced its plant-based line OMG Meat, including crab cakes and fish burgers, with plans for a vegan shrimp later this year. Nestle SA's nonfish tuna is available in parts of Europe, while Swedish retailer Ikea sells vegan caviar, derived from kelp seaweed.

French foodmaker Odontella SAS sells a plant-based smoked salmon made from algae and pea protein in specialty supermarkets across Europe. The product is a long way from its origins as a 2007 experiment in co-founder Alain Guillou's kitchen. It tastes very close to the real thing, though the price is hefty.

The key to price parity will be scaling up production and tapping more markets. "When that happens, you know the mega tipping point is here," says David Yeung, founder and



Fingerino tomatoes used to make Mimic Seafood's meatless tuna.
Source: Mimic Seafood

CEO of OmniFoods, a Hong Kong-based foodtech known for its vegan pork that's been expanding into seafood. "I truly believe this is a matter of two to three years."

Spain's Mimic is banking on that. Although it halted distribution of its tomato-based tuna when Covid-19 lockdowns hit, it plans to resume sales in several Spanish cities by the end of the year, eventually expanding into Denmark. The startup has visions of becoming "the Oatly of seafood," giving the traditional protein market a run for its money as nut and oat milks did for cow's milk.

-www.msn.com, 4 August 2021

Commentary: When reading excerpts from this article and countless others appearing daily on news websites, we are compelled to ask: what next? For one thing, "Give us this day our daily bread" is in the process of



Beef for sale alongside Impossible Burger's plant-based meat at a Los Angeles grocery store. Photographer: Patrick T. Fallon/Bloomberg

being outmoded. While mankind still relies on traditional agriculture for food, whether from land or sea, a change is being observed from the many progressive reports. Typing the question, "How much food is grown by irrigation globally?" into a search engine, gives us the answer, "Irrigation provides approximately 40% of the world's food."

How about seafood? Global production of fish and seafood has quadrupled over the past 50 years, says OurWorldInData.org. Capture fisheries, the source states, produce about 90 million tons, while aquaculture has shot past the 100-million-ton mark.

This is just further confirmation of man's ingenuity; giving him a booster shot of self-reliance, independent from God the Creator. Here Mark 8:36-37 asks two questions: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the

whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

7583


(See *Final Destiny*, Item #2377, \$5.95.)



AUSTRALIA

Trade with India Rather Than China

Australian special envoy and former Prime Minister Tony Abbott said a free trade agreement between his nation and India would signal the “democratic world’s tilt away from China.”

 “Because trade deals are about politics as much as economics, a swift deal between India and Australia would be an important sign of the democratic world’s tilt away from China, as well as boosting the long-term prosperity of both our countries,” Abbott added.

Abbott accused Beijing of “capricious boycotts” of Australian exports including coal, barley, wine and seafood that demonstrated Chinese use of trade as a “strategic weapon.”

“The basic problem is that China’s daunting power is a consequence of the free world’s decision to invite a communist dictatorship into global trading networks,” Abbott said.

India is particularly concerned by freer trade in Australian farm exports. New Delhi’s demands for less restrictive visas for Indian workers is a major sticking point for Australia.

Australia’s current Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi last year upgraded the bilateral relationship with a raft of agreements that strengthened defense ties and committed both nations to expanding trade.

-apnews.com, 9 August 2021

Commentary: Geographically speaking, the distance from Australia to China and India is about the same. As far as close ties, however, India is favored; until 1947, the subcontinent was a British colony. Australia is still part of the British Common-

wealth. Nevertheless, China is an important economic partner. The *CIA Factbook* shows that Australian exports to China are at 39% of the total, while exports to India are only 5% (2019). Imports from China: 25%, with India not even listed.

This writer, who lived in Australia for five years, remembers stories told during the early 1960s. A farmer recalled the mountain of wheat from Melbourne to Geelong (obviously, an exaggeration), unable to be exported to Britain due to the war. Eventually, most of it was sold to China for a higher price than Australia ever received from Britain. Not to mention, the wheat was vermin-infested and degraded in quality.

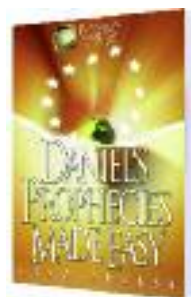
Politics and economy go hand in hand. Australia will not and cannot ignore China, which is true for Europe and America as well. There will be negotiations, compromises, and deals, so that globalism will only continue, but increase.

When we speak of Bible prophecy fulfillment, we must not limit it to local or national events, which come and go, but must stick to what is written: “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns” (Daniel 7:7). This is something not just for the future, but is in the works today. The last Gentile superpower—the Iron Empire—is creating new power blocs while ignoring previous ones. Or as it says, “it devoured

and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.”

7584


(See *Daniel’s Prophecies Made Easy*, Item #1057, \$12.)



CHINA

Space-Based Solar Energy Station

With more than a third of days marred by fog all year round, Chongqing city in southwestern China is not the ideal place for a solar power plant. But soon it will have the nation’s first experimental facility to test a revolutionary technology allowing China to send, and receive, a powerful energy beam from space in about a decade, according to scientists involved in the project.

 An intensive energy beam would need to penetrate the cloud efficiently and hit a ground station directly and precisely. Researchers at the Bishan facility will work on these and other projects.

A solar energy plant is not efficient because it only operates during the day, and the atmosphere reflects or absorbs nearly half the energy in the sunlight.

Since the 1960s, some space scientists and engineers have been attracted to the idea of a solar station in space. From an altitude of 36,000km (22,400 miles) or above, a geo-stationary solar plant can avoid the Earth’s shadow and see the sun 24 hours a day.

The core experimental zone will be 2 hectares (4.9 acres) and surrounded by a clearance zone five times larger. Local residents are not allowed to enter the buffer zone for their own safety, according to the district government.

The safety risk of a space solar plant is not negligible, according to some recent studies in China.

When the huge solar panels turn to chase the sun, for instance, they could produce small but persistent vibrations in the microwave beaming gun that could cause a misfire. The “space farm” would therefore need an extremely sophisticated flight control system to maintain its aim at a tiny spot on Earth.

Most new energy sources, such as solar and wind, are not stable. With other options, such as

(continued next page)

Solar Energy (continued from page 25)

fusion nuclear technology still being technically uncertain, a space-based solar power system “will be a major strategic choice,” professor Ge Changchun wrote.

The research team in Chongqing could not be reached for comment. According to openly available information, the Bishan testing site will be a dual-use facility for military and civilian researchers.

China lags behind the US in space technology at present, but the program will put China in a lead position in the race, they said.

-www.scmp.com, 17 August 2021

Commentary: Another goal, another race, and another step toward independence from God the Creator.

Often, we vastly underestimate the progress mankind has made. Not by creating something, but by taking advantage of, copying, and improving the intricate details of creation. In this case, it’s not the sun giving us light during the day, but a beam from space—36,000 km away—using energy from the sun 24 hours a day.

