

The *Good News*

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A World Held Captive Soon to Be Set Free

Page 4

Coming Soon: The Magnificent Millennium **9** • Has America Lost Its Way? **16**
Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones **22** • Will Jesus Christ Return Tomorrow? **27**

The Gospel of Hope



Most people know that Jesus Christ brought a message called the “gospel,” meaning “good news.” But what is this message, and why is it good news?

Most people assume the gospel is the story of Jesus Christ’s life, ministry, death and resurrection, and that His sacrifice makes it possible for us to be saved. But while all these are certainly important, is there more to the story that many people don’t understand?

Mark 1:14-15 tells us that “Jesus came to Galilee, *preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God*, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. *Repent, and believe in the gospel*’” (emphasis added throughout).

We see here that the gospel is a message about *the Kingdom of God*, and that we are *commanded to believe in it*. So what is this “Kingdom of God”? Some think it’s something that exists in the

The message of the biblical prophets was of a literal, world-ruling kingdom to be established over the entire earth by the coming Messiah.

hearts of believers. Some think it’s the sum total of all Christians everywhere working to advance God’s purpose on earth. Others hold different variations of these ideas. But what does the Bible say?

Surprising to some, Jesus Christ’s message about the Kingdom of God was *not new*. He was *continuing* the message of many biblical prophets before Him. Their message was of a *literal, world-ruling kingdom* to be established over the entire earth by the coming Messiah.

Notice, for example, the vision revealed in Daniel 2:44 about what happens when a final end-time global superpower, comprising an alliance of rulers, is brought to its end at the return of Jesus Christ: “And 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.*”

Here we see plainly that a literal kingdom will be established on earth, replacing all human kingdoms, and it will “stand forever”!

This is made even more obvious in Daniel’s vision recorded in Daniel 7:13-14: “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. *Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.* His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.”

This startling vision describes Jesus Christ being brought before God the Father, who gives Him “*dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him*” in a kingdom that is everlasting!

This is why we read in Revelation 11:15 (in a prophecy that inspired the immortal lines of the “Hallelujah Chorus” in Handel’s *Messiah*): “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet: and there were loud voices in heaven, which said, ‘*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever*’” (New International Version).

This awesome truth lies at the heart of Jesus Christ’s gospel—good news—of the Kingdom of God. It’s at the heart of “the Lord’s prayer,” in which Jesus instructs His followers to pray, “*Your kingdom come*”! It’s a message of great hope in which we are commanded to believe. You’ll learn much more about that message of hope in this issue!

—Scott Ashley, Managing editor

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NORTH, SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

United States: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax (513) 576-9795 Web site: www.gnmagazine.org E-mail: info@ucg.org

Canada: United Church of God—Canada, Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada

Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 876-0569 Web site: www.ucg.ca

Bahamas: United Church of God, P.O. Box N8873, Nassau, Bahamas

Phone: (242) 324-3169 Fax: (242) 364-5566

Martinique: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

Spanish-speaking areas: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.

Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax (513) 576-9795 Web site: www.iglesiadediosunida.org E-mail: info@ucg.org

EUROPE

Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg): P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, Netherlands

British Isles: United Church of God, P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts, WD19 6FZ, England

Phone: 020-8386-8467 Fax: 020-8386-1999 Web site: www.goodnews.org.uk

Eastern Europe and Baltic states: Head Sõnumid, Pk. 62, 50002 Tartu Postkontor, Estonia

France: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

Germany: Vereinte Kirche Gottes/Gute Nachrichten, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany

Phone: 0228-9454636 Fax: 0228-9454637

Italy: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy

Phone and Fax: (+39) 035 4523573 Web site: www.labuonanotizia.org E-mail: info@labuonanotizia.org

Scandinavia: Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 3535, 111 74 Stockholm, Sweden

Phone: +44 20 8386-8467 E-mail: sverige@ucg.org

AFRICA

East Africa—Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda: United Church of God—East Africa

P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200, Kenya E-mail: kenya@ucg.org Web site: www.ucgeastafrica.org

Ghana: P.O. Box AF 75, Adenta, Accra, Ghana

Malawi: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi Phone: 085 22 717 E-mail: malawi@ucg.org

Mauritius: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius E-mail: mauritus@ucg.org

Nigeria: United Church of God—Nigeria, P.O. Box 2265 Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria

Phone: 803323193 Web site: www.ucgnigeria.org E-mail: nigeria@ucg.org

South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland:

United Church of God—Southern Africa, P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205, South Africa

Phone and Fax: 043 748-1694 Web site: www.ucg-rsa.org

Zambia: P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia Phone: (02) 226076 E-mail: zambia@ucg.org

Zimbabwe: P.O. Box 928, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe Phone: 011716273 E-mail: zimbabwe@ucg.org

PACIFIC REGION

Australia and Papua New Guinea: United Church of God—Australia

GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia Phone: 07 55 202 111 Free call: 1800 356 202

Fax: 07 55 202 122 Web site: www.ucg.org.au E-mail: info@ucg.org.au

Fiji: United Church of God, P.O. Box 11081, Laucala Beach Estate, Suva, Fiji

New Zealand: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Shortland St., Auckland 1140, New Zealand

Phone: Toll-free 0508-463-763

Tonga: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 2617, Nuku‘alofa, Tonga

ASIA

All except Philippines: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.

Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax (513) 576-9795 E-mail: info@ucg.org

Philippines: P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines Phone and fax: +63 82 224-4444

Cell/text: +63 918-904-4444 Web site: www.ucg.org.ph E-mail: info@ucg.org.ph

Singapore: United Church of God, P.O. Box 37, MacPherson Road, Singapore 913402

Web site: www.ucg-singapore.org E-mail: info@ucg.org

ALL AREAS AND NATIONS NOT LISTED

United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.

Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax (513) 576-9795 E-mail: info@ucg.org

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Table of Contents



A world held in captivity by a cruel oppressor 4

COVER FEATURE

A World Held Captive: Soon to Be Set Free!

Most Bible believers think this is God's world—but how can we reconcile that with all the suffering we see around us? The surprising fact is that, in terms of human society and its impact, this is not God's world, but a world that has been kidnapped by an unseen enemy. Here's the story of how it was kidnapped and how it will be set free! 4

Coming Soon: The Magnificent Millennium

Much of Bible prophecy describes the Millennium—the first 1,000 years of Christ's reign on earth—showing it is important to God. And the more you understand it, the more important it will be to you! 9



God's plan to transform the entire world 9

Has America Lost Its Way?

Increasingly it seems that the United States cannot solve its problems—whether they be the economy, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, illegal immigration or the Gulf oil spill. Has America lost its way? 16

The "American Century": What Was Really Behind It?

Seldom has a nation dominated an era as the United States dominated much of the 20th century. But what was really behind its amazing accomplishments? Is there more than meets the eye? 18

Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones

The prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of vast numbers of people resurrected to live again as physical human beings. What is the meaning of this mystifying vision, and what does it teach us about God's plan? 22

Could Jesus Christ Return Tomorrow?

A little-noticed prophecy shows that Jesus Christ's return couldn't take place without a revolutionary change in global mass communications—a change that has taken place only in the last few years. 27



What's behind America's rise to superpower? 18

REGULAR FEATURES

World News and Trends	An overview of conditions around the world.	14
Beyond Today	Television log.	26
God, Science and the Bible	News from the world of science about God and the Bible.	29
Letters From Our Readers	Readers of The Good News share their thoughts.	30
Questions and Answers	Answers to questions from our readers.	31

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A World Held Captive Soon to Be Set Free!

by Jerold Aust

Most Bible believers think this is God's world—but how can we reconcile that with all the crime, violence, wars, oppression, starvation and disasters we see all around us? The surprising fact is that, in terms of human society and its impact, this is not God's world, but a world that has been kidnapped by an unseen enemy. Here's the story of how it was kidnapped and how it will be set free!

Kidnapping or hostage cases grab our attention, probably because the crime itself is so horrendous and the victims so helpless. But they also intrigue and puzzle us because of the unusual relationships that sometimes develop between the victims and their abductors.

Jaycee Lee Dugard, who in 1991 was snatched at a bus stop at age 11 and kept in captivity for the next 18 years, apparently did not try to escape and, over time, developed a close relationship with her captor. About her kidnapper, her stepfather said that she “has strong feelings with this guy” and “feels it’s almost like a marriage” (Laura Fitzpatrick, “A Brief History of Stockholm Syndrome,” *Time*, Aug. 31, 2009).

Natascha Kampusch, kidnapped at age 10 while on her way to school, was held captive in a cellar for eight years before finally escaping. Yet she is reported to have cried after her abductor then committed suicide by throwing himself in front of a train. “All I can say is that, bit by bit, *I feel more sorry for him*,” she said. She later called her captor a “poor soul—lost and misguided” (*ibid.*).

Shawn Hornbeck, after 10 months of captivity at the hands of a kidnapper, called the police to report his stolen bike, giving them his first name, *Shawn*, and as his last name the surname of his abductor, *Devlin* (*ibid.*). He stayed with his captor another three years, never escaping even while the man was away working at his two jobs.

Then there’s the infamous case of Patty Hearst, daughter of publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst, who not only acquiesced to the Symbionese Liberation Army’s criminal leader after her kidnapping, but also adopted a new name and joined his group in robbing a bank (*ibid.*).

Stockholm syndrome at work

All of these hostages identified with and supported their kidnappers, even for a time after gaining their freedom. Mental health experts have a particular term for this irrational bonding between kidnapper and victim. They call it Stockholm syndrome. It refers to victims becoming bonded to and even feeling compassion for and loyalty to their captors.

Stockholm syndrome gets its name from a 1973 bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden, in which two thieves held four bank employees hostage at gunpoint in the bank’s vault for six days. “When the victims were released, their reaction shocked

the world: They hugged and kissed their captors, declaring their loyalty even as the kidnappers were carted off to jail” (ibid.).

Psychologists are still largely at a loss to explain such bizarre bonding. At its core it seems to stem from the victim coming to perceive the perpetrator as the one controlling one’s survival and life itself. Thus the victim aligns himself or herself with the captor out of pure self-interest.

Paradoxical? Yes. Uncommon and remote from everyday experience? Surprisingly no—at least not in a broader sense,



which the majority of psychologists are woefully ignorant of. Indeed, they and everyone else, including you yourself, have certainly succumbed to this disorder to some extent.

