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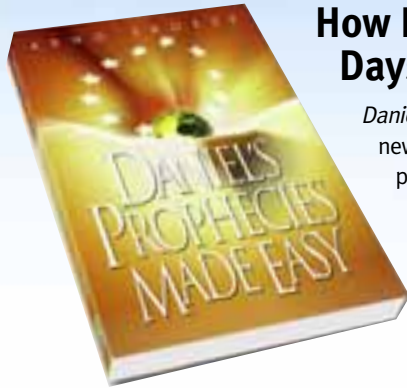
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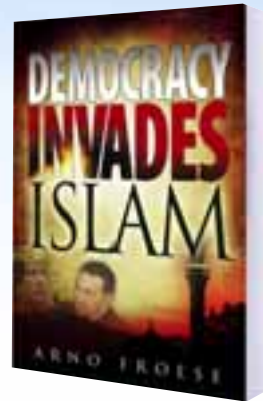
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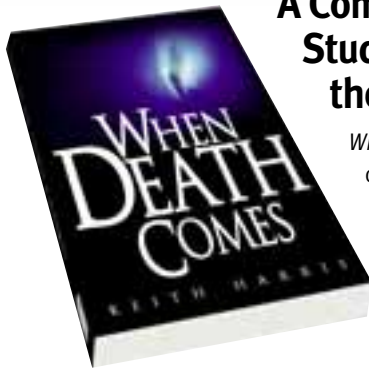
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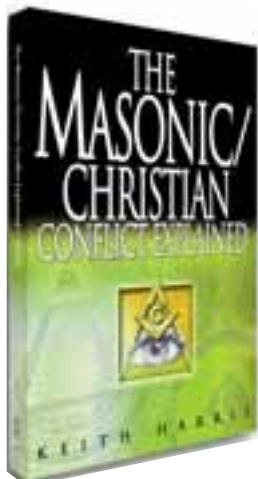


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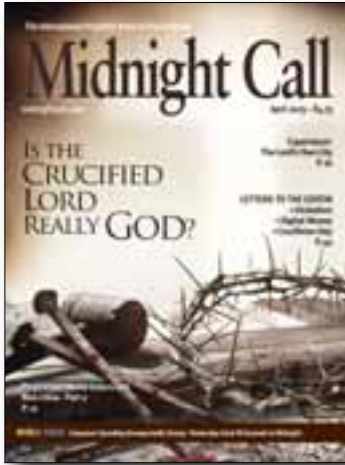
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Jesus in the Middle



By Norbert Lieth

Director of Missions, Midnight Call International

When Jesus was crucified, “two thieves [were] crucified with him, one on the right hand, and one on the left” (Matt 27:38). These two men can be seen as symbolic for all of humanity, which is also divided in two.

Both had been conceived by a father and born to a mother. Both grew up as happy children and matured into adulthood. At some point, both got mixed up with the wrong crowd and made bad decisions, going down the wrong path. Without doubt, both had been repeatedly warned and urged not to pursue this way. Both became criminals, dominated and marked by sin. Both had forfeited their lives.

In retrospect, all had been in vain. They had lived without hope, and at the end were left empty-handed. Both were a tragedy for their family. Both saw themselves betrayed by life, and now had to die without hope. Both stood under the same death sentence; both had to bear the guilt of their lives. The ideals that had caught their enthusiasm and for which they fought with conviction, brought them nothing but shame and death.

Without God, both had carried on with their own lost lives. Both could not atone for their guilt

by their own effort. Both were facing their impending death. The only thing left was the process of dying. Both had the same opinion about Jesus and were mocking Him (Matt 27:44). Both died at the same time and in the same agony. Both were the same distance from Jesus; both were equally close to Him. Both could look at Jesus, could observe and hear Him speak—as well as what others were saying about Him. “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34a). “This is the King of the Jews” (v. 38b). “For he said, I am the Son of God” (Matt 27:43b).

Both were able to talk to Him. Both were equally distant from the gate of heaven. Both were equally close to the gate of hell. Both were crucified with Jesus, and Jesus was crucified for both of them. They both had taken the lives of others, whereas Jesus is the One who gives life. Both had a last opportunity to make a decision.

“There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle” (John 19:18, NIV).

Jesus in the middle. He came into our midst. He is the turning point, the crossroad. His cross intersects our life and our path. He can close our still open sin account. He draws a line through the

EDITOR'S NOTE

guilt and sin calculation: "It is finished" (John 19:30). The Greek word is *tetélestai*, which means "paid in full." The promissory note is destroyed (Col 2:14).

Jesus also splits society into two camps. Concerning Him, people's minds are divided. There are those whose decision will lead to their destruction, and those who allow Him to lift them up. One criminal stuck to his opinion and said: "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us" (Luke 23:39). He was merely intent on an earthly rescue. He was looking to be free of the torture, in order to continue his life without repentance. The other one came to his senses and changed his attitude: "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (v. 42). He no longer cared about an earthly pardon but a heavenly one. He gave up his life and handed it to Jesus. He wanted to be where Jesus was going.

One cursed, and Jesus was silent. The other pleaded, and Jesus said: "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). One hardened his heart, and heaven was closed to him. The other opened his heart, and heaven opened up for him. One went from the threshold of heaven to hell. The other one went from the threshold of hell into heaven.

It depends on the decision. (MC)

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OUR TASK

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

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

STATEMENT OF FAITH

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

WE BELIEVE Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and shed His blood to save mankind. He died and arose bodily the third day, was seen by over 500, 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.

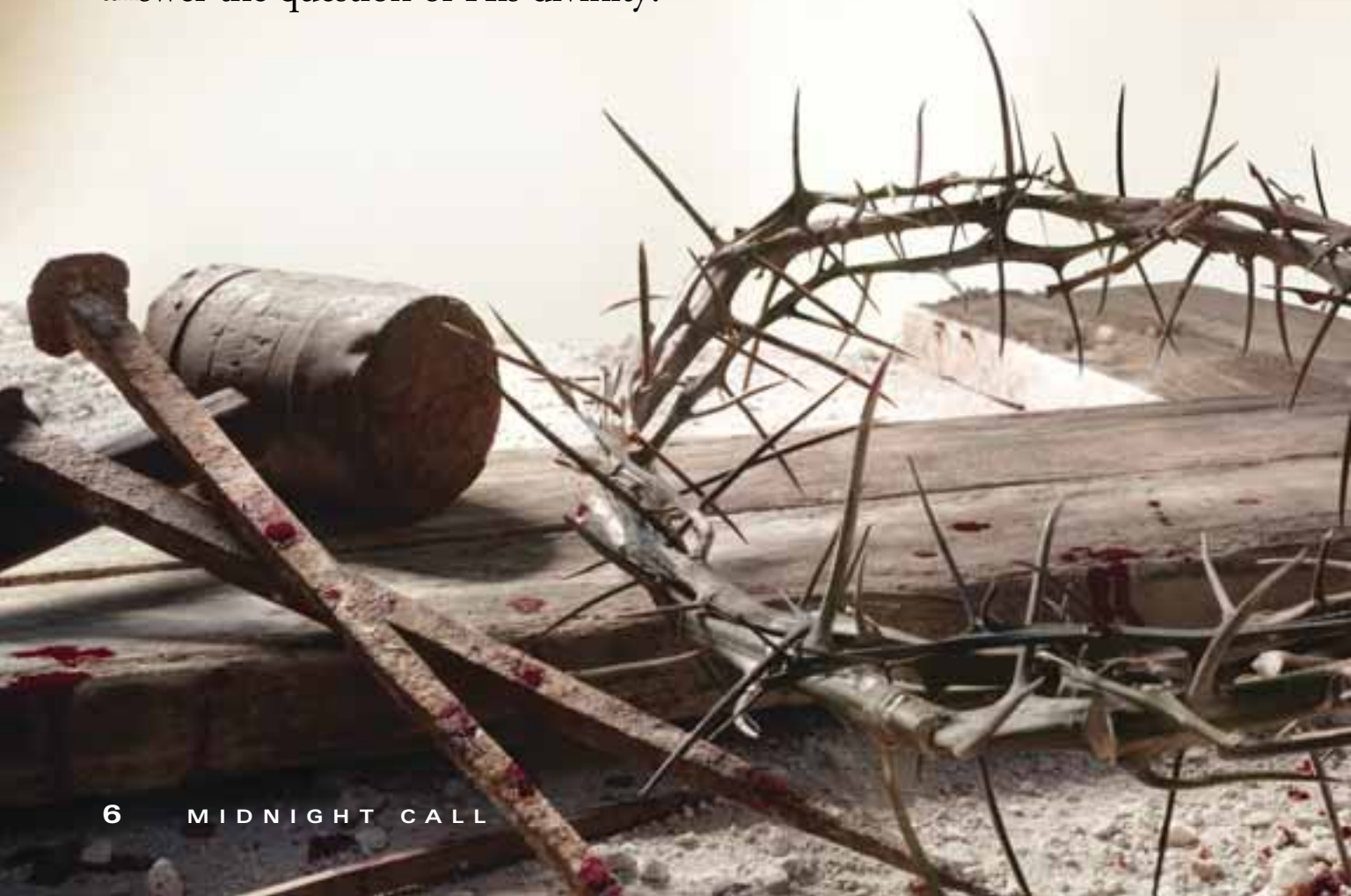
WE BELIEVE in the imminent, pre-tribulation appearance of Jesus Christ for the Rapture of His Church (all born again believers).

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

Is the Crucified Lord Really God?

Thomas Lieth

In Gethsemane, Jesus said “I am he” to those who wanted to arrest Him. These words, and many others in the Holy Scriptures, clearly answer the question of His divinity.



It's well known that there's nothing new under the sun, so it's unsurprising that the Lord Jesus' deity is hotly contested. Islam and Judaism both deny it. Other religious groups and sects deny it as well, including atheists, of course, but also, unbelievably, within the wishy-washy religion of nominal Christianity. These discussions have always taken place.

"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matt 13:41). At first glance, this doesn't seem to say anything about Jesus' divinity. But notice that the person speaking here is Jesus Himself. He is explaining the parable of the wheat and the tares to His disciples. Jesus is speaking of Himself (the Son of man), saying that He will send out His angels. I wonder what person even has angels to send out? Additionally, the Scriptures tell us that angels are beings of God (Heb 1:6, 14). Consequently, Jesus must be God. Otherwise, He couldn't command angels, refer to His angels, and send them out.

As further evidence, consider Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." All monotheistic religions agree on this point. Every Jew, Muslim, and faithful Christian will affirm this statement: Almighty God is the Creator of heaven and earth. Psalm 33:6 says: "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Let's remember this:

the heavens were made "by the word of the LORD." The New Testament gives us various indications that Jesus was involved in Creation, and this sets us apart from all other religions.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb 1:1-2). "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (vv. 7-10).

Consider John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word"—this statement is still congruent with the Creation account from Genesis and Psalm 33. But John continues to say, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In verse 14, John finally relates all of this to Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The New Testament is in no way contradicting the

Is the Crucified Lord Really God?

There was a tendency to question Jesus' divinity even at the time of the early church. And that hasn't changed in the course of church history until today.