Whether this will be implemented is not an issue of “if,” but rather when. China’s government announced that by 2060, the nation will be carbon neutral.

There are many voices of concern, even fear, regarding communist China’s amazing progress. Where will it lead? We repeat: a more peaceful, prosperous, and secure global society.

We must keep in mind that the devil rules planet earth. Why? Because of sin: “He who sins is of the devil.” That includes all of us, but there is an escape: faith in the accomplished work of Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross, where He poured out His life in His blood and exclaimed, “It is finished.” It is He who will establish the real peaceful, prosperous, and secure global society. Subsequently, it stands to reason that the spirit of Antichrist, the demonic forces under the heavens, must mimic this future fulfillment.

7580

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

WORLD

Next Pandemic in 59 Years

The Covid pandemic has proved to be the deadliest viral outbreak the world has seen for more than a century—so it is tempting to hope we will be spared another such crisis in our lifetimes.



But scientists have crunched the numbers—and it’s bad news for anyone who is in their early 20s or younger.

A team of US and Italian researchers have calculated that a major epidemic on a scale similar to Covid is due within the next 59 years—by 2080 at the latest.

It means that, based on average UK life expectancy, anyone under 24 will almost certainly have to live through another huge health disaster. The researchers warned it could happen far sooner than that.

Researchers looked back at the new disease outbreaks over the past 400 years and found that epidemics are not as rare as first thought.

The study looked at the scale and frequency of disease outbreaks going back to 1600, including plague, smallpox, cholera, typhus and novel influenza viruses, and found patterns that give hints about when a similar-scale event will happen again.

Based on the increasing rate at which novel pathogens such as Sars, Mers and Covid have broken loose in human populations in the past 50 years, the study estimates that the probability of outbreaks is likely to grow three-fold in the next few decades.

With this growing risk factor, the researchers estimate that a pandemic similar in scale to Covid is likely within a span of 59 years.

[Scientists have] called for more to be done to anticipate future outbreaks and prepare for large scale epidemics capable of killing millions of people.

“Understanding that pandemics aren’t so rare should raise the priority of efforts to pre-



vent and control them in the future,” said Dr. William Pan of Duke University.

-www.yahoo.com, 23 August 2021

Commentary: These words sound almost prophetic: “future outbreaks ...killing millions of people.”

What does the Bible say? We read in Revelation 16:13-14: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” That occurs after the sixth angel pours out his vial of wrath. It’s the beginning of Armageddon, as verse 16 reads: “And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.” It is the final confrontation between the powers of darkness and the power of light. Because light is stronger than darkness, the battle is already decided: “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with



the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

7586

(See *101 Answers to Questions About the Book of Revelation*, Item #2295, \$15.99.)

ISRAEL

Pig Organs in Humans?

A team of Israeli researchers has developed a hybrid organ—an organ from a pig with “human” blood vessels—that they believe could help alleviate the shortage of transplant organs.



Dr. Shahar Cohen

(photo credit: COURTESY BEILINSON HOSPITAL)

There have been many attempts to implant animal organs in humans but this has largely been unsuccessful, mostly due to acute rejections, explained Dr. Shahar Cohen of Beilinson Hospital, whose team developed the hybrid organ.

“We looked for a way to produce an alternative coating that does not cause rejection,” Cohen told *The Jerusalem Post*.

The solution: Cohen’s team removed the coating from the pig’s blood vessels and replaced it with a more “friendly” coating to the human immune system that was engineered in the laboratory from human placenta cells, which, as far as is known, do not trigger rejection.

“We remove the pig’s internal layer of blood vessels and replace it with a ‘human layer,’ thereby humanizing the blood vessels of the organ and generating a hybrid organ—a pig organ with humanized blood vessels. This is the way to surmount the barrier to pig organs in humans.”

Next, he said, the researchers plan to perform their first hybrid organ transplants in animals and in about five years Cohen hopes that the first human transplant can be performed.

“We believe that our approach will make this reality sooner than later,” Cohen told the *Post*. “Our goal is to change the world and change the face of modern transplantation medicine.”

-*www.jpost.com*, 4 July 2021

Commentary: It’s not surprising that this is being developed in Israel. What is the goal of this medical experiment? The answer is simple: to extend life. Dr. Cohen believes that within five years, the first of these transplants will occur. What is the motive? “Our goal is to change the world and change the face of modern transplantation medicine.”

What was unthinkable just a few years ago is now being developed by medical scientists. No doubt, if successful, it will be practiced the world over. Thus, the question: can man extend his life? Here is what the Bible says: “For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased” (Proverbs 9:11). Actually, the fifth commandment has this to say: “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Exodus 20:12). But Ecclesiastes 7:17 warns: “Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?”

Regarding life expectancy, Psalm 90:10 says: “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” For that reason, each one of

us should take to heart verse 12: “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” 7588

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



AFRICA

Covid-19 Having Less Impact

There has been an increase in Covid-19 deaths across Africa since mid-July 2021. But the impact of the pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa remains markedly lower compared to the Americas, Europe, and Asia.

In a recent paper our team of public health researchers, led by health analyst Janica Adams, examined possible explanations by reviewing the scientific literature. The aim was to help guide public health decision making to contain Covid-19.

Age has been observed as a significant risk factor for severe Covid-19 illness. Most deaths occur in those aged 65 or older. The median age in North and South America, Europe, and Asia ranges from 32 to 42.5 years. The age demographic structure of sub-Saharan Africa is much younger—the median age is 18.

Most elderly people in sub-Saharan Africa don’t live in long-term care facilities. These facilities pose significant risks for infectious diseases. Covid-19 has substantially affected those living in long-term care facilities. During the first wave of the pandemic, about 81% of deaths in Canada occurred in those facilities.

The rapid response of several African governments and health organizations may have played a significant role. At the beginning of the pandemic, several measures were taken: screening, establishment of the Africa Task Force for Novel Coronavirus, suspension of flights from China, and closure of borders in 40 African nations. New programs also promote sharing of Covid-19 information across sub-Saharan Africa.

But stringent lockdowns have taken a serious economic and societal toll across sub-Saharan Africa. Lockdowns resulted in-

(continued next page)

USA

Customer Service Abuse

She worked as an independent contractor for Arise Virtual Solutions, a company that bills itself as a pioneer in the work-from-home industry.

Customers, she said, “get mad at us. They start cursing at us. They start threatening to report us to the main office.” One customer, she said, told her he was going to keep her on the line until he got what he wanted; he “started with the F-word,” then apologized, then carried on. He “wouldn’t stop and wouldn’t stop” until finally, realizing the agent wouldn’t give in, he gave up.

