



The Good News

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A MAGAZINE OF UNDERSTANDING

The Battle Over the Bible

What's Behind the Trashing of the Bible?

Can You Prove the Bible Is True? • The Fourth Horseman of Revelation
Has the Bible Been Preserved Accurately? • Christian Values Under Attack



Imagine, for a moment, that America's founding fathers came to life again. What would they think to see the issues that are tearing apart the nation's social and cultural fabric? Consider a few news items from the last year:

- In San Francisco, a judge ruled that a new federal law banning partial-birth abortions—in which a baby is almost fully delivered before its skull is punctured and crushed—is unconstitutional because it interferes with a woman's "right to choose."
- In Los Angeles, the county board of supervisors, faced with a threatened lawsuit from the American Civil Liberties Union, (ACLU), voted to remove a cross from the county seal. The tiny cross was one of several historical symbols on the seal, which includes a much larger depiction of Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit trees—to which the ACLU raised no objection.
- In Massachusetts, the state's highest court ordered that same-sex marriages be legalized. Officials in New York, California and Oregon

What would the founding fathers think to learn that the Constitution they framed prohibits display of the Ten Commandments but contains the right to same-sex marriage?

quickly defied their own state laws and began performing marriages for thousands of homosexual couples.

- A California-based federal court, acting on a complaint from an atheist, ruled that the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance are unconstitutional. (The decision was overturned on a technicality by the U.S. Supreme Court, which sidestepped the issue itself.)
- A federal court ruled that the chief justice of the supreme court of Alabama must remove a display containing the Ten Commandments (and quotes from the founding fathers) from the Alabama State Judicial Building. The chief justice was threatened with termination and then actually fired when he refused.
- In a Texas case, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a law banning homosexual acts, in effect legalizing homosexual activity throughout the United States and overturning dozens of state laws.

How would America's founding fathers view such developments?

What would they think on hearing that American courts have outlawed school prayer and Bible reading—especially when the first official act of the Continental Congress was to open its first meeting with prayer?

What would they think to learn that American judges have found that the Constitution they framed prohibits public display of the Ten Commandments but contains the right to homosexual acts and same-sex marriage?

What would they think on hearing that a federal court ruled the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional but that courts have repeatedly ruled that the Constitution contains a woman's right to kill her unborn child?

What would they think on discovering that more than 40 million tiny infant boys and girls—more than the entire population of many other countries—have been literally dismembered in the name of "freedom of choice"?

In this edition we focus on the unspoken issue at the heart of all these debates—the *battle over the Bible*. Is it the holy, truthful and authoritative Word of God, or is it only human tradition and stories? It's crucial that you examine the evidence.

—Scott Ashley, Managing editor

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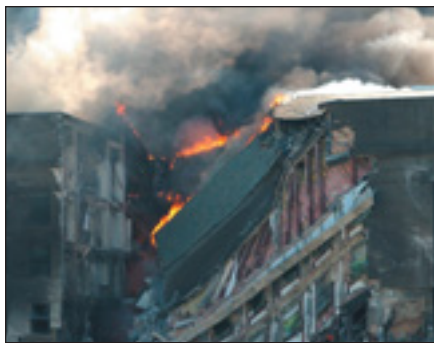


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The Battle Over the Bible

A cultural clash is ripping at the fabric of Western societies. It's most pronounced in the United States, where history is being rewritten and culture reshaped in a battle over the Bible.

by Scott Ashley

Rob was a terrific young man—bright, good-looking and polite—the kind of person anyone would want for a son. His parents were proud of him, as they should've been. I'd known him since childhood and can't remember ever seeing a more pleasant, mature and trusting youngster. Brought up in a Christian home, he had everything going for him.

And then he went away to college.

Neither he nor his family was prepared for what would happen to him there. In one of his classes, Rob ran into an atheist professor who soon undermined and ultimately destroyed his belief in the Bible. It wasn't long before Rob abandoned his Christian convictions and threw away everything he'd been taught and believed about the Bible.

Rob (not his real name) wasn't the first casualty—nor will he be the last—in an ongoing war.

The United States, and indeed much of the Western world, is engaged in a war. No, not

the war on terror, which is very real—but a war every bit as serious and with equally far-reaching consequences. Like the war on terror, it's *a battle for survival* between two starkly different visions of the future.

Some have labeled it “the culture war.” That's a fitting description, though not entirely accurate. The issues run much deeper. At its core we're involved in *a battle over the Bible*.

The battle affects much more than religion. It spills over into politics, education, entertainment, the courts and many other aspects of life. Regrettably, the battle has already been lost in much of Western Europe, where religion and the Bible have been so denigrated that they play little role in public or private life.

There, belief in God is often viewed as a quaint notion—comforting to some, but judged irrelevant to the issues of today.

Taking the Bible seriously is often dismissed casually and contemptuously. A century and a half of indoctrination with evolution, deconstruction of the Bible and two ruinous world wars have largely erased belief in God and the Bible.

Holding out—at least for now—against this rising tide of disbelief in God and the Bible are many people in the United States and a handful of other countries in the democratic West. Yet efforts to acknowledge and uphold belief in God and the Bible appear to be an increasingly uphill struggle. Many forces seem determined to take the United States on a course far astray from the one set during its first two centuries.

High stakes in the battle over the Bible

Is the Bible true? Is it what it claims to be—the Word of God? The stakes are high. U.S. court decisions increasingly reject longstanding laws rooted in the Bible. Some laws, like those prohibiting abortion, pornography and sex outside of marriage, were thrown out so long ago that they're seldom raised as legal

issues anymore. Other laws, such as those banning homosexual activity, have been overturned only in recent times.

In many recent cases, courts and judges have shown outright hostility to such religious freedoms as prayer, display of the Ten Commandments and mention of God and the Bible in public life. Canada has even passed laws under which people can be fined or sent to prison for “inciting hatred” by simply quoting what the Bible says about particular acts of immorality! And make no mistake, the groundwork is already being laid for similar laws in the United States.

Consider some of the issues the conflict over the Bible touches:

- Abortion.
- Premarital and extramarital sex.
- Sex education and distribution of condoms and other forms of birth control in public schools.
- The role of government at all levels.
- International relations.
- Crime and punishment—what kinds of activities are classified as criminal.
- Illegal drug use.

“We have no government armed with the power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and true religion . . . Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other”

—John Adams, second U.S. president

- Religious freedom.
- Public expression of religious belief such as prayer and display of the Ten Commandments.
- Gay marriage.
- Legalization of intimate same-sex relationships.
- The direction and approach of public education from kindergarten through college.
- Teaching of evolution (and banning discussion of creation) in schools.
- Lawsuits over issues of personal responsibility.
- Obscenity, profanity and pornography.
- Entertainment—what we read, watch and listen to.

Of course, this is only a partial list.

If the Bible is *not* true, these are really non-issues, because there is no standard other than human reason for defining right and wrong. And this is exactly why many people want to undermine belief in the Bible.

But if the Bible *is* true, political and cultural leaders are increasingly defying its instructions—and drawing millions of unsuspecting followers with them along

a dangerous and destructive path.

Built on a biblical foundation

It takes no great understanding of history to realize that America’s founding fathers used principles and directives from Scripture as the basis for many U.S. laws.

Many prohibitions, such as those outlawing murder, stealing, lying and adultery in their various forms, obviously originated in and can be traced back to the Ten Commandments. It’s only been in recent decades that laws banning blasphemy, swearing and working on the “Sabbath” (with Sunday assumed, incorrectly, to be the biblical Sabbath) have been wiped off the books in many states.

How did some of America’s founding fathers view the nation’s moral and legal foundation? They made their views quite clear in their own words.

George Washington, first president of the United States, said, “*It is impossible to govern the world without God and the Bible*” (quoted by William Federer, *America’s God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations*, 1996, p. 660, emphasis added throughout quotes).

In his farewell speech (Sept. 19, 1796), he stated: “Of all the dispositions and habits that lead to political prosperity, *religion and morality are indispensable supports* . . . Let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion” (ibid., p. 661).

John Adams, the nation’s second president, stated: “We have no government armed with the power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and true religion . . . *Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other*” (ibid., p. 10).

James Madison, fourth president of the United States and primary framer of the U.S. Constitution, said: “We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. *We have staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God*” (ibid., p. 411).

John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the

United States and son of the second president, said in 1821 that “the highest glory of the American Revolution was this; it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity” (ibid., p. 18).

John Jay, first chief justice of the United States, stated that to best preserve the nation, citizens should select Christians as their leaders. “Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and *it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers*” (ibid., p. 318).

In fact, in an 1892 opinion, the U.S. Supreme Court explicitly acknowledged that the nation was Christian: “*Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian* . . .” (ibid., p. 599).

Calvin Coolidge, the 30th president of the United States, affirmed this when he wrote: “The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country” (ibid., p. 181).

Ronald Reagan, 40th president, stated in a 1984 speech: “Those who created our country—the Founding Fathers and Mothers—understood that there is a divine order which transcends the human order. They saw the state, in fact, as a form of moral order and felt that the bedrock of moral order is religion . . .

“The Mayflower Compact began with the words, ‘In the name of God, amen.’ The Declaration of Independence appeals to ‘Nature’s God’ and the ‘Creator’ and ‘the Supreme Judge of the world.’ Congress was given a chaplain, and the oaths of office are oaths before God” (speech transcript at www.reagan.utexas.edu/resource/speeches/1984/82384a.htm).

How the battle began

How did the United States come to stray so far from its religious and moral foundation?

As happened in Europe and much of the rest of the world, the theory of evolution and supposedly scientific explanations for the existence of a creation without a Creator gained wide acceptance. Starting in the educational establishment, these ideas quickly dominated the field and soon spread to all levels of society. (To learn more, request the free booklets *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?* and *Life’s Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?*)

As we might expect, it wasn't long before the Bible itself was put under the microscope and found wanting. But in reality, as time would prove, it wasn't wanting at all. Many critics, acting with woefully incomplete information, simply rushed to judgment, not knowing that hundreds of later historical and archaeological discoveries would confirm the Bible's astounding accuracy in great detail. (For more information, see "Can You Prove the Bible Is True?," beginning on page 7.)

When we fast-forward to the 20th century, we find some startling admissions from leading Western intellectuals as to why they so readily accepted the theory of evolution and rejected biblically based standards.

For example, writer Aldous Huxley, a fervent advocate of evolution, admitted: "I had motives for not wanting the world to have meaning . . . The liberation we desired was . . . from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom" (*Ends and Means*, 1946, p. 270).

Julian Huxley, brother of Aldous and also a writer and leading proponent of evolution, wrote that "the sense of spiritual relief which comes from rejecting the idea of God as a super-human being is enormous" (*Essays of a Humanist*, 1966, p. 223).

Little did they know they were simply paraphrasing a profound truth about human nature and human reasoning that the apostle Paul expressed some 19 centuries earlier: ". . . *The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot*" (Romans 8:7, New Revised Standard Version, emphasis added throughout).

Humanity's hostility to God

Man's relationship with the Bible has never been very good. Ever since Adam and Eve, people have resisted others telling them how to live. So we shouldn't be surprised when intellectuals and self-appointed "wise" men come up with all kinds of arguments against God and the Bible.

As Paul wrote, people are naturally hostile toward God and His laws. Speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, God noted that we human beings have a great capacity for *self-deception* when it comes to seeing ourselves realistically: "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9, New American Standard Bible).

Jesus Christ Himself said that "it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. *All these evil things come from within*, and they defile

a person" (Mark 7:21-23, NRSV).

Because of our greedy, self-seeking nature, it's no wonder the majority of mankind rejects God and His instructions. It's far more comfortable to make up reasons for thinking He doesn't exist or the Bible can't be His Word than it is to accept that reality—and to then acknowledge that we must start living by it.

Regrettably, this refusal to accept reality has tragic consequences. As God says through the prophet Hosea: "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you . . . ; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children*" (Hosea 4:6).

It never ceases to amaze me that people will turn their backs on God, disobey His Word and ignore His warnings—and then wonder why He doesn't intervene when they get in trouble and need His help.

". . . Because you have rejected knowledge," He says, "I also will reject you."

The conflict continues

What are the results of this battle over the Bible? Recent studies reveal a surprising—and depressing—story. In a little more than a decade, from 1991 to 2004, the number of adult Americans who do not attend church has almost doubled, growing from 39 to 75 million.

Meanwhile, research shows that a majority—6 in 10 Americans—believe that living together with someone of the opposite sex before marriage, having sexual fantasies about others and gambling can be "morally acceptable" behaviors. More than 4 in 10 think that having an abortion and engaging in a sexual relationship with a person other than one's spouse is similarly acceptable.

Approximately a third see no moral problem with profanity, pornography, drunkenness and homosexual sex (The Barna Group, "Spiritual Progress Hard to Find in 2003" and "Morality Continues to Decay," www.barna.org).

It would be convenient to blame unelected lawyers and judges for America's moral slide. But such research shows that in reality they only reflect the moral mindset of a great number of its citizens and their desire to remove any stigma from their shameful actions.

Regrettably, many view such developments as "progress" and those who hold such opinions as "enlightened," while men and women who argue for biblical standards of morality are labeled as bigoted, judgmental, homophobic or worse.

God warns us in Isaiah 5:20 about this kind of perverted thinking: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put

bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

He adds in verse 25: "Therefore the anger of the LORD is aroused against His people; He has stretched out His hand against them and stricken them, and the hills trembled. Their carcasses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still."

How you can win

Only God can change the heart of a nation, and if history is any guide, once a nation rejects Him and His laws, it will seldom repent and turn again to Him. Once a nation loses its moral foundation, it has nowhere to go but down. Our problems have grown so great that ultimately only Jesus Christ Himself can straighten them out—which is exactly why He must return to earth to establish the Kingdom of God (Matthew 24:21-22).

You may not be able to change your country, but *you can allow God to change you*. You can choose to turn to God and, with His help, live by the standards and values He reveals in His Word. You can prove to yourself that the Bible is indeed God's Word, then begin living it.

Follow God's admonition in Isaiah 55:6-7: "*Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*"

We would all do well to heed the warning of Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States and author of the Declaration of Independence, when he wrote: "God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of people that these liberties are of the gift of God? . . . Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever" (Federer, p. 323). **GN**

Recommended Reading

What's behind America's startling moral decline? Does the Bible give us any indication and tell us where these trends will lead? You need to understand the remarkable story revealed in our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. Also be sure to request your free copies of *The Ten Commandments* and *Is the Bible True?* Download or request your free copies today!



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Can You Prove **the Bible Is True?**

Belief in the Bible as the inspired and accurate Word of God is plunging. Here are some simple proofs you can use to show that the Bible is indeed what it claims to be—the very Word of God.

by Mario Seiglie

Have you ever wondered whether the Bible is the inspired Word of God and can be taken literally—meaning in its plain and obvious sense?

Back in 1963, *two out of three* Americans asked by the Gallup polling organization said they believed “the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for

Also, most movies and TV programs about the Bible have quite a liberal slant and could easily cast doubt on its validity.

If someone challenged you to prove that the Bible *is* true and that it *should* be taken literally, could you do it? Could you give them several clear proofs?

There is an easy way to do it if you read on.

was provided by Jesus Christ Himself when He said, “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). This means that what the Bible says is true and has a *basic unity of thought and principles* that cannot be broken or contradicted.

Why is this significant?

According to the traditional chronology for the writing of all the biblical books, it took around *1,500 years* to complete the Bible—a *very* long time.

Imagine, for comparison’s sake, that a collection of several dozen books about the historical, cultural and religious heritage of a people began to be written around the year A.D. 500, a few years after the collapse of the Roman Empire. These books would then have been completed 1,500 years later—in *our* day. Also, some 40 different authors would have been involved over this long span and their language and thought would have reflected their changing surroundings and conditions.

