



*The*  
**Good News**

January-February 2008

A MAGAZINE OF UNDERSTANDING

**Seven Prophecies  
That Must Be Fulfilled Before  
Jesus Christ's Return**

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## Can We Know When?

Speaking of the timing of His return in His famous prophecy on the Mount of Olives shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus said, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matthew 24:36).

On the surface this seems to indicate that we can't know when Jesus Christ will return until it actually happens. Is that what Jesus meant? Consider several verses from Luke's parallel account of that same prophecy in Luke 21:

- “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near” (verse 20, emphasis added throughout).
- “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (verse 28).
- “So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near” (verse 31).

### On the surface this seems to indicate that we can't know when Jesus Christ will return until it actually happens. Is that what Jesus meant?

Here, within the span of a dozen verses, Jesus tells us three times that events and trends in this same prophecy are *clear indications that His coming is near*.

Further, the book of Revelation, which is “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1), in several verses gives us specific spans of time during which events will take place leading up to His return.

For example, gentiles (non-Jews) will gain control of Jerusalem and “will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months” (Revelation 11:2). Similarly, the two witnesses “will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days” before being killed and miraculously resurrected (verses 3-12). God's people are also hidden and divinely protected “for a time and times and half a time” (Revelation 12:14).

All three of these periods—42 months, 1,260 days and “a time [a year] and times [2 years] and half a time [half a year]”—equal 3½ years. Comparing them with other prophecies, we know that all these 3½-year periods end at Jesus Christ's return. Anyone who can count, then, can know to within a day or so the time of Jesus Christ's return—3½ years from when these things commence.

So it isn't a matter that no one can or will know the time of Christ's return when it is near. Jesus Himself gives us three clear markers as to when the final 3½-year countdown will begin. He gave us many other broad indications that the time is growing closer—thus He said, “When you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.”

Jesus followed His words “but of that day and hour no one knows” with the example of Noah's day, when people were unaware of or ignored the danger of the times in which they lived (Matthew 24:37-39). “Watch therefore,” He then says—telling His followers to be alert to conditions around us and to be spiritually vigilant at all times.

The Bible gives us many warning signs that precede Christ's second coming. Yet indications are that in that time the vast majority of mankind will be simply *unwilling* to listen, or so far removed from God's Word that they are woefully *unaware* of those warnings.

The fact that you're a *Good News* reader shows that you are willing to listen. And if you keep reading, you'll also be *aware* of where the world is headed. The articles in this issue are a vital first step!

—Scott Ashley, Managing editor



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# Seven Prophecies That Must Be Fulfilled Before Jesus Christ's Return

*Previous generations have thought that Jesus Christ would return in their lifetimes, but they were proven wrong. Many people alive today think that Christ's return is imminent. Certainly, the Bible contains prophecies that could not have been fulfilled until this generation.*

by Melvin Rhodes

**S**hortly before His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus Christ delivered a major prophecy of end-time events, recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. He was asked by His disciples: "When will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

Jesus responded with a description of conditions and events that would lead up to His second coming.

Moreover, He said that when these signs became evident, His return would occur within one generation (Matthew 24:34). Could this be that generation?

Throughout the nearly 2,000 years since Christ gave His prophecy, many have thought that theirs was the time of His return—and turned out to be wrong, of course. But interestingly, there are a number of prophecies in the Bible that could not be fulfilled until *our* modern era, the post-World War II period.

## **1** The human race would have the ability to exterminate itself

In Matthew 24:22, describing world conditions prior to His second coming, Jesus

said that "if that time of troubles were not cut short, no living thing could survive; but for the sake of God's chosen it will be cut short" (Revised English Bible).

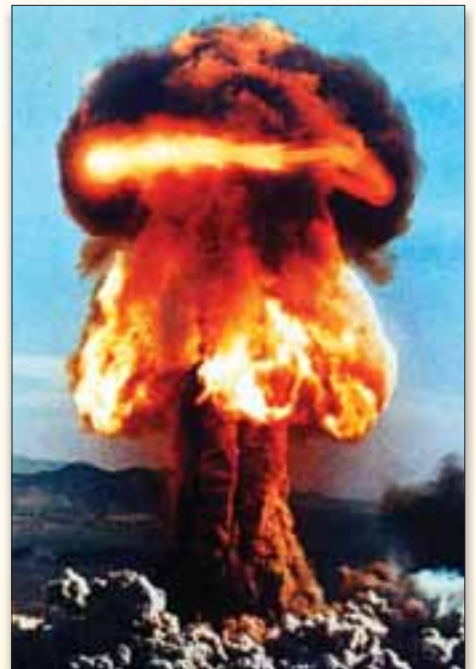
The main message that Jesus Christ brought was of the coming Kingdom of God. This is described as "the gospel" (Mark 1:14). *Gospel* means "good news."

## **If Jesus Christ does not intervene in world affairs, the human race will be faced with extinction.**

While some of the prophecies concerning events prior to the establishment of the Kingdom can seem negative, we should always keep in mind that the central focus of Bible prophecy is the *good news* (gospel) of the coming Kingdom of God.

Matthew 24:22 shows us that if Jesus Christ does not intervene in world affairs, the human race will be faced with extinction. It's crucial to note that humanity has had the capability for self-annihilation for only a little more than 50 years, since both the United States and the Soviet Union developed and stockpiled hydrogen bombs and the world had to learn to live with "mutually assured destruction."

At that time there were only three nuclear



powers (Britain being the other). By the middle of the 1960s France and China had joined the nuclear club. Today at least eight nations have nuclear warheads and the number looks set to increase with a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

Of course, the more nuclear powers we have in the world, the more likely it is that someone will use this deadly force for evil.

Although international attention has been focused on the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran during the last few years, little attention has been given to the possibility of some or all of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal falling into the hands of radical Islamists.

During the ongoing crisis in Pakistan, the Taliban and al-Qaeda and their sympathizers

have steadily gained more power, territory and influence, making *nuclear terrorism* more likely. Consider the consequences for the rest of the world if Osama bin Laden (or others like him) had access to nuclear weapons!

Meanwhile, Russia and China are determinedly flexing their military muscles, raising fears of a return to Cold War-era tensions.

The good news in all this is that Christians have an assurance that Jesus Christ will intervene to save mankind from annihilation. This prophecy could not be fulfilled until man had the potential for self-extinction through weapons of mass destruction. Again, *only in the last 50 years has this become possible.*

## 2 A Jewish homeland had to be reestablished in the Middle East

Geopolitically, the central focus of end-

been fought over countless times, but for four centuries from 1517 the city had been at peace within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. Jews lived there as a minority under Turkish rule. But this was going to change dramatically during the course of the 20th century.

It *had* to change for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy to take place.

The Old Testament prophet Zechariah was used by God to reveal a great deal about end-time events and the second coming of the Messiah. Zechariah lived and prophesied more than 500 years before Christ's first coming, yet his prophetic book tells us a great deal about our world of today.

In Zechariah 12:2-3 God says: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah [the Jews inhabiting the land of Israel] and Jerusalem.

Half of the city shall go into captivity . . . Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle.

"And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south" (Zechariah 14:1-4).

Clearly the last few lines of this prophecy remain to be fulfilled.

Further in this same chapter we read of how those nations that came against Jerusalem will have to go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Jesus Christ (verse 16).

These chapters of Zechariah are a prophecy about the events that precede and include the second coming of Jesus. A Jewish-controlled Jerusalem is notice-



The Western Wall in Jerusalem

**Jesus showed that Jerusalem would be the central focus of the political and military upheavals that would immediately precede His return. Anyone living a century ago would have found these words nearly impossible to comprehend.**

time events is Jerusalem and its environs, what many people refer to as the Holy Land.

Luke 21 is a parallel chapter to Matthew 24. Notice Luke's account of Christ's long prophecy that answered the disciples' questions: "Teacher, . . . when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?" (Luke 21:7).

In response, Jesus showed that Jerusalem would be the central focus of the political and military upheavals that would immediately precede His return: "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near . . . For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (verses 20-22).

Anyone living a century ago would have found these words nearly impossible to comprehend. Jerusalem in ancient times had

And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it."

In verse 9 He adds, "It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

Reading these verses, it is possible to think that they apply to ancient events, as Jerusalem has been fought over repeatedly down through the ages. However, chapter 14 makes clear that this is talking about *future*, not past, events. The time setting is immediately before Jesus Christ's return.

"Behold, the day of the LORD is coming . . . For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished.

ably the central focus.

Shortly before Zechariah, another Jewish prophet named Daniel lived during the time of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. His book speaks of the Jews' daily sacrifices being cut off in the end time (Daniel 12:11; see verses 1-13)—an event that had a forerunner in the temple defilement under Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C.

However, Jesus Christ confirmed this as a *future* event to precede His return (compare Daniel 11:31; Matthew 24:15). This means that these sacrifices must first be reinstated in Jerusalem—requiring Jewish rule over the city.

One hundred years ago such developments were hard to imagine for the simple reason that no independent Jewish political

entity existed in the Middle East.

After rebelling against the Romans in A.D. 66 and again in 132, Judea was crushed and most of the remaining Jews were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. No Jewish homeland existed again until 1948 when the modern nation of Israel was established.

An independent Jewish homeland was merely a dream for a small group of zealots a century ago. It moved a step nearer during World War I, when forces of the British Commonwealth took control of Jerusalem from the Turks in December 1916. A few months later, the British government pledged itself to the establishment of an independent Jewish homeland in the ancient lands the Jews had inhabited for centuries.

It was to be another 30 years before the dream was realized in 1948. Yet since then tiny Israel has had to fight wars for survival in 1948, 1967 and 1973 and has suffered countless terrorist attacks and threats of annihilation from hostile neighbors determined to eliminate the Jewish state.

Once again, *here is a prophecy that can now be fulfilled in our time.*

### 3 The end-time king of the North and king of the South

In Daniel 11 we find an amazing prophecy about two leaders, the kings of the North and South, the heads of regions that were geographically north and south of the Holy Land. To understand this prophecy we have to go to the time of Alexander the Great, who lived near the end of the fourth century B.C., 200 years after Daniel.

Alexander figures prominently throughout the book of Daniel, even though Daniel did not know his name and never knew him personally. He couldn't have, since he died almost two centuries before Alexander appeared on the world stage.

But God revealed to Daniel that after Babylon, Persia would arise as the greatest power of the region, to be followed in turn by Greece. Not surprisingly, the prophecies regarding the rise of Greece are centered on Alexander the Great, one of the greatest conquerors in history.

Daniel 8 gives a vivid account of the coming clash between Persia and Greece. As you read it, remember that a horn symbolizes royal power and authority. Persia had "two horns and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last." This refers to the Medo-Persian Empire, the coming together of two nations or peoples.

As foretold here in verse 3, the Persians rose to greatness after the Medes.

In verse 5 we read of Persia's later defeat by Alexander the Great: "And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes" (verse 5).

The "notable horn" or royal leader was Alexander the Great. The prophecy about his army not even touching the ground is a reference to the incredible speed with which he conquered the known world. All this was achieved in a very short time. Alexander died in 323 B.C. when he was only about 33 years old.

Even his sudden, unexpected death was

cance is that whenever they went to battle against each other, the Jews got trampled on. This was to continue from the time of Alexander until the middle of the second century B.C., a period of almost two centuries.

Then, suddenly, the prophecy jumps down to the end time.

In verse 40 we read: "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land [the Holy Land], and many countries shall be overthrown" (Daniel 11:40-41).

While we don't have space here to cover



Bust of Alexander the Great



The latter part of Daniel's prophecy describes a clash of civilizations. We now see geopolitical conditions lining up for this inevitable clash.

prophesied: "The male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven" (verse 8).

When Alexander died, his empire was eventually divided between four of his generals—the four "notable horns" mentioned here. Two of these established dynasties would have a profound effect on the Jewish people, caught in the middle between them. These two dynasties were the descendants of Seleucus, who ruled a vast empire from Antioch in Syria, north of Jerusalem, and Ptolemy, who ruled Egypt from Alexandria.

Daniel 11 is a long and detailed prophecy about the dynastic conflicts between these two powers, their respective leaders being referred to as "the king of the North" and "the king of the South." Of great signifi-

all the details, the latter part of Daniel's prophecy of the North-South conflict describes a clash of civilizations between the leader of a soon-coming European superpower—a revived Roman Empire (successor to Seleucid Syrian rule)—and a leader who is the successor to the Ptolemaic rule of Egypt, which is now part of the Islamic world. (To learn more, request or download our free booklet *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*.)

We now see geopolitical conditions lining up for this inevitable clash. *Here is yet another prophesied circumstance for which the stage has now been set within our lifetime!*

### 4 An end-time union of European nations

In Daniel 2 and 7 we see prophecies about four great gentile empires that would

arise in the period between the time of Daniel and the coming establishment of the Kingdom of God (Daniel 2:44). Daniel was himself living in the first of these great empires (Daniel 7:4) as a Jewish exile in ancient Babylon.

Following the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C., Persia would become the greatest power, to be followed by Greece (verses 5-6). After Greece came the Roman Empire, “dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong.” This empire was to have “ten horns” and would continue in some form until the establishment of God’s Kingdom at Christ’s return (verses 7-9).

As we saw in the previous section, horns represent leaders or governments. Here these 10 horns symbolize 10 attempts to

pean empire, from Justinian in the sixth century through Charlemagne, Napoleon, Mussolini and Hitler, all involved force. The final resurrection of the Roman Empire will not be attempted in the same way.

Revelation 17 suggests this will be a voluntary union. When these 10 leaders receive power, they will then give their authority to a single leader. Scripture refers to both this individual and the new superpower he leads as “the beast”—acknowledging it as the continuation of the four gentile empires prophesied in Daniel, each one depicted as a beast or wild animal.

Only now is it possible for this to be fulfilled.

In 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed by six European nations that formed the

*conceivable fulfillment of this prophecy was even possible.*

## 5 End-time rise and fall of Israel and Judah

“Israel” was the new name God gave the biblical patriarch Jacob in Genesis 32. The 12 tribes of Israel were descended from his 12 sons. These tribes later formed a united kingdom.

It’s been almost 3,000 years since the kingdom of Israel was split in two. Ten of the 12 tribes of Israel rebelled against King Rehoboam, the son of King Solomon and grandson of King David. The Bible continued to refer to these 10 tribes as Israel while the other two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) that remained loyal to David’s descendants

were known as the kingdom of Judah or simply Judah.

Sometimes Israel is referred to as the northern kingdom and Judah as the southern kingdom. Dominant among the northern tribes were to be the descendants of Jacob’s son Joseph through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh—prophesied by Jacob to be the chief nations of the world in the last days (Genesis 49:1, 22-26; compare Deuteronomy 33:13-17).

About 200 years after the kingdom split, the northern

tribes of Israel fell to Assyria and were deported by the Assyrians to the northern parts of their empire. Often referred to now as the lost tribes, they later migrated north-west across Europe, eventually settling in new homelands far from the Middle East.

The kingdom of Judah fell to Babylon more than a century after Israel’s deportation, but its people were not lost to history. We know them today as the Jews.

The name Ephraim is sometimes used representatively in Scripture for the entire northern kingdom, though it can also refer solely to the descendants of Joseph’s son of that name—prophesied to become a “multitude of nations” (Genesis 48:19). Remarkably, this promise to Ephraim was fulfilled in the British Empire and Commonwealth.

Ephraim’s older brother Manasseh was also prophesied to become a great nation



*Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany*



**Previous attempts to forge a united European empire all involved force. The final resurrection of the Roman Empire will not be attempted in the same way.**

restore the Roman Empire to the power it had in ancient times. Various attempts at a restoration have taken place since the fall of the Western Roman Empire in A.D. 476. A final attempt is to be made shortly before Christ’s return.

We find more details in Revelation 17. Here we read of a final attempt to revive the Roman Empire by “ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast” (verses 12-13).

They will also “make war with the Lamb [Jesus Christ], and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings” (verse 14). Again, it is clear that this prophecy is still future.

Previous attempts to forge a united Euro-

pean Economic Community. Today the EEC has grown into the European Union (EU) with 27 member nations. Out of these will likely come the 10 nations or 10 leaders that form the final resurrection of the Roman Empire. (For more details, read “The Coming European Superpower” beginning on page 13.)