Old Testament; rather, it is the explanation and fulfillment of it. Fundamentally, you can never understand the Old Testament without the New Testament. Those who stop at the Old Testament lack the most essential part; namely, the solution/fulfillment.

“Who [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col 1:15-17).

Jesus could never have participated in Creation as a human being, but the New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus is the Creator, so He must be God. And it is this exact claim that the priests and scribes of His day understood so well, the one they were violently indignant about when Jesus said to them, “Before Abraham was, I am.” How was that supposed to be true, if Jesus had been merely human? After all, Abraham had lived a good 2,000 years before Jesus. As a result, “Then took they up stones to cast at him” (John 8:58-59).

Why? Because this son of a carpenter might be crazy? No, because they understood what this Jesus was insinuating. “I

am God!” And in the eyes of the religious upper class, this was pure blasphemy.

Let's remain with the description of Jesus as the Word of God made flesh. When Scripture says, “In the beginning was the Word,” it is testifying to the Son's eternality. The Son was there from the beginning—eternal, and thus God Himself. “The Word was with God.” Here, on the other hand, we see a separation. The Word is God Himself, and yet distinguished from the Father. This is where the mystery of the Trinity comes into its own. One God, and yet three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We will never truly grasp this mystery of the Trinity with our human limitations, but we must keep it in mind when Jesus' deity is involved. “And the Word was God.”

Let's consider another aspect. God speaks through Isaiah: “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Is 43:25). “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee” (Is 44:22). These passages are about Israel's future redemption, but in them we see the principle of the forgiveness of sins; namely, that only God can forgive sins. That was why the Jewish scholars and priests reproached Jesus when He promised the forgiveness of sins to a paralyzed man (Mark 2:5-12). To them, this

The New Testament gives us various indications that Jesus was involved in Creation, and this sets us apart from all other religions.

presumption from the carpenter's son from Nazareth was a monstrous affair, an unsurpassable blasphemy. In short, an unparalleled scandal! With this act, Jesus clearly underscored His uniqueness and divinity. Let's continue to another piece of evidence.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matt 25:31-33). Jesus is making it clear that at the end of time, He will judge the Gentiles. This also speaks to Jesus' divinity, because the Old Testament declares that God Himself is the Judge. “For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us” (Is 33:22). Let's go through these statements in detail.

“The LORD is our judge”: Jesus describes Himself as a judge, and the book of Acts testifies to this: “And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded



us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:39-42).

“The LORD is our lawgiver”: The Law was given to the people of Israel by the Lord (*Yahweh*) on Mount Sinai. The New Testament confirms that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law (Rom 8; Gal 5:18; John 1:17). Romans also speaks of a new law (Rom 3:27-28); namely, the law of faith in Jesus Christ. As one person of the Trinity, Jesus was therefore present when the Law was given to the people of Israel in the wilderness, as well as the One who gave a new law to His church.

“The LORD is our king”: Revelation shows that Jesus, the Lamb of God who bears the sins of the world, is not just Lord, but Lord of lords (Rev 17:14). And this Jesus is not just King, but King of kings (Rev 19:16).

Is the Crucified Lord Really God?

Fundamentally, you can never understand the Old Testament without the New Testament. Those who stop at the Old Testament lack the most essential part; namely, the solution/fulfillment.

“He will save us”: Who will save? Jesus is the Savior, the One promised in the Old Testament. There is no way around the crucified Lord! “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36, cf. Rom 10:9; Phil 3:20).

We arrive at the meaning of the name *Yahweh*, which is often translated as “LORD” in the Old Testament (as in Isa 33:22). Our Heavenly Father once identified Himself by this name when Moses asked God for it.

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations” (Ex 3:13-15).

“I AM” is the Hebrew name for the God *Yahweh*. The translation, “I AM THAT I AM” only roughly expresses what *Yahweh*

actually means. Abraham Meister writes, “*Yahweh* is the absolute ‘I’ in its highest divine fullness.” Not only “I am who I am,” but also “I am who I was” and “I am who I will be.” God is the “I” without time and without space. Huge, and not for us humans to grasp! This also helps us understand why the high priest literally tore his clothes when Jesus replied to the question of whether He was the Son of God, “I am” (Mark 14:62). These are the same words that Jesus replied when he was captured in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:5). And at the moment He said, by virtue of His divinity, “I am he,” everyone shrank back and fell to the ground (v. 6). With these answers, Jesus Christ, the carpenter’s son from Nazareth, used precisely the same words as God: *Yahweh*—“I am.” They were dumbfounded by Jesus’ confession.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus’ seven “I am” statements have been handed down to us: “I am the bread of life.” “I am the light of the world.” “I am the door of the sheep.” “I am the good shepherd.” “I am the resurrection and the life.” “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” “I am the true vine.” Jesus Christ reveals Himself as God with these “I am” statements, as well as by His statements, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30) and, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).

Jesus, the Lamb of God who bears the sins of the world, is not just Lord, but Lord of lords. And this Jesus is not just King, but King of kings.

Even if today, the linguistic context for us to understand the meaning and scope of the “I am” statements is missing, these words were definitely understood by the Jews at that time. For example, “I am the bread of life”: Every Jew had the showbread in the sanctuary in mind, as well as the commemoration of the 40 years of wandering in the desert (when the Lord God had provided Israel with manna from heaven). And, “I am the light of the world”: Every Jew thought of the seven-armed golden candlestick that also stood in the sanctuary. No Jew, apart from the priests, was allowed to enter (and especially not Gentiles). With these words, Jesus revealed Himself to be the fulfillment of the temple, the priest, and the sacrifices. In the end, that’s what offended the religious system. The priests and scribes felt that their right to exist was being threatened. They had long since been serving not God, but only a religious system. With Jesus as the true high priest and perfect sacrificial lamb, priests and scribes would no longer have been needed. The complete rites of the temple with their associated materialism (think of Jesus cleansing the temple), would be obsolete. And that’s exactly what couldn’t be allowed to happen. Even today, every religious system (including the Christian religion) takes offense at the deity of Jesus and the associated claim of absoluteness. It doesn’t fit into the system.



Whether humanity (atheist and religious alike) accepts it or not, one thing is certain: Jesus isn’t just some human, and especially not the founder of a religion. No, Jesus is God! Through Jesus, God became man (2 Cor 5:19). In Jesus, we receive forgiveness of our sins (1 John 1:7-9). And in Jesus, we have eternal life (1 John 4:9). Without Jesus Christ, the Judge, the Lawgiver, and the King, there would be no salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Who is God? The incarnate Word of God, Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified Lord, who could say with authority, “I am he!”

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PROPHESED WORLD ORDERS AND RED CHINA: PART 2



We must acknowledge that a geopolitical rivalry is playing out. In fact, it may already be far too late to throttle China. The aggressive actions of Western nations against China in recent years, are themselves a sign that China is in fact making large strides. This writer believes that China will continue to gather strength. That will have major repercussions for the world ... particularly for America.

By **Wilfred Hahn**

Yet, according to this writer's interpretations of the Bible, China will not become a great hegemon. It will not be one of the last-day ten heads (mentioned or portrayed 10 times in the Bible). In fact, nor will America be part of the ten-nation coalition that rises out of the Roman beast.

Citizens of Western nations seem to wantonly behave like individualists who demand their rights to the inconvenience of others. Such societies have become carnivorous ... everyone looking for personal gratification and gain. Growing imbalanced wealth distribution is one such malodorous symptom.

Just who are the primary adversaries of the stances that the Chinese government is taking? Those that measure everything in terms of profits and wealth accumulation.

In the meantime, China's Politburo will refuse to be subjugated by capital holders and the rich

... or held hostage to Wall Street and its money-driven lobbies.

A Bipolar World: Who Will Prevail?

There today is a fast-growing counterweight to the United States globally: It is China. This country has already made advances in global influence. Will its rise continue? Where will the growing geopolitical rivalry between the United States and China lead? Will China leap-frog America ... or not?

As we have already intimated, the Bible provides a partial answer.

Unlike America, the Bible does specifically mention China in the last days by name. It is identified as "Sinim."

Consider this prophetic verse: "Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim" (Isaiah 49:12, KJV). This verse refers to

Will China play a significant geopolitical role in the last days, perhaps even being a key member of a final world order?

the time of restoring Israel after the Tribulation period. At that time, the Jews are gathered to the land of Israel.

Just what and where is Sinim?

Most sources agree that “Sinim refers to the far eastern region of China today.”¹ Things related to China are still referred to as “Sino.” For example, the word “sinology” means the study of China. Sinim is likely the most eastern nation mentioned in the Bible.

In the Arabic language today, China is still referred to as “Sin.” The word “Sin” likely comes from the word Ch’in (or Tsin), as in the Ch’in Dynasty which ruled China between 221 and 206 BC, or some other word derivation from before that time. The word “Sinim” in Hebrew would therefore simply be the plural form of “Sin.”

Returning to the quoted verse (Isaiah 49:12), we can deduce from Isaiah’s words, written some 2,700 years ago, that Sinim (China) will most certainly exist in the last days and will carry into the following Millennial period. Isaiah here speaks of the nations that will recognize Israel and worship the Lord.

Moreover, we can also reasonably deduce that China must be a substantial entity at that time, since this nation is actually named in the prophecy. Also, instead of naming the “east,” the prophet simply assumes that this is the direction of Sinim.

What about the “kings of the east” that are mentioned in Revelation 16:12? What role might they have? Will China be counted in this group?

This verse reads: “The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.”

This event occurs in the second half of the Tribulation Period. As a result, the “kings of the east” head west across the Euphrates. We can only speculate as to what their motives may be.

We must then turn to this crucial question: Will China play a significant geopolitical role in the last days, perhaps even being a key member of a final world order? The answer, we believe, is both yes and no. Yes, in our opinion China (and some other select Asian nations) will play a prominent role in the last-day, geopolitical developments mentioned in Revelation 16:12 (quoted above). An aggressive action of some kind seems to be suggested.

While that may be the case, the Bible at the same time also rules out any role for China in the post-globalism, unilateralism period of a “10-king” ruling order.

How can we be sure of this view? Scripture reveals the answer.

Revelation 17:12 supports an important deduction. It reads: “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.” Just how does this verse connect to China and some other Asian countries today?

The verse we have quoted from Revelation specifically refers to these last-day 10 kings and



If we apply this rule, it reveals that such nations as China, India, Persia (Iran) and others will not be part of the final 10-king world power coalition.

reveals a crucial clue. John the Revelator tells us here that these 10 kings “have not yet received a kingdom.” This means that neither the kings nor their kingdoms referred to in this verse had yet existed, either at or by the time that Apostle John wrote Revelation (approx. 90—95 AD).

As such, we can draw some clear conclusions from Revelation 17:12. Any nation today that existed at or prior to the time of John’s prophecy cannot qualify as one of the 10 final kings ... in other words, one of the final influential 10 nations.

If we apply this rule, it reveals that such nations as China, India, Persia (Iran) and others will not be part of the final 10-king world power coalition. Why? Because they had already had kingdoms by the time of John’s prophecies.