This is because *our whole world has been held captive* for several thousand years—and mankind has fallen victim to Stockholm syndrome, identifying with our malevolent captor more than our loving Creator!

The story is strange, but true—and spelled out in the pages of your Bible!

What’s your worldview?

Everyone has a worldview. A worldview is simply the view we have of the world. Overall, a worldview can be predominantly good or bad, depending on how it affects our thinking and what we do.

How is our worldview shaped?

Human beings aren’t born with a worldview; it’s developed over time. From infancy up we acquire all kinds of knowledge through our five senses—hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. We are immersed in the world surrounding us, absorbing some of what we encounter

How did we come to this state? How did mankind fall under the control of this evil and deceptive kidnapper?



without much consideration and evaluating other input in light of earlier impressions or conclusions we’ve been led to.

Our parents, siblings, education, media, jobs and other life experiences all help shape our accumulated worldview. Most people do not question their worldview, assuming that what they think and practice is simply the way it is.

When challenged, they often defend themselves. The core values of religion and politics are among the most sacred to us. We guard such values with our lives; they *are* our lives. Nations go to war over real or imagined threats, sometimes over the sanc-

tity of their core beliefs. To challenge one’s core values is like threatening one’s life.

Our accumulated values make up our worldview, which is a rich garden bed for seedling ideas, good and bad. These grow into weeds or wheat, *through external influence*, holding us captive to our thinking—which we don’t realize is often seriously off track.

A wrong worldview can give rise to a host of societal problems, such as crime, violence, warfare, oppression, corruption, thievery, bad government, sexual sins and perversity, drug and alcohol abuse, broken marriages and homes, widespread religious deception, poverty and many other social ills.

Darkened hearts through an unseen kidnapper

Is this a world in which people

are open to God’s thinking? Notice Jesus Christ’s answer in Matthew 13:15: “*For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed*” (emphasis added throughout). Human beings gullibly close their eyes and ears to God’s truth, which leaves them open to the influence of unrecognized spiritual forces.

The apostle Paul also writes: “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, *so that men are without excuse*. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but *their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened*” (Romans 1:20-21, New International Version).

What is the unseen force that has darkened human beings’ foolish hearts, keeping humanity in captivity to corrupt thinking? Satan the devil, a great fallen angel, is the culprit! Paul also wrote of the need for people to learn God’s truth so “*they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will*” (2 Timothy 2:26).

Here we see that, yes, humankind has indeed been “taken captive” by the devil

“to do his will.” And like those who fall victim to Stockholm syndrome, people have come to identify with their captor more than their Creator!

The apostle Peter similarly warns us to “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, *seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Peter 5:8).

He devours people through the tool of deception. Satan has taken full advantage of the weaknesses of human nature and exploited them through the greatest deception ever perpetrated. He in fact holds the kingdoms of this world captive under his control and is able to give them to whomever he wishes (Matthew 4:8-9).

How did we fall under Satan's control?

How did we come to this state? How did mankind fall under the control of this evil and deceptive kidnapper? The story begins with our first human parents, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden.

On the sixth day of creation week, God created this first human couple. “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth’ . . . Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good” (Genesis 1:26-31).

God’s creation was indeed very good. But it wasn’t long before Satan emerged on the scene in the form of a serpent. Appearing to Eve, he deceived her into disobeying God’s instruction to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He lied to her, contradicting God and telling her she would not die if she ate it. Adam also chose to disobey and took of the fruit (Genesis 3:1-6).

These first human beings chose to *dis*-believe God and believe Satan. They chose to *dis*obey God and to obey Satan. They chose to *dis*regard God’s instruction and to follow Satan’s instead. They willingly chose to follow not God, but the devil—into his deception and captivity. They willingly allowed themselves to be taken

prisoner by their abductor!

The pattern was set; the die was cast. The entire human race has sprung from these first two people, Adam and Eve. And every man and woman since has followed in their footsteps, choosing to follow the way of sin—of disobedience to God (Romans 5:12, 19). Only one human being, Jesus Christ, never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).

Satan's tools for deception

A classic line from a movie sheds light on the deceptiveness of Satan. “The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn’t exist,” it goes.

Satan has indeed convinced many that he doesn’t exist. And such an approach makes his job that much easier! (See “How Naturalism—Rejection of God—Holds Humanity Captive,” page 7.)

But Satan works in other ways as well, including through religion. If you were the devil, how might you go about deceiving humanity into thinking your way was the truth? How about counterfeiting the true God and substituting a big lie for His truth? Can you perhaps envision exploiting humanity’s weaknesses by offering a religious philosophy that says good is bad and bad is good?

Maybe you’d come up with making God out to be harsh, intolerant and untrustworthy, or perhaps just the opposite, painting God as extremely lenient and never imposing judgment. You could in that vein try to convince well-meaning human beings to believe they don’t have to obey Him.

All of this is precisely what Satan has done to human beings. This is how he has led humankind into captivity to sin. Jesus Christ plainly said that “whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). Paul said that we are all slaves to sin until we are freed by God and become “slaves of righteousness”—which is obedience to God’s law (Romans 6:16-23; Psalm 119:172).

One of Satan’s main strategies for deceiving people throughout the Christian world is to convince them that they don’t need to keep God’s laws, that those laws

Due to this widespread deception, God’s Word warns us that “the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”



are obsolete or even harmful, or that Jesus kept them for us so we no longer have to. But Jesus said, “If you want to enter into life, *keep the commandments*” (Matthew 19:17). The apostle John tells us, “He who says, ‘I know Him [God],’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, *and the truth is not in him*” (1 John 2:4).

This is part of Satan’s major goal of eradicating humankind from this earth through manipulating us into harming

How Naturalism—Rejection of God—Holds Humanity Captive

Dr. Phillip Johnson, retired emeritus professor at Boalt School of Law at the University of California, Berkeley, wrote an insightful book, *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law and Education* (1995).

His book helps us understand how easily influenced we are by agnostics and atheists, who write many of our school textbooks and dominate many of our classrooms and school curricula. A Christian society can be badly corrupted by educating its young people in Darwinian evolution.

Dr. Johnson describes how an entire societal culture is shaped by Darwinists: “Darwinian evolution is not primarily important as a scientific theory but as a culturally dominant creation story. Every culture must have

a creation story as a basis for things like philosophy, education and law. *If we want to know how we ought to lead our lives and relate to our fellow creatures, the place to begin is with knowledge about how and why we came into existence.*

“Where there is radical disagreement in a commonwealth about the creation story, the stage is set for intense conflict, the kind of conflict that is known as a ‘culture war.’”

Dr. Johnson shows that naturalism has corrupted Western societies: “In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a very different creation story replaced the traditional one, first among the most highly educated elites and gradually in the society as a whole.

“The new creation story said it is

not true that God created us; on the contrary, our ancestors created God out of their prescientific imagination. *According to the new story, all living creatures evolved by an unguided, purposeless material process of random genetic change and natural selection”* (pp. 12-13).

The new creation story said our ancestors created God out of their prescientific imagination.

Thus, the logic goes, God doesn’t exist and there is no need to allow for or consider Him in our thinking.

Satan the devil would have us believe that we came into being by random chance from primordial slime and that there is no all-powerful Creator or laws to live by—so that we conclude we can do whatever we feel

like doing without moral restriction.

Naturalism—disbelief in anything beyond the natural world around us—is a subtle way to reeducate people, freeing them from feeling guilty over sin by substituting immorality or amorality for godly morality. With no real standards of right and wrong, we

truly are in a position of survival of the fittest and everyone for himself.

The Holy Bible rebukes naturalism: “Let God be true but every man a liar” (Romans 3:4). That has never stopped Satan, who cunningly has taken humanity hostage through “philosophy and empty deceit” (Colossians 2:8).



(Jude 6, King James Version).

While the earth, along with all who dwell on it, rightfully belongs to God (Psalm 24:1), He has allowed it, because of man’s choices, to become Satan’s domain for the time being.

The Bible tells us that Satan is “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, KJV), “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) and the one “who deceives the whole world” (Revelation 12:9). Paul makes it clear that Christians struggle “not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly [unseen spirit] realms” (Ephesians 6:12, NIV).

Satan is also behind a great religious deception that presents “another Jesus” with “a different gospel” (2 Corinthians 11:4). He presents himself as an angel of light, as do his unwitting representatives, who in reality are “deceitful workers” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Due to this widespread deception, God’s Word warns us that “*the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one*” (1 John 5:19).

In the beginning, Adam and Eve were free to know the truth, being free from Satan and from sin. But sin or lawbreaking separates human beings from God (Isaiah 59:2). Satan tempted Eve to sin and then, through her, Adam to follow (Genesis 3:1-24). Humankind has taken up where our

first parents left off, continuing to break God’s laws. Following the way of sin blinds us to God’s truths.

The inhabitants of this world are Satan’s captives, and they unknowingly identify with their kidnapper, preferring to believe his lies and even adopting his cunning, subtle and deceitful ways.

Satan’s attitudes permeate the world

Living under Satan’s rule has brought mankind untold heartache and suffering. Jesus pointed out Satan’s deceitful ways that were evident in those wrongly accusing Him: “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44).

Since Satan is a murderer, it’s no surprise that we live in a world overflowing with violence and mayhem of every kind. It’s no wonder that human history is written in blood, with the record of human existence being largely a chronicle of war after war after war. War is simply murder on a massive scale! Satan is behind genocide and the fact that technological advancements often lead to more efficient means of killing larger numbers of our fellow human beings more quickly.

Murder, manslaughter, beatings and

one another and eventually destroying ourselves (Matthew 24:21-22).

A world under Satan’s rule

Before God created Adam, Satan convinced a third of the angels to rebel with him against God in an attempt to overthrow Him (see Isaiah 14:13-14; Revelation 12:4, 9). Jesus said that He actually witnessed, long before becoming human, the results of Satan’s rebellion: “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

God cast Satan back to his originally assigned domain: “And the angels which kept not their first estate [the earth, where they had been stationed], but left their own habitation [again, the earth], he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day”

assaults plague many countries. We're appalled by the headlines. Even our popular entertainment is often *filled* with violence! Where does this evil influence come from? It comes from the one who "was a murderer from the beginning"!