At one time she handled calls from Barnes & Noble customers. “A lot of cursing, a lot of crying—crying—believe it or not. I’ve been called every name in the book. And I do mean from A to Z. Everything in between. I’ve been hung up on, threatened, told I’m going to lose my job. I had one woman tell me, ‘I hope you have a miserable day.’ You can’t laugh. I can’t laugh. I’m thinking to myself, ‘You ordered



the Bible. You’re some Christian person?’ She’d ordered a Bible! Those are the worst! Those are the worst hypocrites! They scream, curse, yell, carry on, threaten. They’re the worst.”

-www.propublica.org, 21 July 2021

Commentary: This is a perfect example of the need for Christians to “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5a). The customer service representative listed Christians as “the worst hypocrites.” Often, we like to pride ourselves on being “unspotted from the

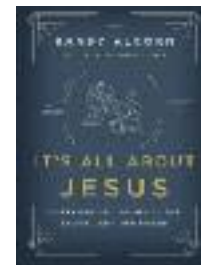
world” (James 1:27b). Yet our testimony before others is often sorely lacking when it comes to being humble and courteous. Even unbelievers know of the “Golden Rule”: “...as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luke 6:31).

The next time we interact with customer service, whether over the phone or in person, we should remember to “...be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among

whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life” (Philippians 2:15-16a). 7561

(By K. Farmer)

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



Covid-19 (continued from page 27)

creased food insecurity, teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, and disruptions in treatment of malaria, TB and HIV. Africa’s 54 nations are not all the same, and local responses should be tailored to the health, social, and economic realities in specific countries.

-qz.com, 23 August 2021

Commentary: The jury is still out when it comes to identifying reasons why some countries have experienced catastrophic damage, while others—in this case, mostly non-industrialized, poorer countries—have been largely spared.

Age is definitely a contributing factor, as the article states. Yet, population density and the availability of healthcare usually plays a larger part when it comes to the spread of pandemics. Quite apparently, Covid-19 is

different, unique, and is revealed unexpectedly.

The following are comparisons of registered deaths due to Covid-19 per 1 million population as of 30 August 2021:

USA	1,933
Israel	714

The numbers go down drastically when it comes to Africa:

Egypt	166
Algeria	20
Liberia	49
Nigeria	12

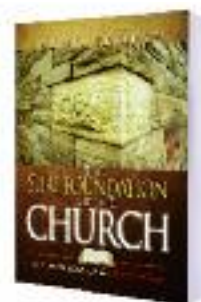
Of great interest is the fact that the so-called Christianized countries have taken the brunt of the pandemic, while most of these Muslim countries are barely affected in comparison.

While we do not have the answer, we do know that the God of creation is in absolute control. It is He who permits the enemy, the god of this world, to prepare the world for unity. Why? Because Satan’s superman, the Antichrist, will be given power to subdue planet earth; thereby making peace, prosperity, and security a reality, albeit temporarily.

Let us continually pray for the Church, His body globally, so our unity will be deepened. The Church is coming closer day by day to its goal: being formed in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7585


(See *The Sure Foundation of the Church*, Item #1066, CLEARANCE \$6.)



 **EU**

European Commission Making Global Policy?

The European Commission presented some of the world's most ambitious plans to confront climate change, aiming to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 percent below 1990 levels within less than a decade.

 The European Union's executive branch said it would make Europe "the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050." E.U. representatives urged the United States and other nations to follow.

The package of proposals—which consists of more than a dozen directives or regulations—was applauded by some environmental groups as a landmark effort. But it is unclear how many of the planned changes will remain in place after the bloc's 27 member states and the European Parliament have examined and modified them in what is expected to be a years-long process.

If passed, one of the most significant changes of the "Fit for 55" package would be the creation of a "carbon border adjustment mechanism," which would impose tariffs on some goods imported from non-E.U. countries with weaker climate laws. In practice, environmental groups hope, this could become a powerful incentive for other nations to follow the bloc's policies.

"To the United States, I would say if you are so worried, then maybe it is time you come forward with very credible plans on decarbonization of your economy," said Bas Eickhout, a European lawmaker from a Dutch green party. "We have heard a lot of announcements, but we have not seen many concrete policies."

-www.washingtonpost.com, 14 July 2021

Commentary: Here again we are seeing the European Union taking on the mantle of global leadership that once belonged almost



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presents the European Union's new climate policy proposals with E.U. Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni in Brussels on July 14.
(Yves Herman/Reuters)

exclusively to the United States. As a unified trading bloc, it can "...impose tariffs on some goods imported from non-E.U. countries with weaker climate laws."

Furthermore, there are technical and practical ways that European law spreads globally. The best example is the GDPR data privacy law, which went into effect in 2018. We recall receiving a slew of GDPR notifications from numerous internet companies, simply because it is often easier for a company to treat all their customers across the globe alike.

However, we must reiterate that the final world empire will not just encompass Europe, but the whole world: "power was given him [Antichrist] over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Revelation 13:7b). We have been on this road to globalism for a while now—first through British colonialism, then American dominance, and now we see the focus shift to Europe. Likewise, China is becoming influential through the immense amount of merchandise they both produce and, now as a relatively richer country, consume. A recent article from *The Guardian* shows how

China influences the entertainment industry because of its role as a massive audience:

"In 2020, the US arm of Pen International, an association of writers that seeks to protect free expression, published an explosive report on how decisions in Hollywood, including the content, casting, plot, dialogue and settings of films were increasingly 'based on an effort to avoid antagonizing Chinese officials.' It wrote that during the past decade or more, 'domestic patterns of



7551
have extended beyond China's borders." 7551

(By J. Froese)

(Listen to *Progressive Globalism*, Item #3341, \$7.)

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The Beth Shalom Guesthouse During Corona Days

BY SARAH MARANZENBOIM-WINKLER

The Beth Shalom Hotel, a small Christian guesthouse, recently went through a difficult time. For more than a year, we could not take in any tourist groups; could not offer guided tours through the region to visit Biblical sites. This was true also for those Christian and Jewish guests, who like to come to Beth Shalom because they appreciate the pleasant, calm atmosphere, the cleanliness, and the friendly demeanor of the longtime staff. Those guests now stayed away, since everything was closed down. From one day to the next, all activities had to cease.

The Beth Shalom House, not functioning like a usual small hotel, in time became something of a second “home” for the Bethesda congregation in Haifa. Even before the corona situation, this congregation used the premises of Beth Shalom for children and young people’s ministry, as well as some social activities. During the corona pandemic, the three, relatively large rooms at the hotel (dining room, assembly room, and recreation room) offered an ideal way to sidestep some of the limitations.

Since the hotel was closed for business, it was an easy decision to let it be used for the congregational activities.

When it was possible again to gather under certain restrictions, Beth Shalom became the place for child and youth activities. And every time, we followed the corona mandates: when 10 or 20 people were allowed to meet in a closed room, we had the capability to separate into groups. When 50 people could meet outside, we would get together in the garden—weather permitting, of course. Given the long time of isolation, these activities became very important for the spiritual and social life of the church members. Not only did the young people of the Bethesda congregation utilize our premises, but also those from an Arabic church in Haifa.