Consider that China already existed in New Testament times. According to historians, the Han Dynasty, a predecessor to modern-day China, was in power at the time of John’s prophecies.

The same may be concluded for the nation of Japan today. As already mentioned, the nation of “Hodu” (India) had already existed, as the Book of Esther confirms in 1:1 and 8:9. Crucially, therefore, we discover here that none of these large and influential Asian nations will be part of the last-day rulership represented by the 10-king coalition.

Points to Ponder

What light could the perspectives shared above, possibly shed upon our times today?

Beyond the certainty that these nations will not be part of the world ruling order at the time the Antichrist takes over global control, we can only attempt a few additional speculative conclusions.

A scenario that appears plausible is that the formation of the final 10 kings may very well be a counter-strategy to the perceived threats or non-aligned perspectives of other global players ... these very possibly being the “kings of the east” who are growing in power before the 10-king coalition emerges.

There is no doubt that China is strategically placed geographically, allowing it to become a naval and economic power that can control and coordinate much of Asia. A number of geographers and geostrategists have long thought this to be the case. As it happens, China today has sharply increased its naval capabilities.

As mentioned, we can deduce that China will not qualify as one of the 10 horns on the head of the 7th Ruler King. It will not be part of the world-ruling 10 kings. Nor is it likely to gain total global dominance.

Finally, what would these conclusions mean for the outcome of the China/America rivalry that we see today? Nearly always, interpretations of Bible prophecy are colored or biased by recency. Events or trends of our time tend to be read into the prophetic Scriptures. As such, the reader beware.

It seems reasonable to conclude that if both China and America do not qualify to be part of

In the meantime, the supposedly “big, bad Red China” is turning “green,” undertaking incredibly huge renewable energy projects. This is another initiative that China is pursuing that few—blinded by their hatred of China—acknowledge.



manufacture three-quarters of the world’s EV batteries, and China has 90% market share for processing the rare earth elements so important to those batteries. BYD [a large automobile and battery conglomerate] is an apex predator in an ecosystem designed to allow it to flourish, from the gleaming minerals in the dirt to the batteries to the cars that

the world’s last power structure, the China/American rivalry will move to backstage geopolitically at some late point. What could be the triggers? We do not know. However, this is a very short period (the time that the 7th head emerges).

For the time being, combative postures may continue . . . aggressive actions may yet escalate. Time will tell. However, as we have showed in Part 1, propaganda obfuscates the facts. China may or may not be less or more virtuous than America or Canada.

In the meantime, the supposedly “big, bad Red China” is turning “green,” undertaking incredibly huge renewable energy projects. This is another initiative that China is pursuing that few—blinded by their hatred of China—acknowledge. We quote from an essay by Nathan Gardels in *Noema*:

“China already dominates key domains of the renewable energy future. ‘Factories in China

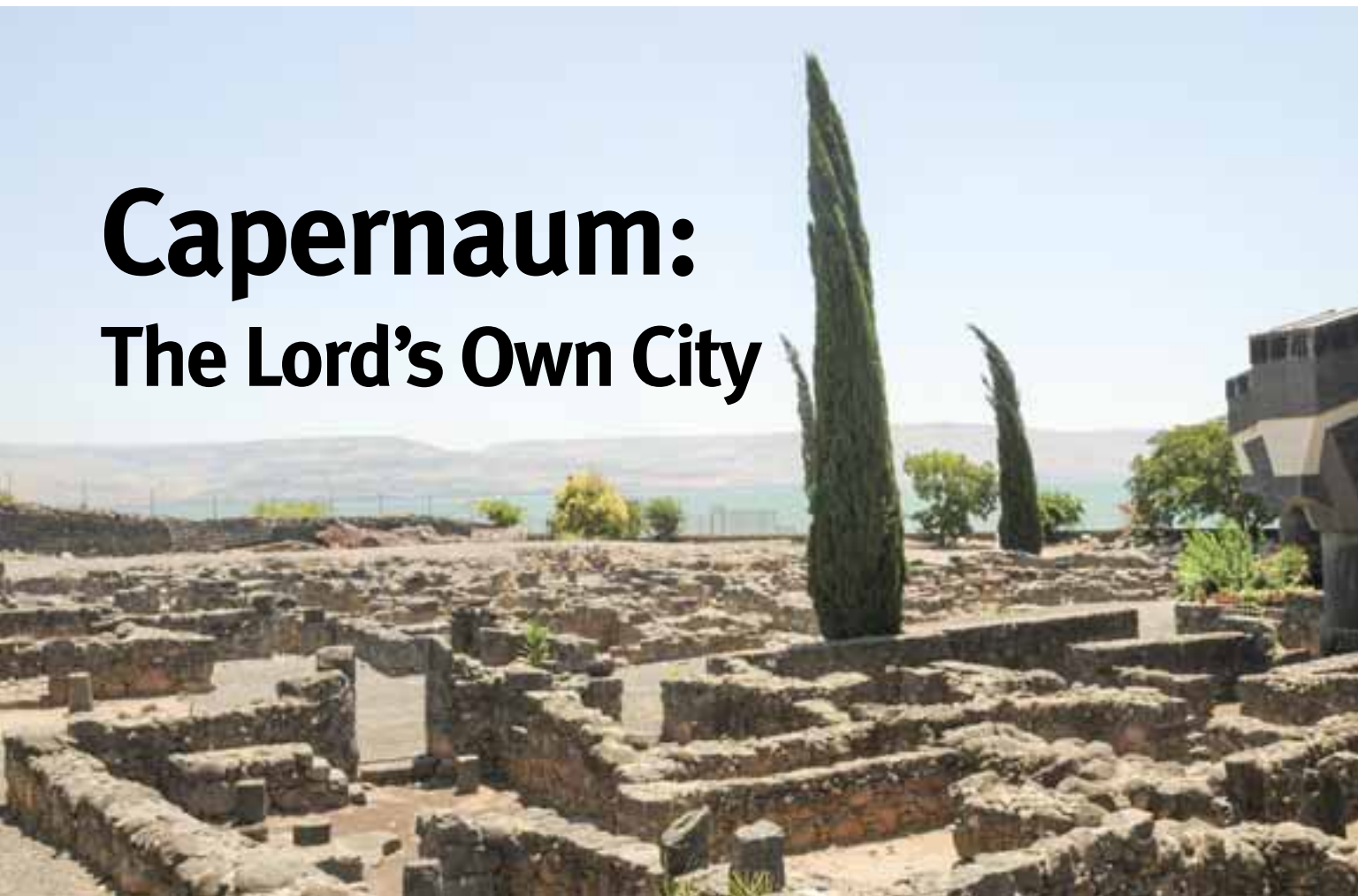
silently glide down the highway back to Shenzhen. You can look into any of the numerous energies called renewable, from pumped hydro to experiments with fusion or thorium nuclear reactors, and you’ll discover that the state-funding model has given Chinese companies an imposing lead.’ China is substantially ahead of the rest of the world in wind power generation as well.”²

A wonderful conclusion to our discussion about China is the message of Isaiah (49:12, as quoted earlier). Despite the distrust and different values that the two nations may have, in the end, China will acknowledge Jesus Christ and enter the Millennial period. (MC)

ENDNOTES

- 1 James H. Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance*, p. 5515: “Sinim is a distant Oriental region.”
- 2 “Red China’s Green Lining,” *Noema*, Oct 29, 2022.

Capernaum: The Lord's Own City



DR. RON J. BIGALKE

The town of Nazareth is secluded among the surrounding hills of lower Galilee. Nazareth remained in relative obscurity until it became famous in New Testament times as the childhood home of Jesus.

The insignificance of Nazareth is evident in the disparaging remark from Nathanael—“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth” (John 1:46)—when Philip said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (v. 45). Nevertheless, the New Tes-

tament identifies Jesus as the prophet “from Nazareth in Galilee” (Matt 21:11).

Nazareth was the residence of Joseph and Mary (Matt 13:53-58; Luke 1:26-27; 2:39) and the place where the angel Gabriel foretold Jesus’ birth (1:26-38). Jesus was probably two years of age when the magi visited to present Him with gifts (Matt 2:1-12), and



Church of the Annunciation

Credit: K. Bigalke



Excavations Beneath the Church

Credit: K. Bigalke

when Herod ordered the slaughter of “all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under” (v. 16). The gifts of the magi were God’s provision to finance the sojourn from Bethlehem to Egypt (vv. 14-21); they also prefigure the wealth of the Gentile nations that the Old Testament prophets said would be given to Israel’s Messiah (Ps 72:10-13; Isa 60:5, 11; 61:6; 66:20; Zeph 3:10; Hag 2:6-9), which is

yet to occur in entirety at Messiah’s return.

When circumstances appear desperate, it is good to remember the Lord’s gracious actions toward His people. He often provides in an unexpected manner. God is not absent! He not only superintends His creation, but also directs history for His purposes. Humanity and the world are not ruled by chance or fate; rather, it is God who directs creation and history toward His determined and ultimate goal.

There is no reason for despair or doubt in regard to God. Believers should expect and seek the Lord’s providence.

When the Lord’s family returned from Egypt, it was in Nazareth where Jesus grew to manhood (Matt 2:23; Luke 4:16). Jesus lived there for approximately 30 years of His life (Luke 2:39-51). He taught at the synagogue in Nazareth (Matt 13:54; Luke 4:16), and it would be the place from which He began His public ministry (Mark 1:9) and the site of His first rejection on the part of the hometown people (Luke 4:16-30). Although He was born in Bethlehem (Matt 2:1-6), the Lord’s extended association with the town of His childhood resulted in Him being called Jesus of Nazareth (Mark 1:24; Luke 18:37). The inscription that Pilate affixed to the cross read, “JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS” (John 19:19). The Lord’s earliest disciples were known as “the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5).