Jesus also called Satan "the father" of lies. Again, is it any wonder that we see so much deception of every kind all around us? Should we be surprised that lying is so commonplace? We lie to each other. Our governments lie to us. We lie to our governments. Our various forms of media lie to us. Countries lie to other countries. Again, there is a reason for this—the father of lies who is behind it all.

As we noted earlier, Satan was an angel who, resenting God's control over him, rebelled against Him. Why do we see so much rebellion and resentment throughout the world? There is a powerful spirit influence behind it all. The very word *Satan* connotes an "adversary" or "enemy." And indeed he continually sets us against one another as well as against God.

So why do we see so much evil and suffering? There is a reason for it. The world is imprisoned by an evil, malicious captor whose attitudes permeate society. He has deceived the world, and those who are deceived, of course, *do not know* they are deceived—or they wouldn't be deceived.

The coming end of Satan's reign

With all the bad news we see around us, *good news* is definitely on the horizon. The time of mankind's deliverance from its captor is drawing near! Soon the deception, discontent and death that permeate our world will be replaced by peace, prosperity and purpose!

Why does it seem that the world's problems are increasing, growing worse by the day? One reason is that Satan knows his time is running out (compare Revelation 12:12), and that God will soon intervene to save the world and set mankind free from Satan's captivity (Hebrews 8:10-12).

Few people realize that a primary reason Jesus Christ must return is *to save us from ourselves!* Jesus Himself said of conditions just before His coming: "It will be a *time of great distress*, such as there has never been before since the beginning of the world, and will never be again. *If that time of troubles were not cut short, no living thing could survive*" (Matthew 24:21-22, Revised English Bible).

Christ's return will literally be a matter of life and death! We might also consider that

With all the bad news we see around us, *good news* is definitely on the horizon. The time of mankind's deliverance from its captor is drawing near!

only within recent decades has it been possible—with the creation of modern weapons of mass destruction—to *eliminate all human life on earth*. And every weapon man has created he has eventually used—even such horrifying creations as nuclear weapons, nerve gas and germ-warfare devices. As mankind stands on the brink of disaster, *Jesus Christ must and will intervene*.

Revelation 11:15-17 describes the scene: "The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: *'The kingdom of the world [currently Satan's kingdom] has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.'*

"And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: 'We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because *you have taken your great power and have begun to reign*'" (NIV).

Revelation 20:1-3 tells us what will then happen to the being who has held the world in cruel captivity and deception for so long:

"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. *He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more . . .*"

At last—a world set free!

These events mark the beginning of a thousand-year period known as the Millennium, a time when Satan will "deceive the nations no more." (You can learn much more about it in the article "Coming Soon:

The Magnificent Millennium," beginning on the next page.)

With Satan at last out of the way, the world will learn the promise of Christ's statement in John 8:32: "You shall know the truth, *and the truth shall make you free.*" God's truth includes the Ten Commandments, which summarize the way He wants mankind to live.

Of this new world God says, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea*" (Isaiah 11:9).

Satan's deceptive influence will be gone. So will his attitude of murdering, lying and rebelling. Instead of war breaking out, *peace* will break out all over! "He [Jesus Christ] shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; *nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore*" (Isaiah 2:4).

This is the wonderful future God has in store for the world. Yes, the world is shrouded in deception and blindness for now. But this state of affairs is soon coming to an end!

If God is opening your mind, though, you need not wait until then to experience the freedom His truth brings. He eagerly desires to share that message of hope with you and bring you out of Satan's deception and captivity *now*.

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

You can, with God's help, break free *now*. He is waiting to hear from you! **GN**

To Learn More...

This article has given only the briefest overview of Satan's pervasive influence throughout the world and the methods he uses to enslave and deceive mankind. Scripture reveals much more vital information that you need to know! To learn more, be sure to request or download our free booklet *Is There Really a Devil?*



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Coming Soon: The Magnificent Millennium

by Don Hooser

The fact that a large portion of Bible prophecy describes the Millennium proves it is extremely important to God. And the more you understand it, the more important it will be to you!



The time known as “the Millennium” is described in a great many scriptures, but, interestingly, the word *millennium* is not in the Bible. What does it mean?

Millennium is derived from two Latin words: *mille*, meaning “thousand,” and *annum*, meaning “year.” *Millennium* simply means 1,000 years. A specific thousand-year period definitely *is* in the Bible.

“*The Millennium*” (with the M typically capitalized) refers to *the future thousand-year reign on earth of Jesus Christ commencing with His second coming*.

Because the word *millennium* is so often associated with the utopian conditions prophesied to exist in the future 1,000-year period, the adjective form, “millennial,” has come to refer to not just the wonderful age to come but any beautiful and inspiring setting that seems ideal,

idyllic or Edenic (i.e., harkening back to the Garden of Eden).

A world restored to Eden-like conditions

In a short but powerful sermon, the apostle Peter referred to the time after Christ’s return as “times of *refreshing*” and as “the times of *restoration of all things*, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:18-21, emphasis added throughout).

Ever since Satan the devil appeared in the Garden of Eden as the wily serpent and enticed Adam and Eve to sin, he has been *corrupting everything!* Today, Romans 8:22 tells us that “the whole creation groans”!

One of the most important things Bible prophecy reveals about the Millennium is that during this time there will be a massive *restoration project* to bring the world back to Eden-like conditions. Paradise lost

will become paradise restored! It will end up being far better than all the secular ideas of utopia that man has dreamed up!

Notice what Bible prophecy tells us about this time: “For the LORD will comfort Zion [that is, Jerusalem, representing all Israel], He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness *like Eden*, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody” (Isaiah 51:3).

And: “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.”’

“Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and *I will do it*” (Ezekiel 36:33-36). What a breathtaking scene!

The literal thousand-year reign of Christ

Revelation 19:11-16 describes how Jesus Christ will return as “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” to establish His reign on the earth. He will also crush the mighty armies that oppose Him (verses 17-21).

When Jesus appeared on earth the first time, most people did not recognize that He was the Messiah because they were expecting a conquering king who would deliver them from Roman rule. Today it’s the opposite. People are now used to the image of a suffering Savior and are not really expecting Him to return and reign over the world. But He absolutely promised that He *will* return—as a *conquering King to rule all nations!*

Revelation 20 then describes what happens next: Christ banishes the forces of evil—Satan and his demon minions—the primary instigators behind the world’s wickedness. Christ will send an angel to

bind Satan and lock him away for this thousand-year period (Revelation 20:1-3).

Why is this such an urgent priority? God's Word tells us that today "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). It is Satan who, ever since the time of Adam and Eve, powerfully "deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). (See "A World Held Captive: Soon to Be Set Free," beginning on page 4.)

The all-pervasive, unseen influence of Satan is the number one reason why "human nature" is so bad. Our minds can be compared to computers that have been infected with a destructive virus. After the source of the virus—Satan—is removed, minds can be cleansed from the lingering effects and then reprogrammed with godly education and God's Holy Spirit!

God's servants resurrected to serve alongside Christ

The next thing John sees in vision in Revelation 20 is God's faithful servants who have been martyred but are now alive again! "And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Revelation verse 4). Jesus earlier stated that these resurrected servants will be immortal (Luke 20:36).

When Revelation 20:5 says, "This is the *first* resurrection," it is referring back to verse 4. The word "first" implies that there will be more than one resurrection. And as verse 5 tells us, a second resurrection will be for "the rest of the dead" who "live again" after "the thousand years were finished." That is when they will have their opportunity for salvation.

Verse 6 provides crucial information about the first resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

The first resurrection is indeed the "better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35) because those in it are raised to glorified eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). The second resurrection is a restoration to *mortal* life (see "Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones: What Does It Mean?" beginning on page 22), so a person in the second resurrection could die "the second death" if he then refused to repent and obey Christ.

These three verses in Revelation 20 just cited—verses 4-6—give us some facts about the Millennium. All the other millennial prophecies throughout the Bible

fill in the wonderful details!

Sad to say, countless people have chosen not to accept Revelation 20 as being literally true. Under Satan's influence, they have, through many interpretations, seen these verses as being merely symbolic.

But the wording of these verses is quite explicit, specific, detailed, sequential, logical and in harmony with the rest of the Bible. There is no justification for understanding them in any way except literally.

Whom will they be reigning over?

Jesus and those resurrected to immortality at His return will rule over all remaining human beings on earth who survive the devastating end-time wars and plagues leading up to that time. They will also rule over angels (1 Corinthians 6:2-3). And they will rule over generations of human beings to follow. Indeed, in this new world of peace and plenty, many, many others will be born throughout the Millennium.

God delights in children. He told Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply"

(Genesis 1:28). During the wonderful world of tomorrow, with its child-friendly conditions and attitudes, couples will be fruitful and people will multiply!

Regarding the Holy Land during the Millennium, God said: "I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young" (Ezekiel 36:10-11). There will even be plenty of animals to enjoy!

In thinking about the Millennium, we need to consider both the perspective of the physical human beings alive then as well as the perspective of the resurrected and glorified saints, the servants of God from this age who will then be given eternal life as immortal spirit beings. Keep in mind that most of the millennial prophecies are describing ideal conditions for physical human beings, including earthly pleasures that sound extremely appealing.

But to be a glorified spirit member of the God family will be infinitely better than



A Millennial Sabbath and a Sabbatical Millennium

Several scriptures indicate that we should expect a millennial "Sabbath" after six 1,000-year millennial "days" have expired.

Peter said, "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8; compare Psalm 90:4).

At creation, God instituted the weekly cycle of seven days. When He "rested on the seventh day," He "sanctified" it, which means He made it a holy day forevermore (Genesis 2:1-3).

When one adds up the biblical chronology and historic records, it's clear that the lapsed time since Adam and Eve has been almost 6,000

years, which is six millennia. If Christ returns at the end of 6,000 years, His reign will be the *seventh* millennium.

Can it be that God intends for us to think of the Millennium as a 1,000-year "Sabbath" of rest from the evils, stresses and suffering of the previous 6,000 years? From what Hebrews 4:1-11 tells us, the answer is "yes." This passage is comparing three "rests." The weekly Sabbath rest and the rest for the Israelites after they ceased from wandering and entered the Promised Land of Canaan are types of the *ultimate* "rest for the people of God" after they enter the Kingdom of God! (verse 9).

living as a human being! Even though it's difficult for us to imagine what it will be like to be a spirit being, we should have full faith that God has something much, much better in store for us when we're raised to existence on the divine level to be like Him! (1 John 3:2).

