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# Midnight Call

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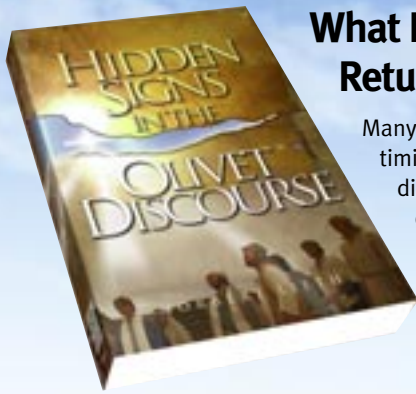
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## An Ignored and Forgotten God — Part 1

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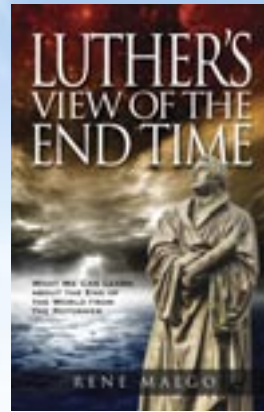
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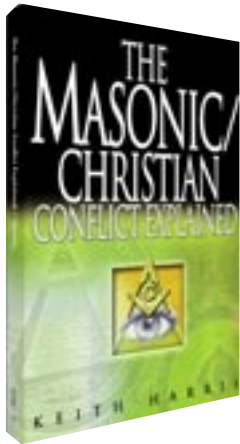


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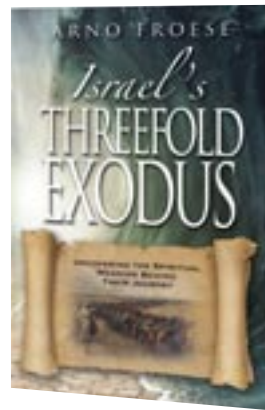
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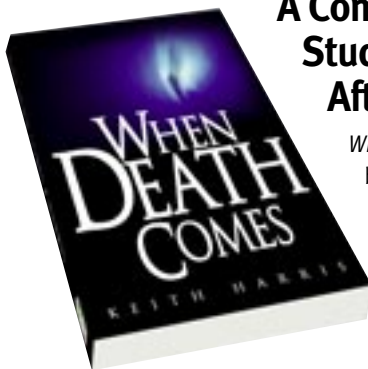
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## Let Us Be Trustworthy

**By Norbert Lieth**

*Director of Missions, Midnight Call International*

When traveling the world, one notices high-rises popping up like mushrooms. Some are annoyed by the building explosion and voice criticism; others are happy about the expansion. The economy is growing, taxes are increasing, and many cities are rising in importance. Some owners of construction companies still conduct business with a handshake, as used to be the custom of old. However, woe to the one who doesn't keep said agreement.

And now to the Church, which is described as a house, a temple, or a body: We are called to build up the body of the Church, to strengthen unity. We should always be mindful of peace within the congregation; yes, to strive toward this goal: "Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another" (Romans 14:19). But upon closer observation, one is tempted to think that there are more "demolition workers" than those who lend a hand to construction. Non-fundamental

issues are debated; to maintain one's own convictions, division and spiritual demolition rather than construction ensues—all with the most pious of demeanors. "...When you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you ... there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you" (1 Cor. 11:18-19).

In Jesus' day, there were twelve disciples. One of them pretended to be especially faithful and spiritual. That was Judas. He claimed to want to use the money for the poor, but was actually a robber. He presented himself as a friend of Jesus, but was a traitor. He was called one of the disciples, but was a devil. He had a close relationship with Jesus at the table, but then went on to put the greatest distance between them. He acted like a follower of Jesus, but was the exact opposite. He kissed with his lips, but with his mouth he betrayed the Lord. Instead of becoming part of the group, he went his own way. Instead of uniting with Jesus, he allowed himself

## EDITOR'S NOTE

to be bought and caused a scattering. Instead of joining the others in building the Church, he took his own life.

There was only one who had seen through this game from the beginning; it was the Lord. David prophetically foretold in Psalm 41:9: "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." Jesus applied this passage to the betrayal by Judas, and said: "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me'" (John 13:18). Jesus left out the four words, "in whom I trusted." Why? Because He knew that Judas would betray Him, and therefore didn't trust him. Jesus did not fall for someone's deceit as David had done. Already at an earlier time, the Lord said: "But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him" (John 6:64). And further, we read in John 2:25: "[Jesus] had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."

Let us be trustworthy, let us be genuine, let us be builders! (MC)

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### OUR TASK

Midnight Call Ministries is a nonprofit missionary organization, dedicated to proclaiming the entire Bible as the unfulfilling 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 ten 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-tribulational appearance of Jesus Christ for the Rapture of His Church (all born again believers).

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



# An Ignored and Forgotten God – Part 1

Stephan Beitze

Notable parallels between the incident of Paul at the Areopagus and the world today, and what it means for us.

**A**n event took place almost 2,000 years ago that has amazing parallels to the current day. We read in Acts 17:16-34:

“Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, ‘What does this babbler wish to say?’ Others said, ‘He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities’—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, ‘May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.’ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

“So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: ‘Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: “To the unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and

breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.”

“Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.’

“Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, ‘We will hear you again about this.’ So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.”

When the Apostle Paul arrived in Athens, he walked through the city while he was waiting for his co-laborers. Athens was one of the most important cities of the time, especially in the realms of culture, sports, and religious fervor. But sometimes people who are exceptionally skilled and knowledgeable are also

## An Ignored and Forgotten God – Part 1

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“Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.”

Caryatids at Acropolis, Athens, Greece

superstitious. This was certainly true in Athens: The population was completely addicted to idolatry. And so, Paul debated with four groups of people there: the Epicureans, the Stoics, the Jews, and the “devout persons.”

The Jews were proud of their religion and Law, believing it made them special and superior to everyone else. They believed they were gaining God’s favor by observing rituals.

In addition, there were two philosophical camps originating in Athens. The Epicureans derived their name from the philosopher Epicurus, and their philosophy focused on making pleasure (rather than wisdom) the goal of life. The Epicureans were materialists. Although they didn’t deny God’s existence, they held that He didn’t interfere in human affairs. They also believed that when a person dies, the body and soul are annihilated. In other words, they essentially lived to enjoy the here and now.

By contrast, Stoic philosophy emphasized knowledge as life’s primary goal. In Paul’s day, Athens was famous for its elite culture, wisdom, philosophy, and fine arts. It could be said that the people there worshiped knowledge or human wisdom. Anyone who came with great knowledge and learning was welcomed with open arms. The Athenians specialized in philosophical discussion, and the Stoics were pantheists striving to live an honorable life. They



were industrious and considered themselves distinguished, worthy people who had earned the right to feel superior to others.

### THE DEAD ENDS

The various groups that Paul encountered still exist today. They may vary somewhat, but the characteristics are the same. We can relate much of today’s mindset to these groups.

**The ones who are always looking for something new:** Our text says that the people of Athens were characterized by their constant pursuit of the new, and things are similar today. People are always looking for every possibility of security, peace, hope, or well-being. And because there is always something new to try, they’re always trying something different. But that’s just evidence of the lack of something truly secure and effective. We’re living in an



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Parties, friendships, hobbies, entertainment, travel, sex, perhaps alcohol and drugs, and many other things are some of the means people use to achieve their supposed happiness. But how quickly they pass!



age of relativism, where everyone has their own truth that they expect others to respect.

That tells us something very serious. If there are many (often contradictory) truths, then there can't be an absolute truth. That's why our time is often rightly referred to as a post-truth age. But what a tragedy it is for mankind when absolute truth no longer exists ... when there's nothing to justifiably believe in and everything is relative, depending on how it feels or personal preference! This leads to enormous uncertainty. There's nothing to hold onto, or be sure of, that won't fail.

People seek happiness, security, and assurance in various ways. They run back and forth, always hoping to find the meaning of life. But what they find only lasts a while, and then they're frustrated after yet another disappointment. Some people even visit churches out of curiosity, to try something new. They see Jesus as just a great teacher and the founder of a new religion—one of many, just one more way. Some even find comfort in the love they receive within the church, but only until something comes along that's more interesting, entertaining, or a “better fit” for their needs.

**The ones who are living for pleasure and materialism:** There are people who, in the manner of the Epicureans, live their lives in a way that follows pleasure. They live by the motto, “You only live once.” As a result, many do whatever satisfies their desires.

Parties, friendships, hobbies, entertainment, travel, sex, perhaps alcohol and drugs, and many other things are some of the means they use to achieve their supposed happiness. But how quickly they pass! Soon they'll need to revisit these things, or find something else that's more enjoyable to achieve the same result. This is very closely related to materialism, which accepts the “haves” of society and rejects the “have-nots.” This results in a constant pursuit of material goods. We've become a consumer society, because many people hope to find their happiness that way.

But what has been gained can be quickly lost! Even the newest and fastest car, a new house or a tropical vacation doesn't fill the void. Besides, there will always be someone else who has more, and better. This results in frustration and a desire to succeed, trapping people in a vicious cycle where they can't find peace.

## An Ignored and Forgotten God – Part 1

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We're living in an age of relativism, where everyone has their own truth that they expect others to respect.

**The ones who want to be good people:** There are also the moralists, who believe they are good and useful to society. Unlike the ones who live for pleasure, they see their life's purpose as doing good for others. They're the first ones to support the construction of a new children's home or school in Africa. They donate to help fight world hunger. They support refugees, and maybe even an environmental movement. They often feel superior to others who don't contribute to these causes. A lot of what they're doing is great. But does it really lead to lasting happiness and security?

**The ones who seek wisdom and knowledge:** The Athenians were very well-educated. Like them, many people today are seeking wisdom, titles, and self-actualization. The world is increasingly characterized as a knowledge cult.

I'm not against studying; I do so myself. But many today are finding their identity in knowledge, and are proud of what they know and have achieved. The Bible even says that knowledge causes pride (1 Cor 8:1). It has become a form of religion, and helps people make sense of the world. They find fulfillment in showing off their knowledge and knowing more than the next person, winning arguments, and gaining recognition for their accomplishments. However, no matter how much knowledge, wisdom, and recognition they gain, they still don't find lasting fulfillment in life. They don't

realize they need God, because they're relying so much on their own abilities.