Since for a long time, church services were possible only over Zoom, the same applied also for the “Sabbath school” for children. When meetings with corona limitations were again possible, we decided to hold the “Sabbath school” on Fridays at Beth Shalom. In

During the heavy bombardment in the South, we offered our house to congregations in that area; particularly for families that were very much in need of a few quiet days.

In addition to the spiritual values, social contact was also very important for the children. Just as during the youth activities, we consistently had to improvise to adhere to corona regulations. Besides the child and youth activities, various other meetings for prayer and get-together were also held at Beth Shalom.

During the heavy bombardment in the South, we offered our house to congregations in that area; particularly for families that were very much in need of a few quiet days. It was a most difficult time, especially for families with children. One family, which had no safe place in their home, was forced to find protection in a public bomb shelter. Staying at Beth Shalom was relief from an untenable situation. It was also a great blessing for this family: their children got to know our children, played

and did crafts with them, and together they listened to Bible stories.

We thank the Lord for all we were able to do for Him during this time and continue to do presently. In Israel, things are beginning to return to normal [but the Delta variant is renewing concerns]. The only exception is international tourism, due to continued limits on air travel. But we wait patiently, because we know that all things work together for good to those who love God (Rom 8:28). At present, we haven't yet overcome the crisis, but are confident that with God's help, we will emerge stronger.

Grateful for all prayers and support, we send our greetings to you from Haifa, Israel.

Your Beth Shalom Team

(NAI0721)

Action
for Israel



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“For Zion’s Sake I Will Not Keep Silent” – Part 1

By David Phillips *Project Manager*



“For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns” (Isaiah 62:1).

These next two months, we will continue to dedicate fundraising for those who cannot afford the entrance fee to the Ebenezer Home. For some, coming up with the entrance fee isn’t a problem, but for others, it’s quite a challenge. Currently, we have an urgent need to help raise these funds for a very special, 87-year-old Arab sister in Yeshua, whose family needs help with this initial fee. Will you join us in helping to make the Ebenezer Home a reality for this dear elderly sister? She needs our support.

Join me as I share about her family and how they miraculously came to faith in Yeshua—and changed my life as well!

This special testimony, of how this family came to faith in Yeshua, involves multiple people, which I believe can be a great encouragement to each of us. It really reminds me of the verse above, which says, “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent.” The Hebrew Scripture puts it something like this: “For Zion’s sake I will not deny...or be quiet...or hold my peace.” It’s hard to explain the deep meaning of it in a foreign language. The point is, if asked about our faith, do we keep quiet?

Believers here in Israel and in many places around the world, are used to being hated or not wanted. Years ago, I had quite the struggle to bear witness to our people (especially Jews) concerning faith in Yeshua, until certain cir-

cumstances brought me to the place where I almost lost my life. In those milliseconds before I was going to die, God brought to my memory Psalm 118:17, which says, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.” I quoted this in prayer to the Lord, asking Him to save me physically, and to allow me to escape death. I didn’t think that I would live, but He knew.

I remember quoting the whole verse to the Lord. The second part of the verse says, “and declare the works (or deeds) of the Lord.” This was my side of the bargain. If the Lord spared my life, I was to declare His works. I never thought that God Himself would require me to keep this last part six months later, but He did. What happened?

Someone requested—no, he really pressured me—to proclaim and speak out about my faith in Yeshua. I didn’t realize at the time that this was God’s plan. Fully remembering the promise I had made to God six months earlier, I now understood that God Himself was requiring me to fulfill my part. You see, by quoting the whole verse, I promised Him that I would speak up and would proclaim the deeds of the Lord God, Jehovah. Now it was my time to bear witness to someone who was not a believer. Yes, I was in distress, petrified with fear. I was scared. I didn’t know what to say. I prayed and asked God to open my mouth and give me the right words to speak.



Let's take a brief break from my story and go to the story of Johnny, the manager of the Ebenezer Home, who also witnessed to this same person. We hadn't realized at the time that this man was going to both of us, asking each of us the same questions about our faith, the Bible, all kinds of questions. Miraculously, we both always answered his questions the same way, as he continued to ask each of us separately over some weeks. This man was comparing and testing us both (without us even realizing it!), and deeply testing our faith and the Word of God. Was our faith real? Was it true? Was Yeshua really the Messiah of the world?

You see, this person worked with Johnny and me in a factory before we came to work at the Ebenezer Home.

Johnny would work in the factory, and I would take a team out to the different building sites. Needless to say, Johnny and I never even had an opportunity to match or compare how we would answer (and remember, we didn't even know he was asking the other person!).

The greatest miracle happened when this man, an Arab, heard the witness and accepted Yeshua...along with his wife and his younger sister! Over a period of a year, as we would visit him now and then in his Arab village up in the Galilee, his brothers would look at

me with such hatred. Their look said, "We want to kill you!" Obviously, since I am writing this article, it never happened, thank the Lord. But another miracle happened.

During the next three years, all seven of this man's brothers, as well as his mother and father, gave their lives to Yeshua and were saved! And now, over a period of many years, over 48 people from this man's family have become faithful believers in Yeshua! Each one of them coming out of the Arab world, once hating Israel. Now all loving Israel, and who now love "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6)—and they love their Messiah Yeshua!

To be continued...



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

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

THE RAPTURE AND ISRAEL... ETERNAL HELL... TRACTS AND REPENTANCE

The Rapture and Israel

Arno Froese,

I am reading a copy of *The Great Mystery of the Rapture*. In chapter one, you write about the Christians being raptured vertically and the Jewish people being raptured horizontally to Israel or Judea.

How do you interpret Romans 11:24, where it says we have been grafted into the cultivated olive tree (which is Israel, I think)?

You told about that elderly gentleman who showed you in Matthews 5:1-2 that Jesus was speaking to or teaching His disciples. But couldn't He have been teaching that multitude with His spiritual voice?

We tend to think in physical terms, not spiritual; yet spiritual things are more real than physical.

-J. Nelson, PA

Answer: The Church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, will one day be raptured vertically, just like it says in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. In the meantime,

however, we see Jewish people moving horizontally—from all countries to the land of Israel.

Yes, the Gentiles have been grafted into the olive tree Israel. But that does not make us Israelis; we remain what we are, as stated in Galatians 3:28. Jews have a physical promise here on earth, but those who belong to the Church—Jews and Gentiles—have a spiritual promise.

You are right: spiritual things are more real than physical. Yet there is no indication in Scripture that Jesus was teaching “with His spiritual voice.” Matthew 5 says He went away “into a mountain: and ... his disciples came unto him.” This is confirmed in Luke 6:20a: “he lifted up his eyes on his disciples.”