And those who are physical human beings won't be missing out for long. They also will be given the opportunity to be raised to immortality.

The role of the glorified saints as kings and priests!

Long ago, God told the prophet Daniel

The Millennium Pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles

The seven annual sacred festivals commanded in the Bible portray the great sequential events in God's master plan for mankind's salvation. They all are thoroughly explained in two important booklets that we offer free of charge: *Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Observe?* and *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*.

Of the seven festivals, the highlight of each year is when God's people enjoy the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles that pictures the coming Millennium.

"You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days . . . And you shall rejoice in your feast . . . Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD" (Deuteronomy 16:13-15).

In Exodus 23:16 it is called "the Feast of Ingathering" because it celebrates each year's autumn harvest (in the northern hemisphere). More importantly, it celebrates the great *spiritual* harvest that will take place during the Millennium as millions upon millions of people come to understand God's truth and have the opportunity to receive His gift of salvation!

During the Millennium there will be great emphasis on keeping the Feast of Tabernacles and using that time to come to Jerusalem to worship: "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

Next is a description of "the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (verses 17-19). Christ will insist that everyone keeps this all-important Feast! It will be a wonderful time of learning as well as a joyful celebration.

that "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever" (Daniel 7:18).

In Revelation 20:6, we saw that the resurrected saints will "be *priests* of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

In Revelation 1:5-6, John's vision reveals that Christ is making the saints "*kings and priests* to His God and Father." That is why Jesus Christ is called "Lord of Lords and King of Kings" (Revelation 17:14; 19:16). The resurrected saints will be the lords and kings who serve under Him!

Notice this millennial prophecy that reveals the teaching role of these spirit leaders when they visibly appear to people to teach them, warn them and remind them: "Your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" (Isaiah 30:20-21, New International Version).



All this is important to understand because God's purpose for human beings is much greater than most people think. Even most Christians think the destiny of the saints is to be angels or something like that, but angels will not rule the world to come (Hebrews 2:5), whereas the saints *will* under Christ (verses 6-11). As already mentioned, the saints will be *over* the angels. Notice what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:3, cited above, "Do you not know that we shall judge angels?"

Angels will always be on a lower level than the family of God. When God calls us "My sons and daughters" (2 Corinthians 6:18), it is much more literal than what most people believe. Angels are not literal spirit-begotten children of God (Hebrews 1:5), while true Christians *are* (Romans

8:16; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 3:1-2; 5:1).

As soon as people repent and are baptized for the forgiveness of their sins and to receive God's Spirit (Acts 2:38), "Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers" (Hebrews 2:11, New International Version). What an incredible honor! (To learn more, request or download our free booklet *What Is Your Destiny?*)

Reunited Israel will be a godly role model for the world

Many people are confused as to why so many prophecies emphasize Israel and Judah. Under the ancient kings David and Solomon, Israel was one nation composed of 12 tribes. After Solomon's death, the nation split into two nations, the "house of Israel" and the "house of Judah." Those who belonged to the house of Judah became known as Jews, while those of the house of Israel, carried into captivity by the Assyrian Empire, lost their identity and became known in history as "the lost 10 tribes."

Why did God bring the Israelites out of Egypt to be His "chosen" nation and "holy people"? One stated objective was for them to be a right example to the world, a role model to demonstrate the wonderful fruit of living life based on God's perfect laws (Deuteronomy 7:6-14). However, because of weak and sin-prone human nature, and because God did not give them the Holy Spirit, they didn't have the "heart" to consistently obey, and so

they failed most of the time (Deuteronomy 5:29; 29:4).

During the very first part of the Millennium, Christ will give special attention to making the modern-day descendants of the Israelites His model nation, which will greatly help in the education and conversion of the rest of the world. (To learn who these modern-day Israelites are, request or download your free copy of the booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.)

Why will Israel succeed in becoming a model nation when it failed in the past? Because after thousands of years of trying to live apart from God's law, they will learn that it is the *only* way to true happiness and fulfillment. They will then turn to Jesus Christ who will be ruling the earth, and

they will receive a “new heart.” Carefully consider the following prophecy:

“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries [where the Israelites have been in captivity as punishment from God], and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

“I will give you a *new heart* and put a *new spirit* within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh [a soft, receptive heart]. I will put *My Spirit within you* and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; *you shall be My people, and I will be your God*” (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

The “Holy Land” will finally live up to its name and be a truly holy land!

In Ezekiel’s next chapter, we learn that God “will make them *one nation* in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations [Israel and Judah], nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again” (Ezekiel 37:22).

Who will be the “one king” over the reunited Israel? It will be the resurrected King David (Ezekiel 37:24-25; 34:23-24).

Jesus also revealed who will reign over the 12 tribes: “Jesus said to [His disciples], ‘Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel’” (Matthew 19:28).

Based on these passages, God will likely assign other top responsibilities to resurrected patriarchs, prophets, apostles and other righteous men and women who proved faithful as godly leaders.

Truth spreads throughout the earth

Jerusalem will be the capital of the world as well as a safe and delightful place! “Thus says the LORD: ‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain.’ Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Old men and old women shall again sit in

the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing’” (Zechariah 8:3-5).

God further says of Jerusalem that “all nations shall flow to it” to learn and to worship. “Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house [temple] of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:2-3).

When Jesus Christ teaches and enforces

“I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”



the way of peace, peace will break out everywhere! “He [Christ] shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4).

Isaiah refers to Jesus as the “Prince of Peace” and then writes, “Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Isaiah is known as “the messianic prophet” because his book is full of prophecies of the Messiah and the Millennium. It’s interesting that Isaiah’s

name means “the LORD saves.”

Peace and prosperity fill the land

Another biblical prophet, Micah, gives some of the same details Isaiah does (Micah 4:1-3) and adds this: “But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid” (verse 4). This short verse is pregnant with meaning. It not only portrays peace and security but indicates the blessing of each family owning fertile, productive property.

It will be a marvelous time for farming,

Is the Millennium the Same Thing as the Kingdom of God?

Although these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, strictly speaking they are not identical.

The Millennium is a *period of time*—1,000 years. The Kingdom of God is the *reign* of God and the *family* of God, which so far has two members—God the Father and God the Son, Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God will rule the earth during and after the Millennium.

And the Kingdom will rapidly expand at that time. God’s incredible plan is to increase His family by transforming human beings into literal children of God!

“But as many as received Him [Jesus Christ], to them He gave the right *to become children of God*, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

God calls us His children from the moment that we receive the gift of His Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, 14, 16, 21; 1 John 3:1-2). However, we become fully and permanently the transformed and glorified children God at the resurrection when Christ returns, when we receive a “spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). That’s when we “inherit the kingdom of God” (verses 50-54).

During Jesus’ earthly ministry, He preached “the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Mark 1:14). *Gospel* means “good news.” Jesus was preaching the good news that all human beings can become members of the Kingdom—the family—of God as well as what the rule of God’s Kingdom will mean for the world’s future.

When Christ returns, an angel will announce, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15, NIV).

gardening and all kinds of outdoor activities: “I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

“I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing. Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase” (Ezekiel 34:25-27).

Jesus Christ will not only change the nature of human beings; He also will



change the nature of animals! No more will animals be predatory and dangerous: “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

“The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den” (Isaiah 11:6-8). Amazing!

This prophecy is both literal and figurative—peace in the natural realm serving to signify peaceful relations between peoples, as nations are often represented by animals in Scripture.

Indeed, the dramatically inspiring verse that follows shows the human focus here by explaining peace as the result of right knowledge: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). People will be unlearning their false ideas and learning the knowledge of God.

Preaching and teaching the truth to everyone will be greatly facilitated by the fact that all people will communicate in one “pure language” (Zephaniah 3:9)!

“The truth shall make you free!”

Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). Once the people of the world understand and are living by God’s laws, which James calls the “law of liberty,” they will enjoy the greatest freedom that is possible for human beings (James 1:25; 2:12). The ultimate freedom, of course, will come when each person escapes all physical limitations by becoming spirit!

Imagine what the world will be like when *everyone* will be living by *all* of the

Ten Commandments!

It will be a world virtually *free* of most of the problems it suffers from today—including wars, violence, crimes, murder, adultery, broken homes, theft, dishonesty, dirty politics and oppressive governments! It will also be a world free of idolatry and pagan superstitions and traditions.

The Ten Commandments define how to love God and how to love

people, as summed up in the two great commandments (Matthew 22:36-40).

During the Millennium, everyone will have the opportunity to become spiritually converted so God’s laws can become internalized—*written in their hearts!*

Here is a concise summary of the New Covenant that will be offered to all people: “I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jeremiah 31:33-34; Hebrew 8:10-12).

Christ will offer all people freedom from ignorance and freedom from the guilt and penalty of their sins.

The Millennium—time of healing, health and happiness!

Isaiah 35 offers one of the most inspiring portraits of the Millennium. Following are portions of it.

“The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall

blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing” (Isaiah 35:1-2).

“Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, ‘Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you.’ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing” (verses 3-6).

Besides receiving miraculous healing, the people will be taught the principles of healthful living so sickness can be prevented. And the healing of physical illnesses here, while literal (as Christ demonstrated through the miracles of His first coming), also pictures an even more important healing that will come—the healing of humanity’s *spiritual* problems.

“For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water” (verses 6-7).

“A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness . . . And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (verses 8-10). These prophecies, too, are meant literally as well as figuratively—portraying both physical and spiritual blessings.

Imagine that!

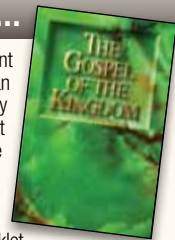
The people of the earth will be saying, “My cup runneth over” with blessings! (Psalm 23:5, King James Version).

Looking forward with heartfelt passion, then, let us all pray as Christ instructed, “Your Kingdom come”!

May the Millennium come soon! **GN**

To Learn More...

The Millennium is a central point of Bible prophecy and God’s plan for mankind. This article has only scratched the surface of what the Bible reveals about this time of Jesus Christ’s coming reign on the earth. To learn more, request or download your free copy of our eye-opening booklet *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. Learn about the best possible news our world could hear!