Some have speculated that the 10 kings referred to in this prophecy will be leaders of 10 regions of the EU that will redraw the boundaries of Europe, ending the present nation-states. The Bible is not clear on exactly which 10 regions or nations will configure the final revival of the militaristic Roman superpower—only that this new superpower will indeed emerge just before Christ’s return.

*However, it wasn’t until the 10th nation, Greece, was admitted in 1981 that any*

(same verse), separating himself from the multitude of nations. This prophecy would be fulfilled in the formation, growth and dominance of the United States of America.

In a revealing prophecy regarding the United States and Britain, Jacob (Israel) said, “Let my name be named upon them” (verse 16). References to “Israel” in end-time prophecy often refer to the United States or the English-speaking countries of the British Empire or both. Sometimes “Israel” can mean all 12 tribes. We have to look at specific verses in their context to see which is meant.

“Judah,” however, always refers to the Jews, the descendants of the house or kingdom of Judah. We must also understand that the modern nation called *Israel* is really *Judah*, made up of Jews. (For much more detail, download or request our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.)

Understanding this critical part of biblical history will help us more fully comprehend a passage of Scripture in the book of Hosea, which is a prophecy about Ephraim (the multitude of nations—Great Britain and some of those nations that came out of her). It warns of destruction to follow the end-time ascendancy of the Israelite nations.

In Hosea 5 we read a prophecy that mentions Israel, Ephraim and Judah: “The pride of Israel testifies to his face; therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity; Judah also stumbles with them” (verse 5). The prophecy continues: “With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the LORD, but they will not find Him; He has withdrawn Himself from them. They have dealt treacherously with the LORD, for they have begotten pagan children. Now a New Moon shall devour them and their heritage” (verses 6-7).

New moons occur a month apart. A new moon “devouring” them would seem to mean that Israel, Ephraim and Judah will all fall within one month.

This prophecy was not fulfilled in ancient times. As already mentioned, ancient Judah fell to Babylon *more than a century* after Israel fell to Assyria. Yet in the end it appears they will fall together—within one month of each other. This prophecy remains to be fulfilled.

Remember that Israel gave his name to Ephraim and Manasseh, the ancestors in turn of the British and American peoples. As Ephraim is mentioned separately in this prophecy, the reference to “Israel” must apply to the United States, which is now the more dominant of the two nations.

For two centuries prior to World War II, the roles were reversed with the multitude of nations—the British Empire—a greater power than the single nation, the United States. But today America is the greater.

“Judah” refers to the Jewish people, particularly those who now constitute the modern nation in the Middle East that calls itself Israel.

Here then is a prophecy regarding all three nations—the United States, Britain and Israel (Judah). According to this prophecy, it appears that all three will fall within

the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (verse 14).

The gospel is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. This message could not be preached around the world without the Bible and freedom of religion. Both came gradually with the ascendancy of the English-speaking peoples from the 16th century until the present day.

However, it was only with the technological advances of television and radio and other means of mass communication



**Lest the idea seem outlandish, consider that Israel and the United States are perhaps the most maligned and criticized nations on earth.**

the span of a month. Verse 6 shows these nations turning back to God, but finding it too late. Because of their sins, He will let them suffer defeat and collapse.

*This prophecy could not have been fulfilled until after the rise of Britain and the United States as world powers in the 19th century and the formation of the Jewish state of Israel in the 20th.*

Lest the idea seem outlandish, consider that Israel and the United States are perhaps the most maligned and criticized nations on earth. Among Muslim hard-liners, America is commonly called “the great Satan” and Israel and Britain “the little Satans.”

## **6 The gospel will be preached in all the world**

In His major end-time prophecy, Jesus answers the question posed by the disciples: “When will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3).

After listing a number of signs of the nearness of His coming, He reveals that “this

after World War II and their widespread acceptance that it became possible to reach hundreds of millions of human beings with the message of the Bible. The gospel of the Kingdom of God will continue to be preached to all nations as long as we have the freedom to continue *The Good News* magazine and our other media efforts.

Even so, during the last 50 years it has not been possible to reach all countries. The former communist nations did not allow freedom of religion. China, with one quarter of the world’s people, still does not. Other nations also try to suppress the publication of biblical truth and even the Bible itself. Many Islamic nations do not allow religious freedom. In some countries people risk the death penalty for changing religion.

But the Internet is changing everything. It is much harder for governments to control. The gospel message of the coming Kingdom of God is still going out to the world. It will finish when God has decided that His work is completed and the time is right for the final end-time events to take place.

*This is yet another prophecy that could not be fulfilled until recent times.*

## **7 Instant worldwide communications and God's final witnesses**

Another end-time Bible prophecy could not be fulfilled until this era of instant worldwide communications.

In His major end-time prophecy of Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, Jesus gave an outline of disasters that would occur on the world scene with increasing frequency and magnitude—to the point

biblical prophets like Elijah and Elisha, will carry God's final warning to the world in the last 3½ years leading up to Christ's return.

"And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days . . . When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was clearly a major turning point in the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, as was the acquisition of the hydrogen bomb by the two superpowers of the 1950s that led to the period of mutually assured destruction.

All has now become possible. This, in turn, makes it much more likely that our generation will live to see Jesus Christ return and establish the Kingdom of God on earth. After all, Jesus Himself said that once these things begin, the generation alive at that time "will by no means pass



**Only with the technological advances of television and radio and other means of mass communication has it become possible to reach hundreds of millions of human beings with the message of the Bible.**

where people would be shaken with fear (Luke 21:26). Discerning an increase in the scale of these events and reacting to them requires *knowing about them*.

At the time this prophecy was given, it could be many months or years before people heard about various disasters—and many they would never hear about at all, much less be able to put together the fact that catastrophes were on some kind of global increase.

Only with the proliferation of newspapers and other forms of mass communications did this become remotely possible. Yet the level of awareness and consequent fear in many that Christ speaks of implies an even *greater* availability of information—possible only since the development of rapid electronic communications.

In any case, only with the technological advances of the last few years has it become possible for the events in Revelation 11 to occur—for people around the world to see the fate of God's final two witnesses.

These two witnesses, reminiscent of other

"Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth" (verses 3, 7-10).

Note that people *the world over* will be able to see their dead bodies during the 3½ days that they lie on display in Jerusalem. This was not possible before satellite television, portable communications devices and the Internet. Again, *only in the last few years has it become possible for this prophecy to be fulfilled*. It still lies in the future, of course, but only now it is clearly possible for this to take place.

### **Will this generation see God's Kingdom established on earth?**

We have seen how seven biblically prophesied circumstances could not have come to pass until recent times. In fact, the

away till all these things take place" (Matthew 24:34).

It's both sobering and encouraging to think that we appear to be living in the generation that will ultimately witness the most important event in the history of mankind. As Jesus Christ tells His followers in Luke 21:28, "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." **GN**

## **Recommended Reading**

What does Bible prophecy reveal about the time of the end? Exactly what will end, and why? What prophecies must be fulfilled before Jesus Christ's return? You definitely need to understand! Request or download *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* and *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*. Both are yours free for the asking!



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[www.gnmagazine.org/booklets](http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets)

# Key Events in History: Were They Linked to Bible Prophecy?

*Have key events of history had a connection to Bible prophecy? A brief look at three transforming events reveals God's guiding hand at work to bring to pass what He had foretold.*

by Mario Seiglie

**W**e've all taken history classes in school. Many of us didn't find them all that interesting. I know that was the case with me. I mostly recall having to memorize a lot of ancient dates and remote places that seemed to have little importance today.

But at a certain point in my life history suddenly became fascinating to me.

It was when I came to understand how history relates to the prophecies of the Bible. A whole new world opened up to me. It was enthralling! I now saw many historical events as valuable evidence that the Bible was truly inspired by God. And I realized that prophecy provides a framework for history, covering the past, present and even the future!

Of course, not all of history directly relates to Bible prophecy, but you would be surprised to find out how much of it truly does. As I discovered, much of history is simply the result of the best and worst of human nature played out in world events within the framework of biblical prophecy.

## The great *what ifs* of history

What happens when history and prophecy converge? You can then have a new appreciation of what has occurred on the world scene. Events that historians marvel about as seemingly lucky breaks or incredible coincidences often turn out to actually be *the fulfillment of Bible prophecies*.

Let me show you some astonishing examples. This was not something I expected when I bought the book *What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* (1999), edited by Robert Cowley, the founding editor of *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History*.

The book discusses some 50 key events in world history, with renowned historians asking, What if things had turned out differently? They conclude that it would be a vastly different world. If crucial events had turned out differently, we could easily be practicing the culture, language and religions of the great conqueror nations: Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Russia, Mongolia, Germany or Japan.

Incredibly, of the 50 key historical events mentioned in the book, I counted 48 that tie in with biblical prophecy! In other words, of the world's most pivotal events as listed by these secular historians, God had a hand in more than 95 percent of them!

Space and time don't allow me to elaborate on each one—it would take an entire book—but we will look at a few outstanding examples.

### Example 1: The plague that saved Jerusalem

What is the first and most important example in this book written by modern history professors? It is an event found in the Bible as well as in world history—what these historians call “The Plague That Saved Jerusalem.”

William McNeill, professor emeritus of history at the University of Chicago, writes: “Military events, even seemingly insignificant episodes, can have unforeseen consequences . . . It seems appropriate to begin this book with such a moment in history, the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, then the seat of the tiny kingdom of Judah, in 701 B.C.

“That siege, by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was lifted after a large part of his army succumbed to a mysteriously lethal contagion . . . But what if disease had not intervened? What if the walls had fallen, and the usual pillage, rape, murder, and forced exile of the population had been Jerusalem's lot? What would our lives, our spiritual underpinnings be like 2,700 years later?

“. . . Jerusalem's preservation from attack by Sennacherib's army shaped the subsequent history of the world far more profoundly than any other military action I know of” (“Infectious Alternatives,” *What If?*, pp. 1-3).

A “mysteriously lethal contagion” struck the Assyrians just at the right moment to save Jerusalem. What a seemingly lucky coincidence! As the Assyrians were about to besiege and destroy Jerusalem, obliterating the Jewish faith, suddenly something devastated the Assyrian army and spared the beleaguered city.

Back in Assyria, the king inscribed on his



**A record from the palace of King Sennacherib confirms that he devastated the kingdom of Judah but never managed to capture Jerusalem—a failure that changed the course of history.**

palace walls a graphic depiction of his invasion of Judah and destruction of its walled cities. But Jerusalem is conspicuously missing! In an official record of his campaign, now known as the Sennacherib Prism, he boasted that he had King Hezekiah trapped in Jerusalem “like a caged bird.” But nothing is said about actually conquering the Jewish capital and its king.

This points to a defeat for Sennacherib here, as ancient kings typically didn't record their losses, only their victories.

The Bible tells us what actually happened: “Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year

of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. Then the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem” (Isaiah 36:1-2).

After hearing the threats and orders to surrender from the Assyrian military commander, King Hezekiah went to God in earnest prayer. He was heard, and God answered him through the prophet Isaiah, who told



**The Lenorman Relief, from the Acropolis in Athens, depicts the rowers of an Athenian trireme, the same kind of ship the Greeks used in their stunning victory over the Persians in the battle of Salamis.**

him God had promised complete deliverance from the Assyrians.

Isaiah said: “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: ‘He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city,’ says the LORD. ‘For I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake’” (Isaiah 37:33-35).

Here, then, was a prophecy of what would come to pass. And what happened? “Then the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh” (verses 36-37). The humiliated king never threatened Judah again, and in time he was assassinated by his own sons, as noted by both the Bible and Assyrian records.

Historians unwilling to accept the Bible’s supernatural explanation here seek a naturalistic one. They point out that Sennacherib’s

defeat was recorded by not only the Bible, but also the Greek historian Herodotus, who gave an account of Sennacherib’s humiliation in his *Histories* (written around 450 B.C.). Citing an Egyptian source, he attributed the miraculous defeat of Sennacherib’s army in the campaign against Egypt (which included Judah) to mice overrunning the camp and wreaking great havoc.

He wrote: “An army of field-mice swarmed over their opponents in the night . . . [and] gnawed through their quivers and their bows, and the handles of their shields, so that on the following day they fled minus their arms and a great number fell” (Book 2:141).

Putting Herodotus’ mention of mice together with the Bible’s description of widespread death among Sennacherib’s forces is where the idea of the aforementioned “mysterious lethal contagion” springs from. Some scholars speculate that since mice are often carriers of deadly diseases, such as the bubonic plague that ravaged Europe during the Middle Ages, something similar could have happened in the Assyrian army.

Of course, it is certainly possible that God worked through such means to destroy the Assyrian forces. But the perfect timing was no coincidence. Jerusalem was saved by God, just as Isaiah foretold.

Here we see the first example of how history and prophecy converge. God had promised hundreds of years before that the nation of Judah would survive through the centuries, escaping annihilation time and time again, to eventually bring forth the promised Messiah from the line of David. And God specifically promised Hezekiah that Sennacherib would be turned away.

So He acted to fulfill His prophecies. Cowley remarks: “What if a mysterious plague had not smitten the Assyrian besiegers of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.? Would there have been a Jewish religion? Or Christianity?” (“Introduction,” *What If?*, p. xiii).

Those are good questions. But knowing a bit about Bible prophecy would have answered it. Instead of this crucial event being merely a lucky coincidence, it turned out to depend on God’s sure Word.

### **Example 2: The unlikely Greek naval victory over the Persians at Salamis in 480 B.C.**

The next example in the book is also

crucial in world history. The outcome permitted Western culture to develop and become part of the European heritage—instead of Europe ending up as part of Persian history, culture and religion.

The famous German historian Georg Hegel said about this naval battle between the Greeks and the Persians: “The interest of the world’s history hung trembling in the balance. Oriental despotism, a world united under one lord and sovereign, on the one side, and separate states, insignificant in extent and resources, but animated by free individuality, on the other side, stood front to front in array of battle” (quoted by Victor Davis Hanson, “No Glory That Was Greece,” *What If?*, p. 17).

“What if the Persians had won?” asks historian and popular columnist Victor Davis Hanson, former classics professor at California State University, Fresno, and Stanford University. “It nearly happened. It should have happened. If the rowers commanded by the Athenian statesman-general Themistocles had not prevailed, would there be, some 2,500 years later, a Western civilization in the form we know it?” (p. 16).

At Salamis, the Greek forces faced a navy three to four times larger. The Persian army enjoyed an even greater numerical superiority, outnumbering the Greek infantry up to 10 to one. Yet they lost, and the Greeks were able to establish their empire and contribute to arts, culture, science—paving the way for Christianity.

“In late September 480,” he adds, “Themistocles and his poor Athenians not only saved Greece and embryonic Western civilization from the Persians, but also redefined the West as something more egalitarian, restless—and volatile—that would evolve into a society that we more or less recognize today” (p. 35).

What was behind this incredible Greek victory against overwhelming numbers of Persians? Was it just a fortunate turn of events? Again we have to look at Bible prophecy for the answer.

The Bible foretold, long before it became a reality, the ultimate outcome of the struggle between the Persian and Greek empires. It foresaw that, against all odds, the Greeks would eventually defeat the Persians and absorb their empire. The battle of Salamis was an important part of that ultimate Greek victory.

The prophet Daniel received the prophecy of this outcome from God around 548 B.C.—even before the Persian and Greek empires had arisen on the world scene!

He wrote: “In the third year of the reign

of King Belshazzar [of Babylon] a vision appeared to me . . . I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

“And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power.

“And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand” (Daniel 8:1-7).

The angel Gabriel explained to Daniel that “the ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece” (verses 20-21).

Here we see that although the Persian Empire was incredibly powerful, the Bible foretold that the Greeks would eventually defeat them. So the Greek victory at Salamis was not a fluke, but a step toward God fulfilling what He had promised years earlier in the Scriptures!

Had the Greeks lost at Salamis, they would have been incorporated into the Persian Empire rather than later conquering Persia, as foretold in Daniel. This prophesied conquest would come with the march of Alexander the Great.

### Example 3: The remarkable rise and fall of Alexander the Great

A very pivotal era in world history was the time of Alexander the Great. But what if he had been killed at the beginning of his career, as almost happened? And why did he die when only about 33, at the height of power?

At the Battle of the Granicus River, during Alexander’s first major military engagement against the Persians, he was surrounded by enemies and received a devastating blow to the head from an axe that cleaved his helmet. Stunned, he was unable to defend himself.

Just as the Persian warrior was about to strike the second blow and kill Alexander, a bodyguard stabbed the attacker with a spear. Alexander was saved and went on to conquer

most of the known world.