Eternal Hell

Dear Editor,

Is hell eternal? Read Proverbs 27:20. This is from King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. “Hell and destruction are never full.” Here Solomon confirms in Scripture that hell is eternal. Where can we find a better source of confirmation?

-L. Williams, MD



Answer: You are correct: hell is eternal, as stated in Proverbs 27:20. In the last book of the Bible, we read of the lake of fire, and Revelation 20:10 ends: "...and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Verse 14 states: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

Tracts and Repentance

I ordered and received tracts #9119 ("A Ticking Climate Bomb?") and #9120 ("Religion or the Gospel?"). But I was concerned that these tracts don't state anywhere in their contents to repent. Please read my suggestion: Mark 1:15; 6:12; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20; Revelation 2:5.

Will these tracts be revised?

-K. Cantel, OH

Answer: Tract #9119 ("A Ticking Climate Bomb?") is a Biblical answer to the environmental movement; there is a way out—paradise through Jesus Christ. Tract #9120 emphasizes the difference between religion and the Gospel. This one ends, "What will your decision be?" The authors of these two tracts are not known to me, whether they are from Europe or South America. That is their testimony, their message they prayerfully wrote.

It may be helpful for you to read the Gospels and note how Jesus approached each person differently; He never repeated Himself. Incidentally, these tracts have had great impact, resulting in many souls coming to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Message of the Month

Dear Sir,

In reference to the "Message of the Month," a few words that come to mind are: inspiring, teaching, guidance, comforting, reassuring.

Consider my limited use of words to express my great gratitude to be a recipient of this monthly program, which I understand shall discontinue at the end of 2021.

Sending this note before I fail to say what an accomplished series of messages it was, and a joy to have received it!

-M. Cardwell, TX

Answer: Your few words regarding the discontinuation of our Message of the Month Club were very uplifting. I appreciate you taking the time to write.

First Manned Flight

Dear Arno Froese,

On pages 21-22 of the June 2021 *News From Israel*, you said the first manned flight was 21 November 1783. That was a hot-air balloon, not manned airflight. You have downplayed the Wright Brothers by not even mentioning the date of their flight. You're being disingenuous with the facts.

-T. Pfeil, TX

Answer: "The first manned flight took place on 21 November 1783 with passengers Jean François Pilâtre de Rozier and François Laurent, [Marquis] d'Arlandes," according to Wikipedia.

Although I can't recall assuredly, some time ago, I read of a steam-powered airship flying in England in the late 1800s. Flying was an evolutionary process by mankind—fly as a bird. Technology, conceived by man's intellect, attempts to copy or surpass God's creation. The ultimate achievement will be Antichrist's image of the beast.

Incidentally, it is good to search information from different sources; you will then find some different answers. In most cases, nationalism plays a strong part. (MC)

Why Did God Kill Achan and His Entire Household?

Norbert Lieth

How can we make sense of the divinely ordained execution of Achan and his family? A biblically based exposition.



In Joshua 7:24-26, we read a serious, truly terrible story: under the Old Covenant, Achan defied God's clear instructions, stole something forbidden, and secretly buried it in his tent. When God exposed the matter, Achan and his entire family were killed, and everything he owned was destroyed. Maybe we don't understand this today, and wonder how Achan's family could have sinned so that

they also fell under this devastating judgment.

God's actions always have deep spiritual meaning.

God is a God of justice, and His judgments are righteous; that's not in doubt. Jesus praised the Father for it (John 17:25). The angels surrounding Him, who have known the Lord since the beginning of creation, praise Him for His righteous-



The Stoning of Achan and His Family

“And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

“And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

“And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day” (Josh 7:24-26).

ness, His holiness, and His deeds (Rev 4:8-9; 16:7). We should also keep in mind that our sense of justice is influenced by sin. When I consider this, it calms me. I don't need to question the Almighty; I can trust in Him. Not by shutting off my intellect, but subordinating it to Him (2 Cor 10:5; Phil 4:7).

It's not simply a matter of how we see, judge, or (if possible) minimize sin; rather, it's always about how the Lord sees it. It was He who exposed the guilt and unmasked Achan. It's serious when God points His finger at us and reveals how guilty we are. There's no wriggling out of it. Yet He also points to forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

The story in Joshua 7:24-26 reveals how seriously sin needs to be taken. It isn't harmless, but gives birth to death (James 1:15). God had to set this example. Otherwise, the whole people would have gone completely off the rails. Achan's example would have resulted in further increasingly brazen behavior. It can be observed in the Old Testament that people were constantly crossing the line. Sin is a

serious matter and not to be trifled with. Figuratively speaking, it pollutes the whole camp and must be completely eradicated whenever it comes to light.

It's certainly terrible that Achan's family also perished. But we must assume that the family undoubtedly knew about his actions and said nothing. It happened in his tent, after all. His housemates may have even helped him bury things. If God had tolerated this, it would have been an incentive for the people to engage in further secrecy, deception, and sin. Sin would have given birth to more sin (2 Tim 2:16; 3:13). One evil deed would have brought the next behind it. Nobody would have taken the Almighty seriously.

Not only was Achan's family destroyed, but also everything he owned, including his livestock and tent. We can see the whole tragedy of sin here; not a trace of what has come into contact with sin can remain in God's presence. Sin defiles everything.

This shows that the perfect salvation the Lord Jesus has obtained for us is so tremendously important and precious. It

Why Did God Kill Achan and His Entire Household?

The Lord knows what He's doing, even when we're frozen in place, racking our brains trying to figure out why things are happening. God is pursuing His divine goal, and we can move forward in trust. God is just, after all!

is the only route for us to stand before God. The judgment before the throne of God, described in Revelation 20 from verse 11 onward, speaks clearly to this.

On the one hand, the Lord saved Rahab (a foreigner and a prostitute) and her whole house because she believed. On the other hand, He had an entire family stoned to death because they were clearly greedy and deceitful, even though they belonged to God's people. Obviously, Achan and his house didn't take God's Word seriously. The New Testament says, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph 5:3). Redeemed saints can certainly fall into such sins as well, which is very tragic.

This doesn't mean that Achan was lost in the same way as those who don't believe in God at all. He had to die, but that doesn't necessarily mean that he was eternally damned; he ultimately confessed his guilt (Josh 7:20ff.). And Joshua called him "my son" (7:19). This incident aligns with the story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). They were believers who were not lost, but had to die for their sin. Compare 1 Corinthians 5:5, where Paul writes about giving someone over "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

According to 1 Corinthians 10:11, the events in Israel under the Old Covenant are meant to be an example and a warning to us. So, what can we learn from this?

Paul gets right to the point. Just as Achan and his possessions were slain, we are to slay everything in us that is ungodly. "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry" (Col 3:5, NIV).