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Decline of democracy presages the coming of a world dictator

Democracy isn't really working well in the developing world. "Despite an economic renaissance, much of Africa is drifting toward a new age of authoritarianism" (Jason McLure, "Why Democracy Isn't Working in Africa," *Newsweek*, June 18, 2010). Even leaders in the countries that have recently begun the democratic process have only used it to become elected autocrats.

The Russian leadership fell into this trap some time after the breakup of the Soviet Union. "Vladimir Putin, riding on high approval ratings while Russian president in the early 2000s, stripped regional governors of influence, eviscerated the national parliament and began to neuter influential media" (Joshua Kurlantzick, "Democracy in Danger," *Prospect*, June 2010).

The *Independent* reported the onset of new legislation in Russia confirming this trend. The upper house of Moscow's parliament recently passed a bill that "gives Russian security services sweeping powers to question people about crimes that *have not yet been committed*" (Shaun Walker, "New Russian Law Revives Sweeping KGB Powers," July 20, emphasis added throughout). Russian president Dmitry Medvedev's signature turns the bill into law.

In addition, "Venezuela's Hugo Chavez appears to be deploying similar tactics, using his power to entrench his allies and undermine checks on his presidency—for instance, by revoking the license of the nation's most vocal private television network and those of dozens of radio stations" (Kurlantzick).

Examples could be cited in the opposite direction, but those are notable exceptions to the rule. *Newsweek* commented, "But backsliders have them outnumbered, a shift that hasn't gone unnoticed in the West" (McLure). Even supposedly fairly well-established democracies have succumbed to the danger, Thailand being a clear case in point.

The European Union (EU) was largely created to both inhibit and prevent warring and dangerous dictatorships from developing again in Europe. The Bible plainly tells us that this carefully contrived

human strategy will *not* work in the long run.

Although one Turkish politician described the EU as "the greatest peace project in the history of mankind," God's Word tells us that a charismatic dictator called "the Beast" is destined to arise and dominate the European scene—controlling the world at large as well. The final book of the Bible warns us of what will happen: "And all the world marveled and followed the beast" (Revelation 13:3). Masses of people will



The upper house of Moscow's parliament recently passed a bill that "gives Russian security services sweeping powers to question people about crimes that *have not yet been committed*."

exclaim: "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (verse 4).

His authority and influence will spread over the whole planet. The apostle John wrote, "And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue [language], and nation" (verse 7). To understand much more, request or download our free booklets *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy, The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* (Sources: *The Independent, Prospect* [both London], *Newsweek*.)

very, very quickly. And there is nothing in the (drug development) pipeline to tackle it."

A longtime problem in health care is the ability of bacteria to develop resistance to antibiotics, meaning researchers are constantly forced to develop new antibiotics to treat infections.

A particularly troubling development in recent years was the spread of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, which takes thousands of lives worldwide every year due to its resistance to most antibiotics. This new gene raises the stakes even higher, as no new drugs are in development that can effectively deal with it.

Because India is becoming a growing provider for cosmetic surgery for Americans and Europeans, it's likely bacteria with the drug-resistant gene will spread worldwide, with potentially devastating results. (Source: Reuters.)

Turkey: Independent regional powerhouse?

British Labour Party Member of Parliament Denis MacShane recently summed up Turkey's current circumstances: "In the Cold War years Turkey was unquestionably accepted as the West's most important frontier nation. Now it seems to prefer coddling Iran over backing the U.N. Security Council's harder line against Tehran. Disputes with Israel, once a key friend of Turkey, have become so bad, there is almost a rupture between the only two democracies in the region" ("Stop the Blame Game," *Newsweek*, July 23, 2010).

Turkey has even voted against United Nations-sponsored sanctions intended to rein in Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Time magazine selected "Turning to the East" as the title for a feature article about Turkey. The teaser for the article stated, "Feeling betrayed by Israel and snubbed by Europe, Turkey is forging a new identity as an independent regional power" (Pelin Turgut, July 5, 2010).

Modern Turkey's claim to a unique global role is partially based on its development out of the Ottoman Empire (roughly 1345 to 1918)—stretching from just outside Vienna, Austria, to the Persian Gulf. Ankara, Tur-

"Feeling betrayed by Israel and snubbed by Europe, Turkey is forging a new identity as an independent regional power"

key's capital, also remains centrally located between East and West—theoretically interfacing between these two different worlds.

Newsweek's feature piece placed "Ankara in the Middle." The article stated: "Once an unquestioning U.S. ally, and at odds with most of its neighbors, Turkey is now forging a new foreign policy, with itself at the very center" (Owen Matthews, *Newsweek*, July 26, 2010).

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates observed that "if there is anything to the notion that Turkey is, if you will, moving eastward, it is, in my view, in no small part because it was pushed, and pushed by some in Europe refusing to give Turkey the kind of organic link to the West that Turkey sought" (as quoted by Marc Champion and Peter Spiegel, "Gates Says EU Pushed Turkey Away," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 10, 2010). Clearly America's political leadership has become very concerned about this new direction in Ankara's thinking. (Sources: *Time, Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal*.)

Deadly superbug spreading from India

A new gene that makes bacteria resistant to virtually all antibiotics has been discovered in patients in the United States, Britain and South Asia, according to an Aug. 11, 2010, Reuters report by health and science reporters Kate Kelland and Ben Hirschler. The new gene apparently originated in India and is being spread outside the country by patients traveling there for inexpensive health care.

The article quoted Timothy Walsh of Cardiff University in Britain, who said: "At a global level, this is a real concern... Because of medical tourism [traveling abroad for medical procedures] and international travel in general, resistance to these types of bacteria has the potential to spread around the world

America's greatness under severe trial

A popular column in *The Economist* stated that "America still towers over rivals in scientific virtuosity, military power, the vitality of democracy and much else. Polls show that Americans are still among the most patriotic people in the world" ("Where Has All the Greatness Gone?" July 17, 2010). But this brief assessment of America's stature also acknowledges the nation's serious difficulties—it being "battered by recession, deep in debt, mired in war."

America faces multiple international problems on many fronts. North Korea is but one. Recently both Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates were present at the heavily fortified demilitarized zone (DMZ) where troops from both the North and the South constantly face each other across no-man's land. South Korea has 600,000 soldiers, and the United States still stations a force of 28,000 there to protect the South. On the other side, North Korea's army numbers about a million soldiers.

The show of solidarity included the arrival of the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* in Pusan. As a July 27, 2010, Associated Press article observed, "If you want to let someone know you are thinking about them, send a massive aircraft carrier." This demonstration of force was "designed to send a clear message to North Korea that its aggressive behavior must stop," said Gen. Walter Sharp, the top U.S. military commander in South Korea (Associated Press, July 28, 2010).

China denounced the entire exercise and was particularly annoyed that these military exercises occurred in the Yellow Sea near the Chinese coast. At a conference in Singapore, Sino-American tensions have also flared up again over Taiwan. "The wary relationship between the militaries of the U.S. and China flared openly—though courteously—at a conference here this weekend, a brief flash of the long-standing tension that's centered on Taiwan but extends to their broader alliances and differing world-views" (Evan Ramstad, "U.S., China Display Military Wariness," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 7, 2010).

Then the Chinese decided not to invite Secretary Gates (as had been previously expected) to the People's Republic for a visit. Also during the Singapore conference "China . . . refused to criticize North Korea but sharply criticized Israel" (ibid.).

The long-standing American alliance with Japan also may be facing a period of worrying fragility. Washington's diplomatic relationship with Japan

has long been "a cornerstone of peace and security" in the region (Tobias Harris, "Japan-U.S. Relations Could Get Bumpy," *Newsweek*, July 16, 2010). Japan's political instability at home gets the blame for the present disruption. Economic growth has been somewhat unsteady for 10 years and more.

Yet "Japan will likely grow even more dependent on the U.S. for its security, with the difference being that the relationship will be more fragile. *For Japan, every U.S. initiative toward China will be scrutinized for signs that the U.S. is abandoning Japan in the region*"—certainly a catch-22 conundrum for America (ibid.).

While these international relationships in East Asia remain seriously threatening, they pale when compared to Afghanistan. President Barack Obama, who inherited the Afghan and Iraq wars from the previous administration, has decided to step up efforts in Afghanistan while drawing down in Iraq.

A *Spectator* writer summed up his take on the U.S. dilemma, and he is by no means alone in this view: "Obama has in effect bet the house on America's

The United States will have to confront even greater challenges in the future. Yet the fate of the nation remains firmly in God's hands.

ability to determine the fate of a quasi-nation possessing marginal significance to the West . . . The Most Powerful Man in the World finds himself a prisoner of events he cannot control" (Andrew Bacevich, "Obama Is in Hock to the Hawks," July 3, 2010). Recall that Lyndon Johnson was forced to grapple with a similar situation involving the Vietnam War in the 1960s.

On the other hand, Joe Klein's column in *Time* magazine advises the U.S. to forget Afghanistan: "Afghanistan is really a sideshow here. Pakistan is the primary U.S. national-security concern in the region . . . It has a nuclear stockpile, and lives under the threat of an Islamist coup by some of the very elements in its military who created and support the Taliban" ("Beyond the Leaks: Our Pakistan Problem," Aug. 9, 2010). In fact, both countries constitute enormous problems for America.

The United States will have to confront even greater challenges in the future. Yet the fate of the nation remains firmly in God's hands. If our Creator decides that the gospel of the Kingdom should go out with much greater power and influence, He may hold off calamitous national and world events to accommodate His overall purpose.

Troubling number of Army suicides

"War is hell," stated American Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman as his Union soldiers crossed the Pearl River after the fall of Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1863. Today, war is still hell for the soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, but an increasing problem has surfaced within U.S. military forces that shows the stress soldiers face.

"A record high number of Army suicides are linked to an increasingly 'permissive' environment in the service where soldiers take personal risks in their lives by using alcohol and drugs, committing crimes and refusing to get psychological help, according to a sweeping internal investigation released by Army officials," said a July 29, 2010, *USA Today* article (Gregg Zoroya, "Army Suicides Linked to Risky Behavior, Lax Discipline"). In many cases, the report says, commanders don't do enough to curb the behavior.

"The review commissioned last year by the No. 2 Army commander, Gen. Peter Chiarelli, says this 'Army-wide problem' is linked to a tally of deaths last year that included 160 active-duty soldiers who committed suicide and 146 more who died during risky activity or behavior such as drug use. Seventy-four of those deaths were drug overdoses. There were also 1,713 attempted suicides last year."