Why was he miraculously spared in that split second? Again, historians talk about these lucky accidents. “What if Alexander had been just a bit less lucky at the Battle of the Granicus?” asks Princeton historian Josiah Ober (“Conquest Denied,” *What If?*, p. 47).

He goes on to say: “It would be a world in which the values characteristic of the Greek city-states were lost in favor of a fusion of



**Alexander the Great, shown here in a mosaic from Pompeii, brought down the mighty Persian Empire before conquering the known world of his day—just as foretold in Bible prophecy.**

Roman and Persian ideals . . . A profound reverence for ritual, tradition, ancestors, and social hierarchy—rather than Greek reverence for freedom, political equality, and the dignity of the person—defined the ethical values of a small ‘cosmopolitan’ elite that would rule over a diverse mosaic of cultures.

“And this could take place because [in this alternative history] there was no long and brilliant ‘Hellenistic Period’—and so no integration of a wider world into a Greek cultural/linguistic sphere. Without the challenge of strong Greek cultural influence and subsequent Roman mismanagement in Judea, Judaism would have remained a localized phenomenon . . . The New Testament (whatever form it took) would never have been composed in ‘universal’ Greek and so would not have found a broad audience” (pp. 55-56).

All of these culture-transforming historic trends hinged on Alexander’s conquests and the spreading of Hellenistic culture throughout Europe and the Middle East.

But why was Alexander destined to survive

and become a conqueror, establishing the Greek empire and then to die at the height of his power at an early age? It was all prophesied hundreds of years in advance.

In the second example given earlier, we quoted Daniel 8:1-7 about the goat (Greece) defeating the ram (Medo-Persia). This was ultimately fulfilled in the conquest of Alexander. Let’s continue in verse 8:

“Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.”

In verses 21-22 the angel Gabriel explained to Daniel the vision’s meaning: “The male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king [Alexander the Great]. As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.”

The Bible contains an even further elaboration of this prophecy, given to Daniel years later, when the Persians had risen to power after defeating the Babylonians. It foretold what would happen to Alexander:

“And when he [Alexander] has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these” (Daniel 11:4).

As prophecy foretold, Alexander died at a young age (again, about 33), and his empire was divided into four parts and ruled by four of his generals—not by any of his family members or descendants.

These three examples, all major turning points in the course of civilization, remind us that Bible prophecy is behind much of world history. Much more importantly, it also reveals what will happen in the future. Will you make the effort to discover what lies ahead? **GN**

## Recommended Reading

Bible prophecy has proven to be astoundingly accurate. Literally hundreds of prophecies, large and small, have been fulfilled. If you’d like to learn more, request or download your free copy of *Is the Bible True?* To gain an understanding of the major themes as laid out in Bible prophecy, be sure to read *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*. Both are yours free for the asking.



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[www.gnmagazine.org/booklets](http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets)

# The Coming European Superpower

*With the collapse of the Soviet Union, there appeared to be only one superpower left in the world. After the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, the United States became the undisputed military, economic and political heavyweight. But is another superpower forming that will challenge the United States as the leader of the Western world?*

by Gary Petty

**M**any citizens of the United States are complacent with a sense of invulnerability. The end of the Cold War has created a sort of emotional isolationism. The average person is more concerned with his or her job, the price of gas and local school board activities than events unfolding on the world scene.

Television news reflects people's interests and lack of worldview, dedicating little time to covering happenings in Europe, Africa or the Far East. But the world is on the verge of major changes.

In fact, another superpower is forming on the European continent that is already challenging the United States both economically and politically.

The dream of a united Europe is an old one. The ancient Roman Empire created a network of roads, postal delivery and economic cooperation, merging cultures and religions across a vast area. For centuries the concept of *Pax Romana*—a peaceful, united empire enforced by Roman law—fired the imagination of many Europeans.

The Romans found that the strain of maintaining an empire stretching from Central Europe to North Africa, and from Britain to the Middle East, eventually proved unmanageable. Rome slowly fell into political, social and economic decay and was conquered by Germanic invaders. In A.D. 476 the Western Empire seemed to suffer a mortal wound, but the dream never completely died.

History has witnessed a number of attempts to reunite Europe's sundry peoples into one empire, several times by force of arms. Charlemagne, Napoleon and, in more recent times, Adolf Hitler have tried to resurrect a united Europe.

From the destruction and death of World War II arose the dream of a peaceful European unity, in spite of the division of the continent with the eastern half under Soviet domination behind the iron curtain.

## A new Europe rises from the ashes

In 1945, after two world wars in 30



**History has witnessed a number of attempts to reunite Europe's sundry peoples into one empire, several times by force of arms. Charlemagne, Napoleon and, in more recent times, Adolf Hitler have tried to resurrect a united Europe.**

years, Europe was in shambles. Many venerable cities had been bombed into rubble. The dead were counted in the tens of millions. Old institutions and organizations ceased to exist.

What happened next, fueled by U.S. dollars supplied under the Marshall Plan, was an economic miracle. Western Europe rebuilt and retooled its industry.

Modernized from the ground up, in the 1950s and 60s many of defeated Germany's factories began to outclass the factories of its national benefactor, the United States. The old dream of a peaceful European union led to an organization known as the European Common Market.

In the last half of the 20th century the Common Market gave way to the European Union, a powerful alliance with old enemies France and Germany at the center. The amount of international integration achieved under the European Union is staggering.

By the turn of the century *Time* magazine's European edition was able to report:

"Europe has a single market, a single currency, a central bank. No member country can build an airport, decide on how much milk can be produced by national cows or call something chocolate without consulting Brussels or conforming to the Commission's guidelines. No important merger or acquisition can proceed unless [the] E.C. competition commissioner . . . has nodded his head."

## Seeking a bigger role

The European Union is now the world's greatest economic power, accounting for more than a third of the globe's total gross domestic product. It is the largest exporter in the world. The euro, the EU's common currency, has increased in value almost 50 percent against the U.S. dollar since its introduction in 2002.

Some EU leaders believe that the union isn't developing fast enough or flexing enough muscle on the world scene. There has even been discussion of forming a coalition within the European Union, led

by France and Germany, that would speed up political unity.

Some European leaders aren't just working for political unity, but hope to create a military force. This military might won't be just for defense, but to exert EU influence into far-flung areas of the world.

Not all Europeans are greeting the concept of an EU military force with open arms. The joint U.S.-European incursion into Kosovo in the late 1990s revealed the general reluctance of many European states to play a part in using military force. The combined EU members sent only 50,000 troops to the Balkans, when they have almost 2 million men under arms.

Meanwhile the United States, with major military commitments in Iraq and

Afghanistan and other forces scattered worldwide in the war on terror, is showing considerable weariness in acting as the world's policeman.

### Europe's prophesied future

The events in Europe are following a historical pattern—an attempt to unite the Spanish and Italians, Germans and Slavs, French and Scandinavians into one empire.

The prophet Daniel was given divine inspiration to reveal the meaning of a prophetic dream. In Daniel 2 the prophet tells of four successive empires, including one that will be ruling at the time of the coming of the Messiah to establish God's Kingdom on earth. Comparing history with other prophecies, we see that these four

kingdoms were, in order, the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian and Roman empires.

Speaking of the fourth and final kingdom, Daniel said it would be "strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others" (verse 40). The Roman Empire indeed proved to be more dominant than the previous three, swallowing up their remnants in a reign that lasted for centuries.

Daniel also revealed fascinating prophetic details of this final kingdom. He said the legs and feet of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represented a kingdom, later shown to be the Roman Empire. The

## Q: When Is a Constitution Not a Constitution? A: When It's a "Treaty."

A leading editorial in the highly respected British newsweekly magazine *The Economist* simply stated in its brief drophead: "Sneaking a new constitution through on the sly is a bad idea for all Europeans" (Oct. 27, 2007). Yet a bad idea could very well become a stark reality.

*The Economist* summed up what really happened: "On October 18 [2007] the leaders of the European Union took the constitution that voters in France and the Netherlands had rejected in 2005, changed the odd phrase, muddled the odd concept and presented the Lisbon 'Reform Treaty' to the world. . . . So there is no need for it to be put to any difficult referendums" (emphasis added throughout).

In other words, after the EU constitution had been rejected by voters in France and the Netherlands, EU leaders simply changed a few details and relabeled it a "treaty" so it could bypass European voters. The treaty was then signed by European leaders in Lisbon on Dec. 13 (though national parliaments must still ratify it before it goes into effect Jan. 1, 2009).

### Major changes for Europe

The *Daily Mail's* deputy political editor, James Chapman, had previously stated in midsummer that the "new treaty is 96 [percent] identical to the rejected blueprint." *The Economist* later referred to the alterations as "cosmetic changes." However, for a short period public attention was focused on important new provisions in this new treaty (also found in the previous constitution):

- The creation of a new European president.
- The creation of a new EU foreign minister with political clout, funding and his own diplomatic service.
- The creation of a new EU public prosecutor.
- New powers for an EU Court of Justice.

*The Economist* summed up some important points: "Majority voting will become the rule in some 50 policy areas currently decided by unanimity: Most dramatically migration, criminal justice and judicial and police cooperation, where the European Court of Justice (ECJ) will also gain broad oversight for the first time" (Oct. 27, 2007).

While Britain and the Irish Republic have obtained some "opt-outs" from the treaty, in the past the European Commission has found ways of circumventing previous opt-outs agreed on in the 1990s. Some are concerned about the deviousness with which this new treaty/constitution has been formulated. *The Economist* firmly stated, "After barely a week many of the conjurers in Brussels have already given up the subterfuge, reassuring everybody that it is a constitution after all" (Oct. 27, 2007).

### A "Mr. Europe" is coming

*The Economist* also pointed out that this new EU treaty creates three competing positions for the so-called and mystical post of "Mr. Europe"; the newly proposed posts of EU president and EU foreign minister plus the president of the European Commission. This newsweekly speculated as to who "could become the figure regarded by the world as Mr Europe"—the most public face for this growing colossus.



**European leaders attend the signing ceremony for the Treaty of Lisbon on Dec. 13, 2007. Proponents essentially repackaged the rejected European constitution, relabeling it a "treaty" to bypass voters in the EU states.**

Likened to a "beast" in the book of Revelation, Bible prophecy tells us that a "Mr. Europe" is indeed coming with charismatic and dictatorial powers that will make the whole world wonder in amazement and, in some cases, *fear*. "And all the world marveled and followed the beast" (Revelation 13:3). Students of history well remember that the ambitions of European leaders plunged the entire world into two bloodbaths in the last century.

Undoubtedly the present political leaders of the European Union have little or no conception of where present events are ultimately taking not only Europe, but the rest of the world as well. However, God has revealed the answer in Bible prophecy. To understand the significance of these trends in Europe, request or download our free booklets *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* and *The Book of Revelation Revealed*.

—John Ross Schroeder

image had feet and toes composed “partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron” (verse 41). This indicated that “the kingdom shall be divided” and “partly strong and partly fragile” (verses 41-42). Further, “just as iron does not mix with clay,” the components of this kingdom would not firmly hold together for long (verse 43).

Then, describing the return of Jesus Christ and His overthrow of all human kingdoms and governments, Daniel says that “in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . . ; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (verse 44).

Specifically, “these kings” here are a group of 10 leaders united in an end-time union or alliance. Daniel’s prophecy indicates that, because of different cultures and languages, this final superpower will not be one tightly integrated group of states, such as the United States, but divergent entities united for a common purpose. Some will no doubt be much stronger than others.

In the book of Revelation we find more details of this end-time alliance of nations: “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:12-14).

The current moves to expand and solidify the European Union appear to be setting the stage for the emergence of this prophesied end-time power. In light of what Bible prophecy reveals, it’s fascinating to note the roots of the movement to unify Europe.

The Jan. 29, 1996, issue of *Newsweek*

reported: “In January 1957, six nations signed a treaty on the site of the ancient Roman Capitol, and brought into being the European Economic Community . . . An aide to Paul-Henri Spaak, the then Belgian foreign minister, remembers that his boss said, ‘Do you think that we have laid the first stone of a new Roman Empire?’ Recalls the aide, ‘We felt very strongly we were Romans that day.’”

The idea of founding a renewed Roman Empire was certainly on the minds of those whose efforts have led to the current organization of European nations. That union has continued to strengthen with greater cooperation and integration in economic and political affairs.

### The final fall

The dreams of Julius Caesar, Justinian, Charlemagne, Napoleon and Mussolini have never died. They will resurge once more—yet will end in utter disaster. In Revelation 19 we find out who destroys this final empire. Here the apostle John writes about a vision he received concerning the future:

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God” (verses 11-13). This is the One we know as Jesus Christ.

Continuing: “And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (verses 14-16; see also verses 17-21).

The final empire of men described in Bible prophecy will be replaced by yet another empire—the Kingdom of God, led by Jesus Christ, which will rule the entire world. Prophecy was given by God to guide us through changing world conditions, strengthen our faith and give us hope for the future. Our faith must be in Him and our lives must be dedicated to doing His will so we might ultimately be a part of that Kingdom. **GN**



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# What's Behind the Falling Dollar?

*With a barrel of oil near \$100 and the dollar recently falling 16 percent against other currencies, Americans need to understand what's behind the falling dollar and what the consequences will be for them.*

**Y**ou wouldn't know the dollar was falling and oil was about to reach \$100 a barrel from this morning's news program on ABC. Instead, the "big news" was that Neil Diamond's famous song "Sweet Caroline" was inspired by Caroline Kennedy, daughter of the late President Kennedy.

My local newspaper, the *Lansing State Journal*, did not enlighten me either. But thanks to the *Financial Times* of London, I am aware of the ongoing international financial crisis aggravated by the millions of people defaulting on their mortgages and the consequent fall in the value of the U.S. currency.

For me, this recent financial news was very much a case of *déjà vu*.

It took me back 40 years to when I worked in a British bank. On the third Saturday night of the month, television programs were interrupted to tell the nation that the British currency, the pound sterling, was to be devalued by 14.2 percent. In comparison, the American currency dropped in value by 16 percent in just a few weeks in November.

Forty years ago currencies had a fixed value, only fluctuating one or two cents either way. Shortly after the devaluation of the British pound and partly because of it, fluctuating currencies became the norm, with values changing daily. In reality they can and often do change every second.

A British news item from 40 years ago may not seem all that important today—but there are lessons from it that resonate in today's world news headlines. To understand this fully, we need to go back in time a little further.

## A lesson from history

A century ago the British currency, the pound sterling, was the international trading (or reserve) currency. A reserve currency must be stable. That's the only way other countries can depend on it when doing business.

Prior to World War I, if, say, China wanted to buy goods from France or

Germany, the payment would have been determined in pounds sterling, not in their own national currencies. Only the pound could be relied on to maintain its value from the time of purchase until the time payment was received.

Helping with this international standing of the pound was the fact that the currency was on the gold standard. That meant pound notes could be exchanged for gold. The Bank of England guaranteed this, and Great Britain had the gold to back up the currency, no matter how many people might wish to convert paper into the precious metal.

At the time of the Great Depression the British had to take their currency off the

## *Most Americans seem blissfully unaware of the dollar's decline or of the likely repercussions for them on a personal level.*

gold standard. However, sterling still continued as a major trading currency. By this time, the dollar was also in use for international trade.

Britain was greatly impoverished by World War II. However, even after the war the British currency continued to be used for trade within the sterling area. This consisted mostly of countries that had been British colonies—roughly one quarter of all the world's nations—and that were still doing a great deal of trade with the mother country and with each other. The system was advantageous to Britain, as the various nations maintained substantial financial reserves in London.

By 1967 Britain was still having serious financial difficulties. Manufacturing had declined. To boost the manufacturing sector, the Labor government at the time decided to devalue the currency, thereby making exports cheaper and more competitive.

Those behind this decision did not foresee that it would lead to the death of the sterling area and the end of the British currency as an international trading currency.

## Could the status of the dollar change?

Here we find lessons for the United States

today. Since World War II, the American dollar has been the world's main trading currency. When Ghana, in West Africa, buys oil from nearby neighbor Nigeria, the oil is priced in U.S. dollars and payment is made in the American currency, not in the Ghanaian cedi or the Nigerian naira.

Neither of these currencies can be used for international trade. They are known as *soft* currencies—they cannot be changed over a bank counter anywhere in the world. Most national currencies are like that—they are soft currencies not accepted outside their own nation's borders.