Could someone seriously believe that these authors would be able to maintain an essential unity of thought and principles through all that time? If they did, it certainly would be unprecedented in world history!

If there is something the history of this world’s religious literature shows, it’s that values and principles change over time. Even within his own lifetime, an author normally undergoes notable changes in his system of values. His writings reflect his ideas and thoughts according to his stage in life. It’s interesting to note how different his ideas are as a young man compared to when he grows old. This pattern is common and well-known.

Yet when the Bible is analyzed in this way, we find it is strikingly different. Although its books were written by about 40 authors spanning some 1,500 years, *they all maintain an amazing consistency*. From Genesis to Revelation, the major themes never change. History progresses, but the themes of love, faith, obedience, mercy and a loving and righteous God intent on redeeming a disobedient mankind do not change. This unity of thought and principles is unique in the world’s literary history.

After a decades-long study of the religious



If someone challenged you to prove that the Bible *is* true and that it *should* be taken literally, could you do it? Could you give them several clear proofs? There is an easy way to do it.

word.” But now, Gallup polls show that *only one in three* believe the same thing—an alarming drop! And the percentage of people in other countries who believe the Bible is the Word of God is generally much lower.

What’s going on?

Associated Press religious writer Richard Ostling points out part of the problem: “Liberal-minded university and seminary professors have labored long to lure Americans away from reading their Bible as strictly literal history. They sometimes complain that few pay heed. But Gallup Poll data suggest the professors have indeed had an impact” (Associated Press, March 27, 2000).

Skeptics abound and the Bible itself tells us we should be ready to give an answer to those who ask about our faith. As the apostle Peter said, “. . . *Always be ready to give a defense* to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15, emphasis added throughout).

So what are some of the main proofs that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and should be taken literally? Let’s take a look at five of these principal proofs.

The unity of the Bible

This first proof that the Bible is inspired

books of the East, M. Montier-Williams, a professor of Sanskrit, compared them with the Bible: “Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table, but place your own Bible on the right side . . . [There is] a gulf between it and the so-called sacred books of the East which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and forever” (quoted by Sidney Collett, *All About the Bible*, 1972, pp. 314-315).

Regarding the unity of the Bible, consider the first writer in the Bible, Moses. Although a Hebrew by birth, he lived in the midst of a thriving Egyptian culture. He was reared in Pharaoh’s court and “was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds” (Acts 7:22).

It would be natural to imagine that his writings would be heavily influenced by Egyptian thinking—yet they aren’t. Instead they reflect thoughts and principles that after more than 3,000 years still have an enormous impact on most of the world’s religious and social values.

Consider, for example, what Moses wrote about health and sickness. One medical doctor writes: “From the record we discover that Moses had so much faith in God’s regulations that he did not incorporate a single current [Egyptian] medical misconception into the inspired instructions . . . The divine instructions were not only devoid of harmful practices, but had many detailed positive recommendations” (Dr. S.I. McMillen, *None of These Diseases*, 1972, p. 10).

This fact is remarkable enough, but what makes the Bible unique is that *all* the other authors that come later faithfully reflect the same values, in spite of their different backgrounds, culture and language.

These writers would consist of people from the most diverse backgrounds. Amos was a sheepbreeder and fruit caretaker. David was a shepherd who became a mighty king. Others, such as Daniel and Nehemiah, held high positions in foreign governments.

In the New Testament, the writers consist of several former fishermen (Peter and John), a tax collector (Matthew), a physician (Luke) and several others of different professions.

What is the principal theme in the Bible? It’s simple: *God is love* (1 John 4:8, 16).

From the beginning, the Bible reveals God as creating mankind not on a capricious whim, but *to be His own beloved children*. God is reproducing Himself through human beings and developing a family relationship as their Father (see Genesis 1:26; 5:1-2;



The Bible describes God hanging the earth “on nothing” (Job 26:7). This was written millennia before Isaac Newton discovered the invisible laws of gravity that showed the earth truly is suspended “on nothing.”

2 Corinthians 6:18). He lovingly placed them in a beautiful garden paradise, instructed them to populate the earth and to exercise proper care and dominion over it (Genesis 1:28; 2:8).

Yet, as a loving parent, God also has to correct mankind when it veers too far off course, and that also is shown throughout the Bible. Nevertheless, the final chapters of Revelation show that God will ultimately triumph in bringing many sons to glory and will wipe away the tears of His children,

promising there will be no more death, sorrow or crying (Revelation 21:4).

One of the foremost Bible scholars of the past century, F.F. Bruce, wrote: “The Bible is not simply an anthology [a collection of books]; there is a unity which binds the whole together . . . Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible” (*The Books and the Parchments: How We Got Our English Bible*, 1984, pp. 88-89).

The apostle Paul sums up the underlying unity of the Bible when he says: “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

The Bible is non-mythical

Another striking difference between the Bible and other religious works is the absence of mythical stories and legends. While many will surely debate this, we should consider the following.

Other creation accounts in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America

include such mythological scenarios as gods feuding and cutting up other gods to form the heavens and the earth. The religious works of the Greeks described the earth being held up by the god Atlas, while in India, the Hindu religion pictured the earth as supported on the backs of eight huge elephants.

Yet the Bible describes God hanging the earth “*on nothing*” (Job 26:7). This was written millennia before Isaac Newton discovered the invisible laws of gravity that showed the earth *truly is* suspended “on nothing.”

In contrast to every other ancient creation account, the Bible pictures the creation of the earth in a very scientific manner. In Genesis 1, the continents are lifted from the seas. Then vegetation is created and, later, animal life—all reproducing “according to its kind”—recognizing fixed genetic laws. Finally we have the creation of man and woman, all done in a dignified and godly manner, without mythological adornments.

The rest of the Bible follows suit. The narratives are historical, faithfully reflecting society and culture as history and archaeology would discover them thousands of years later. And while there may be disputes among archaeologists about certain details

The Bible Under the Microscope

One author contrasts the Bible and other men’s literary works by saying: “There is this great difference between the works of men and the works of God—that the same minute and searching investigation which displays the defects and imperfections of the one, brings out also the beauties of the other.

“If the most finely polished needle [made by man] . . . be subjected to a microscope, many inequalities, much roughness and clumsiness, will be seen. But if the microscope be brought to bear on the flowers of the field [made by God], no such result appears. Instead of their beauty diminishing, new beauties . . . are discovered . . .

“The same law appears also in comparing the Word of God and the most finished productions of men. There are spots and blemishes in the most admired productions of human genius. But the more the Scriptures are searched . . . the more their perfection appears; new beauties are brought into light every day; and the discoveries of science, the researches of the learned . . . all alike conspire to illustrate the wonderful harmony of all the parts” (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, 1959, p. 1).

of the accounts, there is a general consensus of the Bible's accuracy.

Norman Geisler, professor of theology, summarizes the findings of archaeology: "In every period of Old Testament history, we find that there is good evidence from archaeology that the Scriptures speak the truth. In many instances, the Scriptures even reflect firsthand knowledge of the times and customs it describes. While many have doubted the accuracy of the Bible, time and continued research have consistently demonstrated that the Word of God is better informed than its critics" (*Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 1998, p. 52).

Not only is the Bible historically accurate, but when it deals with scientific subjects, it is also reliable. This is one of the reasons the Bible can be accepted as a trustworthy document that should be taken literally. Although it was not written as a textbook on history, science, mathematics or medicine, when the writers of Scripture touch on these subjects, they were inspired by God not to make mistakes, but to write what was true—sometimes stating facts that scientific advancement would not reveal or even consider for thousands of years.

Consider, for example, astronomy. Scientists today have discovered evidence that the universe had a beginning, when space, matter and time suddenly appeared from nowhere. This is reminiscent of what Genesis 1:1 says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Robert Jastrow, a former NASA director, comments: "A sound explanation may exist for the explosive birth of our Universe; but if it does, science cannot find out what the explanation is. The scientist's pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation.

"This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth.' It is unexpected because science has had such extraordinary success in tracing the chain of cause and effect backward in time" (*God and the Astronomers*, 1978, p. 116).

The Bible is intact

Of all the ancient works of substantial size, only the Bible comes to us completely intact. This is against all odds and expectations. In comparison, William Shakespeare's plays, written only about 400 years ago, and *after* the invention of the printing press, are in much worse shape. Shakespeare's original words have been lost in numerous sections, and scholars are left to fill in the blanks as best as they can.

But when it comes to the Bible, its

uncanny preservation has permitted it to weather thousands of years of wars, persecutions, fires and invasions, and still remain intact. As author Josh McDowell notes:

"Compared with other ancient writings, the Bible has more manuscript evidence to support it than any ten pieces of classical literature combined" (*The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 1999, p. 9).

How was this amazing task accomplished? The Old Testament text was preserved by Jewish scribes through the cen-

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). His words have become a prophecy that is still rock-solid in our day.



turies. Scholars unanimously praise their faithful copying and transmission of the text.

Professor Bernard Ramm explains: "Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. With their [scribes] they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle or Seneca?" (*Protestant Christian Evidences*, 1953, pp. 230-231).

What about the New Testament? Here the actual number of preserved manuscripts is so great that it becomes overwhelming.

McDowell writes: "There are more than 5,686 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Add over 10,000 Latin Vulgate and at least 9,300 other early versions, and we have close to, if not more than, 25,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament in existence today. No other document of antiquity even begins to approach such numbers . . .

"In comparison, Homer's *Iliad* is second, with *only* 643 manuscripts that still survive. The first complete preserved text of Homer

dates from the thirteenth century" (p. 34, emphasis added).

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). His words have become a prophecy that is still rock-solid in our day. With *billions* of Bibles in more than 2,000 languages now distributed around the world, God's Word will by no means pass away.

The Bible tells events ahead of time

The fourth proof of the inspiration of

the Bible is the way it deals with time—by accurately foretelling what will happen *ahead of time*. This is also a unique characteristic of the Bible: It boldly proclaims specific historical events to come in the future. No other ancient sacred book dares to deal with time in this way with unmatched results.

As the book *A General Introduction to the Bible* says: "No unconditional prophecy of the Bible about events to the present day has gone unfulfilled . . . Other books claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and parts of the [Hindu] Veda. But none of those books contains predictive prophecy. As a result, fulfilled prophecy is a strong indication of the unique, divine authority of the Bible" (Norman Geisler and William Nix, 1986, p. 13).

One incredible example of prophecy is found in the book of Isaiah. The date of the book is fixed by its first verse: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."

Through history and archaeology, the dates of these kings are well known—from 767 to 686 B.C., a span of 81 years. Yet, in Isaiah 44, God reveals to Isaiah a coming conqueror who would permit Jerusalem to be rebuilt after its destruction—although in Isaiah's day Jerusalem was still standing! So here is a prophecy so ahead of its time that only future generations in Jerusalem would first witness the city's destruction and then its rebuilding!

Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians some *100 years* after Isaiah's day. And work was not begun to reconstruct it until 539 B.C., when the prophesied king conquered Babylon and decreed that the captive Jews be freed and allowed to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the temple.

Continued on page 28



World News and Trends

An Overview of Conditions Around the World

by John Ross Schroeder and Jerold Aust

EU members agree on constitution

All 25 European Union (EU) member countries have agreed in Brussels on a final draft of the new European constitution. Ironically, the stunning anti-Europe vote in the recent EU parliamentary elections probably proved to be the needed catalyst for sudden agreement. Now all EU member nations must seek approval from their national parliaments by December 2006. In addition, Britain and other countries have decided to hold national referenda, also putting approval to their individual citizens.

But what does this new constitution actually do? Noted conservative *Daily Telegraph* commentator Ambrose-Evans Pritchard concedes: "It brings together 450 million people from 25 states, embracing all the major strands of European culture, in a rich, peaceful and democratic union under one supreme legal document—*without a mention of God*" (June 19, emphasis added throughout). It also supersedes the founding document, the Treaty of Rome (1957), the Single European Act (1986), the Maastricht Treaty of European Union (1992) and other formal agreements at Amsterdam (1997) and Nice (2000).

How will this new constitution affect the national sovereignty of member countries? Although British Prime Minister Tony Blair has specifically stated that British national sovereignty is still intact in certain

key areas like foreign policy and national defense, the European constitution itself broadly states: "This constitution shall have primacy over the laws of the Member states" (Article I-5).

Daniel Hannan, a conservative member of the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee, has written the following about foreign affairs and

"The text is full of ambiguities and . . . clauses paving the way for Brussels to slice off more power in the future."

defense: "The Prime Minister's claim to have secured his 'red line' in this area is hard to reconcile with the text. Article I-15 reads: 'The common foreign and security policy shall cover all aspects of foreign policy and all questions relating to the Union's security policy actively and unreservedly, in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity'" (*The Sunday Telegraph*, June 20).

Mr. Hannan then adds: "The constitution creates a European foreign minister and a diplomatic corps, and gives legal recognition to the EU's fledgling military forces, which have already been deployed

in the Congo and Macedonia."

David Heathcoat-Amory, another conservative on the drafting body, said: "The big issue is whether power remains at Westminster [London] at all, or it goes to Brussels, and *under this constitution there will be massive further transfer to Europe*" (*The Daily Telegraph*, June 19).

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard also comments: "The text is full of ambiguities and . . . clauses paving the way for Brussels to slice off more power in the future." The leading conservative British papers have all reacted in terms of the dangers of a future European superstate. Yet Mr. Blair specifically stated: "A new Europe has taken shape, a Europe in which Britain can build alliances and feel at home. A Europe in which there's no one dominant view but in which there's a Europe of flexibility and diverse progress" (Brussels speech quoted in the *Daily Mail*, June 19).

Public and private reaction to the new constitution in each EU country is both pro and con. The important question remains: What does the Bible say about the political future of Europe? For the answer, request our free booklets *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* (Sources: *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *Daily Mail* [all London].)

China breaks Hong Kong agreement

A foreign affairs journalist, John Simpson, wrote: "Last Monday the convenient fiction on which Britain handed over Hong Kong to China ('one country, two systems') came to an end. The Standing

Committee of China's parliament, the National People's Congress, declared that the inhabitants of Hong Kong could not elect their chief executive in 2007 [clearly allowed in Hong Kong's current constitution], nor vote for more than half the seats in the territory's legislature in 2008."

This decision came in spite of assurances in the original 1997 agreement and the fact that opinion

polls show that two thirds of Hong Kong's population wants to elect their own leader.

The Hong Kong situation is closely related to the dangers facing Taiwan. Mr. Simpson reported that "the commander of the flotilla in the Hong Kong harbour, Vice Admiral Yao Xingyuan, was straight-spoken when someone asked him about Taiwan. 'We are ready for the call from our country,' he snapped, 'We have the capability to maintain the political stability of Taiwan.'

"In other words, China is showing that it exerts a

The European Union's dangerous liaisons

The Wall Street Journal Europe reported that "just as the United States imposed sanctions on Damascus, the European Union is finalizing a deal to facilitate trade with Syria."

This is in spite of Damascus' long-standing contempt for basic human rights and its refusal to allow international watchdog organizations to enter the country. Even more serious is the fact that the Syrian government allows Hezbollah (a notorious terrorist organization) to indulge in such activities as illegal weapons sales, money laundering and drug dealing.

The European Union's position is manifestly inconsistent with its stated ideals "founded upon the principles of liberty, democracy and fundamental freedom, and the rule of law." Also this widens

policy divides with the United States and brings the European Union (EU) into conflict with American goals and purposes in the Mideast.

China is another case in point. One correspondent, reporting from Beijing, writes: "While the EU prepares to lift the China arms embargo, Washington is urging caution, saying that Beijing has drawn up a blueprint for attacking Taiwan and could be America's main military adversary within ten years." China's primary source of new weapons has been Russia, but apparently the European Union is anxious to get in on the act.