The number of suicides and attempted suicides in the U.S. military is tragic. War truly is hell, and the more American society tolerates the abuse of alcohol and drugs, the weaker will be our values. The Bible shows this will all change after Christ's return, when peace will break out all over the world. As Micah 4:3 tells us, all nations will beat their swords into plowshares and will at last learn war no more. (Source: *USA Today*.)

The whole story of how and why America became a great nation and why its leadership will be severely tested again and again is thoroughly explained in our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. Request or download your free copy! (Sources: *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Spectator* [London], *The Economist*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, Associated Press.)

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 and Prophecy* Web site—to help you understand the news in the light of Bible prophecy. This eye-opening site offers you a perspective so badly needed in our chaotic and confused world—the perspective of God's Word, the Bible. Visit us at www.WNPonline.org today!





Has America Lost Its Way?

Increasingly it seems that the United States cannot solve its problems—whether it be the economy, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, illegal immigration or the Gulf oil spill. Previous generations seemed to know what to do. Has America lost its way?

When I'm home on Sundays I try to watch *The McLaughlin Group* on PBS, which I find to be the most enlightening discussion on television. My daughter refers to it as my “shouting program” and invariably leaves the room. It's a 25-minute discussion on current events sponsored by *The Financial Times*, one of the world's most prestigious newspapers.

One of the regular contributors is conservative columnist and former presidential candidate Pat Buchanan. On a recent program when the Gulf oil spill was being discussed, he made a profound and insightful comment. Paraphrasing his words, he observed: “Just look at us. We can't cap an oil spill in the Gulf, we can't balance our budget, we can't police our borders and we can't win our wars! How can the world take us seriously?”

Clearly something has gone seriously wrong in the United States, and Americans are increasingly aware of it.

The big issue—the economy

The economy remains the number one issue. As I write this, TV news programs are highlighting the fact that consumer spending is going down, meaning that people are worried about the immediate future. Also, GDP growth slowed in the second quarter of the year to 2.4 percent. This rate of growth is not enough to put a dent in the increasingly worrisome unemployment figures.

Whereas the official unemployment rate is under 10 percent, the real figure is closer to 16.5 percent, according to various financial and economic sources. The reason for the discrepancy is the way the unemployment figures are calculated.

The long-term unemployed are dropped from the figures after they stop reporting that they are looking for work. These so-

called “discouraged workers” may still be looking but have no reason to report it after their benefits run out, or they may have taken part-time work to try to get by, and so could be called underemployed.

The most widely reported figure from the Bureau of Labor Statistics counts as unemployed only those who have reported actively looking for work in the previous four weeks, leading to systematic undercounting.

Making things worse is that many of those who are employed are working shorter hours, suffering through a prolonged period of reduced pay. There's little wonder consumers are not spending as before.

Illegal immigration a major issue

This stubbornly high unemployment rate is no doubt a contributing factor to increased fears over illegal immigration. When unemployment is high in any country, citizens will turn against immigrants who are seen as taking their jobs at lower pay. Reality is not as simple as that, since many immigrants, especially those who are in the United States illegally, will do jobs most Americans are not inclined to do.

Arizona's new law giving police the right to check whether a person is in the country legally is being fought by the federal government, sending a clear signal to Americans that Washington lacks a serious commitment to securing America's borders. The president has made statements expressing support for the 12 million illegals' desire for full citizenship, and cynics sometimes refer to “illegal aliens” as “undocumented Democrats,” as conferring citizenship on them and allowing them to vote would considerably sway elections.

It should also be pointed out that the Republicans are not blameless, as many of them want the illegals to stay since they keep labor costs down for businesses.

Either way, nothing is likely to be done.

What's wrong with the economy?

In the same year that the United States declared itself independent from Great Britain, the Scottish economist Adam Smith wrote his book *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith was an advocate of free enterprise. He believed that when individuals pursued their own personal interest, society as a whole benefited. He strongly supported free-market competition, which helped everyone by keeping prices low while at the same time providing incentive to produce a broad range of products and services.

The wealth of both the United States and Great Britain was built on the free enterprise system promulgated by Smith and his followers. After World War II, Britain turned increasingly away from those principles, advancing the power of the state at the expense of the individual. Consequently, Britain lost its preeminent position and its empire, succumbing increasingly to foreign competition where Smith's principles are increasingly making inroads. India and China are two notable examples.

The United States, regrettably, seems to be following in England's footsteps. The government sector is growing by sucking wealth and resources from the private sector.

Federal government jobs, according to several recent reports, now pay on average *double* what the private sector pays. Almost 50 percent of Americans depend on government for their livelihood in one way or another. The present administration seems set to increase the role of the state sector further.

Ironically, at the same time a communist country on the other side of the Pacific—China—moves closer to free enterprise principles to promote economic growth.

It's not too difficult to see why the United States is in serious trouble. Nor is it hard to see the solution. Quite simply, the government sector (both federal and state) needs to be downsized, thereby enabling taxes to come down and giving a boost to private enterprise.



“Just look at us. We can’t cap an oil spill in the Gulf, we can’t balance our budget, we can’t police our borders and we can’t win our wars! How can the world take us seriously?”

More than 3,000 years ago, God warned the ancient Israelites about the tendency of government to keep on expanding at the expense of the private sector, increasing the hardship on businesses and the general public. When the Israelites asked for a human leader like the other nations (1 Samuel 8:5), God warned them that the king would take more and more from them in the form of taxation until “you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day” (verse 18).

Until the United States reduces the size of government and encourages private business and individual initiative, it will not solve its economic problems and will continue to decline.

Why can’t the United States win its wars?

Aug. 15, 1945, was the last time the United States conclusively won a major war. That was World War II, and the United States was in alliance with the British Empire and the Soviet Union.

A few years later came the Korean War, which, as evidenced by the recent sinking of a South Korean warship by a North Korean submarine, ended in a dangerous

and uneasy stalemate that remains unresolved to this day. On the heels of the Korean War came Vietnam, a war that the United States gave up on.

More recently we have seen two wars against Iraq. The first Persian Gulf War left Saddam Hussein in power, with the result that the second war there was fought over a decade later. Saddam was deposed and later executed, but the struggle in Iraq against insurgents is still ongoing. Furthermore, the toppling of Saddam has allowed *Iran*—for a long time held in check by Iraq—to become a regional superpower and a major threat to the United States, Israel and its neighbors.

Meanwhile, after nine years the war in Afghanistan continues, with the Taliban seeming to gain the upper hand more recently. The world watches puzzled as the greatest military power cannot defeat ill-equipped zealots holed up in caves!

What’s wrong with this picture?

Why has the United States not been winning its wars? Part of the problem is that the United States has misread some of these conflicts.

For example, Vietnam was not so much about democracy versus communism as

about nationalism versus colonialism. The Vietnamese defeated their French colonial rulers in 1954. After more than a century of foreign domination, they did not want another group of foreigners telling them how to run their country.

The American war there was simply a continuation of the wars the Vietnamese had fought against both the Japanese and the French. Ironically, 35 years after America’s defeat, Vietnam is a nation that, like China, is venturing into free enterprise as the way ahead.

A similar error in American judgment has taken place in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Clearly there was little enthusiasm for Western-style democracy in either nation. Meanwhile, tribal and religious loyalties have complicated conflicts that go back centuries and are not likely to be resolved by America and its allies.

At the same time, the financial cost has been horrendous and has contributed greatly to America’s current fiscal deficit. America urgently needs a new and effective strategy.

The problems come back primarily to America’s biblical name, which is Manasseh, meaning “forgetting.” (For a

Continued on page 28

The “American Century”: What Was Really Behind It?

by Mike Kelley

Seldom has a nation dominated an era as the United States dominated much of the 20th century. Its remarkable achievements transformed the world for decades. But what was really behind its amazing accomplishments? Is there more than meets the eye?

In the history of the world, never has a nation come into power, wealth and world influence as rapidly as the United States in the 20th century. The “American Century,” as some historians have labeled it, saw a union of states that had almost split apart in the 1860s rise to world power status and levels of wealth unimagined in the 19th century.

But was it merely American will and energy and luck, combined with a republican form of government, that allowed this to happen? Or is there another reason we can point to that turned a nation of immigrants into the powerhouse it became?

The background most don't realize

The biblical patriarch Abraham is acknowledged as the father of the Jewish and Arab peoples today. But what most do not realize is that he was also the father of the Anglo-Saxon peoples of the British Commonwealth and the United States.

The Good News explored that little-known history in our January-February 2010 issue. For the full story, we invite you to review it and also to request or download our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*, the fascinating but true account of American and British national ancestry.

Suffice it to say here that God passed the national promises made to Abraham on to his grandson Jacob. When old and near death, Jacob conferred these promises to his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh.

Let's follow the scene in Genesis 48. Jacob's son Joseph presented his own sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to their grandfather. Jacob then laid his hands on Joseph's sons to transfer the blessings to them. Crossing his arms so that Ephraim, the younger, would receive the greater

blessing, Jacob pronounced the future of these lads, a future that stretched out thousands of years from that time.

Jacob said of the descendants of the two boys: “He [Manasseh] also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations” (Genesis 48:19).

Notice also that Abraham's descendants were to number into the *hundreds of millions!* God promised him, “Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south” (Genesis 28:14).

These promises were *never fulfilled* in biblical times. While they experienced some significant periods of national wealth and power, Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, did not then rise to the level of greatness and dominion that had been foretold. Eventually they were carried away into national captivity at the hands of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires in the eighth and sixth centuries B.C., respectively.

If the promises made to Abraham and passed down to Ephraim and Manasseh were ever fulfilled, it would have to have been later—*much* later, in our day! As we will see, the promise of a large population was a key to American achievements and the fulfillment of some of the other promises of national greatness in the 20th century.

The amazing truth is that the people of the United States are descended in

large part from Manasseh (while Britain and other nations of British heritage are descended from Ephraim).

The national commitment of World War II

Except for its two-year intervention on the side of Great Britain and France in World War I, the first 40 years of the 20th century were peaceful for the United States. This long period of peace allowed tremendous expansion in power and wealth.