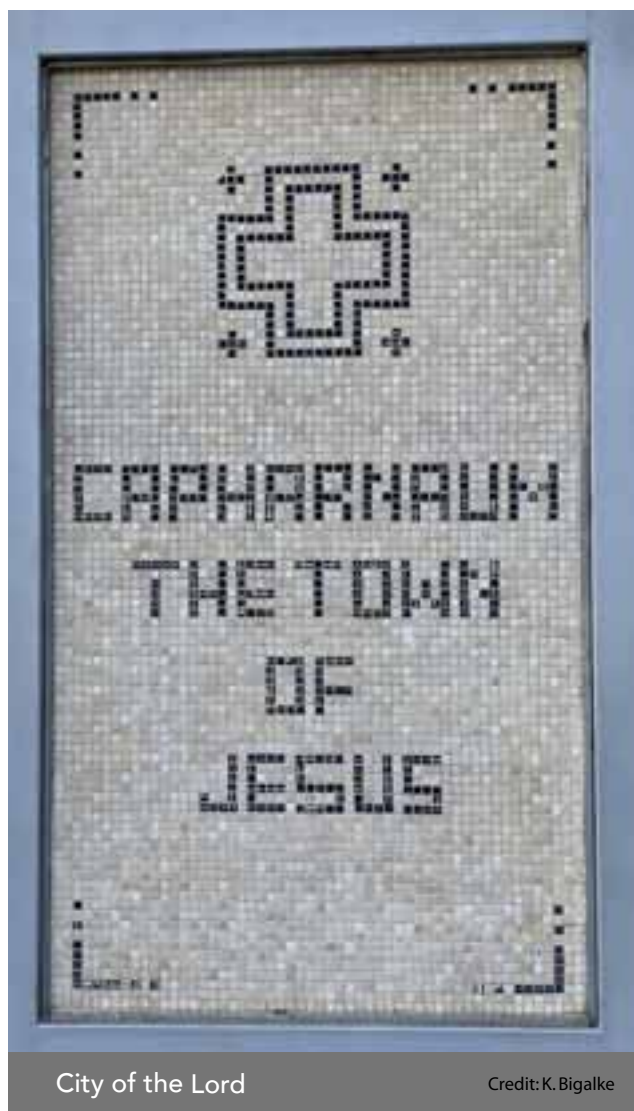
Capernaum: The Lord's Own City

Few people went to Nazareth, yet it was the ideal place for Jesus to spend His childhood, since He would be protected from anyone seeking to cause Him injury (Matt 2:21-23). When He would begin His public ministry years later, Jesus decided to move from the unexciting town of Nazareth to the lively Capernaum, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The primary reason for the change in location was the people's rejection of Jesus in His own hometown. Caper-

naum then became known as the Lord's "own city" (9:1) and is featured prominently as a location from which Jesus accomplished much of His public ministry (Matt 4:13; Mark 2:1). Some of the most significant events of Jesus' ministry occurred in Capernaum.

Jesus chose several of His disciples in the vicinity of Capernaum: the fishermen Peter and his brother Andrew (Mark 1:16-18), who were heirs to a family fishing business based in Capernaum (vv. 21, 29); John and James, the sons of Zebedee, also local fishermen (vv. 19-20); and the tax collector Levi (Matthew), the son of Alphaeus (2:13-14; cf. Matt 9:9). Matthew had a brother, James, who also became a disciple of Jesus (he is often called James the Less to distinguish him from James, the brother of John). Jesus mentioned Capernaum often and performed several miracles there (Matt 8:5; John 6:17-21). He healed the centurion's paralyzed servant (Matt 8:1-13), cured a fever of Peter's mother-in-law (vv. 14-15), and healed many others (v. 16), including a paralytic (9:1-8) and those who were demon-possessed (Mark 1:32, 34). Jesus delivered the discourse concerning kingdom greatness in Capernaum (Mark 9:33-37), in addition to the Bread of Life teaching (John 6; cf. v. 59).

Peter had a home in Capernaum (Matt 8:14; Mark 1:29; 2:1) where Jesus resided (Matt 4:13), and He is reported to have taught frequently in the synagogue there (Mark 1:21; 3:1-5; Luke 4:31; John 6:59). Matthew also lived in Capernaum, and thus demonstrated particular interest regarding the city in his gospel (cf. Matt 9:1-9).



City of the Lord

Credit: K. Bigalke



Peter's Home

Credit: K. Bigalke

According to Luke 7:5, the synagogue at Capernaum was built under the auspices of a Roman centurion, whose paralyzed servant Jesus healed and who loved the nation of Israel.

While it may have seemed wiser for Jesus to dwell in Jerusalem or Judea, the Lord dwelled in Capernaum. His departure from Nazareth to settle in Capernaum (Matt 4:13) is not formally noted in the other Gospel accounts, yet the city is mentioned by each of the synoptists (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) as the primary base of operations for Jesus' Galilean ministry. Jesus chose to settle in Capernaum because the city was most suitable for His ministry; particularly because it was a busy town in close proximity to others, in addition to being on the shore of a sea with an abundance of fish. It was also situated on both sides of the international highway named the Via Maris ("way of the sea"), which extended from Syria (Damascus) to Egypt along the Mediterranean coast (thus providing a commercial advantage with regions to the north and south). Capernaum was sort of a border town, as it was situated between various territories. Tax and trade

were important in Capernaum, which explains why Matthew was "sitting in the tax collector's booth" when Jesus "said to him, 'Follow Me!'" (Matt 9:9), and why there was also a military outpost under the command of a centurion (8:5-13).

Matthew noted that Jesus' selection of Capernaum was "to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet" (4:14). Jesus "began to preach" once He was settled in Capernaum (v. 17). Other cities existed along the shore of the Sea of Galilee that could have fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy, yet it is evident that Jesus' choice of Capernaum was quite purposeful. "A great light" had come to a region that was mostly populated by Gentiles, and Isaiah 9:1-2 prophesied just such a ministry of the Messiah. Jesus chose a city with a persistent contingency of people who could bear witness to His message in many other locations, which is precisely what occurred. "Jesus was going throughout all Galilee . . . [and] the news about Him spread throughout all Syria" as a result (vv. 23-24). Travelers not only conveyed reports of the Lord's ministry to the north in Syria, but also spread that message by means of other roads into "Galilee and *the* Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and *from* beyond the Jordan" (v. 25).

Even though Capernaum was the site of many events in the life of Christ and proofs of His identity, the people were not repentant. Thus, Jesus denounced the town, in addition to several other cities (11:20-24). Sometimes the best use of time for the Lord's glory

Capernaum: The Lord's Own City



Capernaum Synagogue

Credit: K. Bigalke

involves a change in geography, as occurred with Jesus' ministry. He proclaimed woe unto Capernaum, "for if the miracles" that occurred there "occurred in Sodom . . . it would have remained to this day" (v. 23). In fulfillment of Jesus' words, Capernaum is in ruins. Visitors to Capernaum today can still see the remains of what was likely a first century synagogue, which is very probably the one in which Jesus taught. Archaeologists have excavated a site that may have been the location of Peter's home. The remains are located just south of the synagogue at the bottom of three layers of construction.

The city of Capernaum is an example of how many people respond to the gospel message. They may enjoy religious activities and consider themselves spiritual as a result. Familiarity with Jesus and even certain biblical accounts, may provide a false sense of assurance that a person has been redeemed, when in reality he or she will hear the Lord say, "I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS"



Capernaum Ruins

Credit: K. Bigalke

(Matt 7:23). Even though Jesus performed many miracles in Capernaum and the people heard Him speak of Himself as the Bread of Life in the city's synagogue (John 6:59), they nevertheless refused to repent.

Capernaum was given a greater opportunity to believe in Jesus than most cities, which is why its residents will be judged more severely than others who did not enjoy such privileges. In a similar manner, all people will be judged according to the knowledge of the truth available to them (cf. Rom 2:12-16). The fact that God did not spare the people of Capernaum, due to their lack of faith and repentance, is proof that He will condemn for eternity those who today hear the gospel message and witness evidence of the Lord's eternal power and divine nature, yet reject His Son (cf. Rom 1:18-20; Heb 6:4-6; 2 Pet 2:4-10).

(1296)

Woe to us if we go with the flow of this world, conforming to its spirit. The consequence will be that the Lord closes the door of the Gospel.



The Power of the Exalted Christ for a Suffering Church

An interpretation of the last book of the Bible. Part 36. Revelation 3:7-8.

Wim Malgo (1922-1992)

It's truly moving how the exalted Lord bows down to declare His omnipotence to the church in Philadelphia: "These things saith he ... that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Rev 3:7).

This passage sounds as if it could have come from the Old Testament, but it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This is the power that God gave to the exalted Christ, to the great Son of David! He has the key of David, which means the key of the King of kings. He alone can unlock the door to the everlasting kingdom—no one can shut it, and vice-versa: "...and shutteth, and no man openeth."

He has the power over life, death, and hell. This is what we read in Revelation 1:17-18: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."—He has the keys to every door, to everything! He is the sole and absolute Victor! So, it's no coincidence that these exact words of revelation from Christ to the church of Philadelphia were predicted and foreseen by the prophet Isaiah centuries prior. Isaiah 22:22 says, "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he

The Power of the Exalted Christ for a Suffering Church

shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”

In this letter to Philadelphia, the exalted Lord—the living fulfillment of this prophecy—encounters His weak and afflicted church and declares, “I know thy works” (v. 8). Here, as with Smyrna, the Lord doesn’t list out those works as He did with the Ephesians, for example: “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted” (Rev 2:2-3).

And like Smyrna, Philadelphia had to suffer for Jesus’ sake. The church had to endure a struggle of faith against the hateful paganism that was surrounding it. Those who keep the Word, who steadfastly wait upon the Lord, are in radical contrast to those around them, the godless world.

Woe to us when the contrast between the Church of Jesus and the spirit of this world vanishes. Then the Church—and we—have lost the battle of faith. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Woe to us if we go with the flow of this world, conforming to its spirit. The consequence will be that the Lord closes the door of the Gospel. In practical terms, our message, our testimony, will seem ridiculous. It isn’t always the world’s fault if they scoff when we talk about Jesus. Let’s examine ourselves to see

whether it’s because our words have lost their power through dilution by the world.

When Sodom was on the verge of falling, Lot, prompted by the angels, attempted to get the message of salvation across to his future sons-in-law. But it’s recorded that “his sons-in-law thought he was joking” (Gen 19:14, CSB). How will you have an “open door” to the world when you, as a believer, are bound to nicotine, alcohol, television, and more?

The church in Philadelphia had held fast to Jesus, in whose name is power and salvation, and they did not deny Him. That is why He promised them the “open door”: “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it” (Rev 3:8).

The Lord most definitely means a double-hinged door. First, the door opens upward: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ... Let us draw near with a true heart...” (Heb 10:19-20, 22a).

And then, the door also opens to the pagan world, which is filled with rejection and hatred. But the Philadelphian believers had authority, because they had access to the innermost sanctuary before the throne of God. Despite the world’s fanatical rejection, their testimony was compelling: “No man can shut it [the open door].”

What’s more, Paul also says this: “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Cor 16:9). No one could overcome the Apostle Paul because he went all in with his testimony. (MR0822/1269)

How Much Longer, Lord? Part 2



Fredy Peter

Who are the weakest in today's society? The unborn! 625,346 unborn children were killed in the womb in 2019, according to the CDC [though state reporting is voluntary, not mandatory]. That's greater than the population of Baton Rouge, Louisiana or Colorado Springs, Colorado. The total number of abortions worldwide since 1980 is tallied at www.numberofabortions.com: over 1.6 billion babies so far! "And they say, 'The LORD does not see; the God of Jacob does not perceive'" (Psalm 94:7).

Is God really not paying attention? How much longer, Lord?

Can we see God's hand at work in the increasing Islamization? More than 500 years ago, Martin Luther said in *On War Against the Turk*, "Every pastor and preacher ought to exhort his people most diligently to repentance and to prayer. They ought to drive men to

repentance by showing our great and numberless sins and our ingratitude, by which we have earned God's wrath and disfavor, so that He justly gives us into the hands of the devil and the Turk."

It's as if God is saying, "Have it your way. If you won't listen to my beloved Son, then I will give you another god who will rule over you."

How Much Longer, Lord? Part 2

What a brilliant God who created the eye, which uses a highly complex process to transform electromagnetic waves emanating from objects, allowing us to perceive color, light, and shape!