The disturbing factor in EU trade with both Syria and China is that it exacerbates several already troubling foreign policy differences between the United States and the European Union. To see where events are headed, request our free booklet *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. (Sources: *Wall Street Journal Europe*, *The Independent* [London].)

"If the United States and Britain don't like it, too bad; China has the military strength to do the job if necessary."

potential control over Taiwan to match its actual control over Hong Kong. If the United States and Britain don't like it, too bad; China has the military strength to do the job if necessary."

What surprised Mr. Simpson was the almost total lack of British and Western outrage about China ripping up the Hong Kong agreement. This shows that many do not really comprehend the historic significance of former British control of this key outpost and the prophetic legacy underlying it. To understand more about this, request our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. (Sources: *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent* [both London].)



Lack of guidance in making moral decisions

In a recent poll, American adults were asked what guiding sources they used in making ethical decisions and moral choices. Surprisingly, nearly half replied that they didn't know. About one in four said moral decisions were based on their feelings, and nearly 15 percent indicated lessons from childhood. Only a paltry 13 percent based ethical decisions on the Bible.

Do these astonishing figures help explain why so many are mired in a chaotic world of immorality? The first step out of this morass is to establish the fact that the Bible is true and a reliable and authoritative guide to human conduct—the basic beginning point for right standards and values.

To understand the true basis for morality and ethics, request our free booklets *Is the Bible True?* and *The Ten Commandments*. (Source: Barna Research Group, Ltd., report, "How American's Faith Has Changed Since 9/11.")

Could Britain leave the European Union?

Columnist Mark Steyn stated that "poll after poll shows that up to half the British electorate wants out of the EU" (*The Daily Telegraph*). This surprising figure is undergirded by the stunning success of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) in the recent European Union parliamentary elections. This British party advocates the United Kingdom leaving the European Union and then negotiating a fresh trade treaty with it.

Several popular British columnists and journalists do not, however, believe that Britain will leave the EU any time soon. Consider just two examples. Peter Ridell's political briefing editorial was titled: "Baloney! Britain is not on its way out of Europe." He continued in the same vein in the column: "Britain is destined to remain a perpetually awkward partner in the European Union."

Fellow columnist Tim Hames predicted a short life for the UKIP. To indicate his reasons, he wrote: "History hints that these sorts of movements when suddenly flushed with success . . . soon get intoxicated with it. There are personality feuds, policy disputes and the rhetoric becoming wilder in an attempt to retain attention."

The conventional wisdom of journalists and even politicians is not always on target, however. Our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* shows that the British peoples are in reality descendants of Joseph, great grandson of the biblical patriarch Abraham.

Those who have watched the gradual fulfillment of biblical prophecy in Europe have long wondered whether Britain would remain in the EU. Some have thought Britain might eventually leave voluntarily; others have speculated that she might be thrown out. Currently the United Kingdom imports vastly more goods both in number and value from the Continent than the U.K. exports there—indicating the EU may now need Britain more than the other way around. Britain is one of Europe's best customers.

This historic, continuously developing saga of cross-channel conflicts and difficulties has many strands, such as the argument over the contents of the new European constitution. The recurring friction between the United Kingdom and the EU over many aspects of sovereignty indicates that the two have very different legal and cultural traditions. The story bears watching in the light of Bible prophecy.

To understand the vital historical and biblical background of this situation, request the free booklets *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* and *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*. (Sources: *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* [London].)

The Cold War and President Reagan

In January 1981, Ronald Reagan entered the highest office of the land as U.S. president. At once he faced double-digit inflation, unhappy citizens tired of a shrinking dollar and the loss of national prestige abroad. The world was already in the tight grip of the Cold War, but it was getting even more dangerous by the day. And to top it off, the former movie

and international affairs. He signed away eventual control of the Panama Canal, a key U.S. asset for the safety of the Western Hemisphere, failed to curb runaway inflation and seemed unable to perceive the complexities of geopolitics.

To be sure, all of these presidents had good characteristics and redeeming qualities and each one strove to improve the American way of life, at home and abroad.

President Reagan was not considered to be the smartest president by those who opposed his conservative leanings. Indeed, Mr. Reagan said of his "C" grade point average at tiny Eureka College that he simply intended to keep at least a C average so he could remain on the football team. Some who worked with Mr. Reagan remarked that he was always popular and mostly right (*The New York Times*, June 7, p. A18).

Despite the scorn toward his intellect, his greatest critics appeared to forget that Mr. Reagan had once been one of them: he was a Roosevelt democrat until the mid-20th century, believing that big government could solve state, regional and local problems. What his greatest detractors missed was the power in communicative simplicity. President Reagan was not a shouter. When he appeared on television, he came into your living room like a friend sitting with you on the couch.

Only in recent times has history given President Ronald Reagan credit for ending the Cold War. Today, we take it for granted that President Reagan, despite weaknesses that are common to all human beings, may well have been the single greatest human reason as to why the United States is no longer fighting the morale-eroding Cold War.

Since God sets up leaders of nations and can also remove them (Daniel 4:17, 34-37), and since God honors those who try to honor Him as Mr. Reagan did through his unusual moral and gracious leadership as a U.S. president, one positive scripture comes to mind: "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?" (2 Samuel 3:38). (Source: *The New York Times*.)

Only in recent times has history given President Ronald Reagan credit for ending the Cold War.

actor and two-term California governor was assuming the duties of an office that had suffered many human problems.

Consider the five presidencies preceding him: Popular President John F. Kennedy was assassinated while in office; Vice President Lyndon Johnson assumed the presidency and inherited the Vietnam conflict, an increasingly unpopular war as containment without victory demoralized troops abroad and Americans at home. His personal agenda to create the "Great Society" tanked. Recognizing his untenable circumstances, he opted not to run for a second full term.

Richard Nixon, President Eisenhower's vice president who lost his bid for the 1960 presidential election, stepped up to the plate in 1968 and handily captured the presidency. But his presidency was doomed by personal paranoia and abuse of power. Risking impeachment, Mr. Nixon resigned the presidency and appointed Gerald Ford to replace him.

Mr. Ford completed Nixon's second term, but was defeated by a religious Southerner, Jimmy Carter of Georgia. An intelligent and well-meaning president, he wasn't up to the demands of national

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Could We Lose the War on Terror?

A quarter century ago a nation in some ways not that different from the United States and Britain lost a war on terror. What lessons can we learn from that conflict so history does not repeat itself?

by Melvin Rhodes

Jesus Christ taught His followers to pray, “Your kingdom come” (Matthew 6:10). The central message of His ministry was the “gospel [good news—the title of this magazine] of the kingdom of God” (Mark 1:14). He made it clear that this Kingdom “is not of this world” (John 18:36) and that His followers would one day “reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10). This would follow His return as “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:16).

Christians should pray fervently for the



When the first terrorist attack took place, we were stunned—but we soon recovered. There was no need for alarm. After all, we knew God was on our side; He would see us through. But the country I lived in no longer exists.

Kingdom of God for many reasons. One of the most important is the worsening problem of terrorism.

Increasingly, as the war on terror continues, I’m taken back to a terrorist war I witnessed firsthand—one that ended almost a quarter century ago.

It took place in a country I had moved to from my native England. The country had a culture similar to that of Britain and the United States. The names of the people were the same—Smith, Martin, Rhodes, Harvey, Young. The language was English, though the accent differed somewhat.

The system of government was quite

similar—a democratic system in which voters sent their representatives to the capital to make decisions on their behalf. As early America had broken away from Britain, so, too, had this country.

Many of those who lived there enjoyed a life just like that in any other modern country. We ate hamburgers with fries and ketchup, drank Coke and Pepsi, watched episodes of *Gunsmoke*, *Barnaby Jones*, *Canon*, *Batman* and *Happy Days* on television, watched the latest Hollywood movies at our local movie theater or drive-in and went to see live shows at good theaters.

We bought the latest records. We paid for them in dollars and cents. We bought clothes in department stores and food in supermarkets. We drove Fords and GM trucks.

The country was militarily strong. Its armed forces were recognized around the world as among the best. In World War II it had contributed more to the Allied cause, proportionate to population, than anybody, including the British and the Americans. Its air force was so good that Winston Churchill sent pilots there for training. The terrorists didn’t even have an air

force. We could attack their bases at will.

Like the United States and Britain, many of our citizens were among the modern descendants of the northern tribes of ancient Israel. Most people didn’t know that, but a surprising number in many different churches did.

The beginning of the end

When the first terrorist attack took place, we were stunned—but we soon recovered. There was no need for alarm. After all, we knew God was on our side; He would see us through. The country had been attacked by a poorer, less technologically advanced people

of a different race and religion. We were convinced they were all from outside, that some hostile power beyond our shores had inspired them and trained them, giving them the weapons to attack us.

Six years passed before the second terrorist attack came. The terrorist war is dated from the second attack, as if the first didn’t matter. The difference was that the second attack began an intensive and bloody seven-year war.

At the beginning, the government knew it could win. It had greater military might than the enemy. As terrorism struck every corner of the republic, we likened ourselves to England in the dark days of the blitz, when the German Luftwaffe attacked its cities every night, destroying homes and killing tens of thousands of innocent civilians.

But we still knew we would win. The country’s leader had Churchillian resolve. We were a decent, God-fearing people, confident that He would protect us.

But the country I lived in no longer exists. It lost the terrorist war. Its guns, air force and powerful military did not save it. It was defeated—and many of its people scattered to the four corners of the earth.

The country? Its name was Rhodesia. Today Zimbabwe occupies the same space, but it’s a completely different place, a nation whose people are forced to live under one of Africa’s most despotic dictatorships. In place of the prosperous, productive, food-exporting nation that once existed, we now see a country that is an international pariah, its people starving.

Sudden and shocking downfall

To say that the terrorist war there lasted seven years is misleading. I remember writing an article for an international magazine in the autumn of 1975 timed to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the country’s unilateral declaration of independence from Great Britain.

In the article I expressed the opinion that the country would lose its war on terror. At the time some local readers were quite upset,

believing that defeat was impossible. But less than a year later, in late September of 1976, Prime Minister Ian Smith conceded defeat. Over three more years of war followed as different factions struggled for power.

Certainly, there are similarities between the United States and the United Kingdom today and Rhodesia then. There is also one obvious difference—though much of the African population in Rhodesia supported the government and rightly feared the alternatives, the majority wanted to see it fall.

Even so, there are lessons for America and its allies in the war on terror—lessons we should heed before it's too late.

Seven reasons to worry

Comparing Rhodesia then with the West today, I can think of seven reasons why Western democracies may suffer Rhodesia's fate.

Complacency. For the most part, the United States has been blessed with internal peace and stability since the end of the Civil War in 1865. Great Britain can look back on more than 300 years of relative political and social stability.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand, with systems of government similar to that of the mother country, have also greatly benefited from long periods of stability. Rhodesia had enjoyed similar stability as a self-governing colony within the British Empire for almost a century—as long as anybody living could remember.

These long periods of stability make these nations, descendants of the biblical tribe of Joseph, unique in history. Most if not all other nations have been plagued with wars, foreign invasions, revolutions or civil wars during the same time span.

This incredible longevity has resulted in a *pervasive complacency*. It's inconceivable to the average citizen of the United States or Britain that their countries could, like Rhodesia, *cease to exist*.

Yet that is exactly what could happen.

Americans seem to have the world's worst case of attention-deficit disorder (ADD). Less than three years have passed since the nation was stunned by the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Boggled down in what may prove to be an unwinnable war in Iraq and threatened by further acts of terrorism, President George W. Bush announced he was to address the nation in late May.

But if you didn't have cable television, you wouldn't have been able to watch. The

major networks decided that *American Idol* and other shows were far more important than the president's speech to the nation!

There's a certain complacency, a refusal to face up to reality, on the part of the majority



The Afghan mujahideen, from whom Bin Laden has drawn recruits, defeated the forces of the world's second-greatest superpower. Their ousting of Soviet forces led directly to the collapse of the communist system there.

who simply want life to continue as it was before. Many naively think that if America pulled out of Iraq, there would be peace. The reality is that an American defeat in Iraq would only embolden the terrorists to fight on to final victory.

Let no one be mistaken: *The terrorists want to destroy the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and other nations that support the ideals of democracy and personal freedom.*

Let's also realize that the Afghan mujahideen, from whom Osama bin Laden has drawn recruits, defeated the forces of the world's second-greatest superpower. Their ousting of Soviet forces led directly to the collapse of the communist system there.

Just a few weeks ago al-Qaeda issued a statement saying that they would concentrate their terrorist acts against six nations: the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Spain and Italy. More recently, they have targeted and murdered Americans and Britons in Saudi Arabia in an attempt to destroy the oil industry there—which would have drastic consequences on the world economy.

Thirty years ago Rhodesians went about business as usual. The economy was booming. For most, life was good. Nobody dreamed it would all be over in five years.

A major cultural difference is at work here. In American and British culture, most

people simply want to work and prosper, to take care of their families and enjoy life. The assumption is that others want to do the same.

But that is just not the case. All we have to do to understand this fact is look at the suicide bombers who have been a driving force in the present war on terror. Just as most people in Washington and London cannot understand their mentality, so they cannot understand ours.

Proverbs 22:3 advises that "a prudent man foresees evil" and prepares for it. Individually and collectively, we need to replace our complacency with a sense of urgency, a realization of the serious challenges of the times in which we live.

We have not clearly identified the enemy. The biggest single turning point in

the Rhodesian terrorist war was the fall of neighboring Mozambique. This followed directly from an event thousands of miles away—a violent coup that overthrew the government of Portugal early in 1974.

This led rapidly to independence for Mozambique and Angola, two of Rhodesia's neighbors. The Soviet Union, seeking to expand its influence, showed up quickly in both states. Rhodesians were soon fighting for their lives.

But the enemy was also within. The fact that the 19 terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attacks were all foreign nationals does not mean that all terrorists are foreigners.

Dr. Daniel Pipes has authored 11 books on Islam and the Middle East and is a member of the U.S. Defense Department's Special Task Force on Terrorism and Technology. Testifying in a State Department forum on Jan. 30, 2002, Dr. Pipes estimated that 10 to 15 percent of Muslims worldwide support militant Islam (www.danielpipes.org/article/428).

It has often been pointed out that most of the imams teaching in America's mosques, financed by Saudi Arabia, are Wahhabis, an extremely violent branch of Sunni Islam that is Saudi-based.

The United States had only 500,000 Muslims within its borders in the 1970 census. Today estimates range from a low of 2 to 3 million to as high as 10 to 12 million. Even if only as few as 2 or 3 percent support

militant Islam—that’s a huge number of potential terrorists. Dr. Pipes documents nine attacks from militant Muslims within the United States *before 9/11* (ibid.).

Political correctness and a strong emphasis on multiculturalism in the last four decades make it very difficult for Americans and Britons to face up to such facts. But the reality is as it was in Rhodesia—that not all the enemies are outside of the country and that many are within.

One very important lesson we learned in Rhodesia must be realized by the Americans and British if they are to be victorious in the war on terror. In Rhodesia much of the indigenous African population was intimidated by the terrorists and scared into helping them. They were far more afraid of the terrorists than they were of the Rhodesian government.

This is also almost certainly the case in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries on the frontline of today’s terrorist war. This should help us understand why we rarely hear of moderate Muslims condemning terrorist acts. They are not going to criticize violent Islamic fundamentalists for fear of losing their own lives and seeing their families murdered.

Jesus Christ warned in Matthew 24 that the first sign of the coming of His Kingdom would be the prevalence of false religion (verses 3-5). The first of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, riding a white horse, is symbolic of false religion (Revelation 6:1-2). False religion brings in its wake war, famine and pestilence.