**The ones who are religious:** Then there are those who see religion as a way to God, heaven, or a higher purpose. They strictly adhere to rituals and commandments. They believe they've earned a better position through their piety and good deeds. They feel that God must be pleased with them if they're attending church, donating to charity, and doing community service.

We can see that there are still different philosophies toward life today, just as there were in ancient Athens. But they all have one thing in common: They're missing something. That causes people to be dissatisfied, aggressive, selfish, and more. It's even one of the factors behind the rise in poor mental health and suicide rates. Nothing is completely certain.

Which of these attitudes or philosophies are you inclined toward? Do the paths you've taken bring the peace you're longing for, true contentment, security now and for the future? All of the philosophies we've discussed are dead ends that only add to the frustration and discouragement we feel, making us increasingly desperate in our search for the real solution. We may be convinced that our lifestyle is the right one. But whatever our attitude has been, do we have the humility to examine what God says and offers us, so we can make the truly right decision?

The Athenians were very well-educated. Like them, many people today are seeking wisdom, titles, and self-actualization.

The Acropolis of Athens, Greece, with the Parthenon Temple on top of the hill during a summer sunset



### THE ONLY WAY

**The unknown or ignored God:** As he addressed the Athenians, Paul pointed out that despite everything they were, had, and did, they had forgotten what was essential and important. He had come into a very religious society, which worshiped over a hundred deities—including many associated with people’s preferred lifestyles. In many cases, people were giving free rein to their baser instincts, such as when they worshiped the god of wine or the goddess of fertility.

There were indeed some who were sincere in their worship of these deities (which were represented corporeally in various ways). But none of these idols were capable of answering their prayers, moving, or approaching them. Fearing that they had forgotten some deity that might later turn against them, the

people had even erected an altar “to the unknown God” (Acts 17:23). As he spoke to them, Paul said they were in ignorance (v. 30). Although they were some of the most knowledgeable people of their time (and the teachings of their thinkers are still esteemed and studied today), they didn’t know the one thing that was most important for their life and eternity. They were ignoring the true God.

When I consider our society, I’m convinced that if Paul were here today, he’d have to say the same thing of us. The God of the Bible is a stranger to most people. We can find a modern-day parallel to the Athenians’ altar with its inscription “to the unknown God,” when we look at the massive, wonderfully designed cathedrals in Europe. Millions of people visit them annually, taking photos,

## An Ignored and Forgotten God – Part 1

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Paul showed them that there is one true God who created heaven and earth, as well as man. Thank God we're a special, creative act of a loving God, not just the product of chance (or an explosion).

studying the architectural details, associating them with kings who once ruled ... utterly ignoring the purpose for which they were built.

Many people don't even know who Christ is. If we were to take a poll in school today and ask the students who they think Jesus was, some won't know how to answer.

A few years ago, I was speaking with a member of the Gideons, an organization which distributes New Testaments to schools, prisons, hospitals, hotels, and more. I asked him how he perceived the state of interest in God. He replied, "I can illustrate this from personal experience. One time, we were distributing New Testaments in front of a school, and I offered one to a 12-year-old. He asked me what it was, and I told him it was part of the Bible and was about God. The boy responded, 'What do I need God for?'"

God isn't just unknown, but deliberately ignored by many.

### **The representation of the unknown and ignored**

**God:** Paul was invited to present and defend this new faith in the Areopagus. The Areopagus was a place of judgment where judges, sages, and officials gathered to discuss the city's affairs and administer justice (although Paul was brought there out of curiosity, not because he'd been accused of a crime).

The Apostle first emphasized the Athenians' religiosity, telling them, "I perceive that

in every way you are very religious" (Acts 17:22). The underlying Greek word for the worship of deities is *deisidaimon*, which means a high degree of both superstition and reverence (*deido*: fear; *daimon*: demon or pagan god). It's striking that the original word includes the concept of a demon. The Apostle points out elsewhere that worshipping idols is akin to demon worship (1 Cor 10:20). God clearly forbade the worship of any being or object (Ex 20:4-5). So, anyone violating this clear commandment, even if the object bears the name of a saint, is opening themselves up to monstrous influences.

Then Paul showed them that there is one true God who created heaven and earth, as well as man. Thank God we're a special, creative act of a loving God, not just the product of chance (or an explosion). His emphatic interest was in man's creation. This God doesn't need temples to dwell in or people to bring Him food, because He is the Creator of everything.

Paul says elsewhere that man should conclude in favor of God's existence by observing creation (Rom 1:18-21). If we're being honest, looking at the beauty, order, and interaction between everything that exists, or the wonder of our bodies, we can see that there must be a highly intelligent Creator behind the natural laws that maintain this order. There are no coincidences, but planning down to the smallest detail. (MR0922/1278)



## EVANGELICALS: STAND UP FOR JEWS! – PART 2



### THE GREAT DYSFUNCTIONAL BLESSING

The Jews' state of separateness, combined with cycles of oppression and their fervent belief that they have a future, contributed to the crucible from which were forged great achievements. This incredible state that God has cast upon them—in a sense, ensuring their survival and the fulfillment of the prophecies—brings to mind Johnny Cash's famous song, "A Boy Named Sue."

By **Wilfred Hahn**

**N**ot at all attempting to belittle this topic, consider the song's central message. The story is told of a father who would not be around to raise his son, so he named him "Sue." Because of the ridicule and trouble that this name would bring the boy, the father was sure he would survive.

In this sense, God has also marked the Jew. After He divorced and abandoned them to the Diaspora, they were called to continue to be separate; to keep the Sabbath and dietary laws. These differentiating practices no doubt contributed to their persecution. Albert Einstein reportedly said, "It may be thanks to Anti-semitism that we are able to preserve our existence as a race; that at any rate is my belief."

So, we see that a repetitive and chronically depressing cycle has played out over the millennia. Wherever and whenever Jews were allowed an environment to do so—out of the crucible of their oppression—they prospered. The nations in which they resided also prospered. Then, usually, jealousy or some other type of loathing set in, and they were expelled, suppressed, or murdered. Why? While there are many reasons, one factor certainly always played a role.

### Money and the Jew

The world is thankful for the many achievements of the Jewish people, the many Jewish Nobel Prize laureates (about one-fifth have been Jewish), the great inventions and arts.



According to Apostle Paul, “the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). An improper attitude to money, whether jealousy or obsession, is an extremely potent lure to destruction for both Jew and Gentile.



We see that the Jew has excelled in almost every faculty. Gentiles laud Jews for these achievements. Few would feel jealous that many of the greatest violin soloists were Jewish, or that an outsized number of the Boston Symphony Orchestra may be Jewish.

Yet, there is one area that has almost always unleashed a renewed hatred of the Jew—“the love of money.” It seems that the Jew is often connected with the topic of money. Is this reputation deserved? To no surprise, the Koran (written in the 7th century) makes this claim about the Jews: “They delight in twisting words and distort even the word of God. They break their contracts and are treacherous. They hound the people for money. They boast of special privileges in [the] life to come, yet cling tenaciously to life on this earth.”

But now we tread on a charged topic. Therefore, before considering this issue any further, a review of history and facts is first necessary, to ensure that we present a balanced answer.

To begin, that money should be such an effective instrument to incite the persecution of the Jew, should come as no surprise. It is important to understand the dynamics at play here, so as not to fall prey to this nefarious cycle. Crucial to remember is that the love of money strikes at the very core of mankind’s susceptible corrupt nature. According to Apostle Paul, “the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). An improper attitude to money, whether jealousy or obsession, is an extremely potent lure to destruction for both Jew and Gentile.

The second point to realize is that there is no mystery as to the basic requirements of accumulating capital. Simply viewed, it takes time, disciplined saving, and only a little bit of extra effort. Were you to save only 2% more of your earnings than your neighbor every year and work only 2% harder (everything else being equal), it would take only 25–35

years for you to be at least twice as wealthy as your neighbor. It is not unusual to see immigrants work harder. Why? They feel a more urgent need to establish themselves. Imagine how much more disciplined and striving a people would be that throughout history has been persecuted. It is no surprise that such people generally do become wealthier, if allowed the opportunity.

Lastly, though Jews in America have become wealthier than the general population in the past half-century, this is usually taken far out of context. To begin, many immigrant groups have risen to prominence or above-average achievement in one sense or another. This is true for Asians, Hindus, Arabs, and others. They have higher incomes as a group and a much greater concentration in professional job categories such as medicine and academia. So, why pick on the Jews?

While many today believe that various Jewish lobby groups have significant influence upon the American government, their impact is certainly debatable. It could just as easily be said and proven that Arabs have even greater influence. There is no contesting the fact that America, for example, has had a very special relationship with Saudi Arabia, or even Kuwait. America has sent a number of military units into the Middle East to protect the interests of these countries. How-

ever, for some reason, this influence does not elicit as many howls of protest.

We come back to this main point: Whenever the Jew has been allowed to prosper, eventually money has played a role in subsequent persecution. Invariably, the Gentile took great pleasure in stripping Jews of their homes and wealth. Even governments and kings would participate in these confiscations. For example, during the expulsion of the Jews by the King of France, Philip Augustus, in 1182 AD, and King Ferdinand in 1492, who required that 20% of all debt repudiation to Jews accrue to him.

### Thoughts to Ponder

We come back to the role of the Gentile throughout history in relation to the Hebrews. It would be at their hands that the Jew would suffer. History books are full of unspeakable atrocities and injustices. A Gentile can only remain in graven silence at the specter of this gargantuan evil.

Jesus Christ says of Himself through the prophet Zechariah: “After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye—I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me” (Zechariah 2:8-9).



While God has been the author of the Jews' sentence into the Diaspora, both Gentile and Jew have been complicit in carrying it out.



We are alerted to understand that just because God has decreed a disciplining or punishment upon His people, it does not absolve Gentile people and nations whom He might use as His willing instruments to do so. The example of Babylon's role in the Old Testament illustrates this point clearly. While the prophets far in advance identified Babylon as the tool that God would use to bring His judgment against Judah, it was still counted as evil that this nation would touch Jacob. "But when the seventy years [of captivity] are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt..." (Jeremiah 25:12).

It was the same for the Edomites, the descendants of Esau. Though Esau

was the brother of Jacob, his progeny was punished for their violence and plundering of the Jews (see Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11). If this was the case, we can be sure that members of the Church will surely be accountable for their deeds and thoughts against them.