American industrial might blossomed. By the late 1920s, the United States had surpassed Great Britain and Germany as the world's leading coal, steel and iron



Immigrants arrive at New York's Ellis Island in 1904.

producer. Its manufacturing ability transformed the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. By 1940, most American families owned an automobile, a refrigerator and most of the other accoutrements of modern life.

But the peaceful life Americans enjoyed in 1940 was soon to change as the nation watched the growing Nazi storm in Europe and Japanese imperial expansion in Asia. Isolation, the belief that this was not America's war, evaporated on Dec. 7, 1941, when the Japanese launched a preemptive strike at the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States entered World War II with the solid backing of the majority of Americans and a commitment to the all-out national effort needed for victory.

Among the blessings promised to

Joseph's descendants were "blessings of the breasts and of the womb" (Genesis 49:25). The early 20th century saw the fulfillment of that prophecy among the descendants of Manasseh, when from 1900 to 1940 the U.S. population doubled to more than 130 million, fueled by a high birthrate and immigration.

An advanced and mechanized agricultural system, combined with efficient transportation based on the world's leading railway system, also made it one of the world's healthiest populations. After Pearl Harbor, millions of healthy young men—and women—volunteered for the armed forces. The United States was ultimately able to field some 16 million in uniform.

World War II saw the use of mechanized war machinery on a scale unprecedented in the history of warfare. Fighting in both Europe and the Pacific required a vast output of guns, tanks, aircraft and ships. American industry quickly converted from producing consumer goods

materiel to Europe and the Pacific.

Sudden mastery of the seas

But with the outbreak of war on two fronts, American shipping needs grew. Henry Kaiser was one of America's leading industrialists. A master of manufacturing efficiency, he contracted with the U.S. government to produce "liberty ships"—slow-moving freighters designed to do one thing: transport lots of armaments and supplies efficiently. Kaiser streamlined production techniques at his shipyards, eventually launching a new liberty ship *every 10 days*.

Victory in the Second World War required mastery of the seas. Between them, the United States and British Commonwealth controlled most of the major sea gates—such as the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Strait of Hormuz and the English Channel—that could be used as choke points for shipping. Notice that God told Abraham

Several days of bad weather made aircraft reconnaissance impossible and seas too rough for the landing craft.

But a break in the weather was forecast for June 6. Early that morning, German defenders on bluffs overlooking the beaches were stunned to peer out over the English Channel and see nearly 5,000 ships. Many felt the hand of God was involved in providing the crucial weather break needed to launch the invasion.

Some of the fiercest fighting of the war took place over the 11 months that followed, leading to Germany's surrender in early May 1945. Trapped in Berlin, Hitler committed suicide. The nightmare of Nazi oppression was past. But a defiant Japan still had to be dealt with.

Several millennia earlier, God had described to ancient Israel the blessings that would follow if they honored and obeyed Him: "You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight" (Leviticus 26:7-8).

Except to some degree during the time of Joshua and a few times under David and Solomon, this prophecy likewise was never fulfilled. Yet a development occurred toward the end of World War II that could be deemed a latter-day fulfillment of that prophecy.

It provided America,

a nation that comprised only 5 percent of the world's population, with the power to militarily control the other 95 percent. For the short time that the United States was the sole possessor of nuclear weapons, it made the United States the undisputed military leader of the world.

The Manhattan Project

Despite its advantages in manpower, industrial capacity and wealth, America realized that its war effort could be trumped if the Axis powers successfully developed a long-rumored "secret weapon."

By the late 1930s, several of the world's leading physicists, such as Robert Oppenheimer, Enrico Fermi and Albert Einstein in the United States, and Otto Hahn,



B-24 Liberator bombers are assembled in Willow Run, Michigan.



"Little Boy" was the world's first atomic bomb.

to producing goods for the war effort.

At Ypsilanti, Michigan, the Ford Motor Company's gigantic Willow Run plant began turning out B-24 bombers by the hundreds, then thousands. At its peak in August 1944 the Willow Run plant produced 14 B-24s *every day*. Those bombers were crucial in systematically demolishing the industrial capacity of Germany and Japan, reducing their capacity to wage war.

All these war goods and the millions of troops had to be delivered to the fronts. America's railroads provided an efficient way to move troops and war material to America's ports. By 1940 the U.S. merchant fleet had become one of the world's two largest, along with Great Britain's. This vast fleet of thousands of ships was needed to transport troops and war

that his descendants would "possess the gate of their enemies" (Genesis 22:17).

The Royal Navy controlled shipping in the English Channel and Suez Canal. America used the Panama Canal to save weeks of transit time for cargoes from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific. Without control of these passages, victory would have been much more difficult.

The beginning of the end for Nazi Germany probably was the German defeat at Stalingrad in December 1942. But ultimate defeat for Hitler's dream of a Nazi empire accelerated in June 1944 when thousands of American and British forces landed on D-Day at Normandy, on the French coast.

Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, as commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, agonized on the date to launch the invasion.

Fritz Strassmann and Werner Heisenberg in Germany, had concluded that the tremendous, almost unimaginable energy locked in the nucleus of the atom could be released to create a weapon so destructive that the first nation to possess it would be assured of victory.

In Germany, Adolf Hitler was aware of this and ordered a research and development project to produce an atomic bomb.

As America began its rapid mobilization to enter the war in early 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt had also been informed about the destructive potential of nuclear energy. Historians acknowledge that America’s decision to pursue a nuclear weapon stemmed largely from fears that Nazi Germany was already at work on one.

In the United States, Oppenheimer and Einstein, the latter a brilliant Jewish physicist who fled Germany in 1937, had worked out the theoretical framework for the bomb. Einstein wrote several letters to Roosevelt, urging action before Germany could take the lead. But it would take a vast national commitment of resources to support the research and development to get from theory to actually having a weapon to deliver.

Roosevelt appointed Oppenheimer to head up a research group to study the feasibility of using nuclear fission, the splitting of the atomic nucleus, as the basis of the weapon.

In the fall of 1942, with Germany in control of Europe and Allied forces reeling in the Pacific, Roosevelt gave the Manhattan Project the green light. Production of the bomb would require uranium-235, the addition of plutonium (an extremely rare element produced from uranium) and a site for final production of the weapon.

It was decided that these activities would be carried on, in utmost secrecy, at three laboratories that were established in Oak Ridge, Tennessee; in Los Alamos, New Mexico; and in Richland, Washington. Later in the war a research site was established in Canada at Chalk River, Ontario, where scientists and engineers from Britain, Canada, New Zealand and other nations carried on additional research.

The main requirement was the production of enriched uranium-235, which would require a remote location where secrecy could be maintained. So in late 1942, with utmost secrecy, the U.S. government purchased a 60,000-acre tract of secluded, wooded land in Anderson County, Tennessee, about 30 miles west of Knoxville. So tight was the secrecy that even Tennessee’s

governor at the time had little awareness of Oak Ridge’s real purpose.

Production of plutonium required a large nuclear reactor. The Hanford site near Richland, Washington, was chosen for its location near the Columbia River, a source that could supply water to cool the reactors required for plutonium production.

On a bleak mesa in New Mexico, the government created the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

In addition to being the main “think tank,” Los Alamos was responsible for final assembly of the bombs, mainly from materials and components produced at Oak Ridge. It was at Los Alamos that final bomb manufacturing took place—where casings, explosive lenses and enriched uranium were assembled into the actual weapons.

Early on the morning of Aug. 6, 1945, a trio of B-29 bombers took off from a base at Tinian Island, about 1,800 miles from Japan. Col. Paul Tibbets commanded the lead plane, the *Enola Gay*, which carried the first atomic bomb to be used in warfare.

The target city, Hiroshima, was deemed to have considerable industrial and military significance. At 8:15 a.m. Tibbets released the bomb, “Little Boy.” The resulting blast was brighter than the sun. It produced temperatures greater than 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit, and a shock wave that approached 700 miles per hour.

On Aug. 9 a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, an important port city and industrial center in the south of Japan. Between them, the two bombings resulted in unbelievable destruction.

On Aug. 15 millions of Japanese citizens huddled around their radios to hear an important announcement by their revered emperor. Hirohito told his people of his decision to accept the Allied terms of surrender. To fail to do so, he told them, would “result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation.” World

War II, in which some 60 million people had died, was now over.

Putting a man on the moon

Victory by the Allied forces in World War II left the United States as the world’s undisputed supreme power. But within a few years, the Soviet Union also had atomic weapons. And in the next decade, these two powers would square off in another race for



A giant Saturn V rocket stands ready to fly astronauts to the moon.

world prestige—the space race.

Victory in Europe at the close of World War II brought an unexpected and, at the time, unrealized benefit to the United States. A virtually unknown band of 118 German scientists and engineers decided to surrender to the U.S. Army rather than fall into the hands of the Soviet Red Army.

Their young leader, the brilliant and charismatic Wernher von Braun, had led Germany’s efforts to develop the V-2 liquid-propelled rockets that rained by the hundreds on England late in the war. Fortunately for England, the V-2’s crude guidance system caused most of the rockets, armed with deadly one-ton explosive warheads, to miss their marks.

But Von Braun had proven the viability of liquid-fueled rockets, and the V-2 would

prove the developmental grandparent of America's Saturn V, the giant rocket that less than 25 years later would launch men to the moon.

Amid the chaos of the end of the war, the U.S. Army gathered up all the V-2 parts and pieces they could find and sent them with the Von Braun team to the U.S. military base at Ft. Bliss, Texas. Under U.S. Army direction, Von Braun and his group continued the research and development of rockets. Aided by a growing team of American scientists and engineers who would soon take the forefront, V-2s achieved higher and higher altitudes—up to 244 miles in 1949.

The term *rocket* soon gave way to a new term: *guided missile*, a large rocket, directed in flight by a sophisticated guidance system,



U.S. astronaut Buzz Aldrin walks on the moon.

that could travel up to thousands of miles to deliver a warhead—even a nuclear one. But Von Braun had always dreamed of space travel. From his earliest years, he knew that rockets could carry human beings into space.

The Russian launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957 caught America off guard. Development of rockets to carry human beings accelerated, and early in 1961 America was able to launch Alan Shepard into a suborbital flight. Shortly afterward John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth.

By the late 1950s, the United States was involved in the space race, but it was not a national commitment. Congress decided by 1958 to make space exploration a civilian function, and that year created the National

Aeronautics and Space Administration. NASA would soon become an acronym well-known to the average American.