Only a few currencies are known as *hard* currencies. They can be changed almost

anywhere in the world. Included among these are the American dollar, the euro, the British pound, the Canadian and Australian dollars and the Japanese yen. One reason they are hard currencies is that they generally maintain their value and can therefore be relied on.

Besides being a hard currency, the U.S. dollar is the world's reserve currency. Many commodities, including oil, are priced in U.S. dollars. This is to America's advantage. If the American media is anything to go by, few people in the United States realize the consequences of this changing. But it almost happened the weekend of Nov. 18.

OPEC countries meeting in Saudi Arabia heard some of their members calling for oil to be priced in euros or a "basket" of other currencies. Only the intervention of the Saudi delegation stopped this from happening.

When Rafael Correa, the president of Ecuador, stated that "Opec needed to sell its oil in a 'strong currency', he summed up the discontent widely shared by other Opec members and expressed most volubly by Iran and Venezuela. 'If we continue to trade it in a weak currency [the dollar], . . . we will need to sell more of our oil to buy



or exiting the United States” (“America the Unwelcoming,” Nov. 26, 2007).

### What’s the root cause?

The root cause of the problem can be summed up in one word: *debt*. Americans have been overspending for decades, both at the governmental and personal levels. More recently, that debt has been financed by other countries.

Only the United States could do this, precisely because the dollar is the world’s trading currency. Other countries would accept U.S. dollars as payment for goods and were happy to bank those dollars

to pay for their own future needs.

But this is no longer the case. Increasingly of late, there is a realization around the world that those dollars are decreasing in value. Consequently, countries want to divest themselves of their U.S. dollars, but they want to do it slowly to avoid a panic that might wipe out the value altogether.

That’s exactly what China, holder of billions of dollars of U.S. debt, is doing—diversifying into other currencies.

Debt is the primary reason for the present crisis. The subprime mortgage crisis was the trigger, itself a reflection that too many Americans were over their heads in debt.

Banks have made it possible, through credit cards and personal loans, for people to live way beyond their means, buying things they *want* regardless of whether they can really *afford* the items.

Faced with mounting numbers of people filing for bankruptcy to get out from under credit card debt, banks launched a major campaign to have the U.S. Congress change the law so that it would be harder for Americans to avoid their accumulated debt. This, along with the tremendous increase in adjustable rate mortgages, has backfired on the banks, which are now finding that

people struggling to pay their credit card bills and ever-larger mortgage payments are ending up in foreclosure.

America is not the only country affected. According to the BBC, after the United States the United Kingdom and Australia are the next two countries with the highest amounts of personal debt. All three countries seem set to weather some rough financial storms in the near future!

Most Americans seem blissfully unaware of the dollar’s decline or of the possible repercussions for them on a personal level. At the very least, the fuel they need to get to work may well again substantially increase in cost. This will, in turn, affect the prices of nearly everything, since nearly everything we buy must be transported somewhere.

Ironically, neither energy nor food costs are included when the government reports the core inflation rate, often used to determine annual cost of living increases. Life seems set to get harder for most Americans in the months ahead!

This also gives the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank a headache. Wall Street is calling for a further drop in interest rates, which are set by the Fed. However, the rest of the world wants to see interest rates either held or raised so as to stabilize the dollar. This dilemma led to the following front page headline in the Nov. 17, 2007, *Financial Times*: “Fed and Markets Set to Clash on Rates.”

It will be interesting to see whether the Federal Reserve chooses to try to preserve the dollar and maintain its global role as the world’s reserve currency or bows to domestic pressure for relief for debt-strapped Americans and for increased corporate profits. By the time you read this, you may know the answer—and you’ll have a better understanding of the long-term consequences of the choice.

Bible prophecy foretells the rise of a new dominant geopolitical power just prior to Christ’s return (see “The Coming European Superpower” on page 13). And, sadly, it also foretells the decline and fall of the nations descended from Great Britain, including the United States and Australia (see our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* to learn more).

*The Good News* will continue to report on relevant news stories in these regards—and, more importantly, where events are headed. **GN**

the same amount of goods and services” (“Opec Looks at Switch to Strong Currency,” *Financial Times*, Nov. 19, 2007).

If oil were priced in euros, it would cost Americans more to buy it. Further, if the dollar should ever become a soft currency due to its unreliability, the United States would have to actually pay in euros. That means America would have to sell sufficient goods to Europe to buy oil from the Middle East.

Americans have had the luxury of enjoying cheaper oil partly because the precious liquid was priced in dollars. Other countries have seen wild fluctuations and shortages of supply because not only have they had to contend with price increases in dollars, but they have also had the problem of coming up with dollars in the first place.

The United States could soon have that problem with euros. Where would the euros come from? Especially now, when, according to Fareed Zakaria in *Newsweek*, “the United States is the only major country in the world to which travel has declined amid a tourist boom.” He adds: “Every American who has a friend abroad has heard some story about the absurd hassle and humiliation of entering

## What's the state of the world as we enter 2008?

**W**hat's ahead in this new calendar year of 2008? *The Good News* is not in the business of short-term political and economic forecasting, but we can bring you a region-by-region overview of major trends to watch around the world—undergirded by biblical teaching (see Luke 21:34-36).

As this column goes to press just before the turn of the year, long-term allegiances between various nations are being challenged by events, and dictatorships appear to be gaining ground on democracy in at least a few countries.

We will circle the globe here, briefly examining major regions and highlighting certain current events and trends in light of biblical prophecies. Since the largest portion of our *Good News* mailing list is in North America, we begin here.

### The United States

**I**n addition to its troubles with enemy nations, long-term relationships between the United States and several of its allies are currently under considerable strain. As the *International Herald Tribune* observes:

*"The United States could well be wondering why its relationships with three major countries that should be close allies have become so frayed . . . Japan has balked at continuing its naval refueling support for U.S. operations in Afghanistan. India has hedged on proceeding with its nuclear agreement with Washington. Turkey is angry at the inability of the United States to rein in attacks by Iraq-based Kurdish separatists . . . All this is not just a coincidence . . . [These events] reflect a broader erosion of America's influence linked to its war in Iraq and its broader Middle East policies" (Nov. 6, 2007, emphasis added throughout).*

According to a recent survey, only 9 percent of Turkish citizens view the United States in a favorable light (down from 52 percent in 2000). Japan is anxious about thawing American relations with North Korea. It does not want Washington to remove this rogue country from its list of terrorist nations.

Moreover, the British archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, recently attacked America, portraying it as a violent, imperialist country—referring to its "misguided sense of mission." The interview with the archbishop, which implied that the United States had lost its moral high ground, appeared in a Muslim magazine.

Some members of the British Parliament praised Dr. Williams' attack on American foreign policy. One ray of light is that British Conservative Party leader David Cameron went to the United States to repair and mend his formerly strained relationship with President George W. Bush.

On the domestic front, political battles over the administration's policy in Iraq and the overall direction of the country will likely dominate the news leading up to the November presidential election. A front-page article in *USA Today* (Nov. 1, 2007) described things this way: "A year before voting, a nation of discontent

. . . Divided by the war and anxious about the future, Americans want some fixes."

Economic news may be shaky due to the subprime mortgage meltdown. Still the latest news shows "soaring exports boost[ing] economic growth" with "GDP up 4.9% in [the] third quarter" (*Financial Times*, Nov. 30, 2007).

### Down to South America



Hugo Chavez

**V**enezuelan President Hugo Chavez has been consolidating power for years, but his latest drive has been stymied—for now. He had sought changes in his country's constitution that would have afforded him virtual permanent rule for life, but the Venezuelan citizenry rejected his wishes by a vote of 51 to 49 percent. However, he has promised to keep pushing these changes until they do pass!

Chavez is known for his outrageous insults to the American president. Amid all the presidential rhetoric, this Latin nation is suffering widespread shortages in basics like sugar and milk. Chavez' power play has echoes of Fidel Castro's long-reigning Cuban dictatorship. Regrettably, Chavez is using his country's newfound oil wealth to subsidize left-leaning politicians, movements and governments in South America—threatening to undermine progress in the region toward more political and economic freedom. He's also proclaimed a partnership with Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to oppose the United States.

### The Land Down Under

**T**he long reign of one of the most successful conservative leaders in recent times, John Howard, has come to an end in Australia. The November election there brought the much more liberal Kevin Rudd to power. In its wake there are already calls for a referendum with a view to instituting a republic and saying farewell to the queen.

Although this new Australian government has pledged to continue cordial relations with America, it reportedly opposes further involvement in Iraq. John Howard, "the man of steel," will be missed by President Bush.



Kevin Rudd

### China, Japan and North Korea

**I**ntent on becoming another superpower, the People's Republic of China is expanding in almost every possible direction—its space program, Asia in general, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Chinese tentacles are everywhere! China has fairly recently pulled ahead of Germany to become the world's top exporter (*The Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 25, 2007).

China is also using its economic power to rapidly increase its military. According to *Time* (Oct. 1, 2007), "veiled threats from China" against Taiwan continue—perhaps laying the groundwork for possible direct intervention at a future time when the United States has been weakened or is too preoccupied elsewhere. (A bright spot is that Hong Kong continues to actively pressure China to implement its promised democratic reforms.)

And then there is North Korea. Despite agreements with the United States and the first commercial freight train to cross the border with South Korea in decades, it seems Pyongyang is still playing games with America. Does this regime possess nuclear weapons, or does it not? Why does North Korea transfer nuclear know-how to rogue regimes like Iran and Syria (where Israel recently took out what was apparently a nuclear facility under construction)?

Japan is understandably wary of North Korean intentions. It is, therefore, taking further steps to normalize its relations with China. The *Financial Times* reported that "Japan and China announced their first cabinet-level forum on closer business cooperation, highlighting the warmer political ties between Asia's two largest economies after years of strain" (Nov. 21, 2007).

### Pakistan's crucial role

**I**n the words of British author and journalist William Rees-Mogg, a former London *Times* editor: "Pakistan remains an important pivotal country. It is an essential bastion of the American position in the Middle East. Without Pakistan as an ally, it is hard to see how the U.S. could maintain its position in Afghanistan. The worst possible alternative would be an anti-Western Islamic regime" (*The Times*, Nov. 5, 2007).

It remains to be seen whether Pervez Musharraf can hold things together just as president of Pakistan, having recently given up his other crucial role as commander of the armed forces. Can he or any possible future successor successfully stop Pakistan's Islamic radicals from spilling over into a more overt terrorism? With several dozen nuclear warheads in Pakistan's arsenal, the stakes are high.

### Putin's Russia threatens new arms race

**V**ladimir Putin is reverting to the old Soviet model, using Russia's burgeoning oil wealth to rebuild and modernize its military and throw its weight around, particularly in Europe.

Back in mid-July of last year, President Putin "dumped a key arms control treaty limiting the deployment of conventional forces in Europe" (*The Observer*, July 15, 2007). Then recently "he signed a law suspending Russia's participation in a key post-cold war arms treaty in a move that will effectively kill off one of the landmark defence agreements



Vladimir Putin

between Moscow and the west" (*Financial Times*, Dec. 1, 2007).

Amid cries of foul play and vote rigging, Putin's United Russia party won some 62 percent of the vote in a recent national election, firmly establishing his hold on the country's leadership. Whether as president until next spring or prime minister later, apparently the Russian electorate as a whole has firmly backed him. Diplomatic relations with the United States have been worsening for the last few years.

## Troubles in Africa

**A**frica has been plagued by ongoing religious strife between Muslims and just about everyone else. The genocide in the Darfur region of western Sudan is beginning to rival the previous slaughter in Rwanda. The world stands by watching as Arab Muslims kill black Muslims and Christians.

Meanwhile Zimbabwe nears the breaking point.

Recent newspaper headlines are instructive: "Zimbabwe running out of cash as inflation soars"; "Torture is Mugabe's election weapon"; "A stricken nation waiting to die." Yet as the London *Times* lamented, "Robert Mugabe is offered a welcome at the international table," referring to the EU-Africa summit (Dec. 1, 2007). According to UNICEF, the AIDS blight in Zimbabwe alone has left 25 percent of its children—1.1 million—as orphans.



Robert Mugabe

In June of last year Africa was united in refusing an American request for a military headquarters on the African continent. "The Pentagon's plan to create a U.S. military command based in Africa has hit a wall of hostility from governments in the region reluctant to associate themselves with the Bush administration's 'war on terror' and fearful of American intervention" (*The Guardian*, June 25, 2007).

## Nuclear weapons in Iran?

**A** Dec. 4 American intelligence report reversed previous findings and concluded that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003. This new assessment likely decreases the odds of a U.S. military attack on Iran to near zero—which may have been its unstated political purpose.

President Bush has reacted to the report by saying, "Iran was dangerous, Iran is dangerous and Iran will be dangerous if they have the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon" (*The Independent*, Dec. 5, 2007).

John Bolton, former U.S. ambassador to the UN, stated: "As we all know, intelligence estimates can

be wrong in multiple directions . . . You have to look at the strategic position that Iran has been pursuing for close to 20 years now, which is that they want a nuclear weapons capability" (*The Sunday Times*, Dec. 2, 2007).

Wrote Daniel Henninger in *The Wall Street Journal*: "Let's assume for argument's sake that Iran did stop its nuke program in 2003. Why, then, in 2006 was Iran performing test flights of the Shabab-2 and Shabab-3 ballistic missiles, the latter with a range of some 1,200 miles?" (Dec. 6, 2007).

Several prominent Israeli leaders differed sharply with the new intelligence report. The British have also challenged it.

According to a *Time* snapshot article in August of last year, the American administration had stated its intention of sending massive amounts of military hardware to selected Middle Eastern nations to contain the Iranian threat and for other security reasons. "The onslaught of prospective weapons deals is part of a new Bush Administration initiative to contain Iran—and underscore America's long-term involvement in the Middle East" (Aug. 13, 2007).

## Hopes for Mideast peace torn by conflict

**W**e see ongoing conflict in this strife-torn region on many levels, any one of which could trigger a war: Palestinians vs. Israelis, Hamas-supporting Palestinians vs. Palestinians who support the Fatah party, Hezbollah guerrillas vs. Israel, Hezbollah supporters on the verge of provoking a civil war in Lebanon, Syria meddling in Lebanese affairs.

Most of these warring factions definitely agree on one thing: their hatred of Israel. London's chief rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks, wrote: "AntiSemites have attacked our religion and our race. Now they are going after the Jewish nation" (*The Jewish Chronicle*, Nov. 16, 2007). He called this brand of anti-Semitism "a new kind of hatred."

Nonetheless, the recent Middle East peace conference in Annapolis, Maryland, is a possible blueprint for a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. A *Financial Times* feature article stated: "George W. Bush achieved what he wanted at Annapolis—a big international presence, a historic handshake between enemies and rare applause" (Dec. 1, 2007).

Yet the same article also pointed out: "This is not an ideal time for peace-making. The Palestinians are divided. Mahmoud Abbas, the president, has lost the Gaza Strip to the Islamist Hamas. And Hamas's exclusion from peace talks undermines its legitimacy. In Israel, too, Ehud Olmert is weak,

his government coalition shaky."

## Europe and Britain

**M**ajor trends in Europe include the ongoing drive for greater integration and unity within the European Union—leading the EU to desire political and even military clout to match its economic power with the goal of rivaling and eventually surpassing the United States (see "The Coming European Superpower" beginning on page 13).

Ongoing conflict between Muslim minorities and Western governments is exemplified in French riots by young Muslims of North African descent. A British teacher in Sudan was threatened with 40 lashes, a prison sentence and a fine for apparently innocently naming (in concert with her students) a teddy bear "Muhammad."

This name is common among Muslim males, but misusing it is deemed an insult to the prophet Muhammad—in this case supposedly by assigning it to an animal (though a teddy bear is not really an animal of course). Some Sudanese called for her execution for insulting Islam. After 15 days in a Sudanese jail, she was pardoned and has since returned to England.

Columnist Melanie Phillips concluded her article in response by saying: "This country [Britain] in turn has to get real and see the plight of Mrs. Gibbons [the teacher] as yet another symptom of the great onslaught being mounted against our civilization—and towards which not one inch of ground must be given if that civilization is to survive" (*Daily Mail*, Dec. 3, 2007).

Unlike many peers in her generation, she has the eyes to see the road ahead—where these extremist Islamic outbursts are taking us.