Political correctness has promoted the dangerous view that all religions are equal—to the point that most people in the Western world can no longer realistically differentiate between the various faiths. All are considered good and peace-loving when the reality is far different.

Low birthrate. Tied in with the first two

reasons is the low birthrate of Americans and Western Europeans. This contrasts starkly with the high birthrates of developing countries in the Third World, including the Islamic nations.

For a microcosm of the problem, consider Israel. Palestinian populations have long increased faster than the Israelis. Eventually, Palestinians hope, they will be able to return to lands within what is now Israel. If and when that happens, they would then be in the majority. In a democratic system, that gives you power. The Palestinians would be in control of Israel, and then there would be no Jewish state.

A similar situation existed in Rhodesia, where the black population outstripped those of European descent, increasing the imbalance.

Most Islamic countries today have very high birthrates, and their economies usually cannot keep pace with population growth. The result is great frustration and dissatisfaction, which they then tend to blame on the West. This creates a breeding ground for terrorism. With ever-increasing numbers of potential terrorists, Western countries with low birthrates will be at a distinct disadvantage in the coming decades of violence.

The biblical book of Deuteronomy, chapter 28, makes it clear that children are a blessing (verse 4). One of the curses Israel was warned would befall them due to their sins would be curses on the fruit of their body, which could include a lower number of children (verse 18).

Ironically, one of the major factors in the low birthrates in Western democracies, and one that is having a growing social and cultural impact, is the huge number of babies that have been aborted over recent decades.

Our moral values. Or, rather, our *lack* of moral values, play a part in the war on terror.

Proverbs 14:34 says that “righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any

people.” This was illustrated well by the recent pictures of Iraqi prisoners being mistreated by American military personnel. These pictures, shown around the world, have been described as “recruiting posters for al-Qaeda.”

What was particularly appalling in the pictures was the degradation involving sex. Only perverted minds would think of such things. But what do we expect when pornography is easily available on the Internet, cable television and in video-rental outlets?

Even regular Hollywood fare is offensive to many peoples around the world. Admittedly there is a double standard here when we realize that many people watch these movies while at the same time bemoaning Western decadence, but the fact remains that America’s violent and sexually immoral movies have served to increase foreign contempt for the nation and its perceived hypocrisy.

An evening spent watching old movies on television will soon show the contrast between what was produced 50 years ago and what is being made now. Is it just a coincidence that the United States was looked up to back then and is denigrated now?

Rhodesia did not produce pornographic or violent movies, but it did have the worst divorce rate in the world, contributing greatly to family breakdown and loss of respect.

Excerpts from Osama bin Laden’s “Letter to America” were published in London’s *The Observer* newspaper on Nov. 24, 2002. The full text was available on the paper’s Web site.

When cataloging America’s sins, the leader of al-Qaeda cited America’s immorality as justification for his own evil course: “You are a nation that permits acts of immorality, and you consider them to be pillars of personal freedom.”

He continued: “Who can forget your President Clinton’s immoral acts committed in the Oval Office? After that you did not even bring him to account, other than that ‘he made a mistake,’ after which everything passed with no punishment. Is there a worse kind of event for which your name will go down in history and be remembered by nations?”

This paragraph shows an attitude toward the United States that is found ever more frequently around the world. Exposed to American culture through television, many in other countries are critical of American values—the breakdown of the family, the role of women, children talking back to their parents, immodest and sloppy dress, same-sex marriages, use of bad language and

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much more. These same liberal values can be found throughout the Western world.

It's helpful to be reminded that these were not the American values of the 1950s, when the United States was looked up to by virtually all peoples everywhere.

Internal divisions. A culture war is taking place in the United States—a verbal and media war between those who believe in the Judeo-Christian heritage of national and family life and those who reject the values of thousands of years in favor of so-called “alternative lifestyles.”

The anti-biblical faction is currently winning the war on most fronts, and the effect internationally is a lessening of respect for the United States—if not outright hatred



When America is most threatened, courts and unelected judges continue to force God out of schools and remove all references to Him from public buildings.

rising against the country's values.

God foretold that this would happen in Deuteronomy 28:1: “Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.”

In warning against disobedience, He said that such behavior would make Israel and its descendants “troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth” (verse 25).

Indebtedness to foreign nations. In the same chapter of Deuteronomy, God also warned the descendants of Israel that, if they persisted in sin, they would go from being great creditors to heavy borrowers, with the resulting loss of freedom.

In verse 12, as part of the blessings for obedience, He promised that they would “lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.” For disobedience, “the alien [foreigner] who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to

you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head and you shall be the tail” (verses 43-44).

America's monthly trade deficit is the highest in the history of the world and threatens national security. The United States buys from other countries \$500 billion per year more than it sells. The only way the United States can do this is to borrow from other countries while other nations buy up American companies with their excess dollars.

The threat to national security lies in the possibility that one day all America's creditors will lose confidence in the United States and pull the plug on the country.

The U.S. government also borrows heavily from overseas through the monthly sale of U.S. Treasury bonds. Additionally, roughly one third of personal borrowing in recent years has been from overseas banks. Americans may still feel that they are the richest people in the world, but it's only possible by borrowing from nations supposedly poorer than themselves!

A contributing factor in Rhodesia's fall was economic pressure from other nations, especially former allies Britain and America. It would be ironic if similar economic pressure came on the United States and Britain from nations that are presently allies. One of Rhodesia's greatest weaknesses was its

dependence on foreign oil, making the country vulnerable to international pressures. The same is true of America.

We no longer trust in God. America's coins and currency may still carry the words “In God we trust,” but the nation increasingly rejects the God to whom it owes its very existence.

At a time when America is most threatened, when the possibility of a major city like Washington D.C. or New York being decimated by a radiological, nuclear, chemical or biological attack is seriously considered, courts and unelected judges continue to force God out of our schools and remove all references to Him from our public buildings.

These same courts even throw out the biblically sanctioned relationship of marriage between a man and woman, forcing on the nation alternative forms of marriage that God condemns and that most of the rest of the world finds revolting.

Deuteronomy 28 again makes clear the consequences for disobedience. In verses 58-59 God warns: “If you do not carefully

observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues”—the consequences of sin.

In verse 63 He adds: “And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess.”

Why, we should ask, would God bless us for disobedience? Faced with defeat, the president of Rhodesia declared a national day of prayer and fasting. Few responded. The vast majority saw little connection between their own sin and the imminent threat to their country. If we aren't willing to change our ways that have brought us to this point, why should God choose to deliver us?

In Deuteronomy 30:19 He makes clear the choice we all have, both individually and collectively: “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore *choose life*, that both you and your descendants may live.”

Just because a nation does not repent does not mean an individual cannot do so, looking to God for protection in these difficult times. “But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it,” God tells us (Ezekiel 33:19).

The greatest lesson for all of us who lived in Rhodesia during the terrorist war was that we cannot rely on a country, *any* country, for our security. No human political entity will last forever. Ultimately, our only true security lies in God. “Seek first the kingdom of God,” Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:33. Christians should fervently pray daily, “*Your kingdom come*” (Matthew 6:10). **GN**

Recommended Reading

Does the Bible give us any indication or tell us where these trends will lead? For further insight into what's behind America's startling moral decline and the serious problems facing the nation, you need to understand the remarkable story brought to light in our free eye-opening booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. Download or request your free copy today!



Contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download this booklet from our Web site at

www.gnmagazine.org

The Horsemen of Revelation

The Pale Horse of Pestilence

Previous articles in this series covered the meaning of the first three of the horsemen of Revelation—religious deception, war and famine. What does the fourth, the pale green horse and its rider, signify?

by Darris McNeely

Disease travels in tandem with fear. While the first can lead to the death of thousands, the second can unravel the social fabric, disrupting the precarious balance of relationships essential for the stability of nations.

The most recent disease fear was SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which killed hundreds last year and panicked thousands more. Before that it was AIDS, which has killed tens of millions and even today is still decimating the populations of some countries. Tomorrow it could be another, even greater plague to sweep across the landscape, leaving death and destruction in its wake.

In this series we have been examining each of the first four seals

of Revelation 6. These seals, dramatically depicted by four horsemen, show the effect of false religion, war, famine and plague among the earth's population in the days leading to the return of Jesus Christ.

Each of these seals represents powerful forces that devastate human life on the earth. The cumulative effect will lead to such conditions that if Jesus Christ did not intervene and cut short the time of trial, "no flesh would be saved" (Matthew 24:22).

We now come to the fourth seal, the fourth

horseman, and his ride of death by plague. How will the ride of this horseman affect the nations of the earth?

The ride of the fourth horseman

Revelation 6:7-8 tells us this about the fourth seal: "When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come and see.' So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him."

The Expositor's Bible Commentary says this about the color of the fourth horse: "'Pale' (*chloros*) denotes a yellowish green, the light green of a plant, or the paleness of a sick person in contrast to a healthy appearance." Put bluntly, this horse is the color of death.

In Jesus' parallel prophecy in Matthew 24, He explained that in the wake of religious deception, war and famine would come "pestilences" or disease epidemics (verse 7).

The seals have a cumulative effect. False religion causes instability within relationships leading to war. Famine follows war, and when malnourishment occurs and social systems break down, human beings are more susceptible to disease. These seals depict the ferocity of problems unleashed on the world in the lead-up to "the Day of the Lord."

There would be other calamities as well. Jesus also listed in the same context "earthquakes in various places" (verse 7). "Plague" in Scripture denotes not only pestilence but also other calamities in nature that God uses to punish a disobedient humanity. Of course, any such calamities make populations that much riper for the spread of disease epidemics.

The latter part of Revelation 6:8, speaking of all four horsemen, states: "And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth to kill with sword, with hunger, with death and by the beasts of the earth."



In Our Next Issue

Beyond the devastating rides of the four horsemen of Revelation lies a fifth rider offering great hope!

By the time the fourth horseman completes his ride, a fourth of earth's inhabitants will experience incredible devastation. The death toll will be unlike any from plague and disease in human history.

To understand how bad it can be, let's go back and look at some of the great plagues of history.

The Black Death

Perhaps the most famous plague in history is the Black Death of the 14th century, thought by most to have been bubonic plague. Estimates are that more than 20 million people (a third to half of Europe's population) died in the outbreak.

In 1346, reports reached Europe of a devastating disease from China that was affecting many parts of Asia. The next year a mysterious disease appeared in Italy. Ships from the Black Sea sailed into Messina with sailors infected with black boils in their armpits and groins. It was the bubonic plague.

The disease was so lethal that people were known to go to bed well and die before waking. There were two types of this plague. The first was internal, causing swelling and internal bleeding. This was spread by contact. The second concentrated in the lungs and spread by coughing airborne germs. There was no known prevention or cure.

Whole towns were depopulated. The social structure completely broke down. Parents abandoned children; husbands and wives left each other to die. In many cases no one was around to bury the dead, both from fear of contagion and lack of concern. One writer of the time tells of observing 5,000 bodies lying dead in a field.

In that age, the Bible was the primary means to measure any natural calamity. The only way to understand what was happening was to believe the world was coming to an end. There seemed no hope for the future.

The bubonic plague has appeared in more recent times as well. The Great Plague of London in 1664-65 resulted in more than 70,000 deaths in a population estimated at 460,000. An outbreak in Canton and Hong Kong in 1894 left 80,000 to 100,000 dead, and within 20 years the disease spread from the southern Chinese ports throughout the whole world, resulting in more than 10 million deaths.

The plague came to America from Asia in 1899. Today cases are still reported, and an average of 15 people die each year. The disease originates in rodents and is usually transmitted to people by fleas, although animal bites can also be the means of transmission. It is still a virulent disease. As

few as 10 bubonic plague cells can cause a person's death.

Perhaps disease transmission from rodents is part of what Revelation 6:8 means by death from "the beasts of the earth." Microbial and viral infection could also be intended.

Human-engineered plague

Throughout its history, plague has been used as an offensive weapon against populations. The Mongols would catapult plague-infested corpses over the walls of besieged cities. Thousands would die as the disease spread through the walled-in population.

During World War II, Japan dropped plague-infested fleas on China. American research growing out of the war experience led to a decades-long research project at Fort Detrick, Maryland, proving that biological warfare was a feasible method of waging war.

In 1969 U.S. President Richard Nixon ordered the research stopped, and in 1972 the United States signed a treaty with 70 other nations outlawing the production, stockpiling and use of biological weapons as a means of war. Despite this treaty, it is known that many nations, rich and poor alike, have developed biological weapons.

The former Soviet Union conducted a sophisticated effort to manufacture biological weapons during the Cold War years. For years scientists researched ways to genetically alter bubonic plague so as to make it resistant to many forms of modern treatment.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, the tracking and inventory of all this work has been a great concern. The United States and its allies fear that some of it could have fallen into the hands of terrorist groups and could one day be used against them.

After the first Gulf War in 1991, weapons inspectors confirmed that Iraq had developed biological weapons and had even equipped some warheads with germs to use against Saddam Hussein's enemies. The location of these weapons since that time is part of the unsolved mystery of that regime. Could some of them be in the hands of al-Qaeda or some other radical Islamic group, waiting to be used on the West?

Are nations prepared?

Today America and the West brace themselves for further attacks from terrorist groups. What is perhaps feared most is a biological attack with smallpox or some other

widely communicable germ. Experts know that the West is woefully underprepared for such an attack.

In June 2001, the Center for Strategic and International Studies hosted a senior-level war game examining the security challenges of a biological attack on the American homeland.

The premise was the appearance of a case of smallpox in Oklahoma City, rapidly spreading throughout the country. Among the lessons learned from the exercise: "An attack on the United States with biological weapons could threaten vital national security interests. Massive civilian casualties, breakdown in essential institutions, violation of democratic processes, civil disorder, loss of confidence in government and reduced U.S. strategic flexibility abroad are among the ways a biological attack might compromise U.S. security" (www.homelandsecurity.org/darkwinter/index.cfm).

Other estimates say that within days a million people would be dead and two to three times that many infected. No one knows what lies out there waiting to be used by groups wishing other nations harm. We only know that it *could* happen.

Naturally caused disease

Beyond the human-engineered biowarfare, another type of pestilence is waiting as well. This one lurks quietly in the background and could erupt at any time, say scientists who study the subject.

"Eighty years ago a sudden mutation in the virus that causes influenza initiated a worldwide epidemic that in only 18 months killed an estimated 25 to 40 million people around the world. Many consider this to be the worst natural disaster in history" (Hillary Johnson, "Killer Flu," *Rolling Stone*, Jan. 22, 1998). Some historians feel this epidemic hastened the end of World War I.

Scientists studying infectious diseases have sounded warnings that this could occur again.

One expert, W.I.B. Beveridge, says, "There is no known reason why there should not be another catastrophic pandemic like that of 1918 or even worse. The flu always has the capability of becoming a global plague: a spark in a remote corner of the world could start a fire that scorches us all. Should a super flu like that of 1918 make a comeback now that the population has quadrupled and more than a million people cross international boundaries on jets each day, experts say it could kill hundreds of millions" (*ibid.*).

Influenza is one of the most underrated

Continued on page 27

Ronald Reagan: In His Own Words

In the wake of his recent death, hundreds of magazine and newspaper articles have been written about former U.S. President Ronald Reagan. We focus here on the religious beliefs that shaped his character and ultimately influenced the world.

by John Ross Schroeder

Noted American columnist George Will summed up former President Ronald Reagan's international legacy very well. He wrote: "One measure of a leader's greatness is this: By the time he dies, the dangers that summoned him to greatness have been so thoroughly defeated, in no small measure by what he did, it is difficult to recall the magnitude of those dangers, or his achievements.