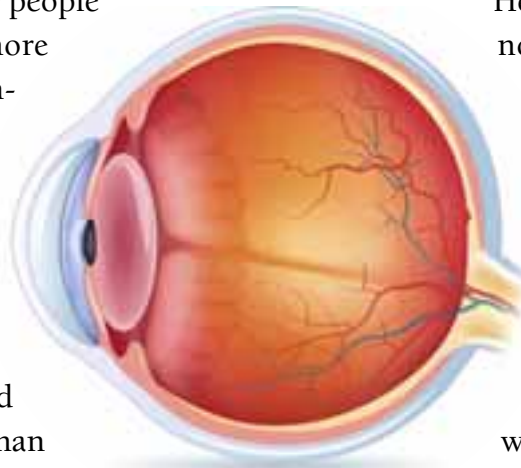
As hatred of God's earthly people and God Himself grows more fanatical, so also does contempt for and persecution of God's heavenly people, His Church. First and foremost in Islamic countries, but also increasingly in the West. According to the Open Doors World Watch List, in 2021 more than 340 million Christians were "living in places where they experience high levels of persecution and discrimination" (www.opendoorsusa.org).

"The LORD does not see..." That is affirmed by Ecclesiastes 8:11: "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil."

This is the exact context in which David expresses himself in the third stanza:

Unsettling Warnings

"Understand, O dullest of the people! Fools, when will you be wise?" (v. 8). The Bible is very direct here and not at all "politically correct." David is saying that godless people are irrational and stupid. Animals who act instinctively are referred to as lacking understanding (cf. Ps 49:20). What a scathing judgment against modern man, who has traded wisdom for knowledge!



"He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?" (v. 9).

What an ingenious God, who causes spoken words to enter our inner ear as sound waves, be converted into nerve impulses, and finally, transported to the brain! What a brilliant God who created the eye, which uses a highly complex process to transform electromagnetic waves emanating from objects, allowing us to perceive color, light, and shape! "Does he not hear and see?"

He doesn't just preside over the smallest nerve cells, but also controls the great events of this world: "He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke? He who teaches man knowledge" (v. 10).

God installs and deposes kings. He is the Lord of history. He has a plan—a plan of salvation—for this world. "Does he not rebuke?" Where are the godless Roman emperors, who were once so feared by Jews and Christians? Today, we name dogs Caesar and Nero!

"The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath" (v. 11).

What a frightening statement: God isn't deaf, blind, and ignorant, but sees everything we see, hears everything we hear, and registers everything we say and do. Even the heart's deepest thoughts are known to Him: all our

While adversity serves as judgment for the nations, it is a blessing for children of God.

machinations, inventions, and plans. God remembers them, and one day every human being will have to answer for them before the just Judge. These are unsettling warnings!

But in the fourth stanza of his psalm, David addresses the one who takes this to heart, admitting his total depravity before God and placing his trust in Him.

Liberating Certainties

While adversity serves as judgment for the nations, it is a blessing for children of God. With a special Beatitude for godly people in need, the psalm's focus now shifts to words of hope, faith, and trust.

“Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD, and whom you teach out of your law, to give him rest from days of trouble, until a pit is dug for the wicked” (vv. 12-13).

Warren Wiersbe notes, “If God immediately rescued His people from their personal difficulties, they would become ‘spoiled brats’ and never grow in faith or character” (*Commentary on the Old Testament*).

The New Testament devotes almost an entire chapter to this concept. Hebrews 12 clearly shows that chastisement is never a punishment, but an expression of the Father's special love for His children. This psalm shows us a truth that's difficult to understand: sometimes God even uses ungodly people to accomplish His purpose.

Here is where we get the answer to, “How much longer, Lord?” Namely, until the pit is dug for the wicked. A reckoning is coming, the

ultimate day of disaster. None of the people of Israel should be ignorant of this, nor should anyone in the whole world: judgment is absolutely certain without repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

God's unconditional loyalty to Israel, however, is equally certain. “For the LORD will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage” (v. 14). John MacArthur writes in his Study Bible that “this important truth serves as a doctrinal basis for Psalms 93—100 and was intended to encourage the nation during difficult times.”

The Hebrew proper name *Yahweh* (or its short form *Yah*) is used 11 times in Psalm 94, and is rendered in our translations as “LORD.” This name emphasizes His inscrutable, unchanging, eternal self-existence. He is “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex 3:14). Furthermore, this name emphasizes His faithfulness as the covenant God of Israel. The name's strikingly frequent appearance in our psalm seems to point out one fact in particular: “Behold, my covenant is with you” (Gen 17:4a). Yes, “the LORD will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage.”

This verse is also the basis for Paul's glorious statement in Romans 11:1a: “I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means!” This last phrase is “the strongest Gr. idiom for repudiating a statement, and it contains a sense of outrage that anyone would ever think the statement was true” (*John MacArthur Study Bible*).

How reassuring this is when we look at the Middle East today. And what comfort to the

How Much Longer, Lord? Part 2



“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

believing remnant in the time of tribulation, when Israel is in its deepest distress. And what security for the children of God as

well, to know that just as Israel’s future is certain, nothing and no

one can “separate us from the

love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:39).

Jesus’ return will be the ultimate deliverance from all problems. This is what the last verse of our stanza speaks of: “for justice will return to the righteous, and all the upright in heart will follow it” (v. 15).

This verse means that under God’s jurisdiction, justice will once again reign. When the Lord comes, He will again judge righteously, and the upright will rejoice. But this verse may also contain the suggestion that Jesus isn’t coming alone, but with His glorified Church as described in Jude 14-15: “It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.’”

Interestingly, these two verses from Jude are in the same order as in Psalm 94: “judge of the earth” (v. 2), “wicked” (v. 3), “arrogant words” (v. 4).

At this point, some may be thinking, “The future sure looks great, but what about today? Who’s going to help me here and now?” The fifth stanza addresses these questions.

Refreshing Consolations

“Who rises up for me against the wicked? Who stands up for me against evildoers?” (v. 16). Yes, who is helping me personally? “If the LORD had not been my help, my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence” (v. 17).

Here David is relating life-threatening situations that he personally experienced, and which would have ended disastrously had the Lord not intervened. But God never comes later than right on time! In addition to his physical needs, David was suffering from mental hardships, which were also allayed by God’s powerful intervention: “When I thought, ‘My foot slips,’ your steadfast love, O LORD, held me up” (v. 18). Can Christians experience fear? Yes, of course! But David shows us how to deal with it: “When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul” (v. 19).

There are very few times in which we receive an answer to the question of why God doesn’t intervene. But what we do get is consolation and certainty that we are not alone! “Blessed be God, we are not left to that condition yet, for the Almighty Lord is still the helper of all those who look to him” (Charles Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*). That’s why Hebrews 4:16 still applies to us today: “Let us then with confidence

Jesus' return will be the ultimate deliverance from all problems.

draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

The peace of heart that we receive won't change the ongoing oppressive emergency. Therefore, in the sixth and final stanza, the psalmist returns to the opening theme and proclaims to the ungodly:

Menacing Vengeance

“Can wicked rulers be allied with you, those who frame injustice by statute?” (v. 20).

This verse addresses rulers who pervert the law, using legal means to codify injustice. We see this portrayed today where murder of the unborn is protected by law. The legal framework is eventually perverted in such a way that the just can be condemned. This is exactly what the Antichrist will do.

Who endured the ultimate judicial injustice? The next verse speaks prophetically of Jesus: “They band together against the life of the righteous and condemn the innocent to death” (v. 21).

Jesus, the only truly righteous One, must have suffered so greatly under the injustice of the time. That's why no one is more understanding of the unjustly condemned than Jesus. For that reason, He is the greatest Comforter and Protector through injustice. The next verse speaks to this: “But the LORD has become my stronghold, and my God the rock of my refuge” (v. 22).

When you're hidden in Jesus, don't let anyone tell you that you're shirking your responsibility. By no means! With Jesus, your heart finds

peace and security to act responsibly in the battle, as well as the ability to withstand the enemy.

And finally, the last verse gives certainty that God has heard your cry. God will also hear the cry of Israel's believing remnant: “He will bring back on them their iniquity and wipe them out for their wickedness; the LORD our God will wipe them out” (v. 23). This is the ultimate fate of all nations who turn against Israel. For in doing so, they are touching the apple of God's eye (cf. Zech 2:8). They are directly opposing Israel's Anointed One.

How much longer, Lord? How long will the righteous be oppressed and persecuted? Why isn't the Lord intervening? Because it is still a time of grace! Peter explains it this way: “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed” (2 Pet 3:9-10).

And so, we pray along with David in Psalm 25:22: “Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.”

The solution will be the return of Jesus. Let's make use of the time we're given, because who knows how soon the Lord will come. Maranatha!

(MR0222/1294)




WORLD FOCUS

 USA

Consumer Spending Unexpectedly Strong

Something unexpected is going on in the U.S. economy.

 Inflation remains high, yet many Americans went on a spending spree, eating out at restaurants and shopping for cars.

In ordinary times, that additional spending would be welcome news to an economy that's heavily dependent on consumer dollars.

Just when it seemed that consumers were running out of gas, shoppers appear to be getting a second wind.

Personal spending rose 1.8% in January, according to the Commerce Department, as consumers splurged on both goods as well as services like going out for meals or the movies.

Jonathan Silver, who tracks credit card use by about 100 million people nationwide, says that additional income will help to support consumer spending in the months to come.

"We estimate households to still have about ten months of spending power if they continue to deplete excess savings at the pace they have over the past six months," Wells Fargo economists wrote in a research note.

People who put off traveling during the worst of the pandemic are making



People walk along 5th Avenue in Manhattan, which is one of the nation's premier shopping streets. Consumer spending was unexpectedly strong. That's good for the economy – but not so good for inflation prospects.

Spencer Platt/Getty Images

up for lost time. Vacation visits to Las Vegas jumped more than 20% last year.

The Fed has been trying to get shoppers to slow their spending by raising interest rates, in an effort to curb inflation.

Economist Ian Shepherdson thinks the Fed's efforts are working. He believes the surprisingly strong spending was a fluke, resulting from unusually warm weather.

-www.npr.org, 25 February 2023

Commentary: There are multiple reasons presented by experts in the field of economics and finance, but one is very simple: the pandemic discouraged economic activity, thus money accumulated. Moreover, gov-

ernment support of businesses and individuals placed additional money at their disposal.

The other side of the story, according to Gallup.com, is that church membership has dropped from 70% in 2000 to 47% in 2020. For millennials, "no church affiliation" was listed at 22% in the 2008-2010 report, climbing to 31% in 2018-2020 report.

This shows that consumerism is attracting an increasing number of people.

Here we are reminded of the spiritual aspect. Revelation 3:17 declares: "because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Merchandise has become king, which is a sign of prosperity. Yet we know the end from the prophetic Word, as we can read in Revelation 18:15: "The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall

stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing." 7951

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



ITALY

Migrant Horror Story

Migrants reportedly from Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria—countries ravaged recently by poverty, natural disasters, conflicts and civil unrest—were crammed aboard the 66-foot-long wooden boat that originated from Turkey and crashed into a rocky shore of eastern Calabria, according to the Italian Coast Guard.