While God has been the author of the Jews' sentence into the Diaspora, both Gentile and Jew have been complicit in carrying it out. However, a Christian need not—must not—be part of these injustices, though God may have allowed the Gentile role in this manner.

Though God decreed this time upon our brother, the Jew, we still individually have a choice in the matter. We dare not be part of this sin, for it is indeed something that will be severely punished. As the Bible says, "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3).

In the third and fourth parts, we review the role of the false church and America in the prophesied timeline of the Jew. <sup>MC</sup>

This is part of a re-edited, four-part excerpt from the 2009 book, *Preserving True Riches in an Age of Deception and Trouble* (secondary title).



Iconic football coach Vince Lombardi was fanatical in regard to fundamentals. Players who competed under his leadership often referred to his dynamism, intensity, and relentless enthusiasm for game basics. Repeatedly, he would emphasize the basic techniques required in blocking and tackling. When his team, the Green Bay Packers, outgained their opponent yet still lost the 1960 NFL Championship, the players began their new season with expectations of playing better, smarter, and more effectively.

**T**he first day of training camp of the 1961 season did not begin as expected for the players. Coach Lombardi took nothing for granted, and would begin a tradition of starting with the basics. He assumed his players did not have any prior knowledge from the past season. He began training camp with the most basic statement possible. “Gentlemen,” he said, holding a pigskin in his right hand, “this is a football.” Lombardi then had everyone open their playbooks to page one, and he explained the fundamentals of the game.

Why would an experienced coach talk to professional athletes as Lombardi did? Apparently,

it worked because the Packers won the NFL Championship that season (37-0), and Lombardi won five total in seven years, including victories in the first two Super Bowls. Lombardi never had a losing season as head coach in the NFL, nor did he ever lose a playoff game again. He was successful because of his simple philosophy that perfecting the fundamentals of the sport best attains excellence.

It is possible to understand something well enough and even perform well, yet still lose (as the Packers did in the 1960 Championship) if one neglects the fundamentals. The primary task in life is to make foremost what is most funda-



# FUTURE READY

DR. RON J. BIGALKE

When “the door was shut,” it would never be opened again.



mental, which is certainly true in regard to the Bible’s prophetic teaching. While it is possible to exhaust all the future details in relation to the coming of the Lord, the fundamental purpose for the prophetic revelation of the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24—25) is to guide one to live wisely in the present.

The Bible reveals the future to give proper motivation and perspective for the here and now. Matthew 25 indicates the vast difference between passive and temporal attitudes regarding the future, and a wise perspective that makes eternal decisions. God wants people to live in view of His coming kingdom, resulting in a purifying hope, just as the Lord Himself is pure (1 John 3:3). Matthew 25 motives one to live a godly (holy and pure) life in view of the future.

### **BEING PREPARED**

(Matt 25:1-13) Matthew 24 concluded with an exhortation to be ready for the Lord’s coming. Matthew 25 begins with a parable based upon the wisdom of those who are prepared for the coming of the Lord, in contrast to the foolishness

of those who are not. Preparedness, readiness, and watchfulness are emphasized.

The parable of the ten virgins emphasizes wisdom (vv. 1-13). All ten had the same amount of time to ready themselves, yet five were foolish and five were prudent. Some took advantage of the time available to them and were ready for the coming of the bridegroom, who in view of Matthew 9:15 is Jesus Himself (which is bold imagery for Him to use, since the Old Testament frequently describes God [not the Messiah] as the bridegroom and Israel as the bride [Isa 54:4-6; Jer 2:2; 3:1-14; 31:32; Hos 1:2; 2:7, 14-23; 3:1-5; etc.]). The wise virgins “who were ready went in with him [the bridegroom] to the wedding feast [the Lord’s kingdom]; and the door was shut” to those who were foolish and unprepared (Matt 25:10).

The difference is between the foolish and wise, as opposed to the bad and good; some were prudent and thoughtful, while others were imprudent and thoughtless. The penalty was severe for the foolish; they were not allowed to enter the wedding feast. When “the door was shut,” it would never be opened again. “I do not know you” (v. 12) is the decisive statement of rejection, and certainly the most solemn words from the One who said, “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me” (John 10:14).

The message of the parable is simple: “Be on the alert” (Matt 25:13a). When the bridegroom comes, it will be evident who are saved (v. 4: had “oil,” an emblem of the Holy Spirit, cf. Zech 4:1-7). No one is ready for the Lord’s coming

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The parable of the talents is a condemnation upon those with much privilege and responsibility (cf. Matt 13:12), yet who were characterized as barren and faithless (21:18-32).

without the Holy Spirit. Hypocrites pretend to be what they are not or claim to believe what they do not; their behavior contradicts what they truly believe and feel. In antiquity, a hypocrite was an actor who assumed a character and would use a mask to conceal his true identity, portraying himself to others in a feigned manner. Hypocrisy is characteristic of the foolish who lack true faith yet claim to be saved (which is why they were classed among the virgins). Preparedness for the Lord's coming proves whether one personally trusts and respects Him.

### **BEING FAITHFUL**

(Matt 25:14-46) Whereas the parable of the virgins emphasizes spiritual alertness, the parable of the talents prioritizes faithful service (vv. 14, 19, 21, 23, 26, 30). The parable begins with a forthright assertion that a master departed “on a journey” and to “his own slaves . . . entrusted his possessions” (v. 14). The context would seem to indicate that the master's departure was necessary, due to governmental affairs or a military enterprise—especially since the parable concludes with Jesus declaring that when He “comes in His glory,” it will be to judge “all the nations” (vv. 31-32).

Judgment is the context, as evident in the parallels: The master returned to settle accounts with his slaves, just as the Son of Man will return to judge all the nations. Understanding this context helps to enlighten the actions of the third slave, who wickedly buried all the possessions allotted to him, which is characteristic of

wartime (Jerusalem would fall to the Romans in AD 70, which is the precise event prophesied in 24:2).

The master's response to the third servant revealed that the servant's motives were disloyal, evil, and unloving (25:26). His laziness was not because he lacked ability or opportunity; rather, he simply refused to invest himself in the master's work, because he selfishly believed the dangers outweighed any faith-motivated risks (vv. 24-30). The other two slaves had faith in their master, and thus viewed his return as sufficient reason to invest the allotted resources during wartime (vv. 16-23). The master was angry with the third servant because he was faithless and selfish, by intending to use the master's absence for his own personal expediency (cf. Luke 12:41-48).

The parable of the talents is a condemnation upon those with much privilege and responsibility (cf. Matt 13:12), yet who were characterized as barren and faithless (21:18-32). They served their own wretched desires (21:33-41), thus culminating in their own destruction (vv. 42-44). Only those alert for the Master's coming “will be saved,” and thus able to share in the blessedness of His coming kingdom. As opposed to disloyalty, the Lord's servants are to invest resources through radical, righteous, even risky obedience to Him (*always by His grace and for His glory*). Not remarkable success but faithfulness is what is rewarded.

The parable of the talents was given near the conclusion of Jesus' earthly ministry. Prior to

## FUTURE READY

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Jesus also outwitted the religious leaders in their carefully designed and planned question regarding the payment of taxes (22:15-22), which was a far more volatile issue at that time than modern discussions.

that parable, the Lord cleansed the temple by expelling the moneychangers (21:12-17). Subsequently, the Lord taught another parable depicting landowners (21:33-46), which represented Israel's first-century religious leaders, who were responsible for shepherding God's people. The purpose of the parable was to illustrate God's judgment against them for their rejection of Jesus.

Jesus also outwitted the religious leaders in their carefully designed and planned question regarding the payment of taxes (22:15-22), which was a far more volatile issue at that time than modern discussions. The timing of Jesus' answer was critical, as it was a crucial moment when decisive action was needed on the Lord's part. Borrowing a coin with Caesar's inscription and likeness upon it (which, ironically, He did not possess yet those seeking to trap Him did), He said some of the most significant words in history: "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's" (v. 21). The impact of Jesus' words upon Western civilization is colossal, as the Lord acknowledged the legitimacy of human government (cf. Rom 13:1-7; 1 Tim 2:1-6; 1 Pet 2:13-17) while prioritizing the greater responsibility to God, who has created humanity and redeems believers by grace through faith.

The final section of Jesus' discourse is not a parable (vv. 31-46) but a description of evaluation or judgment when the Son of Man comes in His glory (cf. 24:30). The only alternatives to



the divinity of Jesus are that He was crazy or evil. He is either bad, mad, or God: a liar, lunatic, or Lord. Jesus said, "He will sit on His glorious throne" (v. 31), words indicating He was either guilty of megalomania (delusional regarding His importance or power) or He is truly the Lord of glory, who will judge all nations from His throne.

While the two parables of Matthew 25 highlight alertness and faithfulness, the closing verses of the chapter focus upon all nations. Jesus repeatedly emphasized the eternal destiny of those who are not faithful and true (cf. 18:23-34; 20:1-16; 21:33-41; 22:1-14; 24:45-51), and then revealed the necessity to be ready for the time in which He will divine all humanity into two categories: sheep and goats (25:32-33). One's eternal destiny will be determined and unchanged when standing before the Lord of glory (vv. 34-46). Awaiting the Lord's coming demands faithful readiness and resolve: accomplishing what God has uniquely prepared for you to do.

(1379)




# WORLD FOCUS

WORLD

## 30,000 Objects Hurtling Through Space

Nearly 70 years after the launch of Sputnik, there are so many machines flying through space, astronomers worry their light pollution will soon make it impossible to study other galaxies with terrestrial telescopes.

 “We can see the fingerprint of human space traffic on stratospheric aerosol,” said Troy Thornberry, a research physicist at NOAA’s Chemical Sciences Laboratory. “Adding a lot of material to the stratosphere that was never there before is something that we’re considering, as well as the sheer mass of material that we put into space.”

More than 300 commercial and government entities have announced plans to launch a staggering 478,000 satellites by 2030, but that number is likely inflated by hype.

“Ten years ago, people thought that our founder was crazy for even talking about space debris,” Ron Lopez told CNN while strolling past the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC. “Now you can’t go to a space conference without a panel or a series of talks on space sustainability and the debris issue.”

Lopez admits that they are a long way from flying garbage trucks, orbiting recycling centers and a “circular economy in space,” but in 2022, Astroscale used a satellite with a strong magnet to catch a moving target launched in the same 3-year mission.