"So if you seek Ronald Reagan's monument, look around and consider what you do not see. The Iron Curtain that scarred a continent is gone, as is the Evil Empire responsible for it. The feeling of foreboding—the sense of shrunken possibilities—that afflicted Americans 20 years ago has been banished by a new birth of the American belief in perpetually expanding horizons" (*The Wall Street Journal Europe*, June 7, 2004).

When Ronald Reagan was inaugurated into office as America's 40th president, his goal was not to somehow *survive* the Cold War but to *end* it. He boldly referred to the old Soviet Union as the Evil Empire and challenged its leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, to tear down the Berlin Wall. Previous U.S. presidents had only talked of *détente*. While other leaders spoke of America's malaise, he continually extolled his country's heritage and its role in the world.

A firm belief in America's divine destiny

Undergirding President Reagan's patriotism was his unshakable conviction about America's divine destiny. He once said while president: "I have always believed that this anointed land was set apart in an uncommon way, *that a divine plan* placed this great continent here between the oceans to be found by people from every corner of the earth who had a special love of faith and freedom" (quoted in "The Great American Experiment," *The Plain Truth*, September 1988, emphasis added throughout article).

During the early 1950s he declared, "I, in my own mind, have thought of America as a place in the divine scheme of things that was set aside as *a promised land*" (*Reagan: A Life in Letters*, 2003, p. 255). He had

commented to a colleague in a personal letter, "How much better the world is because of the voyage of Columbus" (letter to Cyndi Davis while governor of California).

A number of years later, in a letter to a resident of New England, he wrote: "We



“. . . Without God, democracy will not and cannot long endure. If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under.”

have every right to stand tall. Our country is unique in the world. A former prime minister of Australia said some years back, 'I wonder if anybody has thought what the situation would be if there were not in existence the United States—if there were not this giant country prepared to make so many sacrifices'" (letter to L. Dianne Roe, Sept. 27, 1985).

Like nearly all U.S. presidents, Ronald Reagan had a strong sense of American history and grasped the importance of the views of the early leaders who founded the nation. During the last year of his first term (1984), he told a group of Christian

believers in Dallas: "Those who created our country—the Founding Fathers and Mothers—understood that there is a divine order which transcends the human order. They saw the state, in fact, as a form of moral order and felt that the bedrock of moral order is religion. The Mayflower Compact began with the words, 'In the name of God, amen.'

"The Declaration of Independence appeals to 'Nature's God' and the 'Creator' and 'The Supreme Judge of the world' . . . James Madison in the Federalist Papers admitted that in the creation of our Republic he perceived the hand of the Almighty. John Jay, the first chief justice of the United States, warned that we must never forget the God from whom our blessings flowed" (transcript of speech, Aug. 23, 1984).

National morality and belief in God

Patriot that he was, Ronald Reagan also understood the necessity of right national behavior and that such behavior is a natural result of a sincere belief in God and His laws. To make his point, in the same Texas speech he also quoted the words of George Washington, the first U.S. president: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead

to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports . . . Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."

Later in the speech President Reagan added: "*We poison our society when we remove its theological underpinnings.* We court corruption when we leave it bereft of belief . . . Those who believe must be free to speak or act on their belief, to apply moral teaching to public questions . . .

"Without God, we're mired in the material, that flat world that only tells us what the senses perceive. Without God there is a coarsening of society. And without God,

democracy will not and cannot long endure. If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under" (ibid.).

This constitutes a stern national warning from one of the greatest and most beloved presidents in U.S. history. On occasion Ronald Reagan did not hesitate to remind America of some of its specific weaknesses. For example, his words from a July 9, 1979, radio broadcast (he wrote most of these himself, some 670 original handwritten drafts of which survive), recorded during the Iranian hostage crisis, proved quite prophetic:

"We know that we are paying a high price in dollars for imported oil—how much are we paying in loss of independence and self-respect? . . . Are we choosing paths that are politically expedient and morally questionable . . . Are we as Americans so thirsty for oil that we'll forget the traditions upon which our country is founded and let our foreign policy be dictated by anyone who has oil for sale? If so we may be nearer the dustbin of history than we realize" (*Reagan in His Own Hand*, 2001, p. 16).

Belief in the Bible and prayer

This popular president always sought to be optimistic about America and her future. He wrote the following in a personal letter to the founder of *Christian Families Today*: "I have long believed that the American people are hungry for a spiritual revival. I also believe that there are evidences that such a revival is taking place. It is true that we can still see pornography, drug use, profane and obscene language commonly used, etc. . . .

"But there are other signs, increased membership in the fundamental religions where [the] social gospel has not replaced the Bible. Let me reassure you that 2 *Chronicles 7:14* is ever present in my mind. My daily prayer is that God will help me to use this position [as president] to serve Him" (letter to Greg Brezina, Oct. 25, 1982).

The verse to which President Reagan referred quotes God as saying: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

On occasion Ronald Reagan would compose a radio broadcast that reflected something of a special personal concern. For instance, like many Christians today he had a very high regard for the King James Version of the Bible and did not appreciate it when modern translations like the Good News Bible took considerable liberties with its majestic, classical language. Mr. Reagan illustrated his point with some indicative

examples. We quote just one:

"King James Version: 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way . . .'"

"Good News Bible: 'Someone is shouting in the desert, "Get the road ready . . .'"

His comment on the Good News Bible translation: "It sounds like a straw boss announcing lunch hour is over" (radio broadcast, Sept. 6, 1977).

The point for us is not so much that modern versions don't often help clarify the 1611 language of the King James Version (they do), but that Ronald Reagan would take such a keen interest in the relative merits of various Bible versions. Given our secular society today, we don't normally expect that of our national leaders.

Most Christians know that prayer and Bible study go very well together. While addressing a religious group in Florida, President Reagan said: "The other day in the East Room of the White House, at a meeting there, someone asked me whether I was aware of all the people praying for me. I had to say, 'Yes I am.' In fact, I believe in intercessory prayer" (address to the Association of Evangelists, Mar. 8, 1983).

His widow Nancy Reagan adds: "He never took off or landed in a plane without looking out the window and saying a silent prayer" (Nancy Reagan, "The Eternal Optimist," *Time*, June 14, 2004).

Prayers for protection are important. In a 1981 assassination attempt, the bullet that struck him came within an inch of his heart. "God," he wrote in his autobiography, "for some reason, had seen fit to give me his blessing and allow me to live a while longer" (*An American Life*, 1990, p. 262).

One of President Reagan's thoughts on the way to the operating room was to pray for the misguided and mentally disturbed would-be assassin, John Hinckley, Jr. He later wrote, "He was a mixed-up young man from a fine family. That day, I asked the Lord to heal him, and to this day, I still do" (ibid., p. 263).

After he returned to the White House, the president wrote in his diary: "Whatever happens now I owe my life to God and will try to serve him in every way I can" (ibid.).

God's plan for humanity

Of course, it still was a traumatic experience. Nancy Gibbs wrote in *Time* magazine's memorial edition: "Later after Reagan was restored to health, the effects of the attack lingered. 'There was a certain sadness,' said one of his old friends Senator Paul Laxalt. 'You could see it in his eyes. It wasn't just the physical pain. I think he

was deeply hurt emotionally that this could happen to him.'

"Reagan was reluctant to admit any such hurt, but he did acknowledge to an interviewer that it had been 'a reminder of mortality and the importance of time.' Beyond that he liked to say '*God has a plan for everyone*'" (Nancy Gibbs, "The All-American President," *Time*, June 14, 2004).

In commenting on her husband's "strong, unshakable religious beliefs," Mrs. Reagan wrote, "Ronnie always believed that God had a plan for each of us and that we might not know what it is now, but eventually we will" (*Time*, June 14, 2004).

In a letter of condolence to a friend's wife, Mr. Reagan wrote: "We can only trust in God's mercy and *know that He does have a plan for each of us* . . . Know that you have our deepest sympathy and that you are in our thoughts and prayers" (Letter to Mrs. Charles Grimm, July 6, 1987).

A good and decent man

In reading through many of President Reagan's personal letters and radio broadcasts, it becomes obvious that whatever we may make of his encounters in the political arena (his thrusts and parries were milder than most), on a one-on-one basis he came across as a good and decent man. Loyal to friends and acquaintances throughout life, he wrote letters to ordinary people he didn't even know—not just to those concerned with affairs of state.

Ronald Reagan responded without malice to vitriolic personal attacks and tried to reason with his attackers. He didn't answer in kind. As noted British columnist William Rees-Mogg observed: "His speeches were those of a very likeable man, tolerant, easy-going and humorous. He never made harsh personal attacks."

In his article of appreciation, Mr. Rees-Mogg also stated that "he was on the ordinary citizen's side and gently mocked pomposity, even when he was the most powerful man on earth" ("Reagan Dreamt Heroic Dreams and Made a Difference," *The Times* [London], June 7, 2004).

The *Time* feature article rightly concluded: "For a man with the power to pull history around a corner; to end a long, cold fearsome war; to change the conversation of our politics and culture as much by the sheer force of his personality as by the power of his ideas, Ronald Reagan was an unaccountably modest and good-natured soul" (Gibbs, June 14, 2004).

Perhaps his religious beliefs and relationship with God accounted for his remarkable humility. **GN**

Has the Bible Been Preserved Accurately?

Some Bible critics argue that we should disregard the Bible because it's impossible that our modern versions could match the original texts. But how does this argument stand up to scrutiny?

by Ken Graham

Has the Bible been preserved accurately? Are the Scriptures that we read today the same as the ones originally written so long ago? Has the Bible been changed, or does it constitute the same inspired words written by the prophets and the apostles?

Of course, there are language differences because the Bible was not originally written in English. The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew, with a few parts in Aramaic, and the New Testament was penned in Greek.

The Bible wasn't translated into English until the 14th century. But did it change over the many centuries until then?

These are important questions because if it can be shown that the Bible we have today is different from the one God originally inspired, why should we pay attention to it? If we can't



requirements for making scrolls of their holy books. The Masoretes required that all manuscripts have various word numbering systems. As an example of one test they used, when a new copy was made, they counted the number of words in it. If the copy didn't have the proper count, the manuscript was unusable and buried.

Such steps ensured that not a single word could be added to or left out of the Holy Scriptures. Through such steps the scrolls that formed the Hebrew Bible were copied meticulously, carefully and accurately, century after century.

What about the books of the Old Testament?

About A.D. 90 Jewish elders meeting in the Council at Jamnia, in Judea near the Mediterranean coast, affirmed that the canon—the set of writings acknowledged as being divinely inspired—of the Jewish Bible was complete and authoritative.

While there are some differences in organization—the Jewish Bible combines the text into 22 books while our modern Bibles divide the Old Testament into 39—the content is nonetheless the same. The differences are due to the fact that books like Joshua and Judges were written on one scroll, thus making them one book by Jewish count while they appear as separate books in our modern Bibles. Similarly, 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings all made up one book in Jewish reckoning, as did 1 and 2 Chronicles, though all these were divided into multiple books in our English translations.

The Jewish Council at Jamnia rejected other questionable books, known as the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, as inspired or authoritative. So they are not part of this count or the accepted Hebrew canon. Thus these books are left out of most modern Bibles.

Through the centuries the Jewish people were very careful to preserve the Old

The Bible wasn't translated into English until the late 1300s. **Did the Bible change** over the many centuries up until then?

trust that it has been accurately translated and preserved, there is little reason to trust that it is indeed God's Word. So it's very important that we see what the historical record shows. How can we know?

Has the Old Testament been accurately preserved?

The Hebrew Bible, what today is called the Old Testament, is far older than the New Testament—having been written between approximately 1446 and 400 B.C., some 25 to 35 centuries ago. Is the version we have today a faithful and accurate rendition of the original?

Let's take a look at how it was preserved for us.

The apostle Paul wrote that the oracles of God were committed to the Jewish people

(Romans 3:2). For centuries they carefully and meticulously preserved their sacred writings. The manuscripts of the Bible that we have today were written by hand long ago, well before the invention of the printing press. The Jewish scribes who made the copies of the Old Testament Scriptures from generation to generation were scrupulously cautious about their copying procedures.

This meticulous care was perpetuated by the Masoretes, a special group of Jewish scribes who were entrusted with making copies of the Hebrew Bible from about A.D. 500 to 900. Their version of the Old Testament, widely considered the most authoritative, came to be known as the Masoretic Text.

Before and during this time, trained copyists followed various meticulous and stringent

Testament as we have it today. The majority of the manuscripts that we have today of the Old Testament are virtually identical to the copies made by the Masoretes, with very little difference between them.

What do we know from the field of textual criticism?

“Textual criticism” is the field of study in which experts compare the various manuscripts in existence to one another, seeking to come as close as possible to what the original author wrote. The original manuscripts are

successive copies of handwritten documents, even with the greatest of care of the scribes involved. Thus, the field of study called textual criticism exists to try to identify these variations and determine what the original texts said.

After 1455 and Johannes Gutenberg’s invention of the first movable metal type printing press, the Bible could be printed over and over again with predictable accuracy, so variants no longer were a concern. However, before that time manuscripts still had variants. Thus the period before 1455

of the Old Testament dating mostly from the first century B.C.) were discovered in 1947, many people were initially concerned that they would show marked differences with the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament.

Because the Dead Sea Scrolls were a thousand years older than the oldest and most reliable Masoretic Text we have today (the Leningrad Codex, dating to A.D. 1008), scholars thought they might find drastic differences over that long passage of time. But did they?

After years of study, they found that the Dead Sea Scrolls they examined have only a relatively few minor, insignificant differences from today’s Masoretic Text of the Old Testament.

“These oldest-known Biblical texts have one absolutely crucial feature,” explains historian Ian Wilson. “Although . . . a thousand years older than the texts previously available in Hebrew, they show just how faithful the texts of our present Bibles are to those from two thousand years ago and how little they have changed over the centuries. Two Isaiah scrolls, for instance, contain the Isaiah text almost exactly as it is in our present-day Bibles . . .

“Although there are, as we might expect, some minor differences, these are mostly the interchange of a word or the addition or absence of a particular phrase. For example, whereas in present-day Bibles Isaiah 1:15 ends, ‘Your hands are covered in blood’, one of the Dead Sea pair adds, ‘and your fingers with crime’. Where Isaiah 2:3 of our present-day Bibles reads, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of [the LORD]’, to the house of the God of Jacob’, the Dead Sea Scroll version omits, ‘to the mountain of [the LORD]’.

“Such discrepancies are trifling, and there can be no doubt that the Biblical books someone stored away so carefully at Qumran two thousand years ago were as close to those we know in our present Hebrew and Old Testament Bibles as makes no difference” (*The Bible Is History*, 1999, p. 205).

Where there are differences, however, this does not mean the Dead Sea Scrolls were correct and the Masoretic Text incorrect. We should keep in mind that the Dead Sea Scrolls were not necessarily transcribed with the same meticulous preservation practices as those used by the main scribes of the time. Nonetheless, the remarkable discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is astounding confirmation that the Old Testament has indeed been accurately preserved for us today.

What about the New Testament?

Compared to the scarcity of ancient Old

Why Are There Differences in Ancient New Testament Manuscripts?

In the ancient world, copies of the New Testament books were made in several major locations. The manuscripts originating in these locations are grouped in what are called *families* of texts. Manuscripts from these locations generally have variations common to other texts from the same location.

Textual critics hold different opinions about how many families of texts there are of the New Testament. Some will say there are three major families; others might argue there are four or five.

The three major locations and families are the Western (mostly Latin) texts from Italy and the West, the texts from around Asia Minor in the east (Constantinople/Byzantium in what is now Turkey), and those from Egypt, particularly Alexandria.

Some scholars say that Syriac, or texts from western Mesopotamia, constitute a fourth family. Others declare that the Caesarean versions, those originating around Palestine, might be a fifth family.

Because of geographic isolation, through the centuries each of these families tended to “inbreed” or become unique to itself, producing identifiable variations.