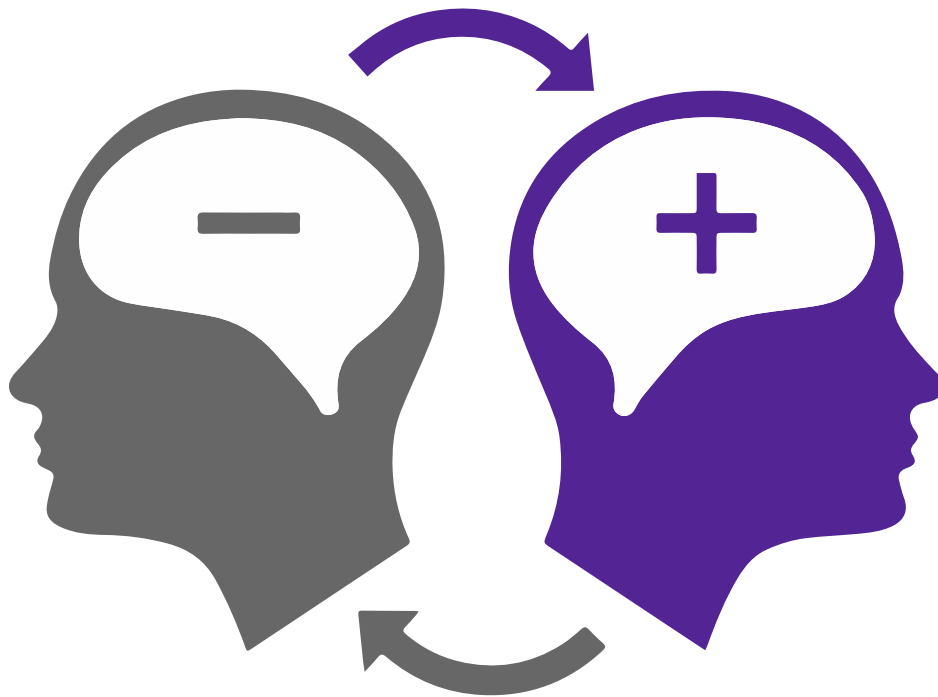
In this regard, the remark in Hosea 2:15 is very interesting. The very valley in which Achan died (the "valley of Achor") will someday be appropriated for Israel's salvation and become a "valley of hope." The Lord opens a door of hope: "And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

It's beautiful to know that the hopelessness of sin and death will be lifted for those who believe in Jesus Christ. God will make all things new, and there will be no more death. That's why we can move forward in confidence, even if we don't understand everything yet.

The first verse after the tragic event with Achan begins with the following words: "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise..." (Josh 8:1).

The Lord knows what He's doing, even when we're frozen in place, racking our brains trying to figure out why things are happening. God is pursuing His divine goal, and we can move forward in trust. God is just, after all!

(MR0521/1166)



A College Student's Story of Despair and Praise

Exulting to the Heavens, Distressed to Death

Morgan Fay

Edward T. Welch puts it very well when he describes depression as a “stubborn darkness,” because that’s exactly what it is. It’s stubborn because as hard as you try, it doesn’t go away on your terms and only gets worse before it can get better. It is darkness because you really feel like you’re the only person in the world who feels this way and that nobody else understands. It feels as if there is no hope—that this is *it!*

For me, it seemed to last for ages. I thought I had always felt this way and that I always would. I went from being a happy, bubbly person who loved serving the Lord and ministering to people, to someone who hated even the thought of living another day.

There really aren’t any events that I can think of that contributed to my depression. Nothing had hap-

pened to me.... School was going fine, volleyball was going well, and life at home was as it always had been. Everything was normal. At least, that’s what I thought, and this made me feel even more frustrated and guilty.

I still remember the day that I first knew something was wrong. It was the Monday before Halloween, and I realized that I was thinking illogically.

Exulting to the Heavens, Distressed to Death

My thoughts were repetitive, condemning, and all-consuming. I literally questioned everything that I did and concluded that it was all sin. I thought I was losing my mind. For me, the mental symptoms were the most miserable and most frustrating. All the racing and obsessive thoughts that never gave me a break, the anxiety, the lack of concentration or ability to think straight, and those times when I felt like I was losing touch with reality! Was I going crazy?

In the back of my mind, I knew this kind of thinking was wrong, but that didn't change anything. In the matter of a day, my whole life seemed to have taken a 180-degree flip in the wrong direction. I remember being so angry with myself for not being able to get it together. Why couldn't I just stop thinking this way?

I no longer had a desire to do anything. Just getting out of bed in the morning seemed like the hardest task in the world. I couldn't even smile at someone when walking on my way to class. I remember all the crying.... So much crying! Crying became an everyday ritual. It was the only way I felt I could let out the way I was feeling without hurting anyone.

The physical symptoms were miserable as well. I had fatigue and weakness, where it was a struggle to even hold my head up or walk from class to class. I had insomnia that woke me up every other hour during the night while I was trying to sleep. I also had a loss of appetite, loss of interest in all activities and friends/family. I had problems with my digestive system (probably from a lack of food and sleep). Headaches, brain fog, blurred vision; I had it all.

During this time, I contemplated suicide for the first time ever. I was never actually close to attempting this, praise the Lord, but I remember thinking that I would rather be dead than have to live the rest of my life feeling this way.

After about a week and a half in this dark and confusing pit, God led me to Dr. Somerville. I came to him crying and desperate for help. I was certain that this was all my fault and that I was caught in some big sin that I couldn't get a grasp on. I was discouraged, defeated, and out of options. But God, who is always faithful to His children, would never let me go from His hand; He had a plan.

After desperately spilling out all the things that had been haunting me for the past week, Dr. Somerville first asked me about past medical conditions, how much I had been sleeping, and what my stress level was like. This caught me by such surprise! I hadn't even once considered that this could be health related. That was the day I discovered I was suffering from depression.

At first, this was hard for me to grasp. I thought that Christians should never be depressed. They're supposed to find their joy in the Lord! But I quickly had to learn that as spiritual and physical beings, depression is more than just sadness; it can become a debilitating state that comes as a result of spiritual or physical infirmities. Many Christians have experienced depression since the beginning of time. It has to be combated with care for the soul and body.

Well, this episode of depression lasted for about 3-4 weeks, but got significantly better over winter break. I had a recurring episode in February after I had come back to school. This finally forced me to start looking into what could medically be causing this. Through our searching, we found that I had a hormonal imbalance. I was majorly lacking in some necessary hormones. We began addressing this issue, but I still struggled through fighting this depression all semester. Although it was progressively getting better, it still was something I had to work through with every waking moment.

Looking back to my episodes, I can honestly say that those were the darkest times in my entire life. I felt like I had even been deserted by the One Person who I had always turned to during trials. It felt like my Savior had left me. I no longer felt like I had a relationship with Jesus Christ, and that I really was all alone to suffer this way for the rest of my life.