But with a pollution crisis now painfully evident on land, at sea and now in space, one of the most symbolic launches since *Sputnik* is scheduled for this summer, when scientists from Japan and NASA launch the world’s first biodegradable satellite, made mostly of wood.



Space debris is becoming a major problem, with thousands of more satellites on track to launch through the end of this decade. Some companies and agencies are starting to test ways to clean it up. CNN/Adobe Stock

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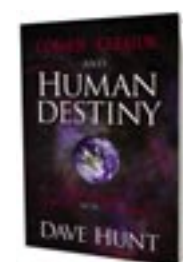
-[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com), 21 February 2024

**Commentary:** Two items to mention: 1) even thirty billion objects in space would not seriously interfere with the global climate; and 2) man’s so-called space travel foreshadows the fulfillment of the intention of Lucifer: “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my

throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north” (Isaiah 14:13). That, we believe, is the motivating spirit behind so-called space travel or exploration.

Besides, the International Space Station, for example, is a mere 410 km (254 miles) from the surface of the earth. Compare that to the earth’s diameter, 12,714 km (7,917 miles).

What the Russian *Sputnik* satellite initiated some 70 years ago, is now being followed by the rest of the world. Yet in the end, all will fail because Psalm 115:16 declares: “The heaven, even the heavens, are the



Lord’s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.” 8185

(See *Cosmos, Creator, and Human Destiny*, Item #2251, \$30.)

 **RUSSIA**

## 200,000 Tons of Grain to African Countries

Agriculture Minister Dmitry Patrushev said that Burkina Faso, Mali, Eritrea, and Zimbabwe each received 25,000 tons of grain while the Central African Republic and Somalia got 50,000 tons each, Russian state news agency TASS reported.

 Shortly after backing out of a crucial deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey that enabled the export of Ukrainian grain, Russian President Vladimir Putin pledged free grain exports to Africa during a summit with some of its leaders in St. Petersburg last year. This move aimed to strengthen support from leaders on the continent amidst a series of sanctions from the West.

Godfrey Kanyenze, who is a founding director of the Labor and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe, also suggested that Russia could be playing the long game to emerge as Africa's preferred global partner.

"They (Russia) are also riding on the fact that the East were not colonizers. So, they've always taken advantage of that historical precedent where the East portrays itself as a non-colonizer and probably a better partner with Africa. So, it's contestation."

*-www.cnn.com, 21 February 2024*

**Commentary:** The six largest wheat exporters in the world are Russia,



**Russian President Vladimir Putin giving a speech during the plenary session of the second Russia-Africa summit in Saint Petersburg**

Pavel Bednyakov/Pool/AFP via Getty Images

Australia, USA, Canada, Ukraine, and France. When it comes to wheat producing countries, China is on top, followed by the European Union, India, Russia, USA, and Canada. Wheat supplies are lacking in many African countries, in most cases due to lack of mechanized agricultural practices and sufficient precipitation, as well as governmental mismanagement.

Quite naturally, Russia is taking the opportunity to seal friendship with more African nations, particularly due to the many restrictions and sanctions placed on it by Western countries in response to their invasion of Ukraine. Yet not only Russia, but also the rest of the world is "playing politics."

This reminds us of Joseph the Hebrew, who was sold by his own brothers to the Midianites and ended up a slave in Egypt. While in prison, he correctly interpreted two important dreams. After Joseph was forgotten in prison for two years,

we read in Genesis 41 of Pharaoh's dream. Correctly interpreting its meaning, Joseph laid out the following: "Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in

the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" (Genesis 41:29-32).

When reading the entire story, we see the true spirit of Joseph. He did not accuse his brethren, but while in prison, he testifies: "For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon" (Genesis 40:15). Note, he did not say, "I was sold by my brothers," but, "I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews." He was taking the guilt of his brothers upon himself.

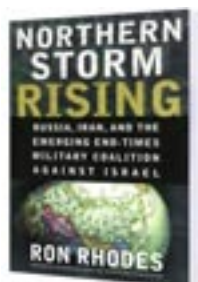
Based on the Orthodox Union website, the Exodus from Egypt took place approximately 890 years

*(continued next page)*

## Grain to Africa (continued from page 22)

before the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians in 421 BC. Bible history documents the success of Israel's agriculture, which during those days was based on Israel's obedience: "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven" (Deuteronomy 11:10-11).

Today—around 2,500 years later, in the same geographic area—Israel produces approximately 95% of their own food. We must also mention that Israel is at the forefront when it comes to agriculture related technology, despite being a country with low precipitation. For the future, the prophet Joel proclaims: "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month" (Joel 2:23).




8189  
(See *Northern Storm Rising*,  
Item #2294, \$15.99.)

## CHINA

### Strong Cooperation with Europe

"I feel that Europe's rational perception of China is increasing, believing that China's development is in line with the logic of history and that Europe should not be afraid of it, let alone reject it," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in an interview transcript.

 Wang, who recently visited and met with a host of leaders from Germany, Spain and France, told Europe that in the bloc's move to de-risk and cut dependence, it should not eliminate cooperation or reduce mutual trust.

Europe has been pursuing a de-risking strategy and reducing dependency on China particularly for critical minerals, citing a lesson from reliance on Russian gas which Moscow cut after its invasion of Ukraine.

The bloc has reiterated it does not mean to decouple from China.

Wang said the European side is positive about strengthening China-European Union exchanges at all levels, and is "very enthusiastic" about deepening practical cooperation.

*-www.reuters.com, 21 February 2024*

**Commentary:** In Western media, led by the USA, saber-rattling seems to be the path taken. Reason? China practices what we may define as communist-social-capital-

ism, while the USA functions as a capital-socialist country. Meanwhile, Europe follows social-capitalism principles.

So, what is the future? Increased cooperation. This is virtually guaranteed by the great volume of merchandise being exchanged the world over. For example, Chinese exports to the EU increased almost nine-fold from 2002 to 2022. VisualCapitalist.com lists the top five exporting nations as firstly China, followed by the USA, Germany, Netherlands, and Japan. Statista.com documents that in 2023, international travelers totaled 1,285,000,000; that figure is increasing exponentially. Hundreds of thousands of flights are departing and landing around the globe. That can also be said for container ships: A Google search reveals that container ships in the active global fleet increased from 4,966 in 2011 to 5,589 in 2022.

In summary, there will be threats and confrontation, but in the end, merchandise is king. Yet the global collapse is recorded in Revelation 18:17: "For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off." 8186



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

 **A U S T R A L I A**

## Loss of Chinese Tourists

As Chinese tourism booms to visa-free countries in Southeast Asia, Australia is losing out, with more cost-conscious mainland travelers also choosing cheaper destinations closer to home, according to tour operators and industry data.

 Once a magnet for Chinese holiday-makers, Australia's tourism industry is getting squeezed by visa demands at a time when Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia have waived such requirements and as mainland consumers tighten their belts.

Chinese holiday-makers made up around 26% of visitors over the Lunar New Year period to Australia, compared with more than 50% in pre-COVID 2019, the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) said.

Inbound tour operators were reporting turnover is less than 50% of 2019 revenues, it added.

"The Chinese holiday travel segment, which makes a significant contribution to the Australian economy, has been slow to shake off the effects of the pandemic," ATEC managing director Peter Shelley said.

-*www.reuters.com*, 21 February 2024

**Commentary:** While Australia depends only little on tourism, it nevertheless contributed about 2.5% to their GDP in 2023.

What is clearly revealed is the interdependence of the nations of the world; in this case, Australia and China.



**4 young Chinese tourists on bridge, Melbourne**  
(photo: istockphoto.com)

The key word seems to be "visa." Not the credit card, but a country granting citizens of another the right to visit, whether for business or pleasure. Here, the European Union is leading. The Schengen Convention Agreement was signed in 1985. In 1990, it covered almost 420 million people, with 3.5 million crossing borders each day for work, study, shopping, and holiday making.

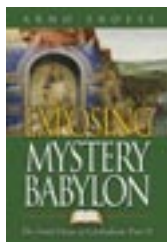
While at the present time, there is war (Russia against Ukraine), Europe still considers itself the safest, freest, and most secure continent.

What we know for sure is that, not only European, but also global unity is predicted in prophetic Scripture, which is our guide. In the end stages of the end times, the god of this world will have his agents who will implement global peace:

"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (Revelation 17:13). 8187

(See *Exposing Mystery Babylon*

Part 1, Item #1078, \$4.50.)




 **G R E E C E**

## India's Role in Global Partnership

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis asked India to play a leading role in building international partnerships to meet the unprecedented challenges brought by the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East and changes in climate and energy security.



**Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, left, talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi as he arrives for a delegation level meeting in New Delhi, India.** (AP Photo/Manish Swarup)

 "We view India as one of the main pillars of stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region," Mitsotakis said after his talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

India, he said, should be a cornerstone of Europe's foreign policy. "This is certainly true for my country," he added.

"None of us can afford to sit on the sidelines. I am convinced that India has an important role to play. It has a voice that should be heard," he said.

India, which enjoys close ties with Russia, has avoided condemning Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine.

-*abcnews.go.com*, 21 February 2024

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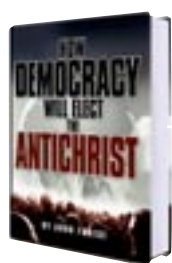
## Global Partnership

(continued from page 24)

**Commentary:** India is or is on its way to being the world’s most populous country, with approximately 1.4 billion people. According to the International Monetary Fund’s “World Economic Outlook,” India’s economy is likely to grow at 6.5% annually beginning this year. However, life expectancy stands at 67.7 years, and per capita GDP only \$6,600—dramatically lower figures than in most Western countries. Yet when looking at the economic growth pattern of India in the last two decades, it is only a matter of time before they replace Japan and Germany as the third biggest economy, after the USA and China.

Here is what a Google search reveals about biblical India: “1 Kings 9:26–27 discusses the navy of King Solomon sailing to Ophir (‘Sopheir’ and ‘Sopphara’ in the LXX), with the word Sopheir meaning India in Coptic; as gold was plentiful in India, ‘it is generally accepted that Ophir was a port in India.’”

What we know from recent history is that large economies will automatically become a significant voice in world politics.



Just like any other nation on planet earth, all will become one to worship the image of the beast. 8188

(See *How Democracy Will Elect the Antichrist*, Item #1064, \$17.95.)