At least 120 migrants were aboard the vessel, according to the coast guard. Citing rescue workers, Agence France-Presse put the number at more than 200.

Vincenzo Luciano, a resident of the area, told ABC News he was among the first witnesses to arrive at the beach near Steccato di Cutro after the boat wrecked.

“We arrived and saw this disaster. The more the sun rose, the more dead bodies we could see,” Luciano said. “I was just trying to get as many people as possible out of the water but they were all dead. I feel destroyed. It will be awhile before I’m ready to head back out to sea.”

Italy is one of the main landing points for migrants being smuggled across the central Mediterranean, mostly from North Africa and in recent years from Turkey. At least 20,333 migrants have been killed or have gone missing since 2014 while attempting the crossing, according to the International Organization for Migration’s Missing Migrants Project.

-abcnews.go.com, 27 February 2023



Some migrants who were saved from the shipwreck that occurred on Feb. 26, 2023, were rescued and helped and warmed by blankets in Steccato di Cutro, near Crotona, in Calabria, southern Italy.

Antonino D'Urso/KONTROLAB/LightRocket via Getty



Migrant Boat Crash Reuters

Commentary: According to World MigrationReport.iom.int, Europe and Asia are the preferred destinations for immigrants. During the period of the 1990s to the 2020s, Europe reported 50 million immigrants at the beginning, up to 86.7 million immigrants in the 2020s. Asia: 50 million in the 1990s, 85.6 million in the 2020s.

In this tragedy, human trafficking organizations were involved, which collect large amounts of money with the promise of guaranteed fare to Europe. More than 20,000 have been killed on the way to their destination since 2014, as the article states. The tragedy is heartbreaking. These immigrants from countries ravaged by poverty, natural disasters, or civil war were hoping for a new life but found death.

For decades, the EU has attempted through various ways and means, to stop or at least reduce the flow of immigrants to the continent, but apparently little has changed. One of the

main reasons for no change is politics and the degree of disunity among the nations. The issue is: how many immigrants is each country prepared to accept? According to Statista.com, figures for 2021 reveal immigrant arrivals as follows: Russia, 320,615; Germany, 312,737; Spain, 275,022; UK, 202,027; Sweden, 80,097.

One thing becomes clear: there is no end in sight to the increasing movement of people from one country to another, thus resulting in a more globalist society.

The Bible indicates that world unity will be established, but in the wrong direction; namely, under the dominion of the god of this world. Nevertheless, in all the tragedy and chaos, the Church—consisting of born-again believers—continues to

grow and will arrive at its destination: the fullness of the Gentiles.

7952

(See *Prophecy for the Gentiles*, Item #1082, \$12.50.)



WORLD

Doomsday Clock 90 Seconds to Midnight

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the specter of nuclear weapon use, Earth crept its closest to Armageddon, a science-oriented advocacy group said, moving its famous "Doomsday Clock" up to just 90 seconds before midnight.

 "We are really closer to that doomsday," former Mongolian president Elbegdorj Tsakhia said at the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists annual announcement rating how close humanity is from doing itself in. He and former Ireland President Mary Robinson joined scientists to underscore what they consider a gathering of several existential threats, with Russian leader Vladimir Putin's actions and words chief among them.

Scientists and activists at the Bulletin announcement also mentioned nuclear weapon proliferation in China, Iran increasing its uranium enrichment, missile tests in North Korea, future pandemics from animal diseases, pathogens from lab mistakes, "disruptive technologies" and worsening climate change as other existential threats to humanity.

-*www.yahoo.com*, 24 January 2023

Commentary: For over a century, we have heard doomsday predictions from respected leaders and scientists—and unfortunately, also from the Christian camp. Thus, it behooves us



The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists announced that it has moved the minute hand of the Doomsday Clock to 90 seconds to midnight.

(AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

to answer the question: what is Armageddon? Based on Revelation 16:16, it is a place in the land of Israel. *Britannica.com* defines Armageddon: "(probably Hebrew: 'Hill of Megiddo')," and adds: "In the New Testament, the place where the kings of the earth under demonic leadership will wage war on the forces of God at the end of history."

When reading verses 13 and 14, we notice this is a demonic event. They are "spirits of devils." They are in contact with "the kings of the earth and of the whole world." Who are they? Diabolical entities, not humans. How do we know? From Daniel's fourth night vision, we learn that after a three week delay, Daniel gets the answer from an angelic identity. The reason for the delay? "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia" (Daniel 10:13). This does not speak of literal, physical kings of Persia, but of diabol-

ical entities that are in charge of all nations.

In the Revelation 16 event, we learn the aim of these diabolical entities: "to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (verse 14b). In Revelation 17:14a, it states: "These shall make war with the Lamb." No military force with its missiles, planes, tanks, or other equipment can oppose the Lamb of God. We have to be very blunt and ask the question: Can America—home to the world's largest military force—declare war against the Lamb? The answer is **NO**. Thus, Armageddon is not a physical military conflict.

We realize general interpretation identifies Armageddon as an end-time war. That, however, is not precisely what the Bible says. Rather, it is the direct confrontation between the diabolical world and the Lamb of God.

Armageddon, therefore, cannot occur unless and until the **light** and the **salt** has been removed from planet earth. Only then will total darkness prevail. The diabolical forces will make their fatal mistake by believing in their ability to destroy the Lamb of God. How will it end? "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 Thess 2:8).


7933

(See *Revealing Revelation*, Item #2394, \$17.99.)

 GERMANY

AI System Searches for Alien Life

Some 540 million years ago, diverse life forms suddenly began to emerge from the muddy ocean floors of planet Earth. This period is known as the Cambrian Explosion, and these aquatic critters are our ancient ancestors.

 We may now be in the midst of a Cambrian Explosion for artificial intelligence (AI). In the past few years, a burst of incredibly capable AI programs like Midjourney, DALL-E 2 and ChatGPT have showcased the rapid progress we've made in machine learning.

AI-based systems are being increasingly used to classify signals found in massive amounts of radio data, helping speed-up the search for alien life.

AI algorithms do not “understand” or “think.” They do excel at pattern recognition, and have proven exceedingly useful for tasks such as classification—but they don't have the ability to problem solve. They only do the specific tasks they were trained to do.

So although the idea of an AI detecting extraterrestrial intelligence sounds like the plot of an exciting science fiction novel, both terms are flawed: AI programs are not intelligent, and searches for extraterrestrial intelligence can't find direct evidence of intelligence.

Instead, radio astronomers look for radio “technosignatures.” These hypothesized signals would indicate the presence of technology and, by proxy,



Midjourney Danny C Price, author provided

the existence of a society with the capability to harness technology for communication.

For our research, we created an algorithm that uses AI methods to classify signals as being either radio interference, or a genuine technosignature candidate. And our algorithm is performing better than we'd hoped.

-*studyfinds.org*, 2 February 2023

Commentary: Recent aerial activity—namely, the shooting down of so-called UFOs by the America military—has caused much excitement. Yet the quest for extraterrestrial intelligence still stands at **zero**. But faith is a strong power, often superseding scientific facts. For example, the religion of evolution is now being taught by virtually all major academic institutions the world over; evidence presented so far is again, **zero**.

What does the Bible say? Very fittingly, Paul writes: “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power

and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). David testifies: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork” (Psalm 19:1). The apostle Paul documents things that are “not seen”: “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the

things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

7945

(See *Alien Intrusion*, Item #2205, \$14.99.)



 CHINA

Leading Growth Despite Covid-19

Globally, there have been over 641 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6.62 million deaths, reported to the World Health Organization, while the incidence rate and the death toll of COVID-19 in China have been the lowest among major countries.

 Its GDP crossed the 100-trillion-yuan (about \$14.37 trillion) threshold in 2020 and further expanded to over 114 trillion yuan in 2021, contributing over 30 percent to world economic growth.

The past three years were unusual and extraordinary for China as it has withstood multiple tests. However,

(continued next page)

Growth Despite Covid-19

(continued from page 31)

China has historically eradicated absolute poverty, significantly expanded the size of the middle-income group, completed the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and embarked on a new journey of building a modern socialist country in all respects.

As the world's manufacturing powerhouse, China boasts the world's biggest and most complete industrial system, making it a key contributor to global industrial chains.

In 2020, China's export of medical supplies maintained steady and orderly growth, offering stronger support to the global society in fighting the COVID-19 epidemic. Meanwhile, Chinese manufacturing's added value accounted for 28.5 percent of the global total.

[...] China's determination to open up further to the outside world remains unwavering, providing enormous opportunities for the rest of the world.

In the first 11 months of [2022], China's trade in goods expanded 8.6 percent year on year to 38.34 trillion yuan, according to the General Administration of Customs.

The country has also continued widening market access and shortening the negative list for foreign investment. It has put into force the Foreign Investment Law, which took effect on the first day of 2020, to protect foreign



Aerial photo shows the morning view of the Lujiazui area in Pudong, East China's Shanghai. [Photo/Xinhua]

investors' legitimate rights and interests.

International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said that they had forecast 3.2 percent growth in China's economy in 2022, improving to 4.4 percent in 2023.

-www.chinadaily.com.cn, 11 December 2022

Commentary: When reading Western-based media, the reports and analysis about China are mostly negative. Why? Because it's a communist-governed nation and a rapidly growing competitor to the capitalist West.

For the past seven plus decades, Soviet communism was the challenge to the Western, democratic world. Then the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) imploded in 1991. China did not but instead, virtually exploded economically. When we ask why, the answer is relatively simple: China observed both the errors of Western capitalism and the fall of Soviet communism. The lesson was simple: learn from others and adapt

to change. Based on various other sources, China has definitely become the leading growth engine of the world economy. It is no longer a question of "if" but "when" China will overtake the US as the world's largest economy.

What is the good news about communist China? According to CFR.org, 7.4% of the population practices the Christian religion (2020), surpassing atheists (6.8%). While no 100% reliable statistics are available, evidence from a number of organizations shows the growth of Christianity in this communist nation. That is our concern as Christians: borders, language, or political conviction cannot hinder in any way, shape, or form the promise Jesus made while in Israel: "I will build my church."

7914

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

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BOLIVIA

Piles of Documents and an Unreachable Lawyer

BY OBED HANISCH, RIBERALTA

Midnight Call needs to update its articles of incorporation and sign a new school contract to continue operating in Bolivia. This comes with some challenges.

I had to spend a lot of time with lawyers and piles of documents to deal with the ministry's articles of incorporation and renewing the school contract. Every association and institution in Bolivia must be brought into compliance with the law by a certain date to be permitted to continue. As a result, I had to travel to Cochabamba multiple times.