Today textual critics are divided on which of the thousands of manuscripts and papyri coming from these areas are most accurate. For most, the arguments boil down to two areas—the Alexandrian (Egyptian) Greek and the Byzantine Greek texts. When we compare the manuscripts from each we find a number of variants between these families. So there was some failure to copy one or the other accurately. The question is, which is more accurate and which is less accurate?

Most scholars today think that the texts from Alexandria, because they are older, are more accurate or closer to the originals. The oldest Alexandrian manuscripts date from around the fourth century after Christ while the oldest Byzantine manuscripts come from around the seventh century. However, does older necessarily equate to better? There are several factors to consider.

First, we must consider that there are fewer than 45 texts from Alexandria, compared with around 5,000 of the Byzantine manuscripts. Thus the Alexandrian texts appear to be a tiny minority.

Second, Alexandria was a major center of gnosticism, a religious/philosophical movement that corrupted early Christianity. When we look at the variants in the Alexandrian texts, we find that their gnostic leanings tend to portray Jesus Christ as neither divine nor having come in the flesh as a physical human being.

A third area to consider is that the Byzantine scribes were known to be reputable in their faithfulness in the copying process. Many more points could be argued, but English translations based on the Byzantine texts of the New Testament appear to be more accurate. (For more information, request or download our reprint article “Which Bible Translation Should I Use?”)

For your peace of mind, however, the numbers of variants of any real significance between the Alexandrian texts and the Byzantine texts are few. We could sum up the differences by saying that 99.5 percent of the New Testament is the same no matter which version you have or use. The remaining half a percent would amount to about 20,000 variants. Of these, the overwhelming majority are minor scribal errors such as differences in spelling.

Of some 2,500 real differences, only about 300 involve any substantial difference in meaning. These variants involve less than one tenth of one percent of the text of the New Testament. The numbers of variants that actually affect the meaning—not just spelling—of the text are minuscule.

called “autographs,” literally “self writings.” Today, with the passage of so much time, no autographs—original copies—exist of any of the Old or New Testament books.

Over the centuries minor differences (called variants) often make their way into

is where textual criticism comes into play.

Because of the strict requirements and few locations where the Old Testament was copied, few variants or versions of the Old Testament ever came into existence. When the Dead Sea Scrolls (primarily portions

Testament manuscripts, the New Testament is a different story. Today literally thousands of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament exist, each of varying antiquity and from various locations. But, like the Old Testament,

5,700 hand-written Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. In addition, there are more than 9,000 manuscripts in other languages (e.g., Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Arabic). Some of these nearly 15,000 manuscripts are

manuscripts that were written soon after the originals . . . The time gap between the original and the first surviving copy is still vastly shorter than anything else from the ancient world. The *Iliad* has the next shortest gap at about 500 years; most other ancient works are 1,000 years or more from the original. The New Testament gap is about 25 years and maybe less.

“ . . . The New Testament documents have more manuscripts, earlier manuscripts, and more abundantly supported manuscripts than the best ten pieces of classical literature combined . . . ”

no autographs of the New Testament books exist today either.

How reliable are these manuscripts, and how do they compare to other works from this general time period?

“ . . . The New Testament documents have more manuscripts, earlier manuscripts, and more abundantly supported manuscripts than the best ten pieces of classical literature combined . . . At last count, there are nearly

complete Bibles, others are books or pages, and a few are just fragments . . .

“The next closest work is the *Iliad* by Homer, with 643 manuscripts. Most other ancient works survive on fewer than a dozen manuscripts, yet few historians question the historicity of the events those works describe . . .

“Not only does the New Testament enjoy abundant manuscript support, but it also has

“ . . . The early church fathers—men of the second and third centuries such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and others—quoted the New Testament so much (36,289 times, to be exact) that all but eleven verses of the New Testament can be reconstructed just from their quotations . . . So we not only have thousands of manuscripts but thousands of quotations from those manuscripts” (Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, 2004, pp. 225-228).

Sir Frederic Kenyon, authority on ancient manuscripts, sums up the status of the New

How Did We Get the Bible?

How was the Bible actually put together? How do we know that the Bible contains the books that it should have? These are important questions, and many books have been written to address them.

These questions concern the *canon*—the group or list of books that are considered to be inspired by God. The word *canon* is originally from a Semitic word, *qaneh* in Hebrew. It meant “reed” or “stalk,” which is how it is used in Job 40:21 and 1 Kings 14:15. From this it conveys a secondary meaning of something with which to measure, a standard or benchmark.

The word then found its way into Greek, where it took the form *kanon*. And through Greek and into the Latin *canna*, it comes to us in the English form of *canon*—not to be confused, of course, with the large, heavy military gun known as a *cannon* (a word which also derives from the root meaning “reed” because it is a tube).

The dictionary states that other meanings of *canon* include regulations, principles, rules or standards of judgment. These bring us back to the ancient meaning of a measure, standard or benchmark—in this case the issue of which writings meet the standard or benchmark of being considered part of the inspired, hand-recorded Word of God.

The word *Bible* comes to us again through Latin from the Greek word *biblia*, meaning “books.” It contains the *books* (originally written on scrolls) that are acknowledged or understood to be the canonical—divinely inspired—books of God. One might say, accurately, that they are the *standard* by which every human being should live.

As the apostle Paul wrote to his fellow minister Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15-17: “From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

“Holy Scriptures” in verse 15 means “sacred writings”—words that were divinely inspired by God. Verse 16 says literally in Greek that “all Scripture is *God-breathed* . . .” [NIV, emphasis added throughout]. And indeed we find the Bible to truly be the breath of God for human beings in whom He placed the breath of life.

The Bible is a manual intended by God to show human beings two things: It shows us how to live, and it is a guide to God’s plan for the salvation of mankind.

What makes a book inspired or canonical?

In the book *The Origin of the Bible*, edited by Philip Comfort, contributor R.T. Beckwith writes: “What qualifies a book for a place in the canon of the Old Testament or New Testament is not just that it is ancient, informative and helpful, and has long been read and valued by God’s people, but that it has God’s authority for what it says. God spoke through its human author to teach his people what to believe and how to behave.

“It is not just a record of revelation, but the permanent written form of revelation. This is what we mean when we say that the Bible is ‘inspired,’ and it makes the books of the Bible in this respect different from all other books” (1992, p. 52).

Three other comments in the same book, by Milton Fisher, show how the Church came to recognize the canon of the New Testament:

- “The church’s concept of canon, derived first of all from the reverence given the Old Testament Scriptures, rested in the conviction that the apostles were uniquely authorized to speak in the name of the One who possessed all authority—the Lord Jesus Christ” (p. 76).
- “Apostolic speaking on behalf of Christ was recognized in the church, whether in personal utterance or in written form” (p. 77).
- “This is what is really meant by canonization—recognition of the divinely authenticated word” (p. 77).

The Old Testament or Hebrew Bible

The books of the Old and New Testament canon were written and canonized over some 1,600 years, beginning in the 15th century B.C. with the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) and ending near the end of the first century after Christ with the book of Revelation. No historian left a full account of the individual steps in this long process. However, we do have tidbits of information here and there along the road that give us some knowledge about what took place.

Over the thousand years during which it was written, the Old Testament underwent at least five periods of canonization. Ezra, a priest and scribe, apparently was the one responsible for the final collection and arrangement of the books of the Hebrew Bible (what we call the Old Testament) around 450 B.C. With his canonization, the Old Testament was essentially complete. In A.D. 90 Jewish elders and

Testament this way: "It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain: Especially is this the case with the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world" (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, revised by A.W. Adams, 1958, p. 23).

Dealing with different translations

Critics may use textual differences and claims of errors to discredit the Bible. But the fact remains that God is ultimately responsible for His Word, and its accurate preservation and transmission over so many centuries is nothing short of miraculous.

However, God did choose to record and preserve His Word in the Hebrew and Greek

languages. When the Hebrew and Greek are translated into English, no one English translation preserves the complete essence of God's inspired thoughts. Regrettably, in moving from any language to another, something is always lost because not all words and concepts translate precisely.

Most people have found that they benefit from using several translations rather than relying on only one. And God has seen to it that we have several excellent English translations with which to obtain understanding, each with their own different strengths. We have found that the New King James Version usually best serves our publishing efforts in putting across the gospel message as clearly as possible.

God promises to guide, through His Holy Spirit, the true believer into understanding the essence of His Word (John 16:13). He also provides an educated, trained ministry to explain His Word clearly and accurately for the edification and instruction of those He has called (Ephesians 4:11-16;

2 Timothy 4:1-4). To this end *The Good News* magazine serves as a tool to help you better understand the Bible. We can be sure that the Word of God has been preserved accurately for us today. We must make sure to read it, study it, treasure it and put it into practice in our lives. **GN**

Recommended Reading

You can discover many proofs that the Bible is the accurate, inspired Word of God. To learn more, request or download your free copy of *Is the Bible True?* This booklet explores some of the proofs from science, history and archaeology that the Bible truly is God's Word to humanity. To better understand the differences in Bible translations, request or download our free reprint article "Which Bible Translation Should I Use?"



Contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download them from our Web site at

www.gnmagazine.org

authorities met at the Council of Jamnia, where the canon of the Hebrew Bible was confirmed as authoritative and complete, as it had evidently been considered to be long before this.

Some six decades earlier, Jesus Christ Himself affirmed His acceptance of the three divisions of the Old Testament (Law, Prophets and Writings) as canonical. Notice His statement in Luke 24:44: "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in *the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms* concerning Me." (The last section here is also

The Bible is composed of several dozen books containing history, prophecy, poetry, laws, biographies and personal letters. How did these particular books become a part of the Bible?

known as the Writings, called "Psalms" after its first and largest book.)

The three-part organization of the Old Testament was commonly known and understood in Jesus' day. The Christian churches have long since accepted the Old Testament in this format as Scripture.

The New Testament

No one is absolutely certain about how the New Testament canon came together. We do know that in A.D. 397 the Synod of Carthage confirmed as canonical the 27 books of what is now our New Testament. But it really only recognized that these 27 books already had been in use and read in the churches for some three centuries.

There are two theories about how the canon of the New Testament came together. The one adhered to by most today says that it was a gradual process over nearly three centuries and that no one person was key in the process.

The second, lesser-known theory holds that the apostles Paul, Peter and John were the final canonizers of the New Testament, and that John, with help from other believers, was able to finish and distribute copies of the entire 27 books to the churches in Asia Minor and the Holy Land.

Neither theory has explicit proof, though both have some supporting evidence.

The latter view, which the publishers of *The Good News* consider to be correct, appears to be supported in several New Testament passages. One is 2 Peter 3:16, where the apostle Peter, writing to the early Church, commented that he considered the letters of Paul part of the "Scriptures."

Peter was putting the writings of the apostle Paul on an equal footing with the Old Testament Scriptures. This would indicate that the apostles already considered some of the apostolic writings divinely inspired and deserving to be included in the canon of Holy Scripture.

Paul himself appears to have had a hand in the process of canonization of the New Testament, selecting which books and letters, particularly of his writings, were to be preserved for us.

In 2 Timothy 4:13, the last of Paul's prison letters that remains from before his execution, he tells Timothy to "bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments."

This is a puzzling request, unless Paul was asking Timothy to bring books and letters from which he would select those that would be part of the canon. We know that some of his letters, such as the one to the church in Laodicea mentioned in Colossians 4:16, were *not* preserved—so obviously some selection process took place. Presumably those Paul chose were then passed off to other apostles, likely Peter and then John.

It seems most likely that the apostle John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20) and who outlived all the other apostles, under God's inspiration made the final selections of the writings that would be included as Scripture in what we know as the New Testament.

In Revelation 22:18-19, in the final chapter of the final book of the Bible, John gives a warning that appears to indicate that the Bible was then complete, with nothing more to be added or taken away. "If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

In A.D. 397 the Synod of Carthage accepted the 27 books that comprise our New Testament as canonical. But they were not the canonizers of these books. They had long since been distributed and were accepted and read in churches throughout the empire for some 300 years.

We can rest assured that the eternal God had a sure hand in ensuring His Word would survive for future generations and we have exactly the writings He chose to be preserved for us.

William Tyndale: He Gave His Life to Give Us the Bible

“William Tyndale’s Bible translations have been the best-kept secrets in English Bible history. Many people have never heard of Tyndale; very few have (knowingly) read him. Yet no other Englishman—not even Shakespeare—has reached so many.” —David Daniell, leading Tyndale scholar

by John Ross Schroeder

In his autobiography, famed movie actor Charlton Heston (*Ben Hur*, *The Ten Commandments*, *El Cid*) marveled that a committee could produce such a monumental classic as the King James Version of the English-language Bible of 1611.

But according to British author Brian Moynahan, William Tyndale’s most recent biographer, “A complete analysis of the Authorised Version [KJV] . . . was made in 1998. It shows that Tyndale’s words account for 84 per cent of the New Testament, and 75 per cent of the Old Testament books that he translated” (*William Tyndale: If God Spare My Life*, 2003, p. 1).

“Much of the credit [for the King James Version of the Bible] should go to Tyndale, whose translation, according to a recent study, was used 83 percent of the time . . .”

Tyndale’s contribution to the English Bible

David Daniell, the leading Tyndale scholar of our modern age, adds: “William Tyndale gave us our English Bible. The sages assembled by King James to prepare the Authorised Version of 1611, so often praised for unlikely corporate inspiration, took over Tyndale’s work. Nine-tenths of the Authorised Version’s New Testament is Tyndale’s . . .” (*William Tyndale: A Biography*, 1994, p. 1).

Well before any thorough, painstaking analytical comparative study had ever been done, the noted British Bible scholar F.F. Bruce commented on the work of the compilers of the King James Version. “All the existing English versions lay before the translators . . . But the abiding influence of one man in particular may be traced throughout great portions of their work, and that man was William Tyndale” (*The Books and the Parchments*, 1984, p. 221).

An article in the December 2003 *Bible Review* said: “Careful textual comparisons reveal the debt owed by these [King James

Version] translators to previous or contemporary sources. *Much of the credit should go to Tyndale*, whose translation, according to a recent study, was used 83 percent of the time, including for such famous lines as ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and earth’ (Genesis 1:1), ‘Let there be light’ (Genesis 1:3) and ‘In the beginning was the Word’ (John 1:1)” (Leonard Greenspoon, “How the Bible Became the King’s Owne English,” emphasis added).

Whether the figure is rounded off to 90 percent or is viewed more precisely in the mid-80s, William Tyndale’s contribution to the King James Version (the New Testament

the 1380s. Wycliffe’s Bible preceded Tyndale’s by about 150 years and proved very popular. However, heresy-hunting



William Tyndale and the Apostle Paul

A letter written from prison by William Tyndale lay buried in the archives of the Council of Brabant in Belgium for some 300 years. The contents are heartbreaking.

“ . . . I beg your Lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here through the winter, you will request the commissary to have the kindness to send me, from the goods of mine which he has, a warmer cap, for I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell. And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark.

“But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency, to be urgent with the commissary, that he will kindly permit me to have the Hebrew Bible, the Hebrew grammar and Hebrew dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study . . . I will be patient, abiding the will of God, to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ . . .”

Centuries before, while awaiting martyrdom in Rome, the apostle Paul had written to Timothy with the following urgent requests: “Be diligent to come to me quickly . . . Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments” (2 Timothy 4:13). Paul’s urgent pleas would be eerily echoed by William Tyndale, also in prison and awaiting execution, 15 centuries later.

in particular) and the English Bible as a whole is monumental.

The early British translators

Modern mankind owes a great debt to early Bible translators like Tyndale and his predecessor John Wycliffe, the philosopher and theologian who gave the British people God’s Word in the English language during

Catholic religious authorities eventually banned his translation.