## Amazon Lobbyists Banned

Amazon lobbyists are to be banned from the European Parliament until further notice, after an internal body unanimously decided to withdraw their badges, EUobserver has learned.



The ban follows a call by the parliament’s employment committee, when MEPs decided to take action against the US firm for failing to cooperate with them on various occasions since 2021.

“The European parliament has drawn a clear red line: Amazon’s anti-democratic behavior won’t be tolerated,” said Olivier Roethig, regional secretary at UNI Europa, a union representing seven million service workers.

This is not the first time that MEPs have used the parliament’s rules of procedure to ask for a badge to be deactivated or withdrawn for refusing, without sufficient justification, “to comply with a formal summons to attend a hearing or a committee meeting or to cooperate with a committee of inquiry,” according to Rule 123.

In 2017, Monsanto lobbyists were barred from entering the institution after the US pesticide company declined a request from the agriculture and environment committees to attend a hearing on the glyphosate weedkiller.

-euobserver.com, 27 February 2024

**Commentary:** According to outvio.com, of the five largest online retailers, Ama-



The US online giant failed to cooperate with MEPs on various occasions since 2021, they said. (Photo: European Parliament)

zon.com is in first place, and the next four places are Chinese: Jingon, Alibaba, Suning, and Meituan. Various other sources have somewhat different rankings, but Amazon is number one.

We can identify the problem with two words: “worker’s rights.” Europe has the world’s strictest rules when it comes to employees and labor practices. That apparently was the reason why the world’s largest retailer, Walmart, had to close its business in Germany. Required paid holidays in Europe, by country, vary from 20 to 48 days per year; in the USA, it’s zero.

Europe’s online retail market is growing; presently, more than 24% of Amazon’s income is earned in the EU.

Often repeated in this column is the statement, “Merchandise is king.” Why? Because Bible prophecy predicts that when Armageddon—the day of global collapse—comes, Revelation 18:15 will be fulfilled: “The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.” 8195

(See *God’s Grand Finale*, Item #2408, \$16.99.)

**+** SWITZERLAND

## Scientists Freeze Positronium Atoms

Positronium can generate huge amounts of energy. It can shed light on ‘antimatter’ which existed at the beginning of the Universe, and studying it could revolutionize physics, cancer treatment, and maybe even space travel.

“Physicists are in love with positronium,” said Dr. Ruggero Caravita, who led the research at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (Cern), near Geneva. “It is the perfect atom to do experiments with antimatter.”

“Now the entire field of study is unblocked.”

So what exactly is positronium?

It is a so-called exotic atom consisting of both matter and antimatter—so very unusual stuff indeed.

Matter is what the world around us is made from, including the stars, the planets and us.

Antimatter is its opposite. It was created in equal amounts when the Universe was born, but exists only fleetingly in nature now, with very little of it occurring naturally in the cosmos.

One of the first experiments frozen positronium could be used for is to see if its antimatter part follows Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity in the same way as the matter part.

The matter, which forms the world around us, consists of atoms, the simplest of which is hydrogen, which is the most plentiful element in the Universe.



Lisa Glogglar was among those who set up an intricate system of lasers to cool positronium atoms Photo: CERN



Positronium is created and cooled at Cern's antimatter factory Photo: CERN

This is made up of a positively-charged proton and a negatively-charged electron.

Positronium, on the other hand, consists of an electron and its antimatter equivalent, a positron.

The Cern group is not alone in their quest for frozen positronium. A group from the KEK Slow Positron Facility in Tokyo [is] about to publish similar results.

It is turning out to be a scientific race, involving other groups around the world as well, because this esoteric substance potentially has enormous practical benefits. When an electron and positron combine, they release huge amounts of energy. This could be harnessed to create powerful, so called gamma ray lasers.

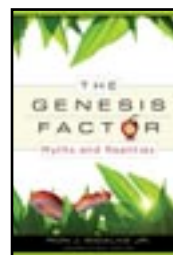
-www.bbc.com, 22 February 2024

**Commentary:** An average person cannot digest the depths of this research and alleged discovery. When objectively analyzing scientific achievements for the last few decades, it seems nothing is impossible—or so mankind thinks.

We note that Albert Einstein is mentioned. Wikipedia testifies: “Einstein was then asked to what extent he was

influenced by Christianity. ‘As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene.’ Einstein was then asked if he accepted the historical existence of Jesus, to which he replied, ‘Unquestionably! No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.’”

While we highly respect true science, we do know that when it comes



to the age of the earth, it is clearly documented in Genesis 1. 8197

(See *The Genesis Factor*, Item #2239, \$15.99.)

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# Why the Cross?

Thomas Lieth



Was it truly necessary for Jesus to shed His blood on the Cross in such brutal fashion? Or could God have accomplished salvation another way? Was His execution just human injustice, an accident in God's plan? A biblical response.

**I**n Romans 5:8, Paul confronts us doubly regarding the death of the Lord Jesus on the Cross and our position as sinners, as well as something that is not limited to past, present, or future. This timeless thing is the love of God. God is love, and since He is eternal, His love is also eternal. From eternity to eternity, God is love (1 John 4:16). And then in verses 9-11, the Apostle shows the colossal implications of that timeless love of God for our present and future:

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

Something crucial is being communicated here: We have been justified by the blood of the Lord Jesus. And that brings us to the matter of

why the Lord Jesus had to be crucified. Wasn't there any other way? Couldn't God have come up with a method that would have been more convenient, less costly, bloodless? It's been said that Jesus' death on the Cross wasn't necessary for salvation, but was instead the result of the people's barbarism. In other words, the crucifixion was an accident, a mistake, an unplanned blow of fate. But that would mean that God had failed to prevent the error, and that the Lord Jesus was unable to follow through on the challenge: “If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matt 27:40).

If Jesus was unable to come down from the Cross, then the message of the Cross would not be good news; it would be an announcement of humiliation. It would not be the proclamation of a great victory, but a commemoration of shame. For Paul, however, the word of the Cross—namely, the death of the Lord Jesus—is the Gospel made plain (1 Cor 2:2), in which the climax is not the Lord's death but His resurrection. But there can be no resurrection without death, and there is no victory without

## Why the Cross?

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The whole Gospel, i.e., God's entire plan of salvation, stands or falls on the Lord Jesus' death on the Cross.



resurrection, so one depends on the other (1 Cor 15:20).

In short: The whole Gospel, i.e., God's entire plan of salvation, stands or falls on the Lord Jesus' death on the Cross. The message of the Cross has always been scandalous; this is nothing new (1 Cor 1:18). The mere thought that the almighty and holy God humbled Himself completely to become human, and that He also came to suffer as a man and die miserably on the Cross, is too much of a good thing for some. So there are critics, even among Christians, who not only deny the atonement but who also provocatively say, "I want nothing to do with a bloodthirsty God who demands sacrifices!"

However, people who argue this way misunderstand God's perfect holiness and absolute purity. In the sciences, absolute purity is a limit value that can only be approached, but never actually reached. This is a good illustration of the discrepancy between the holy, absolutely pure God and us humans, who can never reach His absolute purity ... at least not by ourselves.

And so, God would have every reason to say, "I want nothing to do with a person who doesn't want sacrifice!" Because it is the sacrifice that purifies people, and the blood that sanctifies them (Heb 10:14; 1 John 1:7).

Without this perfection, purification, and sanctification, no one can enter God's eternity. God cannot turn a blind eye, for only something as holy and absolutely pure as He is, can enter His presence. God is so holy that He cannot even look at sin (Hab 1:13). The atonement of the Cross is indeed cruel, no question. But it is imperative, for only the blood of the only pure One can cleanse a defiled life, just as a blood transfusion can save the life of a person whose blood is contaminated.

Many people fail to realize another thing: The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus is an act of salvation and a display of sacrificial love. God's holiness condemns sin, but God's love provides the sinner with a way out. It is and remains a fact that God's presence is a sin-

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## God's love and His holy wrath do not contradict each other.

free zone. As a result, every sin (no matter how small) and every sinner (no matter how precious) must be denied access to Him. Due to the Fall and its consequences, and due to our life-giving but contaminated blood, we are, for all intents and purposes, under God's wrath (Rom 1:18).

But if God is love, how can He be full of wrath at the same time? In fact, God's love and His holy wrath do not contradict each other. The wrath of God is not only a punishment, but also a protection. His anger is holy and loving, the anger of the One who doesn't want any human being to perish. In His love, God hates sin, because it defiles man and robs him of his life. But God would not be God if He did not also have a solution to this dilemma, this discrepancy between His holy anger at sin and His love for the sinner. A solution that flows from His love, and also His absolute purity, holiness, and righteousness. God's justice demands judgment of sin, but God's love opens the way to forgiveness (Rom 5:9).

How? When God Himself became man and nailed our debt to the Cross (Col 2:14). God is the just Judge who Himself atones for the punishment He pronounces. There is a story about a judge who, under his country's law, had to sentence his beloved mother to be flogged because she was undeniably guilty. It would be unjust to pardon her, but it would also be unkind for the judge to bring his own mother to justice. After the judge sentenced his mother, so that justice would be served,

he stood and declared with tears in his eyes, "I accept this punishment on behalf of my mother."

God can't just let things slide. God can't just arbitrarily declare a universal amnesty. That would be contrary to what justice demands. It would be the undoing of the new heaven and the new earth if sin were not conquered once and for all, atoned for, and condemned to everlasting damnation. And this is the principle: The one who intends to free us from sin must himself be sinless. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin..." (2 Cor 5:21; cf. 1 Pet 2:22). The one who wants to conquer death must be stronger than death (Acts 2:24). One who wants to give people eternal life must himself be eternal. He must be truly human to die, and truly God to conquer death and the devil (cf. 1 John 3:8; Heb 2:14).

Only One met all these requirements to vicariously atone for our guilt: Jesus Christ! He is the Priest who offers the sacrifice, and at the same time He is the sacrifice that is offered: "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come ... not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Heb 9:11-12).