And Kosovo is back in the news, stating its intention to declare independence from Serbia. The headline in *The Independent* reads, "Serbs prepare to flee from Kosovo as another conflict in the Balkans looms" (Dec. 7, 2007).

## Wrap-Up: Full Circle

**R**eviewing the various regions around the globe, the name of one country emerges again and again: the United States, the country we started with. America's present role in a troubled and uncertain world is truly unique among the nations. It is likely to remain the dominant superpower, at least for a while. As global policeman, it has a defense budget almost as big as the rest of the world's.

To understand the why of present American power and influence, and the country's past, present and future role, request or download our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.

## How Can You Make Sense of the News?

So much is happening in the world, and so quickly. Where are today's dramatic and dangerous trends taking us? What does Bible prophecy reveal about our future? You're probably very concerned with the direction the world is heading. So are we. That's why we've created the *World News & Prophecy* Web site—to help you understand the news in the light of Bible prophecy. This eye-opening site offers you a perspective you won't find anywhere else—the perspective of God's Word, the Bible. Visit us at [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org) today!



# Help Your Child **Refute Evolution**

*Your children are likely being indoctrinated almost continuously with evolutionary teachings and ideas not only at school, but just about everywhere. Here are some tips for helping them deal with these false concepts.*

by Paul Luecke

**Y**ou are watching a nature show on television with your child. The film footage is impressive; the narration is interesting, adding fact upon incredible fact.

The narrator then adds another remarkable “fact”: “Over millions of years, the hummingbird developed the remarkable ability to fly not only forward as other birds, but to also fly backwards and hover in midflight like a helicopter.”

The next day your child comes home from school with homework for science. You notice some charts to be filled in, showing how human beings evolved over time.

What should you do?

Even if your children grow up in a Bible-believing home, in today’s world they will be bombarded with the concept of evolution. But won’t they just naturally absorb from you the truth about creation? No! Without your consistent instruction and guidance, your child will be taught by default one predominant picture of how the world and everything in it came to exist—evolution.

## Convinced of a Creator

Following are some pointers to help your child not only refute the false teachings of evolution, but also become convinced of a Creator who is very real and who should become very real to him or her personally.

**1** First, *become informed yourself.* You are your child’s most important teacher! And God intends you to be your child’s *most influential teacher.* But as a teacher you need to be armed with important information to pass along.

Take the time to read or view some of the materials listed under “Some Resources to Help” on the facing page. Your child’s teachers at school will most likely not be taking the time to become informed about this information if they believe in evolution, so *you* must. Some of the books you can find at your local



**You are responsible for the education of your child, and it is important to know what others are teaching him or her.**

library, or you can find used copies of most through the Internet.

**2** Whenever evolutionary concepts are encountered—whether in a television show, in a book or at school—*discuss them with your child* at your earliest opportunity. If you have educated yourself with some facts and proofs that show evolution is false, you can help your child refute what he or she has just heard about evolution on a level you know your child can best understand.

You can find many ways to teach the problems with evolutionary theory, especially if you are creative. Several important concepts are brought out clearly in the book *Darwin’s Black Box*, for example. These include the principles of irreducible complexity, minimal function and obvious intelligent design.

**3** It is not enough to clear away evolutionary falsehoods. You should also *fill your children’s minds with truth*—reading the Bible with them regularly, starting at an early age and continuing through their formative years at home.

Explain why evolution is so popular today. Go through Romans 1:18-32 and

explain how the underlying motivation is that people—even many highly educated people—simply don’t want there to be a God. They don’t want to believe that a higher power has authority over how they should live and what they should do. They want to feel free to do what they wish without the guilt of having to answer to a Creator.

In spite of advanced knowledge in many areas today, God says people, including the modern nations descended from ancient Israel, will come to destruction because they lack knowledge: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). This certainly includes a willing ignorance of the existence of God.

While teaching your children that we exist because God created us, it is also very important to teach them *why* God created us! As you read through the Bible with your child, reinforce the reason God made people with an intelligence vastly higher than any animal—our potential to enter the immortal, divine family of God!

**4** What about dealing with evolution being taught at school? Ultimately, *you are responsible*

# Some Resources to Help



- **Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?** This free booklet, from the publishers of *The Good News*, addresses many of the problems with the theory of evolution—often from the admissions of evolutionists themselves! You’ll also find in it a listing of additional excellent books on the subject.
- **Life’s Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?** This free booklet, also from the publishers of *The Good News*, reveals some of the compelling evidence for the existence of a Creator.
- **Unlocking the Mystery of Life**, Illustra Media, 2002. This excellent DVD documentary examines the scientific case for intelligent design and, through computer animation, takes you into the interior of the living cell to explore systems and processes that bear the unmistakable hallmarks of design.
- **Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution**, Michael Behe, 1996. This book by a university biochemist demonstrates that the tiny building blocks of life—cells and their myriad components—are far too complex for their codependent parts and processes to have evolved without an outside, intelligent design at work.
- **Evolution: A Theory in Crisis**, Michael Denton, 1996. This book by a biological researcher and medical doctor examines features of the natural world that mutation and natural selection cannot explain and shows the impossibility of transitional forms required for evolution to have taken place.
- **Darwin on Trial**, Phillip Johnson, 1993. This book, by a professor of law at the University of California at Berkeley, puts the theory of evolution “on trial” by examining scientific detail that argues convincingly against the theory of evolution.
- **The Case for a Creator**, Lee Strobel, 2004. A journalist and former atheist investigates scientific evidence that points toward God.
- **Icons of Evolution**, Jonathan Wells, 2000. A molecular biologist tackles 10 of the most prominent arguments neo-Darwinists use as examples of evidence for evolution and shows how each is misrepresented and misused to support Darwin’s theory of naturalism. (At the Web site [www.iconsofevolution.com/tools](http://www.iconsofevolution.com/tools) you can also find Wells’ list of “Ten Questions to Ask Your Biology Teacher About Evolution.”)

for the education of your child, and it is important to know what others are teaching him or her. Start the habit of discussing what was taught in school each day, briefly at the dinner table or before starting on homework. And when it comes to the subject of evolution vs. creation, it is critical that you are involved.

Here are some tips for helping your child deal with evolutionary teachings at school:

- Taking tests in school—where evolutionary teachings are expected to be put

down as the “correct” answers—can be handled without violating the student’s conscience by simply adding a note at the top of the test page such as “The book says . . .” or “As taught in class . . .”

These few words (or something similar) qualify all the answers that follow as not necessarily being the student’s personal belief, but that he or she is merely recalling and repeating back what the teacher or textbook said.

- It’s usually best not to start arguments about evolution vs. creation in the class-

room. As well-intentioned as this may be, arguing with people who do not acknowledge God as our Creator may only cause problems in the long run. No teacher wants to be put on the spot or proven wrong in front of a class of students.

This does not mean your child should be cowed into silence when directly challenged by a teacher or peers, an issue addressed in the next point.

- Do prepare your child to “be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you” (1 Peter 3:15). This is a principle we all need to be prepared to practice. But being able to answer people who ask us about why we believe in a Creator—or about any of the beliefs we hold—is something that can only happen if we know the facts.

Again, this means covering evolution vs. creation concepts with your child—and reading the Bible—as an ongoing process. Remind your child that he or she is not alone; there are many others who believe in creation rather than evolution.

Even if he or she *were* alone, this would be good practice in learning to hold fast to the truth even if no one else around us believes it. This is one of those areas of peer pressure our children need help to stand up against.

**5** Help your child formulate a list of proofs of the existence of a Creator. To develop a relationship with God and ultimately become baptized and converted, he or she must come to prove absolutely that God exists. For “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is” (Hebrews 11:6).

Start a listing of absolute proofs, which can be added to or expanded as your child grows in understanding.

## Preparing for the future

The world around us is rapidly approaching its end. Why? Because it has rejected God. But we—including you and your children—have been called out of that world to walk with our Creator and prepare for the arrival of His Kingdom here on earth.

Parents, God has charged you with the responsibility of equipping your children with knowledge of Him and His way of life. He expects you to help them come to know for certain that they aren’t the product of a blind, random evolutionary process and to see the wonderful future He has planned for them! **GN**

## Television Log

All channels and times listed are for cable TV unless stated otherwise. For additional information and the most current airing times, or to download or view programs online, visit [www.beyondtoday.tv](http://www.beyondtoday.tv).

### UNITED STATES

**Alabama**  
Athens ch. 2, Sundays 8:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 7 p.m.  
Decatur ch. 2, Sundays 8:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 7 p.m.  
Scottsboro ch. 2, Sundays 8:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 7 p.m.

**Arizona**  
Prescott ch. 13, Sundays 5 p.m.; Saturdays 3:30 p.m.  
Prescott Valley ch. 13, Sundays 9 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.  
Tucson ch. 73, 98, 120, Sundays 10 a.m.; Saturdays 9 a.m.

**Arkansas**  
Fayetteville ch. 18, Sundays 10 a.m.; Wednesdays 6 p.m.; Saturdays 9 a.m.  
Mena ch. 19, Sundays 8:30 a.m.  
Mountain Home ch. 7, 22, Sundays 9 a.m.

**California**  
Alamo ch. 26, Thursdays 7:30 p.m.; 2nd & 4th Mondays 9 p.m.  
Berkeley ch. 26, Thursdays 9 p.m.  
Clayton ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Concord ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Danville ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Dublin ch. 26, Fridays 4 p.m.  
El Cerrito ch. 26, Thursdays 9 p.m.  
El Sobrante ch. 26, Thursdays 9 p.m.  
Emeryville ch. 26, Sundays 8 a.m.  
Eureka ch. 26, Fridays 8 p.m.  
Fremont ch. 29, Tuesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Hayward ch. 28, Tuesdays 10 p.m.  
Hemet ch. 3, Fridays 2:30 p.m.  
Hercules ch. 26, Thursdays 9 p.m.  
Lafayette ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Livermore ch. 26, Tuesdays 10:30 p.m.  
Marin County ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Martinez ch. 26, Thursdays 8:30 p.m.; Fridays 6 p.m.  
Modesto ch. 16, 98, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 4:30 p.m.  
Monrovia ch. 26, Thursdays 7:30 p.m.; 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Moraga ch. 21, Tuesdays 9:30 p.m.  
Novato ch. 26, Thursdays 7:30 p.m.; 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Oakland ch. 26, Thursdays 7:30 p.m.; 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Orinda ch. 26, Thursdays 7:30 p.m.; 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Palo Cedro ch. 56, Sundays 6 a.m. & 6 p.m.  
Pasadena ch. 26, Sundays 9 p.m.  
Petaluma ch. 26, Sundays 8 a.m.  
Piedmont ch. 26, Thursdays 12 midnight  
Pittsburg ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Pleasant Hill ch. 26, Fridays 4 p.m.  
Redding ch. 11, Sundays 11:30 a.m.  
Richmond ch. 26, Thursdays 7:30 p.m.; 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.  
Rossmore ch. 18, Thursdays 6 p.m.  
Sacramento ch. 19, Sundays 3:30 p.m.  
San Diego (North) ch. 18, 19, 23, Mondays 5 p.m.  
San Diego (South) ch. 29, Sundays 11 a.m.  
San Francisco ch. 15A, Wednesdays 4:30 p.m.  
San Jose ch. 26, Thursdays 9 p.m.  
San Rafael ch. 15A, Wednesdays 4:30 p.m.  
Santa Clara ch. 72, Sundays 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays 10:30 a.m.  
Santa Rosa ch. 6, Thursdays 4:30 p.m.  
2nd, Thursdays 9:30 p.m.  
26, 2nd & 4th Mondays 9:30 p.m.

**Colorado**  
Boulder ch. 43, Fridays 1 p.m.

**Georgia**  
Cornelia ch. 4, Sundays 6:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.

**Hawaii**  
Hilo ch. 53, Sundays 10 a.m.; Thursdays 7:30 p.m.  
Lanai ch. 13, Fridays 7 p.m.; Saturdays 7 a.m.  
Maui ch. 52, Fridays 7 p.m.; Saturdays 7 a.m.  
Molokai ch. 13, Fridays 7 p.m.; Saturdays 7 a.m.

**Idaho**  
Boise ch. 11, Wednesdays 7:30 p.m.

**Illinois**  
Arlington Heights ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Bartlett ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Brookport ch. 2, Sundays 2 p.m.  
Buffalo Grove ch. 19, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Chicago ch. 36, times vary  
Des Plaines ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
East St. Louis ch. 18, Saturdays 5:30 p.m.  
Elk Grove Village ch. 19, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Glenview ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Golf ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Hanover Park ch. 19, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Hoffman Estates ch. 19, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Lincolnwood ch. 2, Sundays 2 p.m.  
Metropolis ch. 19, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Morton Grove ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Mt. Prospect ch. 17, Sundays 10 a.m.  
Naperville ch. 19, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Niles ch. 20, Sundays 6 p.m.

Northbrook ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Palatine ch. 19, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Park Ridge ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Prospect Heights ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Rolling Meadows ch. 19, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Romeoville ch. 6, Sundays 9 a.m.  
Schaumburg ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Skokie ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Springfield ch. 4, Fridays 3 a.m., 11 a.m. & 8 p.m.  
Streamwood ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Wheeling ch. 35, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Wilmette ch. 19, Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.

**Indiana**  
Bloomington ch. 3, Sundays 9:30 p.m.  
Elkhart ch. 99, Mondays 4:30 p.m.  
Evansville ch. 7, Mondays 5:30 p.m.; Tuesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Ft. Wayne ch. 57, Sundays 9 a.m.  
South Bend ch. 99, Mondays 4:30 p.m.  
Valparaiso ch. 99, Tuesdays 8:30 p.m.

**Iowa**  
Des Moines ch. 15, Sundays 11:30 a.m.

**Kentucky**  
Berea ch. 5, Fridays 9 & 9:30 p.m.  
Hopkinsville ch. 23, Wednesdays and Fridays 11 a.m.  
Owensboro ch. 52, Sundays 8 a.m. & 7 p.m.  
Paducah ch. 2, Sundays 2 p.m.  
Richmond ch. 5, Fridays 9 & 9:30 p.m.

**Massachusetts**  
Amherst ch. 12, Tuesdays 9 p.m.  
Boston ch. 22, 23, 83, Sundays 7 a.m.; Wednesdays 10 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.  
Cambridge ch. 22, 23, 83, Sundays 7 a.m.; Wednesdays 10 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.  
East Longmeadow ch. 5, Sundays 11:30 a.m.  
Greenfield ch. 17, Tuesdays 9 a.m.; Wednesdays 10:30 a.m.  
Palmer ch. 15, Sundays 12, 2:30 & 8 p.m.  
Shrewsbury ch. 33, Wednesdays 10 p.m.; Thursdays 7 a.m.  
Worcester ch. 13, Thursdays 10 a.m.

**Michigan**  
Ann Arbor ch. 17, Thursdays 4:30 p.m.  
Grand Haven ch. 22, Mondays 4 p.m.  
Grand Rapids ch. 25, Tuesdays or Wednesdays 11 a.m.  
Kalamazoo ch. 19, Sundays 8:30 a.m.  
Midland ch. 3, Fridays 5:30 p.m.  
Mt. Pleasant ch. 3, times vary  
Traverse City ch. 2, Sundays 11:30 a.m.; Fridays 5 p.m.  
Ypsilanti ch. 17, Thursdays 4:30 p.m.