We'd appreciate your prayers for this process, as well as for the school contract. It all comes down to this: the school on our premises is run by the state, which is why we need to have an official contract with the Ministry of Education. It regulates a number of things, including the agreement that we provide the religion teachers, and priority in boarding school registrations. Since our current contract hasn't been adapted to the new laws, it must be renewed. We've already been able to meet with the relevant authorities and express our wish to do so. Now we'll need to submit an application for contract renewal which, like most everything here in Bolivia, must be prepared by a lawyer. We're praying that we'll find favor as a mission in the eyes of the authorities. Only the Lord can grant that.



Obed updating documents



Working on lessons at school

Call Disconnected After 30 Seconds!

We were finally able to reach our busy lawyer in the city, but it turned out that I didn't have enough minutes left on my cell phone and the call was disconnected! We'd been working on revising our association's articles of incorporation for a long time, and we'd slowly but surely



reached the last stage before submitting the papers to the office in La Paz. We needed to finish this work as soon as possible to be able to continue the mission's work. But the lawyer wasn't doing anything. Days passed, and then weeks . . . Calling and texting didn't seem to work. That's when we thought of trying the lawyer's number from my wife's cell phone, but her minutes ran out!

Two days later, I spontaneously booked a flight to pay the lawyer a visit in person. My return flight was the following day. On Monday, I visited her

office with no success, and used the time to criss-cross the city checking items off my shopping list (spare parts, building supplies, etc.). At 9:15 am on Tuesday, the day of departure, I was finally sitting at the computer with her and we were able to finish the first draft by 10:30. Then I had to hurry to the street, grab a taxi back to the hotel, pack my suitcase, and rush back to the waiting taxi—to check in at the airport just in time! At 11:35 am, I was on the plane back to Riberalta. The Lord Jesus has helped so much! (MR1122)



“Miss, where would you rather live? With your father or your sister?”

By Maria, volunteer

Ana (name changed) asked this question out of the blue while I was combing her hair. After asking her a lot of questions, I found out that this 10-year-old's family had asked

her exactly this question. Ana's mother had died from Covid [in 2021]. Her new stepmother, who is very young herself, now has a new baby of her own.

Ana's father works a lot, so she spends most of her time with her stepmother and the baby. Her father also drinks a lot on weekends, so he's often angry. Her 22-year-old sister lives with her grandfather and cares for a cousin's children during the day, so she doesn't really want Ana with her. With such a large burden weighing on her, Ana can hardly concentrate at school and is genuinely afraid of the Fridays she can go home: she is often picked up very late or not at all.

I've asked myself how she is supposed to understand or trust God's love, when she experiences so little love and feels so unwanted. My prayer is that not only Ana, but also all the other girls, despite their broken families, will know the love of God and receive the Lord Jesus into their hearts, and that His love will overflow in them.

“Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not
thine heart be glad when he stumbleth”
(Proverbs 24:17).

BY ARNO FROESE

At the end of January, the news media reported that an Arab Palestinian terrorist had shot and killed seven Jews leaving their synagogue. The tragedy was one of the worst in recent years, dating back to 2008. It was evening when the terrorist waited in his car until Jews would exit their synagogue after prayer. None of the known Palestinian militant groups claimed responsibility. But as expected, the Palestinian Authority blamed Israel for their “dangerous escalations,” pointing to the raid by Israeli Defense Forces in the city of Jenin, which resulted in 10 people killed.

The distinct difference must be mentioned: the Israeli Defense Forces were in search of known, documented terrorists planning attacks in Israel. Yet Arab-Palestinian terrorists, whether from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, or Gaza, have one thing in mind: kill Jews.

Doubtless, virtually all of the perpetrators are the exception and not the rule. Arabs who reside in Israel enjoy a significantly higher standard of living than in neighboring Arab countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt.

A recent story by *Israel Today* highlights an Arab paramedic who rushed to save the lives of Jews.

The story of Fadi Dekidek, an Arab paramedic from a Palestinian neighborhood in conflict-ridden eastern Jerusalem who rushed to save lives in the two recent terror attacks in Jerusalem, proves that tragedies can bring us up to a better place.

“I’m a professional who is entrusted with saving lives,” he told Ynet. “I ignore all the background noise. Saving people is all that matters.”

While Dekidek was working to save Jewish lives, he heard shouts condemning Arabs and calling for “Death to Arabs.”

“I can hear it,” Dekidek says of all the “noise,” “but I ignore it and do my job. I’m a professional who is entrusted with taking care of the wounded. The only thing that matters is saving lives.”

-*www.israeltoday.co.il*, 31 January 2023

Another source, the *Times of Israel*, headlines their article, “Settler to be charged with hate crime for torching Palestinian car.”

While ... soldiers were trying to locate the Palestinians, an Israeli man from the settlement of Ma’ale Efraim arrived in the Palestinian town and set fire to a vehicle, the Shin Bet charged.

“This is an act that harms the military force’s ability to carry out its mission and may even endanger it,” the agency said.

The Shin Bet said the 22-year-old was previously known to security forces, and an indictment charging him with a racially motivated hate crime would be filed in the coming days.

Incidents of vandalism against Palestinians and Israeli security forces are commonly referred to as “price tag” attacks, with perpetrators claiming they are retaliation for Palestinian violence or government policies seen as hostile to the settler movement.

In other violence, Palestinians said settlers attacked cars and property in a number of locations across the West Bank, including in Huwara, where they reportedly smashed shop windows. Local Palestinians reportedly hurled stones at the settlers to drive them off.


The vandalism came in the wake of several Palestinian terror attacks that killed seven Israelis and seriously injured five others.

-*www.timesofisrael.com*, 31 January 2023

Obviously, both sides attempt to practice “eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth.” But that, as we all know, does not solve the conflict; rather, accelerates it.

In view of these horrible actions, the introductory Scripture serves as fresh, cool water to a thirsty soul: “Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.” Proverbs 25:25 adds: “As cold waters

to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.”

While we realize that this conflict will go on for some time, we know from the Word of God that one day there will be peace—not based on political negotiations, but because the Prince of Peace has arrived. It is the time when the prophetic Word will be fulfilled: “And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4). 



 MIDNIGHT CALL

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A Great Messianic Awakening in Israel

“In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’S passover” (Lev 23:5).

By David Phillips *CEO (Chief Executive Officer)*

According to some calculations, it could be around 3500 years ago when the commandment to celebrate Passover was first given.

Passover is the first of three feasts which the children of Israel would travel up to the temple to celebrate, as mentioned in the verse above. Thousands of Israelites would flock to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover sacrifice at the temple. In those days, Judea was under Roman rulership. Don’t forget that the Romans were pagan worshipers, and many of the Jews hated these conquerors.

We can see a great Messianic awakening around the time when Yeshua went up to Jerusalem to celebrate His last Passover with His disciples (known as the Last Supper). This is the memorial which many believers celebrate as communion.

Under this Roman period, the Jews waited to see a Messiah (an Anointed One by God) come to rule as their King and Savior, One who would rescue them from the foreign forces.

Days before the feasts, the multitudes welcomed Yeshua; yet only a few days afterwards, they sentenced Him to die on the cross! We struggle to believe that people can change their minds so dras-

tically within such a short time, yet we know this happened.

Once again within Israel, we are seeing a dramatic awakening for the Messiah to come. Many Israelis are thoughtful and express their heart’s desire concerning this. Yes, our country is in a mess ... very similar to the time surrounding Yeshua’s death.

The Ebenezer Home will celebrate Passover with great joy, because we know that the Messiah Yeshua IS our Savior. For us, it’s a real memorial celebration to know that He has saved us from our sin and given us eternal life. This gives our entire team and all of our residents great hope and joy!

Join us in the Spirit and in prayer as we all celebrate Passover: remembering the exodus from Egypt, which for us is the redemption from slavery and bondage to sin. And as we celebrate, join us in keeping our fellow citizens in prayer, that they will come to know their Messiah Yeshua. May God put in their hearts the same awakening that occurred at the time of Yeshua’s first coming.

Your donations for this month will help us maintain our building, to give our elderly brothers and sisters a place to call home.



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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JESUS CAN COME!



By Peter Malgo

“Mommy, I had no idea how exciting it is to believe in the Lord Jesus.” That’s how Luca, one of my grandchildren, expressed himself. He had read a children’s book that explained current events from a Biblical perspective—above all, what awaits us Christians in this end time: the Rapture and the return of Jesus.

In connection with this, the necessity of following Jesus was pointed out. Luca is so caught up in the reality of the Rapture and lives in such imminent expectation, that many an adult could adopt some of this same attitude. Also, Luca is not afraid to speak openly about this to his friends. One time, he was riding home on his bicycle with one of his classmates and suddenly said: “Hey Daniel, if I ride ahead of you on my bike and just suddenly disappear, with my bike going on without me, then the Lord Jesus has taken me to heaven and the Rapture has happened.” His friend replied: “You’re crazy; that’s like saying your bike helmet will fly away.” Luca answered: “No, my bike helmet, my clothes and schoolbag will just be lying on the ground.” At home, Luca was beaming as he said: “Yes Daddy, I am ready: Jesus can come!” And in the evening,

he prayed: “Lord Jesus, I would love to go to heaven as a child ... Let me be a good missionary for you, so that my school friends will also be saved.”

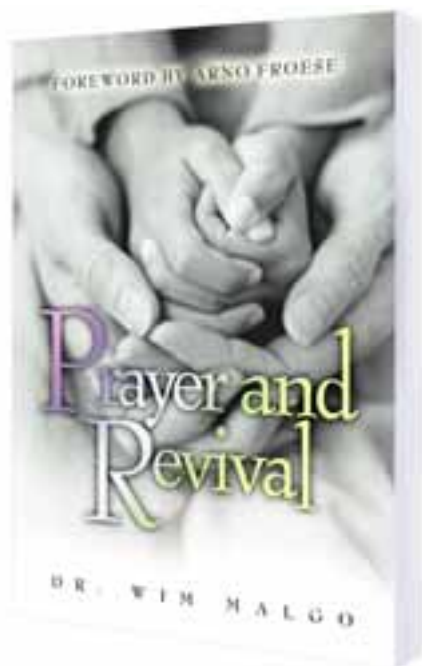
How different we adults often behave! We may anticipate a special event ... maybe a wedding, the birth of a first child, or the move into a new home. Honestly, would we want to be taken up to heaven before those events take place? Isn’t it truly more likely that our secret desire goes this way: “Lord, let me experience this or that before you take me to you in heaven.” Children can immerse themselves in the world of their play, forgetting everything in their surroundings and assigning imaginary reality to their toys and games. The same is true with their child-like belief in Jesus Christ. Once a child is caught up in it, life with Jesus becomes so real that everything else loses importance. The child begins to

view things from one perspective: he imagines what will happen when the Rapture occurs, and he longs to experience this soon. Yes, life with Jesus is exciting. Is that the way you feel?

Have you ever given thought to what takes place when the Rapture occurs? Just imagine the following scenario: you are a pilot flying an airplane. You are speaking to the co-pilot next to you and tell him: "It could happen that my seat will suddenly be empty. Would you then take over flying this plane, for I will have been raptured." Or you are in physical therapy as a patient and are lifting weights. You tell the therapist: "It could be that this weight will suddenly fall to the floor—hopefully not

on your toes. That would mean I have been raptured." There are many other examples we could think of. Children live in this world and tolerate it when the other one says: "You are crazy!" What about us? Our Lord Jesus said in Matthew 18:3: "...Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." In addition, He gives us two impressive examples: "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Matthew 24:40-41).