And so, Calvary's act of redemption is God's ingenious way of escape for a world that is thoroughly corrupt. Yet it begs the question: Couldn't reconciliation with God have been achieved without this bloody sacrifice? Is our guilt really so great that this cruel and terrible death on the Cross was necessary, even

## Why the Cross?

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Calvary's act of redemption is God's ingenious way of escape for a world that is thoroughly corrupt.

inevitable? This question is answered in the Garden of Gethsemane, where God's peerless Son asked three times that the cup might pass from Him (Matt 26:39, 42). It's quite obvious that there was no other way out, because in that case, the Heavenly Father would have intervened at that moment at the very latest. The Lord Jesus submitted to His Father's will and walked this difficult path to the Cross voluntarily and obediently, to the point of death (Phil 2:7-8). He Himself had spoken of the fact that He would have to suffer all this (Luke 24:46), and that it was necessary for salvation (Mark 10:45). So, the Son of God Himself spoke of the crucifixion as having no alternatives to save people from perishing. Death on the Cross was God's firm decree, which there was no avoiding (Acts 2:23; 1 John 4:10). So, it's not an accident; it's God's love, which He showed us in Christ Jesus.

Let's go a step further in answering the question, why the Cross? If we look at the Bible's account of Creation, we find that we humans are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27; cf. Gen 9:6). This means, among other things, that just as God is eternal, human life is also designed for eternity. With His act of creation, God didn't make something temporary, but something that should endure for eternity. "He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart..." (Ecc 3:11). On the one hand, this means the knowledge of an eternal God. And on the other hand, we ourselves carry this eternity within us in His image.

Furthermore, Genesis 2:7 speaks of the breath of life that God breathed into man (cf. Job 33:4). Since it's written that man became a living soul by means of this breath of God, then we're not just talking about life (since animals are also alive) but about this very special relationship with God, designed for eternity. The Bible also speaks of the resurrection of all people, both those who were saved and those who were unsaved: "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29).

This is one important aspect of our creation. The second is the interesting statement in Leviticus 17:11 that life is in the blood. This Bible passage is something like a key for answering the question of why constant bloody sacrifices had to be offered under the Old Covenant, and why the Lord Jesus had to seal the New Covenant with blood (Heb 9:15, 18). This is the last Scripture in which the inseparable connection between blood and life becomes evident. And this interdependence runs through the entire Holy Scripture as a common theme, while at the same time explaining why there can be no connection with God without blood.

For example, Adam and Eve tried to cover their sins with fig leaves. That was the "vegetarian" alternative: a human attempt to save something that couldn't be saved. But God immediately made it clear that salvation and

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There was and is no other way, whether we understand it or not. And even if we don't understand, we can still believe that we have eternal life in the blood of the Lord Jesus.

survival would only be possible through His intervention, and only through blood. Because if God clothed the first human couple in animal furs, then animals must have died for it. That hadn't been the case until that point (Gen 3:21). And as I mentioned before, this principle (blood = life) continues like a throughline. Abel presented a bloody sacrifice from his sheep before the Lord. Noah offered sacrifices from the animals he had taken on board the ark especially for that purpose. God established the covenant with Abraham through the death of five different animals (Gen 15:9-10). The Exodus from Egypt and the Passover associated with it, would be unthinkable without the blood that had to be painted on the doorposts and lintels. And this all happened before the Law with all its sacrificial provisions had even been introduced.

Without blood, there is no union or communion with Him, who created us in His image and breathed His breath into us! Only through blood can there be reconciliation with the God of life, for life is in the blood (Heb 9:18-22).

The New Covenant, the covenant of grace and forgiveness, had to be sealed in blood. Consider the words of the Lord Jesus: "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'" (Matt 26:27-28). The Lord Jesus had to shed His blood—to die—so that we

could live. "...It is the blood that makes atonement by the life" (Lev 17:11). It says in Revelation 5:9 regarding the Lord Jesus, "for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God..." And in Romans 3:23-25, we read:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received [made effective] by faith..."

By faith in His blood! It isn't enough to believe in a prophet named Jesus, in a Jesus who performed some miracles, proclaimed love, and delivered an ingenious Sermon on the Mount. What's important is what the Lord Jesus did for us on the Cross. We must believe in His blood. His holy, pure, and precious blood cleanses our sin-defiled blood. What was incomplete through the Old Covenant sacrifices—what was only a shadow of what God had once promised—was made real through the blood of the Lord Jesus.

There was and is no other way, whether we understand it or not. And even if we don't understand, we can still believe that we have eternal life in the blood of the Lord Jesus. "Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Pet 1:18-19). (MR0422/1228)



## Letters to the Editor

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

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

# PAUL THE TWELFTH APOSTLE?... THIRD TEMPLE... VOTING

## Paul the Twelfth Apostle?

Dear Mr. Froese,

In the article “The Bible Is True,” on page 12 of the January *Midnight Call*, it says, “...the exalted Christ later added Paul in place of Judas,” referring to the twelve disciples. The editor’s comment mentions Matthias in Acts 1:26 being another possibility. What do you think about this?

-A. Kaland, WI

**Answer:** Acts 1:26a reads: “And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias.” Note the words, “gave forth their lots”; thus, democratically elected. Paul was chosen by supernatural intervention based on Acts 9:5b: “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” The purpose? “For he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (verse 15b). In 1 Timothy 2:7a, Paul testifies: “I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle...” What we don’t know are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb: “And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:14). That will be our final answer.

## Third Temple

Dear Arno,

Please help me answer a question that a fellow born-again believer recently asked me: “Where will a temple appear during the end times?”

-B. Tobin, NY

**Answer:** Many, if not most, Bible scholars insist on a literal temple in Jerusalem, based on 2 Thessalonians 2:4. My interpretation leads me more to Ephesians 2:21, 1 Peter 2:5, and 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. That is the spiritual temple, which is global. When completed, God will take possession thereof.

Although at this time it is all but impossible for a third temple to be built, who knows what will take place after the Rapture.

Of interest is the fact that Mark writes, citing Daniel the prophet, “standing where it ought not” (Mark 13:14). That means a temple may be built, but “where it ought not.” Thus, it is open to speculation.

## Voting

Dear Arno,

I appreciate your position regarding politics, but we still don’t know what the apostles would do if they had been provided with the





reins of power during their earthly lives. Anyhow, we don't do exactly everything they do, because the foundation of the apostles' era is complete. We the people now have the power to vote. To whom much is given, much is required—thus my desire to work for the defeat of politicians who try to stifle the ability to preach the Word of God.

-M. Bosman, WA

**Answer:** There are three reasons: 1. Churches and non-profit organizations are forbidden by the government from engaging in political activity. The IRS specifically states: "Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are ab-

solutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign."

2. There is no provision in the New Testament for the establishment of a Christian nation.

3. We follow Jesus. Did He or the apostles participate in political activity? The answer is a resounding "no." Yet I add, political voting is up to each individual. In some countries like Australia and Brazil, it is compulsory.

We make the mistake by falsely analyzing our nation's position. The Bible identifies ours and others: "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15b). "The whole world lieth in wickedness," says 1 John 5:19b. Our Lord Jesus Christ has delivered us "from this present evil world"—not to change it but to proclaim the truth! (MC)

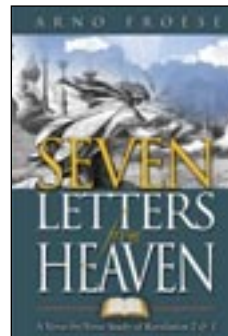


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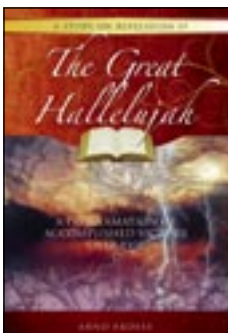


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“The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2).

BY ARNO FROESE

Introducing Psalm 18, the *Tanakh* reads: “For the leader. Of David, the servant of the LORD, who addressed the words of this song to the LORD after the LORD had saved him from the hands of all his enemies and from the clutches of Saul.” When reading the history of David, we see that he foreshadows the Messiah of Israel. He was severely persecuted by King Saul; his life was threatened, yet he was innocent of any wrongdoing relating to Saul. He cried out to God: “Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart” (Psalm 26:2). King Saul had to confess: “And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil” (1 Samuel 24:17).

Later, when Saul was again pursuing David mercilessly, David had the opportunity to take judgment in his own hands while Saul and his trusted soldiers were sleeping. David took the spear and a cruse of water from Saul, and during the daytime, proclaimed what he had done. Again, Saul praises David: “Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place” (1 Samuel 26:25).

David was tested to the limits of his physical existence on earth, all for a specific purpose: to foreshadow the suffering of the Messiah, as recorded in Psalm 22:16-18: “For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”

### **Gaza War**

Hamas’ murderous attack, its cold-blooded killing of civilians on 7 October 2023, cannot be compared to any other event in Jewish history but the Holocaust. They were killed because they were Jews. Yet, when one does a little research, we find that they have collectively contributed to the wellbeing of humanity more than any other people on earth.

According to JewishVirtualLibrary.org, the global Jewish population stood at 16.2 million in 1939. Yet in 1945, estimates of the Jewish population range to under 11 million. Today, only 0.2% of the world’s population is Jewish, yet they comprise 22% of all Nobel Prizes that have ever been bestowed.

Did the Hamas massacre affect belief in God?  
*The Jerusalem Post* reports:

According to a comprehensive survey conducted by Lazar Research for *The Jerusalem Post*, 33% of Israelis have reported a strengthened faith in God since the October 7 massacre by Hamas and the subsequent war.

The study, spearheaded by Dr. Menachem Lazar of Lazar Research in collaboration with Panel4All.co.il, an internet respondent panel, aimed to gauge the religious sentiments among Israelis in these turbulent times.

The practical expressions of the respondents' strengthened religious faith were primarily prayers (63%), conversations with God (59%), and the recitation of Psalms (45%). The increase in prayers was especially characteristic of respondents aged 60+ (73%); conversations with God were reported at relatively high rates by secular respondents

(64%), Sephardic respondents (65%), and respondents aged 45-60 (60%).

An absolute majority of respondents (75%) said that since October 7, they feel a greater connection to the State of Israel (69%) and the diverse Israeli society (68%). About half of the Israelis surveyed feel more connected to the Jewish people in the Diaspora (53%) and to Jewish tradition (49%).

-*www.jpost.com*, 9 February 2024

What is not recorded is the increase of Jews believing in Jesus, the Messiah of Israel.