**Minnesota**  
Albert Lea ch. 6, Sundays 9:55 a.m.  
Austin ch. 6, Sundays 7 p.m.  
Blaine ch. 14, Sundays 1 & 9 a.m.; Saturdays 5 p.m.  
Brooklyn Center ch. 19, Sundays 4 a.m., 10 a.m., 4 p.m.; Saturdays 10 p.m.  
Brooklyn Park ch. 19, Sundays 4 a.m., 10 a.m., 4 p.m.; Saturdays 10 p.m.  
Burnsville ch. 14, Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 4:30 p.m.; Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays 4:30 a.m.  
Centerville ch. 14, Sundays 1 & 9 a.m.; Saturdays 5 p.m.  
Circle Pines ch. 14, Sundays 1 & 9 a.m.; Saturdays 5 p.m.  
Eagan ch. 15, Sundays 6:30 a.m.; Mondays 12:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 9:30 p.m.; Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.; Thursdays 3:30 p.m.; Fridays 12:30 p.m.; Saturdays 9:30 a.m.  
Eden Prairie ch. 15, Sundays 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays 5:30 p.m.  
Edina ch. 15, Sundays 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays 5:30 p.m.  
Golden Valley ch. 19, Sundays 4 a.m., 10 a.m., 4 p.m.; Saturdays 10 p.m.  
Ham Lake ch. 14, Sundays 1 & 9 a.m.; Saturdays 5 p.m.  
Hopkins ch. 15, Sundays 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays 5:30 p.m.  
Inver Grove Hts. ch. 15, Sundays 6:30 a.m.; Mondays 12:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 9:30 p.m.; Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.; Thursdays 3:30 p.m.; Fridays 12:30 p.m.; Saturdays 9:30 a.m.  
Lexington ch. 14, Sundays 1 & 9 a.m.; Saturdays 5 p.m.  
Lino Lakes ch. 14, Sundays 1 & 9 a.m.; Saturdays 5 p.m.  
Litchfield ch. 10, Sundays 2 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 7 p.m.; Wednesdays 1 a.m., 3 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 6:30 p.m.  
Maple Grove ch. 19, Sundays 4 a.m., 10 a.m., 4 p.m.; Saturdays 10 p.m.  
Minneapolis ch. 75, Mondays 6:30 p.m.  
Minnetonka ch. 15, Sundays 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays 5:30 p.m.  
New Hope ch. 19, Sundays 4 a.m., 10 a.m., 4 p.m.; Saturdays 10 p.m.  
New Ulm ch. 72, Sundays 5 p.m.; Thursdays 10 a.m.; Fridays 7 p.m.  
Osseo ch. 19, Sundays 4 a.m., 10 a.m., 4 p.m.; Saturdays 10 p.m.  
Plymouth ch. 19, Sundays 4 a.m., 10 a.m., 4 p.m.; Saturdays 10 p.m.  
Richfield ch. 15, Sundays 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays 5:30 p.m.  
Robbinsdale ch. 19, Sundays 4 a.m., 10 a.m.,

Rochester ch. 4 p.m.; Saturdays 10 p.m.  
St. Charles ch. 10, Sundays 10 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.  
Spring Lake Park ch. 20, Sundays 2 p.m.; Wednesdays 3 p.m.  
Wabasha ch. 14, Sundays 1 & 9 a.m.; Saturdays 5 p.m.  
Willmar ch. 20, Sundays 2 p.m.; Wednesdays 3 p.m.  
Winona ch. 8, Thursdays 11 a.m. & 8 p.m.; Saturdays 5 p.m.  
Winona ch. 20, Sundays 2 p.m.; Wednesdays 3 p.m.

**Missouri**  
Cape Girardeau ch. 5, Sundays 7:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 6 p.m.; Thursdays 12:30 p.m.; Fridays 7:30 p.m.  
Jackson ch. 5, Sundays 7:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 6 p.m.; Thursdays 12:30 p.m.; Fridays 7:30 p.m.  
Jefferson City ch. 3, Wednesdays 6 p.m.  
Poplar Bluff ch. 54, Tuesdays 4 p.m.  
St. Louis ch. 18, Saturdays 5:30 p.m.

**Montana**  
Billings ch. 7, Sundays 6 p.m.; Saturdays 11 a.m.  
Helena ch. 11, Sundays 3 p.m.  
Missoula ch. 7, Sundays 11 a.m.

**Nevada**  
Carson City ch. 10, Wednesdays 7:30 p.m.  
Reno/Sparks ch. 16, Wednesdays 7 p.m.

**New Hampshire**  
LaConia ch. 25, 26, Sundays 7:30 a.m. & 4:30 p.m.

**New Jersey**  
Newark ch. 19, Sundays 7 a.m.

**New Mexico**  
Albuquerque ch. 27, Sundays 10:30 p.m.  
Santa Fe ch. 16, Sundays 10 a.m.; Mondays 6:30 p.m.

**New York**  
Binghamton ch. 4, Thursdays 5:30 p.m.  
Brooklyn ch. 56, 69, Sundays 10 a.m.  
Canandaigua ch. 12, Sundays 2 p.m.  
Manhattan ch. 57, Sundays 7 a.m.  
Olean ch. 6, Thursdays 9:30 p.m.  
Oneonta ch. 23, Mondays 6 p.m.; Wednesdays 9 p.m.  
Queens ch. 35, Tuesdays 8 p.m.; Thursdays 3 p.m.; Fridays 10 p.m.; Saturdays 4:30 p.m.  
Rochester ch. 15, Tuesdays & Thursdays 8 a.m.  
Woodbury ch. 20, Saturdays 9:30 a.m.

**North Carolina**  
Asheville ch. 20, Sundays 1 p.m.  
Burlington ch. 5, 10, Sundays 10 a.m.  
Charlotte ch. 21, Saturdays 2 p.m.  
Durham ch. 8, Wednesdays 7:30 a.m.  
Greensboro ch. 8, Sundays 10:30 & 12:30 a.m.  
Hickory ch. 3, Sundays 7 p.m.  
Mebane ch. 5, 10, Sundays 10 a.m.  
Raleigh ch. 22, Tuesdays 6:30 p.m.

**North Dakota**  
Bismarck ch. 12, Sundays 2:30 p.m.  
Fargo ch. 12, Tuesdays 10:30 a.m.

**Ohio**  
Akron ch. 15, Sundays 9:30 a.m.; Mondays 11 p.m.  
Athens ch. 23, Sundays 7 p.m.; Wednesdays 7 p.m.  
Brunswick ch. 21, Tuesdays 7 p.m.; Wednesdays 12:30, 4:30 & 8:30 a.m.; 2:30, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.  
Bryan ch. 4, Sundays 11 a.m. & 8 p.m.; Mondays 8 p.m.  
Cincinnati ch. 18, Sundays 10:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 10 p.m.; Thursdays 11 p.m.; Saturdays 6:30 a.m.  
Cincinnati (Union Twp.) ch. 8, Sundays 2:30 a.m.; Tuesdays 9:30 a.m.; Wednesdays 11 p.m.; Saturdays 2:30 p.m.

**Ontario**  
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sundays 11:30 a.m.

**New Brunswick**  
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sundays 11:30 a.m.

**Newfoundland and Labrador**  
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sundays 12 noon

**Northwest Territory**  
The Christian Channel Northwestel ch. 226, Sundays 8:30 a.m.

**Ontario**  
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sundays 10:30 a.m.  
The Christian Channel Cogeco ch. 186, Sundays 10:30 a.m.

**Saskatchewan**  
The Christian Channel SaskTel ch. 282, Sundays 8:30 a.m.

Del Rio ch. 19, Sundays 9 a.m.; Wednesdays 5 p.m.  
El Paso ch. 15, Mondays, Fridays, Saturdays 1 p.m.  
Fort Worth ch. 28, Tuesdays 5:30 p.m.; Thursdays 1 p.m.  
Houston ch. 17, 98, Sundays 1:30 p.m.  
Longview ch. 26, Tuesdays 2 p.m.; Wednesdays 10 a.m.; Fridays 12:30 p.m.; Saturdays 9 p.m.

**Virginia**  
Hampton Roads ch. 71, 74, Sundays 10 a.m.

**Washington**  
Everett ch. 77, Wednesdays 5 p.m.  
Kennewick ch. 13, Sundays & Tuesdays 8:30 p.m.  
Olympia ch. 22, 29, Sundays 9 a.m.; Thursdays 10:30 p.m.  
Seattle ch. 29, 77, Sundays 9 a.m.  
Vancouver ch. 11, Sundays 1 p.m.; Tuesdays 3:30 p.m.; Thursdays 12 noon; Fridays 8 p.m.

**West Virginia**  
Morgantown ch. 3, Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 3 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m.

**Wisconsin**  
Beloit ch. 12, Thursdays 6:30 p.m.  
Eau Claire ch. 13, Sundays & Tuesdays 8:30 p.m.  
Kenosha ch. 14, Sundays & Mondays 7:30 p.m.  
Madison ch. 4, Sundays 12:30 p.m.  
Milwaukee ch. 96, Mondays 2 p.m.; Tuesdays 7 p.m.; Wednesdays 2 p.m.  
Oshkosh ch. 2, Mondays 4 p.m.; Tuesdays 2 p.m.; Fridays 4 p.m.; Saturdays 8 p.m.  
Stevens Point ch. 3, Mondays 5 & 9:30 p.m.; Tuesdays 10 a.m. & 3:30 p.m.  
Wausau ch. 10, Sundays 8:30 a.m.; Saturdays 9 a.m.  
West Allis ch. 14, times vary

### CANADA

**Nationwide**  
Vision TV, Sundays 11 p.m. (PST)  
Star Choice Digital Channel 399, Sundays 10:30 a.m. (EST)

**Alberta**  
The Christian Channel Telus ch. 158, Sundays 8:30 a.m.

**British Columbia**  
The Christian Channel Telus ch. 158, Sundays 7:30 a.m.

**Manitoba**  
The Christian Channel MTS ch. 21, Sundays 9:30 a.m.

**New Brunswick**  
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sundays 11:30 a.m.

**Newfoundland and Labrador**  
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sundays 12 noon

**Northwest Territory**  
The Christian Channel Northwestel ch. 226, Sundays 8:30 a.m.

**Ontario**  
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sundays 10:30 a.m.  
The Christian Channel Cogeco ch. 186, Sundays 10:30 a.m.

**Saskatchewan**  
The Christian Channel SaskTel ch. 282, Sundays 8:30 a.m.

### AFRICA AND EUROPE

The Omega Channel, INSAT 10, orbital position 68.5 degrees east, frequency 12682MHz, 11 p.m. daily (CAT)

## Radio Log

For additional information and the most current airing times, or to download or listen to programs online, visit [www.beyondtoday.tv/radio/](http://www.beyondtoday.tv/radio/).

**Nationwide**  
Internet Radio live365.com, Sundays 8:30 a.m. (PST)

**Alabama**  
Birmingham 1070 AM, Sundays 7:30 a.m.

**Arizona**  
Douglas 930 AM, Saturdays 10:30 a.m.  
Globe 1240 AM, Saturdays 10:30 a.m.  
Sierra Vista 1470 AM, Saturdays 10:30 a.m.  
Tucson 940 AM, Saturdays 10:30 a.m.

**California**  
San Diego 760 AM, Sundays 6 a.m.

**Florida**  
Jacksonville 690 AM/106.5 FM, Sundays 7 a.m.

**Indiana**  
Ft. Wayne 1190 AM, Sundays 10 a.m.

**Louisiana**  
New Orleans 870 AM, Saturdays 9:30 p.m.

**Montana**  
Helena 101.9 FM, Mondays 8 p.m.; Fridays 8 p.m.; Saturdays 8 a.m.

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# Wars of Religion: A Scourge Reborn

*Religious strife continues to dominate our world. God and religion are certainly not dead, despite all the rumors. The front lines of religion crisscross our globe, telling us that religion will play a major role in the 21st century. How will that impact your life?*

by **Beyond Today** host **Darris McNeely**

Jesus of Nazareth walked out of the Jerusalem temple complex. Heading east, He crossed the Kidron Valley and slowly made His way up the slope of the Mount of Olives (or Mt. Olivet) on the opposite side. With Him were His disciples. At some point near the summit, under the shade of some trees, they stopped and looked back across the valley to the city and its magnificent temple.

Minutes earlier, as they left the temple, Christ's words had shocked the disciples. He told them that the time was coming when the massive temple would be utterly destroyed, without a stone left atop another. Now they sought to find out what He meant. "Tell us, when will these things be?" they asked. "And what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

Jesus responded with what would become known as the Olivet Prophecy—an overview of the trends and events that would lead up to His return. He listed several signs, but the first sign He gave was: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (verses 4-5, King James Version).

This was to be followed by wars, famines and disease epidemics (verses 6-8). We should observe that each problem here often engenders the next one—false religion leading to wars leading to famines leading to disease. We consider here the first development leading to the second and how this is playing out on the world stage.

## Religious deception: A scourge on humankind

Religious deception was the first and, in many ways, the most basic of problems



*At the Battle of Tours, in October 732, soldiers under the command of the Frankish king Charles Martel stopped the Muslim advance into Western Europe.*

that would plague the world. Religious wars have racked the planet for millennia. In today's postmodern world, while many wish that religion would fade completely from the scene, the reality is that there is more strife in God's name than ever before. A survey of our world shows that far from dying out, religion continues to play a significant role in the political affairs of nations.

Before 9/11 the prevailing thought was that religion as a force in world affairs was on the decline. *The Economist*, in its millennium edition, published another in the long line of obituaries for religion and God. Many hoped that the "end of history" had brought an end to religion as a dominating force in human behavior—and for good reason.

Religious strife forms the basis for much of history. From the Crusades of the Middle Ages to the 20th century, many wars and

conflicts had religion as a part of the cause. Nations that sought to join the modern world made strong efforts to shed their religious baggage, or at least to minimize its role in the governance of the state.

Kemal Ataturk created modern Turkey as a secular state, no small feat for a Muslim country and the seat of the old Ottoman Empire. In postcolonial India, Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to limit the role of religion. He felt that it "almost always . . . seems to stand for blind belief and reaction, dogma and bigotry, superstition

and exploitation and the preservation of vested interests." Unfortunately for the country, religious strife still plays a significant role there.

## Religious conflict in the modern world

On 9/11, Muslim terrorists attacked the United States in the name of Allah and set off a chain of religious events that is shaping the 21st century. Where before few Westerners could tell the distinction between a Shiite and a Sunni Muslim, today the words are at least part of the religious debate even though many remain woefully ignorant of the entire Islamic faith.

The new wars of religion define many regions. In the dispute between the Palestinians and Israelis over the Holy Land, religion has become central to the conflict as the two sides jockey over sacred land and religious sites.

China today openly persecutes religious

sects like Falun Gong, and there is speculation that Christians outnumber members of the Communist Party. Before the death of Pope John Paul II there was talk that he had secretly appointed a Chinese cardinal.

The Chinese government's paranoia toward religion took on comic overtones when it recently banned Buddhist monks in Tibet from reincarnating without government permission! It is a futile effort to control the succession of the Dalai Lama, keeping the next one in China.

Even the antireligion forces exhibit an air of religiosity themselves. The new, virulent strain of atheism takes on spiritual dimensions when its high priests attack faith and the faithful.

Atheists Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins have written best sellers in a crusade against religion and a belief in God. Their dogma flows from a fountain of exasperation at the failure of enlightenment and rational philosophy to eradicate religion from public life. Their books show the deep, passionate fervor they hold for their ideas against the tides of modern religion.

And then look at American politics. President George W. Bush candidly discusses his faith and opens cabinet meetings with prayer. Republican presidential candidates must disclose their religious preferences and court conservative evangelical groups if they hope to secure their party's nomination.

In 2008, Democratic candidates understand that their message must be crafted with a "social gospel" emphasis to woo the religious sentiments of various regions if they are to be successful. The 2008 race features some fascination and concern over the Mormon beliefs of one candidate, much like the 1960 race focused on the Catholicism of another.

Everywhere you look in today's world you find religious problems. Radical Islam is a frontline problem in the Middle East, Asia and Europe. India has Hinduism, and China has its growing number of Christians. It is a long and tedious list.

Some conclude that if the Bush administration had understood the complexities of Islam—and remembered the British experience in the 1920s—before invading Iraq, things could have turned out differently. But that wasn't to be.

So if even the experts lack fundamental knowledge of world religions, where does that leave others? Surveys consistently show that most people understand little about their *own* faith, much less any of the major world religions. Most people today are

religious illiterates. As the new religious wars shape the coming years, this will prove a serious liability for anyone trying to understand what is happening.

Religious historian Philip Jenkins predicts that in the years to come religion will be "the prime animating and destructive force in human affairs, guiding attitudes to political liberty and obligation, concepts of nationhood and, of course, conflicts and wars" (quoted in "In God's Name," *The Economist*, Nov. 3, 2007). This statement is in line with what Bible prophecy—in the form of the words of Jesus Christ Himself—has to say about religion.

### Warning of deception to come

As we've seen, Jesus warned His followers that after His death many would come in His name, but with their own version of what He was and what He taught (Matthew 24:4).

Church history shows this occurred very quickly. It may come as a complete shock for you to contemplate that most of the 2,000 years of recorded church history are largely the story of a counterfeit Christianity that acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah and Savior but does not follow His actual teachings. (To understand more, request our free booklet *The Church Jesus Built*.)