But no matter how much I felt that way, I had to constantly remind myself that it wasn't true! I had to learn that no matter how much my body and mind seemed to be changing, God was never-changing! God is constant and loves me just as much through those times as He does any other time.

Once I became His child, I was "stuck." Nothing could separate me from the love of Jesus Christ, as Romans 8:38-39 says. I had to depend and lean on God every minute of every day. My whole life, I had

“At first, this was hard for me to grasp. I thought that Christians should never be depressed.”



really been confident of my relationship with God. But once my depression hit, I became more dependent than I had ever been on Him. I had to learn to trust that God would keep His promises no matter what.

Every Christian should have to learn that lesson! I learned to look not at my present fleshly estate, but instead to eternity with Him, where I would have a perfect, flawless body: where I would forever spend eternity enjoying my Savior. That became my hope! Even if I would spend the rest of my life depressed here on this earth, it would be okay, because God would give me the strength to press on. One day I would be rid of it in heaven. God gave me this hope and constantly reminded me of it daily. I can't ever say that I've "walked through depression," because God carried me through it! He carried me the whole way!

Three months after my depression, I still continually deal with wrong thoughts, anxieties, and feelings. Those times have left a huge scar that I may need to deal with for the rest of my life. But God is gracious and so good! He continues to give me strength daily and courage to face those things. With every day, I sense healing and moving on. I have learned to pray through all things—every concern, question, or anxiety. This has given me a closer relationship with my Savior that I do not regret! I am still in the midst of discovering health contributors and working through my sleep patterns, exercise and eating habits. It's a slow process that requires a lot of trial and error, but God uses it to continue to teach me patience and reliance upon Him alone.

The three most important things I would recommend to someone facing depression stem from the things that I had to learn as well through my trial.

1. Seek answers from a medical standpoint first. I really had to humble myself in this area, because I'm a young college volleyball player. I should be just fine! I had to accept that I might need to take care of myself physically before continuing to live my "normal" life again. Sometimes we need to fix the physical side of things before blaming it all on spiritual matters.

2. Speak truth to your heart daily. Learn to start talking to yourself instead of listening to yourself. I wish I had learned this earlier on during my trial. Depression has a way of making your mind feel like it is on repeat mode. It is always playing those thoughts that condemn us the most. I had to learn to stop listening to those constant and obsessive thoughts and start filling my mind with the truth. Dr. Somerville taught me how to take every thought captive and fill my mind instead with what the Bible says is true. Philippians 4:4-9 helped me with that.

3. Remember Romans 8:28. This was probably the most beneficial verse for me through my depression. I constantly questioned why God was allowing me to go through something like this, and how it could ever be good. I had to remember that God only does what is most glorifying to Him and what is the very best for His children! I had to look not at my current state, but toward eternity, realizing that He was using this for my good and ultimately for His glory. I can now say that I have encouraged multiple people through my testimony, learned what dependence upon God really looks like—and, most importantly, through Him, my relationship with my Savior has been strengthened even more! It is because of this that I can say, "Praise Him!"

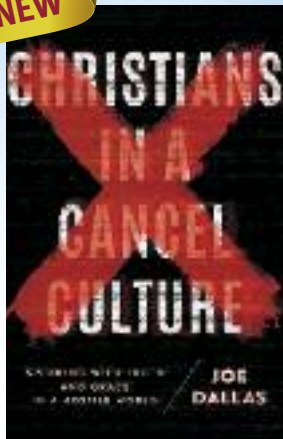
(MR1120/1117)

(Excerpt from *If I'm a Christian, Why Am I Depressed?*)

by Robert B. Somerville.)

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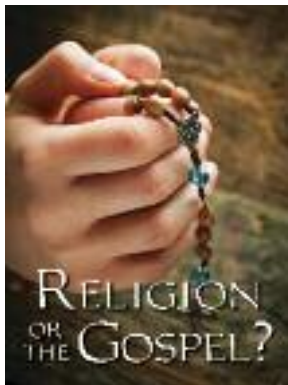
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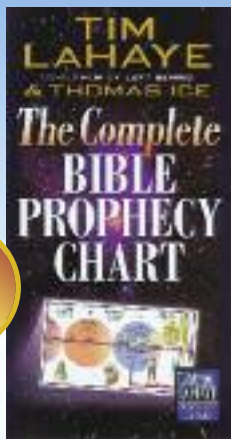
A Ticking Climate Bomb?

The Bible isn't a richly illustrated, glossy magazine like the leading scientific journals. The latest article in it was written a long time ago. I search for the phrase "climate change," to no avail. But I believe that the Bible still concretely addresses the topic.