May the Lord give us the grace to return to a child-like faith, so that we can say: "I am ready: Jesus can come!" ^{MC}



This book contains some of Dr. Wim Malgo's most heart-stirring messages.

In this compilation, he explains that the Lord is willing, even in our days, to pour out a spirit of prayer upon His believing children. Revival will take place in our lives, families, churches, and the world when we pray honestly and with complete dedication. Chapters include:

- The Divine Conditions for Revival
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Note: All letters will be answered by the Executive Editor, Arno Froese.

GLOBALISM... DIGITAL MONEY... CRUCIFIXION DAY

Globalism

Editor:

Your reference to “global conspiracy” and Christians is logically inconsistent. Globalism is no longer “shadowy” and thus not a conspiracy. Bringing all governance under world authority is openly advocated. Saying it doesn’t matter because we’re already in bondage doesn’t make sense. Why not say globalism is being used by some to enforce greater bondage?

As you quoted, Dr. Scofield warned Christians from ceding too much to political affiliation. However, there is still a place for Christians to voice their Biblically-based views in the public square. All forms of bondage are not the same. Just ask the Chinese and Middle Eastern Christian leaders seeking freedom for the Gospel.

-M. Carlson, FL

Answer: In simple terms, globalism is a natural development due to modern industrialization—and, I must add, for the well-being of humanity. However, the real goal is that eventually, the world will be led into the final bondage.

We cannot deny that the spirit of globalism is a liberating philosophy; for example, “All men are created equal.” Equality is the key word in these end times. The United States is one of the first globalist societies, consisting of people from virtually all European countries, Asia, and Africa, with a remnant of the original inhabitants (Native Americans).

You are right: Christians should voice biblically based views in the public square—preaching the liberating Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul actually used a dumb idol (“to the unknown god”) to proclaim the Gospel in the public square.

Incidentally, the spirit of globalism influences politicians and business executives to work toward world peace, prosperity and se-



curity; for example, advocating for Muslims persecuted by China. Progress is being made when it comes to Christians in Islamic countries. Curricula are undergoing changes in many Islamic nations, teaching children tolerance toward minorities and other religions.

Digital Money

Dear Brother Froese,

I was surfing the internet and came across a news item, which in my opinion is important. Perhaps you already know about the following:

On March 9, 2022, President Joe Biden signed Executive Order #14067, titled “Ensuring Responsible Development of Digital Assets.” With this act, James G. Rickards has concluded that the US government will know how every dollar is spent by an individual.

To preserve personal wealth, Mr. Rickards suggest buying gold and/or foreign currency such as Swiss francs. Enclosed is an ad appearing in *World* [Christian] magazine on 4/24/2021, also advocating buying gold.

In my way of thinking, I wonder if this movement is a step toward future control by the Antichrist?

-A. Falch, CA

Answer: A web search on digital currency revealed:

There are three types of digital currency: cryptocurrency, stablecoins and CBDCs. Cryptocurrency is a form of decentralized digital currency that isn’t pegged to any fiat currency. It uses cryptography to manage its ledger systems, and the market determines its value. Bitcoin was the first cryptocurrency.

-*www.forbes.com*, 13 October 2022

Note the words “fiat currency.” It simply means any currency not backed by a commodity such as gold or silver. But without paper money, there would be little to no progress in the global economy; it is simply part of the end-time package.

I noticed in the *World* article you sent, “Paper dollars have lost about 85% of their purchasing power over the last 50 years.” That’s only partially true. Note, wages in 1973 averaged \$7,580; for 2022, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics lists it as \$54,132. Research will reveal that today’s median income can purchase more and better-quality merchandise per hour worked than in 1973. Almost on a yearly basis, houses, appliances, vehicles, etc. are significantly improved from the previous year.

Incidentally, the Great Collapse is yet to come, according to Revelation 18. At the time of the Apocalypse, gold and silver won’t help; banks and stores are closed.

We don’t need to buy gold or silver, but as true Christians, let us do our utmost to proclaim the wonderful truth of the Word of



Letters to the Editor

God: only Jesus saves, and He is coming again!

Crucifixion Day

Dear Mr. Froese,

The problem with a Friday crucifixion is John 12:1: “Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany” (from Jericho). If the Friday view can be accepted, then six days earlier was the weekly Shabbat, and on this day such a journey was legally out of the question for a devout Jew. Had this been the case, Jesus would have been breaking the law.

A little later, in John 12:12-13, John writes: “On the next day (the day after coming to Bethany) much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

Jesus, as the Passover lamb, was crucified on Passover, the 14th of Nisan. In order to complete the fulfillment of Passover, Jesus had to make the triumphal entry on the 10th of Nisan, when the Lamb was brought in from the fold (see Exodus 12:3). Counting back from Thursday the 14th would place the 10th on a Sunday.

If indeed His entry occurred on a Sunday, then the crucifixion had to oc-

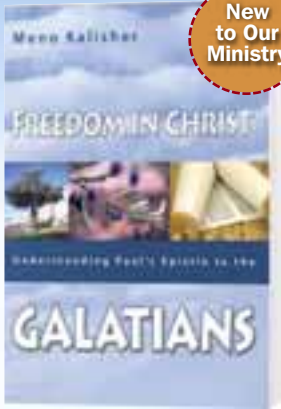
cur on a Thursday, if you believe what John wrote is true. If we were to look at the calendar on the 21st of December, we might say, “It is only 5 days until Christmas.” According to John, it was 5 days until Passover when Jesus entered Jerusalem in what we call the Triumphal Entry. This means that on Sunday the 10th, it would be 5 days until Passover: Sunday would be day one, Monday the 11th day two, Tuesday the 12th day three, Wednesday the 13th day four, and Thursday the 14th day five, the day our Savior was crucified.

-C. Grimsley, TX

Answer: Jesus died “the day before the sabbath”—that’s Friday (Mark 15:42; see also Luke 23:53-54). He arose on “the first day of the week”—Sunday (Mark 16:9). When you don’t accept this, you must use all kinds of mathematical configurations, including calendar dates, but they don’t add up. Don’t look for 72 hours; in such case, Jesus would have had to arise at about 3 pm. Note the Bible says, “early the first day.”

Maybe this will help: the law is very complex, yet James 2:10 reads: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” In a similar way, if Jesus arose just one second into the 3rd day, it would have counted as “day and night” because that day was violated. (MC)

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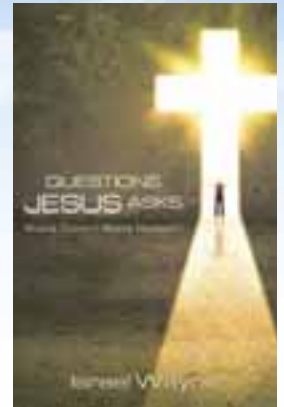
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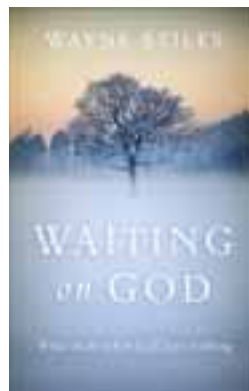
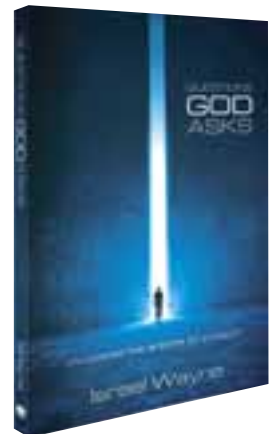
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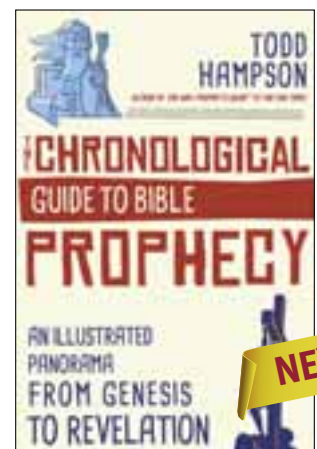
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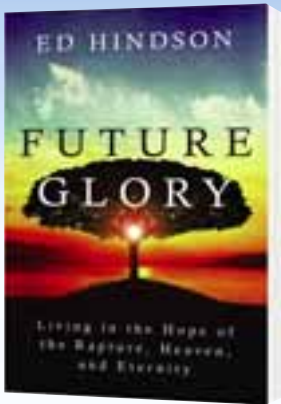
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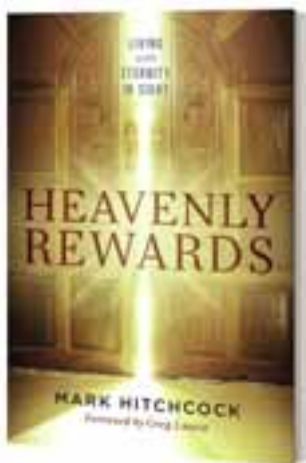
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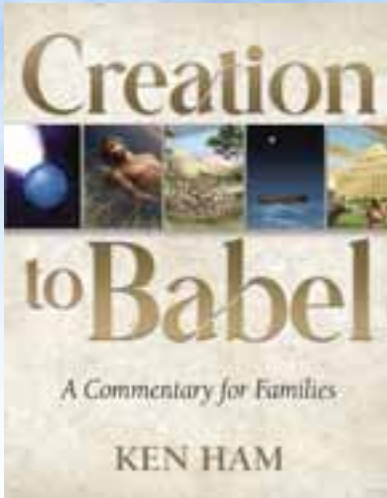
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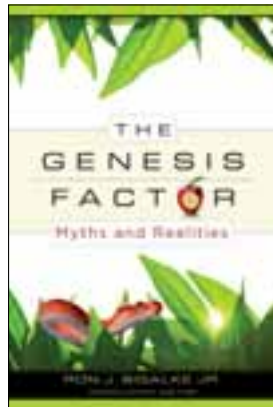
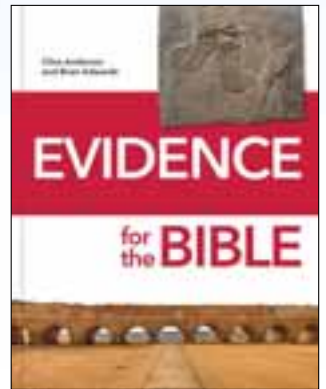
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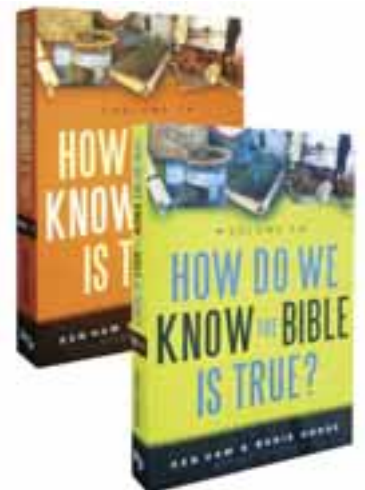
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