One thing we know for sure is the prophetic Word uttered by Zacharias over 2,000 years ago: "That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham" (Luke 1:71-73). (MC)

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



# AND WHEN I GET OLD...



By Peter Malgo

“By the year 2050, we will be biologically immortal”—this the provocative title of a report on the topic of aging and the question of whether preventive healthcare might require some new framework. Biochemist Dr. Peter Gautschi deliberately expressed himself in a polarizing way when he stated: “We have already opened the door to immortality.” This hope of eliminating mortality is based on the decoding of the aging gene. Dr. Gautschi asks: “Is this the last great challenge facing humanity?”

**R**esearch in genetic engineering, nutritional science, and increased knowledge of molecular biology are partly responsible for these visions of the future. Today, there are approximately [722,000] people worldwide who are over 100 years old. According to estimates, that number is expected to quadruple by the year 2050. However, these assumptions ignore the fact that there is a Higher One who created life in the first place and determines its duration.

God’s original intention was, without a doubt, to bestow immortality on man. In Genesis 2:17, He says: “...in the day that thou eatest thereof [the tree of knowledge] thou shalt surely die.” Despite this warning, man disobeyed, and thus his fate was sealed. He had to die. Yet God gave man many years. Some even lived beyond 900

(Genesis 5). But man continued to sin, for we read that “...the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). That was the moment God wanted to destroy mankind completely. We know the story of Noah and the Flood. However, God now greatly reduced the lifespan of man: “...yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Genesis 6:3).

In our day, there are scientists who think they are able to reverse all of this. In Genesis 7:16, we read: “...and the Lord shut him in.” That was not merely the door of the Ark that God Himself shut here, but also the door of that period of time when people were allowed to live for centuries. Dr. Gautschi: “We have opened the door to immortality”—*reopened?* Certainly



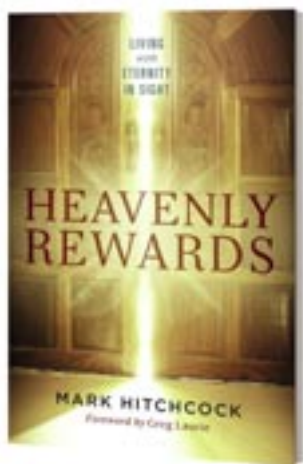
When one turns 60, it makes one realize: Most of my life is behind me. And then the question arises: How many years do I have left? The truth is that God has set a limit to our lives.

not. Have you ever wondered why people were allowed to live so long in ancient times, but not anymore today? There is only one reason: because of the wickedness of man. The most well-known statement about man's life span is found in Psalm 90:10: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years..."

When one turns 60, it makes one realize: Most of my life is behind me. And then the question arises: How many years do I have left? The truth is that God has set a limit to our lives.

Of our Lord Jesus, it is said: "...who only hath immortality, dwelling in the

light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see..." (1 Timothy 6:16). All of us who belong to Him, who are His children, will one day really see Jesus: "...for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). This will be when we have passed from death to eternal life; when our mortality has put on immortality, as described in 1 Corinthians 15:53. Let us become newly aware that one day we will stand before our Lord in eternity, and therefore do what He tells us: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). (MC)



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## Pesach: The Power of the Blood of Yeshua Never Ends

By David Phillips (*Ebenezer's CEO*)

Let me take you back to the first time the children of Israel celebrated Pesach (Passover). Roughly 3,460 years ago, the night of this first Pesach was one of the most significant turning points for the people of Israel, a symbol for generations to come. They had entered the land of Egypt 430 years before as the sons of Jacob, and were subject to great oppression by the Egyptians. Yes, the children of Israel were slaves—a term that is difficult to understand today—and had to work very hard to obtain just the necessities in order to survive. To make matters worse, they were severely mistreated and used by the Egyptians, who even tried to eliminate them by killing their males.

This was about to change. One night—the eve of Pesach—Moses gave them instructions he received from God JEHOVAH. He knew what was about to happen, and told the people of Israel to prepare and be ready to move. God was about to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians.

They had to prepare the Pesach meal in haste, with no time to make a nice dinner. They had to roast the meat, and even their bread had no time to rise. Everything was made in a hurry, as they had to be ready to move at a moment's notice!

The command of God given to Moses was to take the blood of the lamb and apply it to the doorposts (both the top and the sides) so it covered the door. The point was, it had to be physically seen by the death angel. If the blood was

seen, he would not enter the house but would “pass over” (Heb. – Pesach) it. Now, when we accept Yeshua and His death on the cross (which also took place on the eve of Passover), His blood is applied to us and protects us. The enemy can see His blood—which covers and protects us—and can't ignore it. Thus, he cannot enter our hearts and take possession of our soul. He cannot do anything to those who have the blood of Christ applied to their lives. He must pass on!

There is no being saved without blood; we clearly see this in Scripture. The first time Passover was celebrated by the Israelites, they had to apply the blood. If they didn't, the firstborn would die. It didn't matter if he had been born the day before, or was 80 years of age or older: If the blood was not applied to the door, the firstborn among the people and the animals of that household would die ... period.

When I look back to this first Pesach night, it was the first time that such an event occurred; namely, that blood was applied to protect the people of God. God had a plan. He wanted to prepare the hearts of the people of Israel, so they would understand that this would be required for them to be saved. Our prayer is that they would understand that it didn't stop with the first Passover lamb: We all need the blood of Yeshua to be eternally saved!

The Israelites continued to celebrate Passover for hundreds of years, until Yeshua celebrated



Pesach with His disciples. Listen to what Yeshua told them: “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22:15).

Each year, I have the same desire to celebrate with friends and family, and those here with us at the Ebenezer Home. One day we will all meet in heaven to celebrate, and we look forward to seeing you!

This feast is very symbolic and true. Pesach encourages us with the reminder that it is even more than breaking bread and taking part in communion: This entire event is about us being saved and protected by the blood of Yeshua. It was an act of love and grace, and a picture of what Yeshua would go through to protect us and give us life through His blood.

Why do we celebrate Pesach today? To remember that it was on this feast that Yeshua protected the children of Israel via the lamb’s blood, and how He, the Lamb of God, shed His blood so that you and I can be saved.

Maybe you don’t celebrate in the traditional way Jewish families do, but that doesn’t matter.

May I encourage you this year to sit down—whether alone, together with family, or with your congregation—and take time to ponder this feast. Join us as we celebrate and remember what took place that first Passover night: the foretelling of what Yeshua would one day do for us by the shedding of His own blood. Psalm 22 is a perfect picture of what Yeshua went through about one thousand years after the Psalm was written. It was written, and it was true. Brothers and sisters, it happened just as God foretold!

In a practical way, it will always be hard to understand why the people of Israel had to apply the blood upon the doorposts, and how it actually worked. But if God the Father said it would work, it would, and it did! The same is true today. If Yeshua tells us to believe, we can trust Him that, just as it worked back then, it still works today. He does not change. The power of the blood of Yeshua is never ending. It will always be the same. It saves, it protects, and it gives us eternal life.

Chag Sameach!



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### BELGIUM

# The Prodigal Son

An extraordinary “chance encounter,” the power of prayer, and the work of the Spirit.

BY ELIA MORISE

Ever since my childhood, I’ve known a family of nine from Egypt. All are believers, with the exception of one son. His parents have been praying for him for a long time.

Some time ago, I was invited to an Arab evangelism event in Belgium. A church in Brussels had rented space in a school to host it. When I entered the school on the first morning, I met two Arab men who were preparing food for the conference. I thanked them for their work, and gave each a bar of Swiss chocolate. I like to give Swiss chocolate as a gift, because the labels have an image of the Swiss flag, which has a cross on it. The Lord often uses it to open the door to spiritual conversations.

The cook asked me where I was from. I told him that I live in Switzerland, but I’m from Egypt. He was also from Egypt. We discovered that we were born in the same place, and he knew my youngest brother. It was then that I recalled the dear man in the Egyptian church who always prayed for him by name, and also



asked the congregation to pray for his prodigal son.

When I inquired about this, the cook told me, “Yes, I know who you’re talking about. I’m the sinner from that family.” I got goosebumps when I realized who he was. After a brief conversation, I asked if I could pray with him. “Maybe later,” he said.

After lunch, he came to say hello. I asked again if now would be a good time to pray together. He replied that he wasn’t ready yet, but felt that we would meet again, *inshallah* (God willing). In our culture, this is an excuse to get out of a conversation.





On the last night of the event, I thought a lot about this man. I wondered if I should have tried harder. But then came a big surprise: He wanted to take me to the airport first thing the next morning, and he'd taken time off from work specifically to do it. In the car, words poured out of him like a waterfall. He said he was very moved that I came to greet him and thank him, even though he was just the cook.

Since there was still time until my departure, we sat together at the airport. He talked about his life, which sounded like a thriller: traveling under multiple false passports, working for organized crime, dealing in drugs. Fights were the most harmless thing he recounted. Knife scars were visible on his face and arms.

Then came the tears.

"I haven't forgotten how my parents are praying for me. And now, someone's come

from my hometown, who knows my parents and asks to pray with me. I'm so tired and broken. I need help."

He held my hand, and permitted me to pray with him. The tears flowed onto the restaurant table, and everything got wet. After I prayed, he was quiet for a while, before he began talking to Jesus himself. It was very moving, and I'll never forget it. He said:

"Lord, thank you for waiting for me for so long. I confess my wrongdoing, and I thank you that you're able to accept a dirty man. I'm bringing you all of my weariness. I ask that you'd clean my mind from all filth and my unclean past. Please forgive me for all of the grief and disappointment I've caused my parents."

Today, he belongs to the church and attends services regularly.

(MR1123)



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

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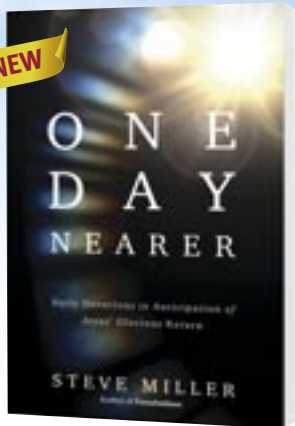
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# Midnight Call's April Resource Guide



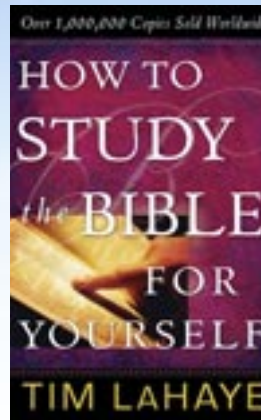
## 365 Days of Keeping Watch and Finding Hope

As you read the 365 daily devotions within, you will

- see God's love, power, and wisdom on display in all that He has done and will do at Christ's first and second comings
- learn what it means to live wisely in these last days and set your mind on things that are above
- discover the many ways God is committed to sustaining you today and will bless you in the future.