All of these courageous men (and there were others, like Miles Coverdale and John Rogers) went through hell and high water—often risking their lives—to bring us the Scriptures in English. And once the Bible in English was sufficiently established, first Britain and later America eventually caused

the Word of God to be translated into many other languages—even as the English Bible itself was spread all over the globe.

Tyndale's version was the first rendering into English directly from Hebrew and Greek, the original biblical languages (along with a small portion in Aramaic). Catholic religious authorities clung to their Latin version and forbade translations into other languages. But as Tyndale noted, "The properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin" (quoted by Moynahan, p. 179).

12 years of translating in Europe

Tyndale's English version was a Bible born in European exile. Persecution by the Catholic bishops in England required that he traverse the English Channel in 1524 to accomplish the task.

A written prohibition, composed by

So Tyndale had little choice but to emigrate to Europe. Most probably his first port of call, in 1524, was Hamburg, a north German city with a fairly solid reputation for tolerance at that time—a friendly environment sorely sought by the 30-year-old translator.

Later Tyndale moved to Wittenberg in eastern Germany, where Martin Luther had dramatically confronted the Roman Catholic Church. (Luther had barely preceded Tyndale by translating the New Testament into the German language in 1522. The Old Testament followed in 1534.)

Then, sometime in 1525, Tyndale traveled to Cologne, where a small portion of his English New Testament was first printed by Peter Quentell's press. The actual printing got as far as Matthew 22 before the authorities raided the premises that housed the printing press. But the wary British translator had just departed with copies of what

"Worms Edition," a pocket-sized rendition of the New Testament, his first complete version including all 27 books. (In 1994 the British Library purchased the sole remaining complete copy for £1 million.)

According to *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, "Cardinal Wolsey ordered Tyndale seized at Worms." But the translator first found refuge in Marburg, and then he decided to move on to Antwerp in Belgium. Here Tyndale completed the translation of the Torah or Pentateuch—the five books of Moses. Then, early in 1529, this traveling translator boarded a ship bound for Hamburg, the North German city he had visited on the first leg of his European odyssey.

It was on this fateful voyage that William Tyndale experienced a major setback in his quest to translate the entire Bible. Somewhat like the apostle Paul before him so many centuries before, Tyndale was shipwrecked somewhere off the coast of the Netherlands. His entire English Pentateuch, freshly translated, perished in the sea.

Tyndale biographer Brian Moynahan wrote: "The shipwreck on the Dutch coast had cost him, 'both money, his copies and time,' [John] Foxe [author of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*] says. He lost all of his books, and was 'compelled to begin all again anew, to the 'doubling of his labours.' The reference books he will have had to replace include the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, Hebrew grammars and the Septuagint" (*William Tyndale: If God Spare My Life*, p. 177).

I remember reading about Ernest Hemingway's feelings when he learned that his first wife Hadley had lost the manuscript of *The Sun Also Rises* (later to become the first of the famous American author's successful novels) on a train journey. Like the determined Hemingway who rewrote the novel, Tyndale showed his mettle by translating the Torah all over again in the home of Hamburg resident Margaret Von Emmerson. Some believe he may have been assisted by Miles Coverdale.

Wrote F.F. Bruce: "Next to Tyndale, the man to whom the lovers of the English Bible owe the greatest debt is Myles Coverdale (1488-1569). Coverdale was not the scholar that Tyndale was, but the best part of his life was devoted to the task of making the Bible accessible to his fellow countrymen in their own tongue" (*The English Bible: A History of Translations*, 1963, p. 53).

A translator of skill and courage

Many Bible scholars since have praised the courage, resourcefulness and stubborn persistence of Tyndale. Consider, for example, *The Cambridge History of the Bible*: "England was fortunate to have in William

Tyndale as Translator

Where did William Tyndale learn Greek and Hebrew? Englishman Richard Croke had occupied the chair of Greek at Leipzig (Germany), but this professor came back to Cambridge in 1518 to begin his lectures on Greek. Tyndale's competence in this language may well be due to Croke's lectures. Before that, Professor Grocyn had also taught excellent Greek in Oxford during the time Tyndale was there.

What about Hebrew? David Daniell has written: "In Europe, rabbinical schools flourished and knowledge of Hebrew was growing. Tyndale learned Hebrew: perhaps in Worms, the main centre of Jewish learning in Germany. Hebrew was almost unknown in England" (*The English Bible*, p. 147). Maybe translating the Old Testament from the original Hebrew became a secondary reason for Tyndale crossing the English Channel.

Completely verifiable answers to these questions may never be fully discovered in this life. Because of constant persecution, Tyndale had to slip into the woodwork most of the time. Verifiable historical facts are few indeed. As his latest biographer commented, "For a controversialist who was recklessly brave in print, Tyndale had an extraordinary ability to fade into the background" (Moynahan, *William Tyndale: If God Spare My Life*, p. 33).

But what is not in dispute is well stated by David Daniell: "Tyndale's gift not only to English-speaking New Testament Christianity, but to language and literature, secular as well as religious, came from a unique ability as translator.

"He had the technical skills of fluent and accurate Greek, Hebrew, Latin and German (and other languages) and the machinery of recent dictionaries and grammars. He had a complete understanding of the complex art of rhetoric. His twin achievements as a translator, still admired, were accuracy and clarity, the latter allowing him variety of expression" (*The Bible in English*, p. 133).

His language gifts played a major role in establishing the foundation of the English-language Bibles we use and enjoy today.

British clergy in 1408, strictly "forbade anyone to translate, or even read, any parts of vernacular versions of the Bible, without express episcopal permission," which was adamantly refused to Tyndale by Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London, during the summer of 1523 (David Daniell, *Tyndale's New Testament*, 1995, p. xxix).

During this fateful period Tyndale understood "at last not only that there was no room in my Lord of London's Palace to translate the New Testament, but also *there was no place to do it in all of England*" (Tyndale, *Preface to Translation of Pentateuch*, 1530, emphasis added).

had been completed thus far.

It was uncanny how again and again Tyndale was often just that much ahead of those who wished to halt the publication of the Bible in English. The religious authorities in England, motivated by Cardinal Wolsey, had set their European counterparts against Tyndale.

Complete New Testament finally translated

Tyndale then fled with his meager operations, traveling via the Rhine River to Worms, another continental German city with a reputation for tolerance. In 1526 he managed to publish 6,000 copies of the

Tyndale the man who could do what was wanted, a man of sufficient scholarship to work from Hebrew and Greek, with genius to fashion a fitting English idiom *and faith and courage to persist whatever it cost him*” (S.L. Greenslade, editor, 1963, p. 141, emphasis added).

In any event, Tyndale spent most of 1529 translating the Pentateuch from Hebrew into English—finally finishing it in 1530. He said of the book of Deuteronomy: “This is a book worthy to be read in day and night and never to be out of hands . . . and a very pure gospel” (quoted by Moynahan, p. 179).

William Tyndale reached the apex of his translating skills with the revised New Testament of 1534. For instance, in Matthew’s Gospel he replaced “Blessed are the meek and lowly in spirit, who inherit the kingdom of heaven” (1526 version) with the more direct and pleasantly familiar “Blessed are the peacemakers” (1534). Also, in Philippians he replaced “Perform your own salvation” (1526) with “*Work out your own*

of Belgium and in modern times the European Union’s principal base of operations. Although the prison where he had been incarcerated has long since disappeared, nearly 10 years ago I visited a somewhat similar nearby prison site constructed in the Napoleonic age. Tyndale’s experience must



The religious establishment martyred this man who some scholars believe . . . has never been equaled as an English Bible translator.

salvation with fear and trembling” (1534, emphasis added).

In those few years remaining to him, sometime between 1530 and early 1535, Tyndale also translated Joshua, Judges and the six historical books of 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles along with the book of Jonah. “By the spring of 1535 he had certainly finished translating the historical books of the Old Testament, Joshua to 2 Chronicles” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 2003, p. 152). F.F. Bruce adds that he translated Jonah in 1531 (*The Books and the Parchments*, p. 215).

These manuscripts were passed on to John Rogers, who published them in *Matthew’s Bible* in 1537. David Daniell adds: “John Rogers assembled all of Tyndale’s biblical translations, and a complete English Bible was printed by Matthew Crom in Antwerp” (*The Bible in English*, p. 157). John Rogers was himself martyred later during Queen Mary’s reign.

In May of 1535, the authorities finally found and arrested Tyndale in Antwerp, halting his goal of translating the entire Bible into English.

A martyr’s death near Brussels

William Tyndale had moved back to what is now Belgium, where his life ended in painful martyrdom at Vilvorde, approximately six miles from Brussels—capital city

have been horrendous beyond imagination.

I later learned that Tyndale’s cell was dug under and adjacent to a river—clearly a catalyst for even worse conditions than the Napoleonic prison. Yet he desperately wanted to continue his translating work on the Old Testament even in a dank, damp, dark cell void of any sunlight (see “William Tyndale and the Apostle Paul,” page 24).

We who normally read the Scriptures in circumstances many times more comfortable should deeply appreciate the raw courage of these early translators. Some of these men died to bring you the Bible. In 1531 Tyndale had told Stephen Vaughn of “the great danger wherewith I am everywhere compassed” (quoted by Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 153).

On Oct. 6, 1536, at age 42, William Tyndale was affixed to the stake, strangled and then burned.

The religious establishment martyred this man who some scholars believe, in his mastery of the English rhythm, phrasing and styling, has never been equaled as a Bible translator. F.F. Bruce caught the spirit of his genius: “Tyndale, working under the white heat of potential martyrdom, rises at times to a poetic glow, transcending the style of the original Greek” (*The Books and the Parchments*, 1950 edition, p. 13).

There is a story that even King Henry VIII of England apparently wanted to spare the

translator’s life, but Roman Catholic authorities insisted on his execution. Tyndale’s last words on the stake consisted of a prayer that God would open the eyes of the king of England.

But in the meantime, F.F. Bruce summarized the disheartening circumstances: “Tyndale died a martyr’s death, vilified by authorities in church and state in England. Nothing was too bad to say about his translation. Thousands of copies were seized on entering this country and publicly burned” (*The Books and the Parchments*, 1984, p. 216).

Yet, paradoxically, Tyndale’s final prayer was answered only months later when the English-language Bible was finally accepted by the crown. “Within months of Tyndale’s martyrdom, a complete English Bible, two-thirds of it Tyndale’s work, and licensed by Henry VIII, was circulating in Britain” (Daniell, *The English Bible*, p. 157).

Although Tyndale received no personal credit in the aftermath of his death—and even several centuries afterwards—F.F. Bruce adds: “But when royal policy changed in England . . . and the translation of the Bible into English was authorised, the version which won the royal favour and was placed in every parish church in England [able at last to be read by everyone who could read] was basically Tyndale’s . . .” (*The Books and the Parchments*, 1984, p. 216).

What a debt we owe to those who gave their lives to give us the Word of God! **GN**

Biographical Timeline

- **1494 or 1495:** Born in Gloucestershire County in England near the Welsh border.
- **1506:** Entered Magdalen School in Oxford.
- **1512:** Received Bachelor of Arts degree (Oxford).
- **1515:** Received Master of Arts degree (Oxford).
- **1516:** Entered University of Cambridge.
- **1521:** Ordained to priesthood.
- **1522:** Translated Erasmus’ *The Christian’s Soldiers Handbook* from Latin into English.
- **1524:** Crossed the English Channel to Europe—most probably to Hamburg (Germany).
- **1526:** New Testament published in Worms (Germany).
- **1530:** Pentateuch finally published.
- **1534:** Revised New Testament printed.
- **1535:** Arrested in Antwerp (Belgium).
- **1536:** Martyred near Brussels (Belgium).

Fourth Horseman

Continued from page 17

biomedical hazards in today's world. It's possible that new super strains may already be evolving. Medical science takes eight months or more to create a vaccine once a new strain appears. Researchers know they cannot stop a pandemic. By the time authorities understand what is happening, it would be too late to spare millions.

Last year's outbreak of SARS was rapidly identified and its genetic makeup fully decoded in a matter of weeks. Scientists from around the world worked together using the latest technology and communication tools to make this breakthrough. By contrast, it took several years to do the same with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) when it first surfaced more than 20 years ago.

However, it could take years to develop a viable vaccine to combat SARS. In the meantime other mutant strains are waiting to jump the species barrier from animals to humans. When they do, the results could be catastrophic. A breakdown caused by war in one part of the world, coupled with an outbreak of influenza, as in World War I, would be all it would take to set in motion a disease pandemic on the scale of those described in the book of Revelation.

The seals in context

When we look at the four seals of Revelation 6, we have to understand them in the context of God's age-long message to mankind. False religion, war, famine and disease are the results of man's broken relationship with Him. And when these horsemen make their rides, it will be after repeated warning and pleading from God to turn from sin and live righteously based on His eternal law of love toward God and man.

When God first set ancient Israel in a land of promise, He gave them instruction on how to live and conduct their affairs in a way that would bring peace and harmony. God wanted them to live with blessing and abundance, not suffering and misery. In His basic instruction, our Creator explained how to avoid the problems that will devastate the world with the opening of these seals.

Notice the pattern set in Leviticus 26: "You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 26:1).

Here is the solution to false religion, represented by the first seal and its horseman. Any form of worship other than that given

by God is a false idol having no value or validity. Lacking meaning or sense, it is worse than nothing because it leads to willful ignorance and lack of understanding of the true God and His purpose for human life.

False religion and deception breaks the bond between God and His creation and leads to false *systems* of religion. When this bond is broken, human relationships suffer, leading to conflict and war, represented by the second of the seals.

Verse 6 says: "I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid." This peace, in contrast to the second horsemen of war, is a gift from God when man obeys Him from the heart and puts His laws and ways first.

"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit" (Leviticus 26:3-4). For obedience, God promises the opposite of the third horseman of famine—plenty of food from abundant harvests.

And the antidote to the fourth horseman of disease? When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He told them: "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you" (Exodus 15:26). However, if they disobeyed and broke the covenant, they could expect disease to afflict them, their families and their nation.

Notice: "But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God . . . the Lord will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from the land into which you go to possess. The Lord will smite you with consumption, with fever and inflammation . . . and the tumors, the scurvy and the itch, from which you cannot be healed. The Lord will smite you with madness and blindness and dismay of [mind and] heart" (Deuteronomy 28:15, 21-22, 27-28, Amplified Bible).

Bound within the promises of blessings and curses is the larger context for the four seals of Revelation 6. The human race is bound to its Creator in a relationship that will reach a conclusion. God will accomplish His purpose of "bringing many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10). Mankind eventually will come face to face with God and admit that He is the one and only true God.

The book of Revelation shows God's merciful intervention in human affairs to both correct and save man from destruction. God will bring justice to the earth, but first there will be a time of unparalleled tribulation.

The fifth horseman

Barely a year ago the world experienced something resembling panic with the sudden appearance of the SARS virus. In Hong Kong all places of entertainment were temporarily shut down. Cities such as Toronto were put on a warning list as possible places to avoid due to the spread of SARS cases.

The world media machine contributed to both an awareness of the disease and a fear that, in the end, proved to be out of proportion to the danger posed by the virus. However, the economic impact due to decreased tourist and business travel had a significant effect on many areas.

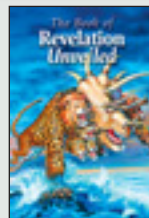
One can only imagine the worldwide impact to come from the culmination of the ride of the pale horseman. The world has seen relatively mild precursors. What will happen when modern communications and travel allow people to see literally millions of deaths?

Which brings us to the only hope this world has to survive this devastating stampede. People commonly refer to these four seals as "the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." Because the last word here is often synonymous with global destruction, there is typically no hope in this reference. But "Apocalypse" is simply the Greek name of the book of Revelation—meaning "revealing" or "unveiling." And this book reveals more than the gloom and doom that lie at the end of the age.