Islam, too, accepts Jesus (or *Isa* in Arabic) as a true prophet but rejects the New Testament as corrupted. Muslims believe that Jesus will return in the last days to forcibly convert the world to Islam.

Both these religions have asserted their deceptions on a world spiritually imprisoned by a powerful spiritual being (Revelation 12:9).

Satan the deceiver waits to spring on the world a master deception that will build on all the deceptions he has engineered throughout human history. Revelation 13 describes a great false religious leader to come who will perform great miracles to deceive a postmodern scientific world into actually believing a false religious faith.

His teaching and actions will turn the world for a brief period toward giving allegiance to a masterful political leader who will promise humanity a terrestrial kingdom of peace. People will believe the lie and accept his mark of identity on every dimension of life.

This is the scene symbolized by the ride of the first of the "four horsemen of the Apocalypse" in Revelation 6, a rider who wears a crown and sits on a white horse wielding a bow and going among the

nations to conquer and rule. This first seal will unleash a wave of religious fervor that will transform the world in the period Christ called "the end of the age."

The religious wars of the 21st century will involve a mixture of violence, evangelism and pacifism. Terrorism will play a significant role as fanatical religious elements will seek to overthrow nations and gather power into their hands.

Tribalism and nationalism will ignite periodic strife in developing nations like Nigeria and India; religion will be at the center of the conflict. States such as Iran will use their power to advance or retard religious elements, provoking strong reactions in the process. Religious parties will use even the ballot box to push their agendas or gain control of a country.

This will be a potent and heady mix going forward. Violence will be mixed with peaceful efforts in the steady march toward the religious unity described in Bible prophecy.

### The hope of the fifth horseman

The book of Revelation does not leave us with only a grim picture of deception and strife. It takes a final, fifth horseman, Jesus Christ at His return, to put down the power of the nations gathered in the end time.

Revelation 19 shows the unveiling of the heavens and the appearance of Christ on a white horse at His triumphant return to the very place where he offered a glimpse of the future—the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4).

The One who warned in advance of religious deception will return to end the religion-inspired wars at the end of the age. If you keep your eyes focused on His teachings and the work of the Church He founded, you will be able to avoid the deceptions that will grip this world. **GN**

## Recommended Reading

How can you understand Bible prophecies of the time of the end? What signs did Jesus Christ and the biblical prophets give that indicate His return is near? How can you understand what they mean? Be sure to request or download your free copy of *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* to discover the answers! To learn more about the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, download our free article reprint series *The Horsemen of Revelation* at [www.gnmagazine.org/issues/reprints](http://www.gnmagazine.org/issues/reprints).



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# God, Science and the Bible

News from the world of science about God and the Bible

by Mario Seiglie, Tom Robinson and Scott Ashley

## Researcher Identifies Seal of Biblical Queen Jezebel

In 1964, Israeli archaeologist Nahman Avigad purchased a seal engraved in ancient Hebrew script with the letters YZBL—the name *Jezebel*. Professor Avigad, along with others, thought it might be the official seal of the Queen Jezebel of the Bible, but since the location and date of the item's discovery were unknown, there was no way to link it to the infamous queen.

However, a recent investigation by Old Testament scholar Marjo Korpel of Utrecht University in the Netherlands indicates that the seal, housed for years in the Israel Museum, likely did belong to the murderous monarch.

The seal's large size indicates that its owner was quite important, as does the fact that it was carved from opal, a semiprecious stone. "It's twice as big as normal seals and also the iconography is very nicely engraved," Dr. Korpel said.

Her analysis of the seal's engraved symbols led her to conclude that it belonged to female royalty—i.e., a queen. "The lion-sphinx with female head and female Isis-Hathor crown, which is unique, this clearly points to a queen," she explained.

Further, "the lotus [located below the Horus falcon] was a symbol of gender definition and refers to a female owner [while] the winged sun disk was a well-known symbol of royalty in and outside Israel."



**In ancient Hebrew script, the letters YZBL—spelling Jezebel—surround the stylized falcon at the bottom of this seal. Based on the seal's royal symbols, a Dutch researcher has identified it as belonging to the infamous biblical Queen Jezebel.**

Other icons on the seal, such as the Horus falcon and twin cobras, symbols probably adopted from Egypt, also reinforce the object's connection to a monarch, Dr. Korpel observed.

By process of elimination, she concluded that the biblical queen was the only plausible owner. Her complete analysis was published in a volume of the scholarly *Journal for Semitics*.

The biblical books of 1 and 2 Kings portray Jezebel as an influential ruler who manipulated her husband, the 9th-century-B.C. Israelite King Ahab, using deceit and murder to accomplish her goals. The daughter of a Phoenician ruler, she married Ahab as part of a political alliance and determined to convert both him and the kingdom of Israel to the worship of the deities of her former country.

After slaughtering true prophets of God, she also attempted to kill Elijah. In accordance with Elijah's prophecy, she met a violent end and her corpse was devoured by dogs.

After learning of Dr. Korpel's research and conclusions, Hebrew University professor Hagai Misgav said he believed that the Israel Museum and Israel Antiquities Authority possess many more artifacts that may carry unnoticed historical clues. "Not all the artifacts have been thoroughly examined," he noted. "There are many discoveries waiting to be made."

## The importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls

Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, never before seen outside of Israel, have been touring different museums in the United States, such as in the Natural History Museum in San Diego, California, and the Pacific Science Center in Seattle, Washington. They provide a glimpse of the amazing accuracy of the transmission of the text of the Old Testament through the millennia.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are collectively composed of some 900 documents that contain, besides other religious literature, sections of the *entire* Hebrew Bible except for the book of Esther. The scrolls range in date from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D.

When these manuscripts were discovered in various caves of the northwestern region of the Dead Sea close to Qumran, a site most archaeologists believe was a community of Essene Jews, scholars wondered how many discrepancies would be found between them and the Old Testament text used for the translation of our modern Bibles, a text whose oldest copies date to the 10th century A.D. More than 1,000 years elapsed between the two versions. How well would they conform?

Incredibly, when the two versions were compared, researchers found that they uncannily matched—virtually word for word. For example, the Dead Sea Scroll containing the entire book of Isaiah, some 26 feet long, was compared to the 10th-century version of the Masoretic Text, which is the basis for our modern Old Testament. The researchers found it to match in virtually every instance.

Notes Bible scholar Gleason Archer: "Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips on the pen

and variations in spelling . . . They do not affect the message of revelation in the slightest" (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 1974, p. 25).

This is the greatest contribution the Dead Sea Scrolls have made to biblical scholarship. They have confirmed the reliability of the Old Testament text we now possess in our Bibles. "Critical scholars," states Garry Brantley, "questioned the accuracy of the MT [Masoretic Text], which formed the basis of our English versions of the Old Testament, since there was such a large chronological gap between it and the autographs [original documents]. Because of this uncertainty, scholars often 'corrected' the text with considerable freedom.

"Qumran, however, has provided remains of an early Masoretic edition predating the Christian era on which the traditional MT [Masoretic Text] is based. A comparison of the [Masoretic Text] to this earlier text revealed the remarkable accuracy with which scribes copied the sacred texts. Accordingly, the integrity of the Hebrew Bible was confirmed, which generally has heightened its respect among scholars and drastically reduced textual alteration" ("The Dead Sea Scrolls and Biblical Integrity," *Reason & Revelation* online journal, April 1995, ApologeticsPress.org).

In fact, the Masoretic Text we possess today has been found to be *more* carefully transmitted than the Dead Sea Scrolls version! When compared, the largest Isaiah Dead Sea Scroll was found to have more spelling errors—and this is generally the case when comparing the Masoretic Text and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

What about the *New Testament* text? How accurate is it? From the thousands of ancient copies or portions of copies known, *98 percent* of the *New Testament* texts agree. The variations that do exist are mostly spelling errors or scribal additions that are easily discarded.

As the great text scholar Sir Frederic Kenyon noted after examining both the Old and New Testament texts (and it holds true even more so today), "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries" (*Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*, 1939, p. 23).



# Jesus Christ's Command to Us: Bear Good Fruit and Much Fruit

*Jesus Christ taught important spiritual lessons regarding the “fruit” of our lives. What are those lessons, and how well are we applying them? Our eternal life depends on this understanding!*

by Don Hooser

**A**t the mention of fruit, what are your first thoughts? A snack? A dessert? Your favorite fruits?

The Bible refers to literal fruit—such as olives, grapes and figs—many times. More frequently the biblical Hebrew and Greek words translated “fruit” have a symbolic sense. All crops are considered “fruit of the earth.” Children are called the “fruit of the womb.” A man’s words are “the fruit of his mouth.”

In ancient and modern times, people have used “fruit” to mean *results, products, outcomes, accomplishments and achievements*. An employee must be *productive* to be worthy of his wage. He must work hard, work fast and work smart to *get jobs done and done right*. In Scripture, “fruit” has similar meanings.

## Defining “good” fruit

The Bible at times likens people to fruit trees or grapevines and portrays God as the owner of the orchards and vineyards. The Master knows our character by our spiritual fruits, just as “a tree is known [identified] by its fruit”—either good or bad (Matthew 12:33).

God’s number one concern is for all fruit to be *good*—“the fruit of righteousness” (James 3:18). In fact, Jesus warned, “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and is thrown into the fire” to be destroyed (Matthew 7:19).

And what is *good*? Only God has the supreme authority to define good and evil. Jesus went on to say, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who *does the will of My Father* in heaven” (Matthew 7:21, emphasis added throughout).

And what is God’s will for our lives? It is revealed throughout His Word and is summarized by the two great commandments and the Ten Commandments (Matthew 22:36-40; 19:17).

We must aim high to reach the highest

goals. To produce the best fruit requires work, time, patience and perseverance (James 5:7-11).

## We are to be fruitful

Closely following God’s desire for good fruit is His desire for us to produce a lot of it—to be *highly productive*. Jesus said, “This is to my Father’s glory, that you *bear much fruit*, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:8, New International Version). Notice, bearing abundant fruit glorifies God and identifies Christ’s disciples!

Later, Jesus states the purpose of our calling: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you *to go and*

actually be “cut down.” *Professing* without *producing* is no good.

## We are to grow

The similar parables in Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-27 illustrate God’s emphasis on spiritual growth and accomplishment. In each story, two servants obediently invested the master’s money to earn a profit for him. But the third servant merely hid the money for safekeeping. Fear of failure was his excuse for not even trying.

The parable shows that we must obey God with faith and courage even when it may be humanly frightening. The fearful servant is called “unprofitable” and “wicked and lazy” (Matthew 25:30, 26).

**“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”**

*bear fruit*—fruit that will last” (John 15:16, NIV). Hence we must be oriented toward eternal goals and work with all our hearts to bring them to fruition!

The following parable is quite instructive: “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down’” (Luke 13:6-9).

The keeper of the vineyard asked for another year, during which time he would fertilize the soil to encourage growth. This illustrates God’s patience with us—how He is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

A fruitless fruit tree, however, will even-

To each of the profitable (*fruitful*) servants, the master said, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:21, 23). May this be what we hear when Christ returns to reward His servants!

## We can’t bear fruit without God

During His life on earth, Jesus Christ said of His miraculous acts, “The Son can do nothing of Himself” (John 5:19). He explained, “The Father who dwells in Me does the works” (John 14:10).

Neither can we, acting on our own, produce spiritual fruit! It requires a miracle of God through Christ. Let’s carefully read and ponder what Jesus explained to His disciples the evening before His arrest.

He said: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;

and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:1-2). “Pruning” includes the Father’s loving discipline to correct our faults (Hebrews 12:5-11).

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, *bears much fruit*; for *without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:4-5). Rely on God and great things will happen!

“If anyone does not abide in Me,” Jesus continued, “he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (verses 6-7). Abiding in Christ includes *learning and applying God’s Word*. And a major key to bearing fruit is *praying for help!*

Abiding in Christ also includes abiding in His Church, “the body of Christ,” as numerous scriptures show (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27; Ephesians 1:21-22; 4:12).

### The essential role of God’s Spirit

Jesus said we can bear fruit *only if He “abides” in us* (John 15:4-5). How is this possible? It is through the gift of God’s Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

How do we receive this gift? Peter said, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

God’s Spirit does many things. It imparts spiritual understanding (1 Corinthians 2:10-14). It imparts a willingness to obey—to be like Christ who said, “Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). It imparts an ability to obey and love far above human ability. It is the Spirit “of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

### The power to bear fruit

With the Holy Spirit, one becomes spiritually alive, beginning a new life! God’s Spirit is like the life-giving sap that flows up the trunk of a tree to all its branches so they can yield fruit!

Notice God’s beautiful portrayal of His people as flourishing fruit trees:

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, *nor will cease from yielding fruit*” (Jeremiah 17:7-8; compare Psalm 1:3).

The apostle Paul said in Galatians 5, “Walk in the Spirit . . . If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (verses 16, 25). God’s Spirit enables us to act according to God’s principles—to live a godly life!

Without God’s Spirit, we are merely mortal flesh, and the fruits of raw human nature are called the “works of the flesh” in verses 19-21. After listing these sinful “works,” Paul warns that “those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (verse 21).

With the help of God’s Spirit, however, we produce something far different: “But the *fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, long-suffering [or patience], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (verses 22-23). That is truly *good* fruit! God wants us to bear *much* of this fruit!

Spirit-led people have these wonderful virtues of godly character as the result of God’s Spirit acting from within. The credit for this fruit belongs to God and Jesus Christ who supply that Spirit.

And God will let us bear this fruit only when we are trying to *give* of ourselves to others. This fruit is manifested in *relationships*. God’s Spirit is like a river (John 7:38). It will flow *into* us only when it is also flowing *out to* others.

In a series of future articles we will examine each of the special aspects of the fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5—to thoroughly understand them, to see how we can cultivate them and to see how we can use them in serving God and one another. We will get a good taste of each one.

As we do that, let’s remember to focus on Christ’s overall lesson regarding the fruit of our lives: *Bear good fruit and much fruit!* **GN**



# The Parable of the Sower

In Jesus’ parable of the sower, recorded in Matthew 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8, “the seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). The story describes three reasons why some who hear God’s truth fail to bear spiritual fruit. It also reveals the state of mind of those who produce abundant fruit. Following is a paraphrased summary of the four examples given.

The seed that fell by the wayside and was eaten by birds illustrates how many people may hear some truth, but Satan the devil is responsible for their losing interest before they really study it, believe it and act on it.

The seed that fell on rocky soil illustrates how some people are initially enthusiastic about God’s truth, but they don’t put down deep spiritual roots. When they begin to suffer trials or persecutions because of their beliefs, they lack the faith and courage to continue, and so they wither like a thirsty plant in the sun.

The seed that fell among weeds and thorns illustrates how our lives can become overcrowded and spiritually starved, just like a plant surrounded by weeds becomes starved for sunlight, water and nutrients. Those weeds and thorns include “the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches [materialism],” “the desires for other things” and “cares, riches and pleasures of life” (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14).

“But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13:23). Or, as Luke records, “those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience [or endurance]” (Luke 8:15).

Which of the above examples will apply to your life?

## “Breaking Free From Addictions”

You may think that this sounds crazy, but I call this a wonderful coincidence. I went to my mailbox today and *The Good News* magazine, including the article “Breaking Free From Addictions,” was the only piece of mail in there.

I have just moved on recently from an evil addiction and an abusive relationship. I read your article and it really moved me. Everything described exactly what I have been through. I am now clean. I feel uplifted and quite excited to start a brand new life. Illegal drugs are truly evil and they will destroy everything and anyone around you. I am truly blessed to find God. I look forward to reading this magazine for the rest of my life, for it did open my eyes more than ever.

S.F., Internet

*Readers affected by abusive relationships may wish to request our free reprint article titled “Dealing With Abuse.” Among the subjects it covers are understanding abuse, child abuse, emotional healing, sexual abuse and breaking free from sexual addictions such as pornography. “Dealing With Abuse” is available either in print or at [www.gnmagazine.org/reprints](http://www.gnmagazine.org/reprints).*

I am a therapist in a jail working with persons who have both mental health problems and chemical addictions. My charge is to enhance readiness and motivation for treatment upon release. Exploring spiritual, philosophical and existential issues is an essential part of the curriculum. I am wondering if you could send me [multiple] copies of *The Good News* magazine that contains the article “Breaking Free From Addictions.” I will use it as a part of the reading material for the class.