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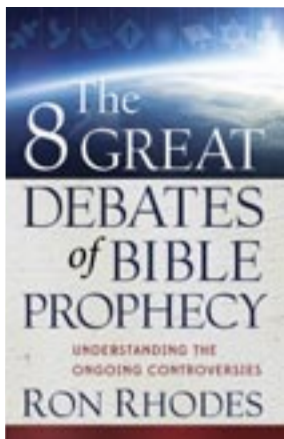
In this 30th anniversary edition of the bestseller, readers will discover how to:

- locate the Bible's major principles, promises, and commands
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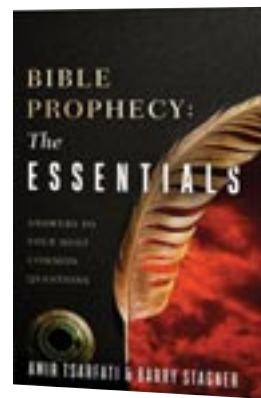
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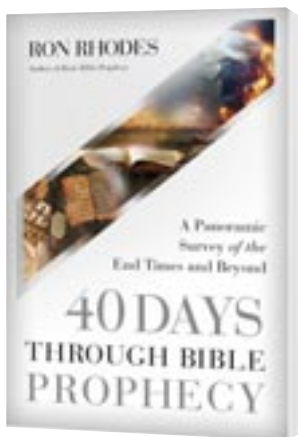
Amir and Barry team up to answer 70 of the most commonly asked Bible prophecy questions.

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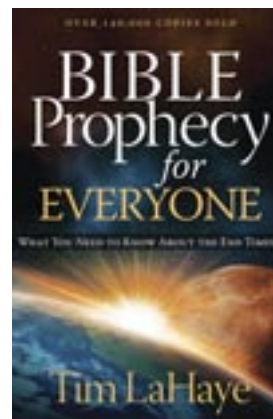
## A Panoramic Survey of the End Times and Beyond

- Gain fluency in Bible prophecy vocabulary, learning terms like rapture, millennial kingdom, and eternal state
- Identify the chronology of prophetic events, from what has already occurred to what is still to come
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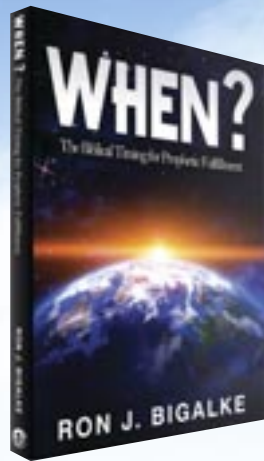
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- Why do some believers object to the idea of a rapture?
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## Get a Clear Picture of the Last Days

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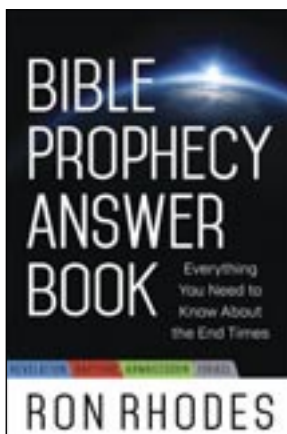
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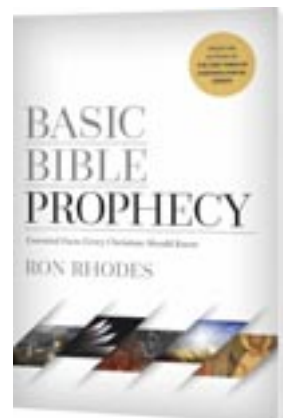
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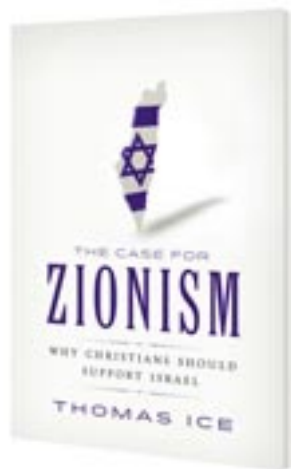
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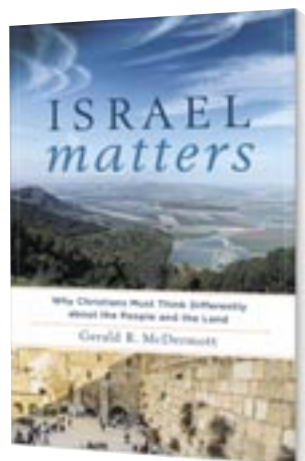
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## The Millenia-Old Love God Has for His People

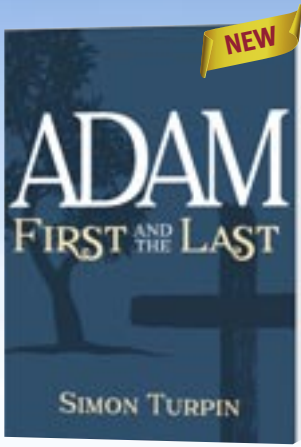
Tracing the history of the Jewish people to the present day, the authors look at prophecy after prophecy that clearly attest to the Lord's miraculous promises. From historical records to personal, dramatic stories, *Miracle of Israel* shows us that in keeping epic promises to the nation of Israel, God's provision for each of us is sure, perfect, and on time, every time.

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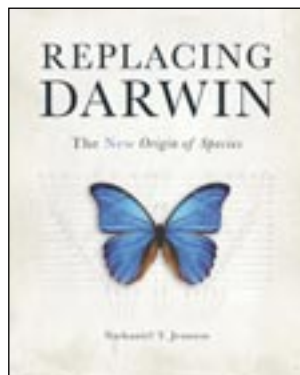


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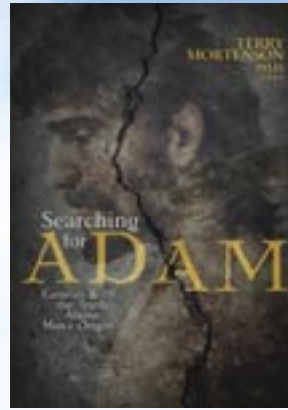


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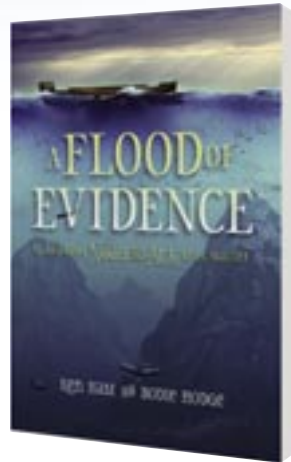
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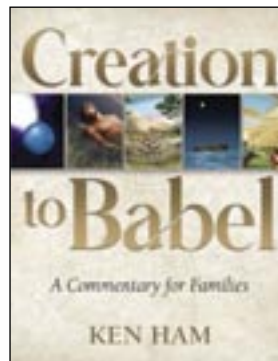
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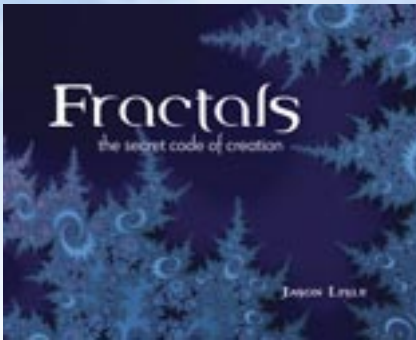
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## Is there a secret code embedded in Math itself?



The artworks displayed in this book have always existed, built into the numbers at creation. Dr. Lisle suggests that only the Christian worldview can make sense of this secret code. As such, the images in this book are a demonstration of the truth of that worldview.

- Demonstrates that even abstract concepts like numbers could not exist apart from God
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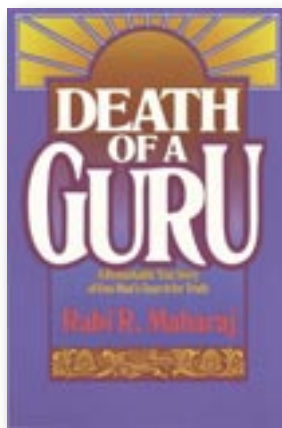
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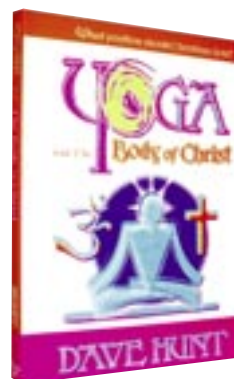
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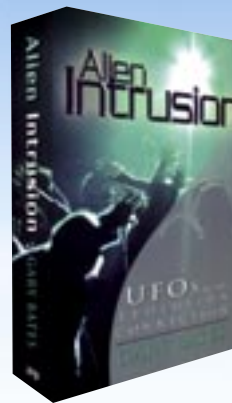
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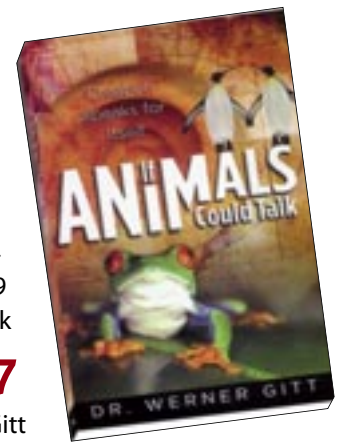
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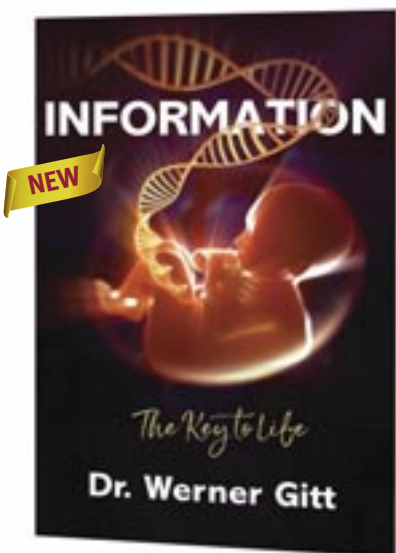
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