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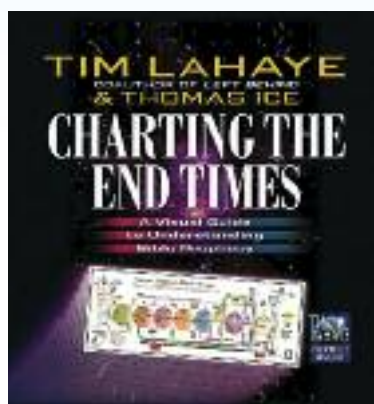
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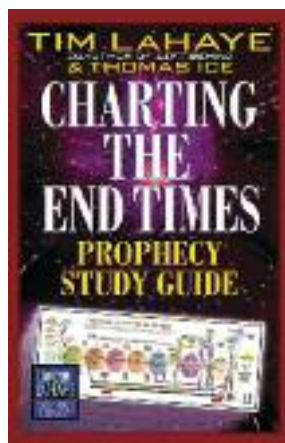
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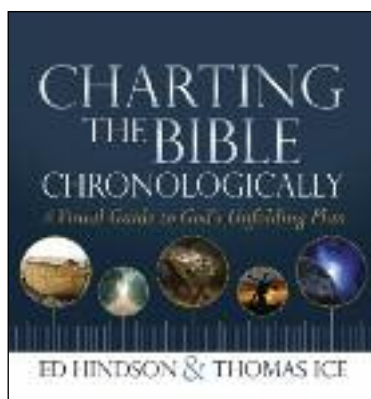
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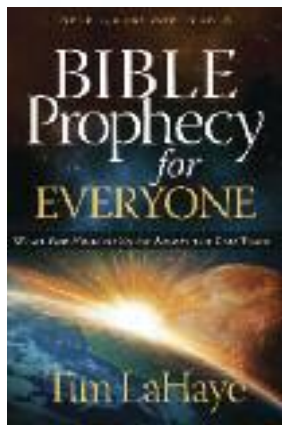
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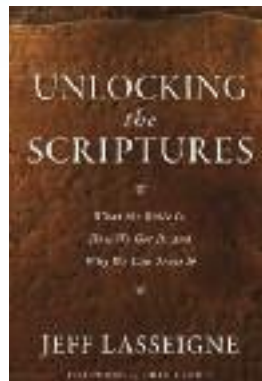
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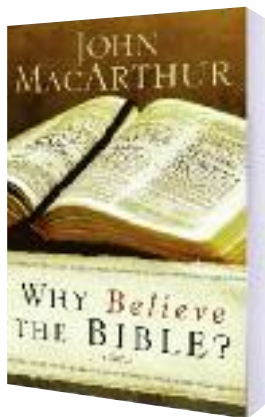
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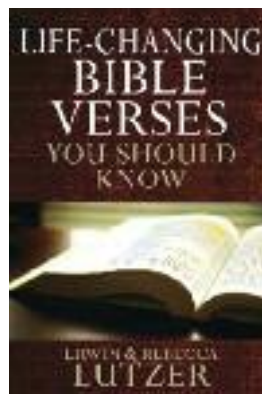
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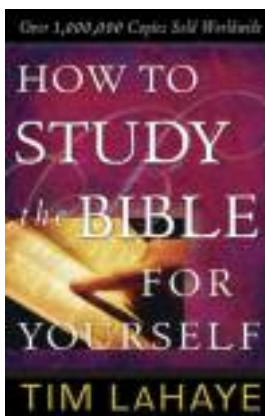
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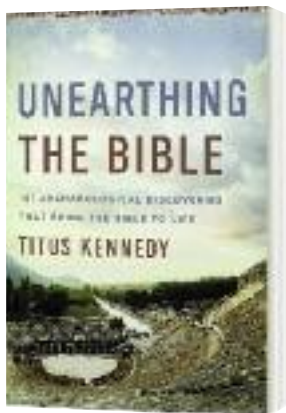
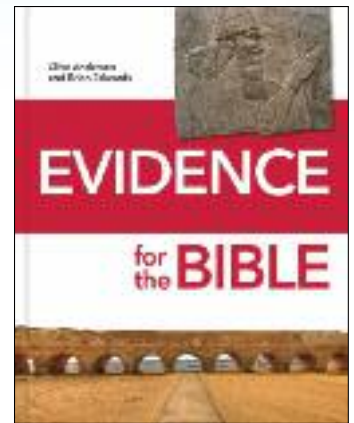
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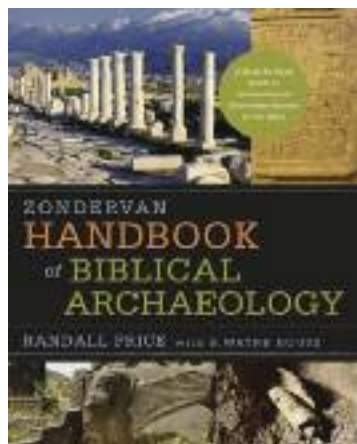


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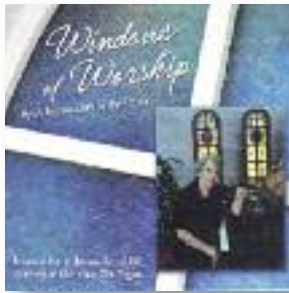
Govert Roos, a “natural musical talent,” is just a pleasure to listen to. The music was recorded live by our Romanian coworkers. Ghighi Iovin teams up with Govert Roos on tracks 7 and 10.



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The guitarist Attila Rontó, born 1969 in Miskolc, Hungary, started his musical education at a local academy when he was nine years old. Rontó’s musical style is a

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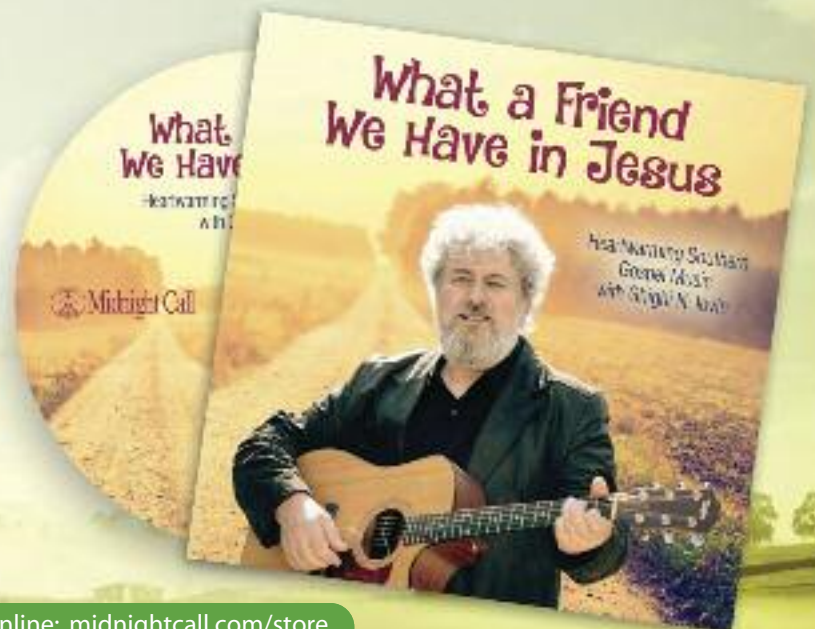
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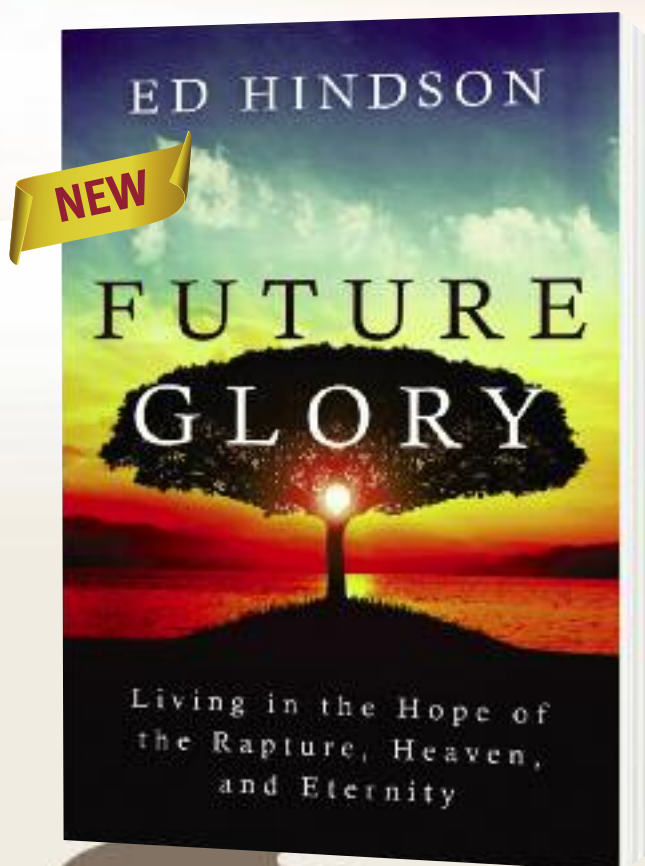


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