H.C., Pontiac, Michigan

## The Good News

In the last issue, L.B. of Texas wrote that he can no longer read *The Good News* because its writings do not coincide with those of his faith. The only way one can learn the truth is by reading sources which have information other than what one is trained to believe. I read *The Good News* even though I am Jewish because it is written in a straightforward and honest manner.

M.B., Montreal, Canada

I would like to express my deep gratitude for your sending me your magazines. You are touching on a biblical point of view that is so vital. I had the opportunity to live in Israel for seven years. What I’ve learned about the important role Israel has in the future is in line with all of your articles. Please kindly inform me how I can make a donation.

D.S., Ontario, Canada

*Our Canadian office in Vancouver, B.C., responded to your request for information. Making donation checks payable to The Good News or the United Church of God is acceptable in most countries, including the United States.*

We are a small group on the island of Rurutu in the South Pacific. We are studying the Bible with your booklets. I also receive your *Good News* magazine. I have learned so much from you about the Bible. You have been very helpful to me because I have been sharing your magazines with others. How to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior is something they have never thought of or knew before. Thank you for sending the gospel around the world.

Mrs. K.T.V., French Polynesia

I want to be part of the United Church of God. I got the booklets you sent me and was held spellbound by them. Why is it that people here do not know about these truths, the good news of the kingdom? Why is it that so many are still held ransom by the superstitious beliefs they term “Christianity”? I had come out of atheism but had no direction until I laid my hands on *The Good News* magazine, which led me to these wonderful booklets. What we believe matters more than anything.

A.O., Internet

Thank you for *The Good News* magazine and the booklets that you always mail to me. I read them all from cover to cover, and I can’t tell you how much I have learned from these publications. They are teaching me more and more about God our Father and helping me to grow closer to Him every day. I used to

hate getting the mail as it was always bills and junk mail. Now that I am receiving your booklets and magazines, I can hardly wait for the mail to arrive. I am also eager to start the *Bible Study Course*.

P.L., Mesa, Arizona

I just had to write and say that my husband and I both enjoy reading *The Good News*. It wasn’t always like this. When I first began receiving it my husband picked it up and, when he saw it had to do with God, would fling it on the coffee table and remark, “I hope you didn’t pay for this.” But as the issues came, I kept reading them and leaving them there. Pretty soon he began picking them up and reading them one by one in earnest. A month ago he said, “I really enjoy reading *The Good News*.”

C.K.T., Dorris, California

Every time I suffer from my depression I feel the comfort and love from the brothers and sisters in the United Church of God through reading your articles. I downloaded all your booklets and magazines and found it all a great treasure of knowledge more precious than that of gold.

J.G.V., Philippines

*You may wish to download or request two of our free reprint articles, “Depression: Ways to Win the Battle” and “The Bible’s Keys to Mental Health.”*

I would like to thank you for all the eye-opening material in *The Good News* magazine, not forgetting to mention your booklets. Your literature is helping me a lot to grow in the Lord. My prayer is that God will continue to bless your magazine and everyone who is involved in this publication. I believe this magazine is touching the lives of people around the world.

W.S., South Africa

Today I received my first copy of *The Good News*, and so far I am thrilled with it. I’ve paged through it already and read quite a lot. I will read every article slowly and carefully, taking my time. The articles seem totally sound and Bible-based. It is also wonderful to know that there are Christians in the world who believe the way I do about the Sabbath day and the biblically appointed Holy Days (as opposed to the man-made pagan days adopted long ago by an apostate church). I love “meeting” Christians who love the Word of God enough to keep it in truth.

A.S., Cape Town, South Africa

## Booklets help our readers

I ordered your booklets *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*, *Sunset to Sunset: God’s Sabbath Rest* and *What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?* I have found your booklets to be a big blessing in my life. They talk about a lot of things that most religious denominations overlook. I have shared these booklets with a few of my friends and coworkers.

M.C., Warren, Ohio

I wrote to you for some information about biblical foods, what to eat and what not to eat, according to the Bible. You sent me a wonderful booklet *What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?* I did not think it would be so easy to give up some of the foods I had eaten all of my life. But I gave them up right away because I love my Lord.

S.D., Dorchester, Massachusetts

I’m Romanian. The booklets I received yesterday really made me want to write and tell you how happy I am for being a Christian. It’s incredible to read and understand, to see and feel God’s glory and His amazing light upon His children through the way your lives are given for His work. I thank you for printing these booklets. I thank you for spreading *The Good News* all over the world.

S.S., Romania

Published letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address your letters to *The Good News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, Ohio 45254-1027, U.S.A., or e-mail [gninfo@ucg.org](mailto:gninfo@ucg.org) (please be sure to include your full name, city, state or province, and country).



**Q: Why did Jesus say, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” during His last moments of consciousness? Why did God apparently abandon Him?**

A.B.S., Texas

A: You are not alone in your bewilderment. Noted British author and journalist Paul Johnson has also found this particular biblical passage somewhat of a puzzle. He wrote: “But what are you to make of Matthew [27], verse 46: ‘And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?’ That is to say, ‘Why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ . . . Whence this sudden note of anguish, the last words to come from Him, immediately before He yielded up the ghost? . . . I have never found a theologian with a satisfactory explanation of this episode” (*The Spectator*, Dec. 1, 2007, emphasis added throughout).

To arrive at a reasonable explanation, we need to look at the Bible as a whole, closely examining the context of this particular passage along with tying in other related scriptures. Jesus commanded us to heed every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3). The apostle Paul added that we should be “rightly dividing [or correctly sorting out] the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15)—recognizing that all Scripture is by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

First we should understand that Jesus crying out to the Father on this occasion was a direct fulfillment of a prophecy recorded in a psalm of King David (see Psalm 22:1). Christ’s fulfillment of many prophetic aspects of this psalm is one of the proofs of His Messiahship.

We should also understand that a comparison of the Gospel accounts shows that these were not the actual last words of Jesus as He was being crucified. Notice verse 50, which occurred moments afterward: “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.”

But He did not simply cry out this second time. Another Gospel account reveals further details, explaining that on His final cry He said His last words to His Father as a human being. Notice what Luke states: “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice [the final cry referred to in Matthew 27:50], He said: ‘Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ Having said this, He breathed His last” (Luke 23:46).

The biblical evidence, examined as a whole, indicates that *these* were Jesus’ actual last words—not the cry of anguish shortly before. Just as in the heaviest of temptations in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asked His Father if there could be another way out of this dilemma before quickly submitting Himself to God’s will as He always did (see Matthew 26:36-44)—Christ again instantly exerted self-control and submitted to His Father’s will just prior to His death. (If only we as Christians would deal with our temptations, minor by comparison, like our Savior did!)

Although the Father totally supported and helped Jesus during His time on earth, dying by means of crucifixion to forgive our sins was something Jesus had to accomplish absolutely alone. The book of Hebrews says, “When He had by Himself purged our sins, [He] sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3). Indeed this sacrifice was planned by the Father and the preexistent Word, the One who became Christ, from the beginning.

Our modern age takes sin very lightly, often in a cavalier manner, watering it down to “faults” and “mistakes.” But in truth sin is a very serious matter to God. It is the transgression of His holy, spiritual law (1 John 3:4). To atone for it required the precious life of the very Son of God in a humiliating and painful death by crucifixion.

Our Savior’s words on this occasion help us understand just how serious sin is in God’s sight. Isaiah 59:2 explains that sin cuts us off from God: “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

Sin is deadly serious. To be our sacrifice for sin, Jesus took on Himself all the

sins the human race had ever committed or ever would commit. As 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us, God the Father “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us.” Hebrews 9:26-28 explains that “He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself . . . so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.”

As a well-known prophecy of the crucifixion states: “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities . . . And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:5-6).

Because of what Jesus Christ represented for those few brief moments—the sins of all mankind—our Heavenly Father had to justly judge this sin, giving Jesus over to its awful penalty, death (Romans 6:23), in effect turning His back on Him. Thus Jesus cried out, quoting Psalm 22:1, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

In inspiring Psalm 22, the Father and Christ both knew this would happen—but realizing it ahead of time is not the same as actually experiencing it. Jesus, who had been in communion with the Father as a constant companion His whole life, was now cut off—and deeply felt the severance of that contact. His anguished cry was no doubt very real.

Yet through Jesus’ perseverance at that very time, the gulf between God and man created by our sins was about to be bridged. As Isaiah 53:11 foretold, “My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.”

Jesus Christ, who alone among mankind lived a sinless life, took our sins on Himself—willingly paying the penalty for our lawless behavior so we could be totally forgiven and reconciled to God and begin a new life of obedience. We had all earned the death penalty for our disobedience. But through His sacrifice we pass “from death into life” (John 5:24).

To understand more about Jesus Christ and His paramount sacrifice, request or download our free booklet *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*.

**Q: Surely “Jerusalem above” is the heavenly Jerusalem. So isn’t that where Christ will reign, and not from the Jerusalem on earth?**

J.D., Penzance, Britain

A: The scriptural record attests to the fact that Christ will return from heaven to this physical earth to reign for 1,000 years on this planet—with the restored and renewed physical city of Jerusalem as its world capital.

Zechariah 14:3-4, for example, states: “Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east . . .”

At His ascension to heaven from the Mount of Olives 40 days after His resurrection, two angels told the disciples: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

In Revelation 20:4, John records his vision of the resurrected saints ruling with Jesus Christ: “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them . . . And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” Revelation 5:10 says that this takes place on the earth.

But beyond that millennial period and the Great White Throne Judgment, God the Father—bringing the New Jerusalem with Him—will come down to be with Christ and the rest of His divine family, the vast multitude of the saved, who will by this time have been changed into immortal spirit beings (see Revelation 21:1-5). By then, the old physical order will have passed away.

To understand the intriguing details, request or download our free booklet *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*. Chapters 7 and 8 will clarify the order and nature of these future events. Also *Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?*, will help show that the Jerusalem of Christ’s millennial rule on earth is not in heaven. And to better understand the nature of Christ’s coming Kingdom, request or download *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. All are free for the asking.

# Where Have All the Young Men Gone?

*What has happened to masculinity? How can a boy grow up and become a real man in a hostile world?*

by Randy Stiver

Out of the howling vortex of the sexual and drug revolution of the 1960s rose dramatic forces that have robbed far too many young men in the 2000s of the final remnants of societal and family understanding of true masculinity.

God created mankind male and female, revealing definite functions for each (Genesis 1:27-28). The world corrupted those gender roles, but the last 40 years have particularly hammered young men.

The feminist movement sought gender equality under the law, and this helped spawn a huge increase of women in the workforce. Twelve percent of mothers with children under age 6 were employed in America in 1950. By 2000 it was 64 percent.

Some feminist thinkers proclaimed that the sexes were just the same—that traditional gender roles were shaped only by society's expectations. The idea seemed to be that boys would behave better—defined as more like girls—if they were taught to do so early enough.

This unisex philosophy persists to varying degrees in spite of the ageless observation of the obvious male-female differences and the dramatically increased understanding of brain mapping. God wired male brains very differently from female brains—to equip each for his or her purpose in marriage, family and life. Yet feminism's philosophers proceeded to make themselves the arbiters of masculinity.

## Modern society's masculinity crisis

Male studies scholar and author of *A New Psychology of Men*, professor Ronald Levant of the University of Akron cites "a crisis of connection between men and women resulting from major structural changes in women's roles over the last 40 years" ("Why Study Boys and Men?" 2002). He says this has "shaken traditional masculinity ideology to such an extent there is now a *masculinity crisis* in which many men feel bewildered and confused, and the



**Where have all the young men gone? They've wandered off hoping to find a real, manly, loving dad who will take them outdoors and teach them good things.**

pride associated with being a man is lower than at any time in the recent past."

The political correctness movement within education takes a serious toll on boyhood and young manhood. One young mother of three rambunctious boys in a small town in Ohio volunteers at her sons' schools. She finds teachers increasingly frustrated with boys because they don't sit as quietly or learn like the girls. She has tried to help by pointing out that, after all, they *are* boys—and they don't learn as girls learn. We now see almost the reverse of the song "Why Can't a Woman Be More Like a Man?" from the old Broadway musical *My Fair Lady*.

The hard data about the education of young men is alarming. The Higher Education Statistics Agency in the United Kingdom projected that the percentage of male students in higher education will be only

39 percent before 2010 (Wendy Berliner, *The Guardian*, May 2004).

In the United States the percentage of male university students is now only 44 percent. This decade-long downward spiral of male education indicates that young men are focusing significantly less on preparing to be good providers for their future families.

Popular culture's entertainment, advertising, consumerism and the quest for "stuff" greatly undermines youthful masculinity. Many seem to have bought into the adage, He who has the most toys when he dies wins. Numerous male studies scholars talk about the delay of emotional maturity in many young men today; some observe that age 30 is the new 15.

The media coined three terms to describe the boy-man consumer groups of the 21st century:

• *Metrosexual*—a man in love with himself and his urban lifestyle, who is fastidious about his appearance and who gropes for masculine identity based on the judgments of women. The metrosexual spends; therefore, he is.

• *Ubersexual*—the masculine-appearing, self-focused, media-idol type who exudes opportunistic self-confidence irrespective of female opinion.

• *Retrossexual*—the macho man of the past, but lacking the outgoing masculine qualities of duty, honor and loyalty.

Do you see the makings of a good future husband and father in any of those definitions? Do you know why not?

### Exit the dad

One of the horrific spin-offs of the sexual revolution and the hard-core feminist head games of the past 40 years has been the determined devaluing of the role of the masculine husband and father.

The exponential increase in the numbers of single-mom households over that time represents the results of a tragic Hiroshima of sexual immorality in the world. It gives a new and terrible meaning to the term *nuclear family*—a family blown apart by a generation of young men who lustfully, selfishly and foolishly abdicated their God-given responsibilities to the divine institutions of marriage and family.

Those males, because they really aren't real men, became the non-supporting husbands and disappearing dads who sired sons to likewise disappear from the lives of *their* children. Maybe you have felt the lonely pain of fatherlessness yourself or know friends who do.

Thankfully, some men overcome this negative cycle. Some have realized the importance of loyalty and love for wife and children. Some have eloquently explained how much a boy learns and prizes attention from his dad.

Brothers Conn and Hal Iggulden wrote the current best seller *The Dangerous Book for Boys*. It is only "dangerous" by today's politically correct, emasculated standard, as it provides a host of practical, hands-on things for boys and young men to do and learn.

Interviewed by a *Popular Mechanics* magazine editor, Conn Iggulden expressed the brothers' hope that the book inspires fathers to get outside

to do and build things with their sons: "Most boys will value something they do with their dad, and they'll have an experience they'll value for the rest of their lives . . . If you show them how to beat the next level on the Xbox, it *won't* last the rest of their lives" (October 2007).

Where have all the young men gone? They've wandered off hoping to find a real, manly, loving dad who will take them outdoors and teach them good things.

### What's your game plan?

What can you as a young man do to develop true masculinity? How can you find the godly way (Psalm 119:9)? Here are a few ways:

Find good role models. If you have a strong, involved dad—great! Love and honor him. If you are not so blessed, find men of honesty and good character in your life and observe them. Learn the good; discard the bad.

Develop honor, duty and loyalty. Be respectful of authority. Cheerfully do your work (and then some) at home, school or on the job. Loyally care for your family and serve God and man.

Build your strength. "The glory of young men is their strength . . ." (Proverbs 20:29).

• *Physically*—turn off the television or computer and get outdoors, exercise, eat right and soak up the sights, sounds and smells of God's creation.

• *Mentally*—study hard, learn well and seek true values in your education.

• *Emotionally*—read history (including in the Bible), read biographies of great men of character, soak up the moral strength of their good examples, learn to suffer patiently and faithfully and learn to laugh joyfully at the right things.

• *Spiritually*—pray daily to the one Father you can always count on, thank Him profusely for your blessings and ask Him for greater strength of faith to get up and do all that needs to be done.

The lament of "Where have all the young men gone?" will disappear when Jesus Christ returns to rule the nations for 1,000 years and beyond. In the meantime He is looking for a few good young men to dream the dream and see the vision of His soon-coming Kingdom. **GN**



# LEARN MORE!

If you like reading our articles for teens and young adults in *The Good News*, be sure to take a look at our companion magazine, *Vertical Thought*, at: [www.VerticalThought.org](http://www.VerticalThought.org).

This magazine is specially written for our younger *Good News* audience. Each issue is packed with helpful insight and eye-opening articles guiding today's young adults in getting the most out of life—both now and in the future.


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