Indeed, John saw more than four horsemen in his vision. He saw *five*. Revelation 19:11-16 shows us the ride of the fifth horseman. It is the appearance of Jesus Christ, on a white horse from heaven, intervening in world affairs at its most crucial point. In the next issue, in our final article in this series, we will focus on this "horseman of hope," the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, whose appearance will bring an everlasting Kingdom of truth, peace, plenty and ultimate well-being. **GN**

Recommended Reading

What other factors play into the frightening ride of the pale horse, the color of death, at the time of the end? What leads to its fateful ride? How will humanity be affected by these and other events? Be sure to request or download our free booklets *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* to better understand these prophesied events.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download them from our Web site at

www.gnmagazine.org

Prove the Bible

Continued from page 9

In Isaiah 44, God reveals to Isaiah the actual name of the coming conqueror—Cyrus, known in history as Cyrus the Great:

“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: ‘I am the LORD, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone . . . who frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad . . . who says to Jerusalem, ‘you shall be inhabited,’ . . . who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be built,’ and to the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid’”’” (Isaiah 44:24-28).

This is only one of the hundreds of Bible prophecies that have been confirmed. Dozens of specific prophecies deal with Jesus Christ and were fulfilled in precise detail. No other ancient sacred book even dares to deal with predictive prophecy—making the Bible unique.

Wilbur Smith, professor of the Bible, says about this book: “It is the only volume ever produced by man, or a group of men, in which is to be found a large body of prophecies relating to individual nations, to Israel, to all the peoples of the earth, to certain cities, and to the coming of One who was to be the Messiah.

“The ancient world had many different devices for determining the future, known as divination, but not in the entire gamut of Greek and Latin literature, even though they use the words prophet and prophecy, can we find any real specific prophecy of a great historic event to come in the distant future, nor any prophecy of a Savior to arise in the human race . . .

“Mohammedanism cannot point to any prophecies of the coming of Mohammed uttered hundreds of years before his birth. Neither can the founders of any cult in this country rightly identify any ancient text specifically foretelling their appearance” (*The Incomparable Book*, 1961, pp. 9-10).

Fulfilled prophecy is proof of the Bible’s divine inspiration.

The Bible yields results!

The final proof of the Bible’s inspiration is very simple—*apply it and it will work for you.*

The Bible has yielded fantastic results in the lives of so many, and it can do the same for you. It is a *practical* book, explaining God’s will in virtually every facet of life and how to achieve true success. As U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt remarked, “A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.”

However, reaping its blessings takes *faith*—an active belief that God’s Word is true and that applying it will *yield* positive results. The Bible puts it this way: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Thanks to the Bible, we can enjoy so many benefits of Western civilization. As Susan Gallagher and Roger Lundin note: “The Bible is one of the most important documents in the history of civilization not only because of its status as holy, inspired Scripture, but also because of its pervasive influence on Western thought.

“As the predominant world view for at least fourteen centuries, Christianity and its great central text played a major role in the formation of Western culture. Consequently, many literary texts, even those in our post-Christian era, frequently draw on the Bible and Christian tradition” (*Literature Through the Eyes of Faith*, 1984, p. 120).

Modern science also owes much to the Bible. Philosopher Francis Schaeffer explains: “The rise of modern science did not conflict with what the Bible teaches; indeed, at a crucial point the Scientific Revolution rested upon what the Bible teaches. Both Alfred North Whitehead and J. Robert Oppenheimer have stressed that modern science was born out of the Christian world view . . .

“As far as I know, neither of the two men were Christians or claimed to be Christians, yet both were straightforward in acknowledging that modern science was born out of the Christian world view . . . In other words, because the early scientists believed that the world was created by a reasonable God, they were not surprised to discover that people could find out something true about nature and the universe on the basis of reason” (*How Should We Then Live?*, 1976, pp. 132-133).

God says in the Bible that every application of its principles will yield beneficial results. It states: “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; *it shall not return to Me void*, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Moreover, the impact Jesus Christ has had in millions of lives continues unabated. The French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte once said: “I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and

every other person in the world there is no possible terms of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him” (quoted by Frank Mead, *The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, 1965, p. 56).

Historian Philip Schaff adds: “This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon. Without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined. Without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet.

“Without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise, than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times” (*The Person of Christ*, 1913, p. 33).

Yes, the bottom line of proving the Bible true and that it should be taken at face value is simple—*it works!*

So, if any Bible skeptic comes asking for proofs that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, here is a way to remember these five proofs. Just remember the first key word of the first proof—UNITY—and then each of its letters reveals the first letter of the key words of the rest of the proofs:

U = *Unity*
N = *Non-mythical*
I = *Intact*
T = *Time*
Y = *Yield*

With these five proofs in mind, it will be easier for you to believe that the Bible is true and that you should take it in its literal and natural sense. **GN**

Recommended Reading

You’ll find many other fascinating proofs of the inspiration of the Bible in our booklet *Is the Bible True?*, yours free for the asking. To help you better comprehend the Bible, we’ve prepared a booklet, *How to Understand the Bible*, also free. And for an in-depth look at the Bible, dive into our monthly *Bible Reading Program*, offering clear, easy-to-follow commentary that makes the Bible really come alive! You’ll find it at www.ucg.org/brp.



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Letters From Our Readers

Tells it like it is

I've been reading *The Good News* for a short time now. I have found it to be well-documented and thought-provoking. I can respect a publication that tells it like it is, without the embellishment. I read it cover to cover whenever I receive it. My wife and I will be reading it for years to come. Keep up the good work.

B.W., Yellville, Arkansas

Letters from around the world

I saw your magazine in the house of my friend a few days ago and I am very impressed. This is a very good product for Christians. I want you to send me this magazine.

S.D., Pakistan

I'm 22 years old and from Iran. I graduated in the geology field last semester. At the moment I'm an English student in one of my city's institutes. One day the teacher brought a magazine to our class and introduced it to us. It was your gazette, *The Good News*. All of us had a glance. When I saw it, I found it so interesting and thought that it could help me to improve my knowledge of English and also make me more familiar with your religion. I would be happy if you sent me your magazine and accepted me as one of your subscribers.

Y.R., Iran

I have read your publications for many years, and each time I am impressed with the importance of their contents. I therefore beg you not to cease sending me your material so that I may day by day continue to make use of it in my Bible study. My prayer to the Creator is that He constantly supply your needs and give you strength so that you may continue to bring His message to each and every home as He instructs in Mark 16:15—"Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature . . ."

C.A., Venezuela

You cannot imagine how happy I am to have found your message. For about a year now we are on a new path, separating lies from truth. Sometimes we are quite shocked to see doctrines, teachings or interpretations upon which we have based our Christian faith. Your valuable, many-faceted articles are a big help for us and a confirmation in

our fight against unfounded teachings.

Reader from Switzerland

Thank you for sending me your magazine regularly. I am on the way to having more faith in God, and your magazine has its part in that. These magazines are wonderful, and I would like to receive a copy of each new booklet that you publish. My joy is great that there are still people today who write about God's Word like you do. Keep up the good work with your magazine. God bless you!

Reader from Germany

Canadian comments

I have been so impressed with your literature that I cannot wait to get more so I can learn and continue with my daily struggle in following Christ. This letter is to show my appreciation for the all the literature that I have already received. Thank you for being the only Christian publication that I trust 100 percent.

D.P., Alberta

Thank you for giving away such a magazine. I found it in a stand near my supermarket. I read it through and through. I've read so many things I never heard of before and I've gained real understanding. I am 83 years old and I do want to know more about my Savior.

M.R., Ontario

Please accept this donation for the work of God. May God richly bless your work as time is getting closer for the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. We need to get closer to God in prayer and Bible study, so we will be able to stand in times of trial.

L.A., Vancouver, British Columbia

Regarding Roman Catholic beliefs

I wanted to comment on the letter in the May-June issue in which someone was concerned that the United Church of God was anti-Catholic. I will simply say that I was raised Roman Catholic. But over the last year I have undergone some serious spiritual changes. As someone who followed what I thought to be right for my whole life, I was disturbed to come to an understanding that I was never given the whole story.

I'm glad I was given the opportunity to understand the Bible better. Sometimes

things can sound judgmental, but if you are willing to look beyond that and see the reasons, you might find out that no one is being judged. Rather the ideas should be looked at closely so that whatever you believe, you have the understanding of why and can support your beliefs inside yourself. For me, when I started looking I discovered my beliefs needed to change to support what I now understand as truth.

K.C., Lansing, Michigan

Jesus Christ: The Real Story

Please extend sincere thanks and appreciation to the writers of *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*. I have been reading your material for years and it is my feeling that this is the most thorough and well-done work ever.

B.N., Hawkins, Texas

My sister recently received your booklet *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*. She was telling me some of the truths in it, and they made a lot of sense. Please send me a copy.

M.A., Ithaca, New York

I just received your booklet *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*. Thank you. Your ministry is a blessing. Please receive this small gift. I know God will multiply it so that I can give more.

M.H., Bakersfield, California

Information about the Church

Could you send me information about the United Church of God in my area? I have been searching for a church home that worships on the Sabbath and have not found what I am looking for. It is important that it is Bible-based and man's ideas haven't contaminated its teachings. Thank you so much for supporting me in my spiritual growth.

J.K., Nampa, Idaho

The needed information has been forwarded to you. Readers wanting to know more about us are welcome to contact any of our offices and to request our free booklet This Is the United Church of God.

Published letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address your letters to The Good News, Box 541027, Cincinnati, Ohio 45254, U.S.A., or e-mail ginfo@ucg.org (please be sure to include your full name, city, state or province, and country).

Christian Values Under Attack: Will Yours Survive the College Challenge?

Will you be leaving home for college this autumn? If so, your Christianity is sure to be tested. Read on for advice on how to stay faithful.

by Ralph Levy

The college years are often some of the greatest times of challenge for young people brought up in Christian homes. A college degree is essential for so many occupations. Yet four or more years of college or university often tear young Christians away from their foundation, at times destroying values and beliefs taught them by their parents and their churches.

Is it possible to survive college and hold on to Christian values? If so, what are the keys? And what are the big dangers in college life?

Challenge number one: anti-Christian philosophies

No matter where you go, you will probably have professors who don't share your beliefs, and who may even be openly hostile

Marx taught that history is driven by conflict between social classes, not by national, racial or religious conflict. The opening words of his *Communist Manifesto* read as follows: "The history of all . . . society is a history of class struggles." From this flows the idea that as lower classes rise up in rebellion against their oppressors, society moves forward toward an ultimate utopia free of class distinctions and injustice.

I came to see the falseness and futility of these ideas. It was the Holy Bible, the Word of God, that helped me to see it. The Bible makes plain that evil isn't determined by who has his hands on the means of production in society. People from lower classes can be just as evil, just as selfish and just as prone to mistreat their neighbors as those from the privileged classes. And overturning it all, as Communists desire, might lead only to loss of freedom, bankrupt

is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Of course, God knows this and is willing to help us change, once we make the choice to live the way He commands. King David of Israel discovered this and wrote of the changed heart in Psalm 51. Praying to God, he said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (verse 10).

The solutions taught on many college campuses are really misleading. Humanity can't make it without God's help, no matter how reasonable the proposed solution may sound or how radical it may be!

Challenge number two: drugs and alcohol

A recent survey found that 49.7 percent

College will present challenges to young Christians wanting to remain morally pure! Perhaps the greatest challenge to your character and determination will come in this area. How can you protect yourself?

to them. Humanism and the various forms of Marxism or Communism are still popular philosophies in the world of postsecondary education. And even though these beliefs have less popularity outside of college, you will still need to be prepared to face them.

When I went to university in England, I suddenly found myself in a radical political environment. Those who didn't seek radical political change in some form or other were definitely in the minority. Leftist groups of many different stripes seemed to abound. The ideas of the famous German philosopher Karl Marx were everywhere. Having never studied Marx before, I became fascinated, and then somewhat pulled in, before I finally (thankfully!) rejected those ideas.

economies and, often, far worse abuses of power.

Another very common, but unchristian, philosophy encountered in college is humanism. Essentially, humanists believe "the solution is within us." They view human nature as inherently good and suggest that humankind's problems would be solved if only the good in us can be coaxed out. Most humanists deny any idea of the uniqueness of man or of life after death.

Again, humanism conflicts with what the Bible teaches us. The prophet Jeremiah made it very clear when he declared, "O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23) and "The heart



of college students reported participating in "binge drinking" (defined as five or more drinks in one sitting) in the two weeks prior to completing the survey. The same survey showed that 64.5 percent had experienced a hangover from excessive drinking, 55.3 percent reported having been nauseated or vomiting, 40.5 percent had "done something I later regretted" and 12.3 percent reported they had been taken advantage of sexually while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Of all the students in the survey who had

experienced unwanted sexual intercourse, 82.6 percent said they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol when this occurred, while 76 percent of those reporting unwanted sexual touching said they were under the influence at the time (2001 *Statistics on Alcohol and Other Drug Use on American Campuses*).

Abuse of alcohol and drugs is a big problem among college students. So what's a Christian to do? The Word of God makes it plain: "Hear, my son, and be wise . . . Do not mix with winebibbers [in other words, avoid the parties where people are getting drunk or taking drugs!] . . . for the drunkard . . . will come to poverty" (Proverbs 23:19-21).

And don't forget that you can always get up and leave. If the drugs begin to circulate or people are getting drunk, the Christian can always say, "Thank you for the invitation, but I have to leave now." You might be surprised to see others get up and leave with you!

Challenge number three: sexual immorality

Recent research shows fewer high school students are having sex now compared to 10 years ago and that the majority of high school graduates are virgins. But the picture changes drastically in college.



A report in the December 2001 issue of *Archives of Sexual Behavior* indicates that 71 percent of unmarried college students reported being sexually experienced. Breaking it down further, 64 percent reported one sexual partner in the 30 days prior to the survey, while 30 percent reported no sexual partners in that time. Presumably, the remaining 6 percent had been with two or more partners in the month prior to the survey.

College will present challenges to young Christians wanting to remain morally pure!

Perhaps the greatest challenge to your character and determination will come in this area. How can you protect yourself?

First, choose your environment carefully. It may be wise to stay at home or with close relatives while in college. That way you can avoid the noise, drugs and excessive drinking you would have to face in many college dorms.

If you're going away from home, it's a good idea to find roommates with whom you share certain basic values. Look for people you'll get along with and who will commit to having no drugs, no illegal or excessive drinking and no boyfriend or girlfriend sleepovers. Sit down and discuss these things with potential roommates before committing to sharing a room with them.

If there's no choice but to live in a dorm, you might try to find one where other Christians are living. Fraternities and sororities are often the most free-living dorms, and should usually be avoided. But there are fraternities and sororities that are organized on a set of values, such as service to the community or basic Christian morality.

Anything you can do to be in the company of people who will help you maintain your Christian values is something to be pursued. The Bible tells us that "evil company corrupts good habits" (1 Corinthians 15:33),

and, conversely, that "whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools suffers harm" (Proverbs 13:20, New Revised Standard Version). Like it or not, we're all heavily influenced by the company we keep.

A source of help: true Christian fellowship

One of the big keys to holding on to your Christian faith during the college years is the Church. Keep going to Church! In fact,

during this time when your faith is being assaulted, you really need *more* time with like-minded Christians than you did before. Spiritual camaraderie and adding to your Christian knowledge offer tremendous encouragement.

Hold on to your source of strength during your college years. Take the time for prayer, for study of the Scriptures and for *true Christian fellowship* to help you through. Build the bonds in Christ, and survive the college years—with your Christian faith not just intact, but strengthened! **GN**



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