The elections of 1960 produced a new, energetic young president. John F. Kennedy was a believer in space exploration and saw it as a cause, a national project, on which to focus the nation's attention. In a speech before Congress in May 1961, Kennedy issued the challenge: "First, I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth."

Kennedy's electrifying announcement gave rise to the Apollo-Saturn program, the national effort to put a man on the moon. In Huntsville, Alabama, NASA established the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center, devoted to the development of large rockets whose sole mission was to lift not weapons of mass destruction, but human and scientific payloads into space.

With Von Braun at the helm of these efforts, the United States developed the Saturn series of ever-larger and more powerful booster rockets, culminating with the gigantic Saturn V.

American TV viewers thrilled to the sight of the July 1969 launch of Apollo 11, the mission to the moon. As the Saturn V lifted off from Florida's Cape Kennedy, with a 500-foot shaft of flame and a rumble like that of an earthquake, Americans knew that three brave men were taking the ride of their lives.

Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins were on their way to the moon. When the lunar lander successfully touched down on the moon's surface, Armstrong radioed to earth: "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." America had beaten the Soviet Union to the moon. In the 40 years since, only a handful of Americans, and no one from other countries, have set foot on the moon.

Apollo 11 excited the American people as few other events in the nation's history. Many saw the hand of God in the American triumph as a Christian nation beat the atheistic, communist Soviet Union in a supreme effort of national will and commitment of resources.

Promises fulfilled—now what?

God Almighty keeps His Word, and there can be little doubt that the promises made to Abraham have been fulfilled. The British Commonwealth and the United States became the multitude of nations and the

great nation promised in Genesis 35:11 and 48:19. But God also told ancient Israel that the promises could be taken away. Read Deuteronomy 28 and 29 to see what God said would befall His people if they rejected His way and turned their back on Him.

Notice also Leviticus 26:19: "I will break the pride of your power," God warned. At the beginning of the 21st century the United States is still, militarily, the world's leading power. But the nation is bogged down in bloody and costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The United States is still leader of the free world, but cannot seem to stop rogue nations like Iran and North Korea from developing nuclear weapons. America wrestles with the problem of militant Islam, and many wonder if the Muslim conquests of the seventh century will be repeated. The nation's law enforcement agencies must constantly guard against a devastating terrorist attack that could come at any time and in any place.

Economically, the United States has been transformed from the world's leading lending nation to its greatest debtor. And in Europe, an economic bloc is rising whose combined output easily surpasses the United States. In Asia, the ancient nation of China is rising rapidly as another major competing economic force.

Blessings can be given, and blessings can be taken away. America has been richly blessed, enabling great national achievements such as those we've noted. And we could easily name many more.

But it is time for Americans to realize their place in the world, wake up to what is really going on and soberly pay attention to what the Creator says is in store for the nation if its people do not turn their hearts and mend their ways. **GN**

To Learn More...

Where is the United States mentioned in Bible prophecy? While several much smaller nations are mentioned by name, are major powers left out? Or are they simply identified in ways that few people realize? You need to understand what the Bible reveals about the future of the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other countries. Request or download your free copy of *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* today!



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Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones: What Does It Mean?

by John Ross Schroeder

The prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of vast numbers of people resurrected to live again as physical human beings. What is the meaning of this mystifying vision, and what does it teach us about God's plan?

From early youth Ezekiel had been educated and trained to be a priest in the kingdom of Judah. But his hopes and dreams had been dashed by King Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, taking him and other young Jews captive to Babylon. Now far separated from the temple in Jerusalem, how could his education and training be of any real value? There was no need to worry. God was looking after His own. The Creator had called Ezekiel to be a great prophet, ranked alongside Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Christian writer Christopher Wright put it this way: "So while we can value all the positive contributions that Ezekiel's education and training as a priest brought to his prophetic ministry, we must also appreciate the immense personal, professional and theological shock it must have been to him . . . [Yet] God would use all that He had built into Ezekiel's life during his years of preparation" (*The Message of Ezekiel*, 2001, p. 27).

When he was 30 years old, Ezekiel began to experience astonishing visions from Almighty God. Perhaps in a personal diary, he recorded the exact date on which the first vision occurred: "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (Ezekiel 1:1, emphasis added throughout).

The invisible barriers between heaven and earth were supernaturally parted for Ezekiel. But what did this prophet actually see in vision? Moving beyond the introductory

revelation of the awesome angelic realm, we fast-forward to verses 26 and 28. "On the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it . . . This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD."

Ezekiel initially reacted just like the prophet Daniel and the apostles Paul and John did later. "So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One [God] speaking. And He said to me, 'Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you' . . . And He said to me; 'Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel'" (Ezekiel 1:28; 2:1-3). God gave Ezekiel a great mission to accomplish. He had important announcements to make.

These were intended to reach people far beyond his own time to people down through the ages. And one important vision would serve to encourage all who have ever lived in facing the same remorseless enemy—the seemingly hopeless ending of life in death.

Looking ahead

The prophet did have a comparatively small personal audience in Babylon of fellow captives from Judah (Ezekiel 3:11). But the real import of his message was not primarily for these deported, displaced prisoners who could do little about their circumstance.

It's important to understand that the kingdoms of Israel and Judah had separated after King Solomon's death and that the people of the kingdom of Israel had already gone

into captivity at the hands of the Assyrians during the latter part of the eighth century B.C.—well over a century before Ezekiel prophesied.

And by the time his prophecies began, some of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah were likewise already in captivity, first by the Assyrians and then the Babylonians, with most of the rest soon to follow as a result of later Babylonian invasions.

Careful reading of Ezekiel's prophetic message will reveal that it was aimed mainly at the distant future, primarily directed to the end-time descendants of Israel. Much of God's revelation to him revolved around crucial, end-time events—both positive and



negative—that would take place centuries in the future.

In the prophecy Jesus Christ gave on the Mount of Olives the week He died, He plainly stated regarding the end-time, "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written [in the Old Testament prophecies, including Ezekiel] may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22). But cataclysmic occurrences at the close of man's age are just one aspect of this overall prophetic scenario.

Notice the apostle Peter's words to the crowd gathered in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost seven weeks after Jesus' death and resurrection: "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may

Much of God's revelation to Ezekiel revolved around the distant descendants of Israel and crucial, end-time events centuries in the future.

send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive *until the times of restoration of all things*, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets [again including Ezekiel] since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

This insightful passage depicts a future golden age brought to a suffering humanity by the returning Jesus Christ, lasting 1,000 years (see Revelation 20:1-6). Israel’s prophets aptly describe this long period of peace, prosperity and well-being. One of God’s annual festivals, the Feast of Tabernacles, corresponds directly to Christ’s coming millennial reign. (See “Coming Soon: The Magnificent Millennium,” beginning on page 9.)

A rebellious nation lost forever?

God continued to instruct Ezekiel: “Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, *go to the house of Israel* and speak with My words to them’” (Ezekiel 3:4).

Our Creator speaks to a rebellious people who have rarely been inclined to take His

warnings, British Commonwealth and peoples of northwestern Europe. For the biblical and historical evidence, request or download our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. You cannot truly grasp God’s prophetic message to humankind apart from the essential knowledge disclosed in this eye-opening publication.

The modern descendants of Israel have been likewise rebellious against God. And all share in the same fate—national punishment and, for each individual, the ultimate penalty of sin, which is death (Romans 6:23). The prophecies of future national blessings are encouraging, but what good are they to those who have died?

After the Exodus from Egypt, a whole generation of disobedient Israelites perished in the wilderness. Later, many died at the hands of ruthless Assyrian invaders. Much later, about 40 years after Christ’s death and resurrection, many died tragically as a result of the Roman invasion of Judea and the capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Of course, the same fate is shared by

children who died in infancy without ever knowing why?

Of course, these questions beset people of every nation—not just Israel. But God has given a special message through Ezekiel to Israel in this regard—one that holds significance for all people.

Portrait of the great resurrection

Ezekiel continued to have visions throughout his prophetic ministry. The one in the 37th chapter speaks directly to the desperate plight of Israel down through the ages. Its intriguing description of the valley of dry bones was the subject of a popular song, “Dry Bones,” during the mid-1950s.

No matter how many times one rereads it, this account remains both arresting and suspenseful to the converted mind. But even more important is the profound *meaning* for us—and for our departed loved ones, who may never have been called of God or spiritually converted during this age. This remarkable, comforting vision assures us that we will see them again!

So many people among the Israelites have died as victims of evil and injustice. How should we try to understand all of these tragic occurrences?



warning messages seriously. Their descendants down through time have most often chosen to remain in the depths of idolatry and Sabbath-breaking, two sins against God that Ezekiel emphasized (Ezekiel 14:1-6; 20:12-13, 16-17, 24; 22:3, 8). Tragically, these two trends continue unabated today (see our free booklet *The Ten Commandments*).

But who truly represents the “Israel” today to whom these prophecies are intended? The present tiny state of Israel consists mostly of Jews descended from those of the kingdom of Judah, so the name Israel is a misnomer.

History and Bible prophecy show that the modern descendants of the other tribes of Israel stand clearly identified as the Ameri-

those who never had the opportunity to choose a way of life to follow. Consider all those little babies Herod cruelly killed in a failed effort to murder the Christ child. Their parents were devastated with unrelieved grief. “A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more” (Matthew 2:18). Are these children, then, now lost?

So many people among the Israelites have died as victims of evil and injustice. Today we remember the Holocaust in which 6 million Jews were callously murdered in Central and Eastern Europe. How should we try to understand all of these tragic occurrences? Is there no hope for even innocent

“The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones . . . and He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ So I answered, ‘O Lord GOD, you know’” (Ezekiel 37:1-3).

God must not be underestimated. He asked the patriarch Abraham, “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” (Genesis 18:14). Centuries later He posed the same question to the prophet Jeremiah: “Behold, I am the LORD, *the God of all flesh*. Is there anything too hard for Me?” (Jeremiah 32:27).

Ezekiel’s vision continues: “Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: ‘Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, *and you shall live*’ . . . Also He said to me, ‘Prophecy to

the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live'" (Ezekiel 37:5, 9). Physical human beings cannot live without drawing breath—the essence of our fleshly life. Even excellent swimmers, experts at holding their breath, cannot survive long without breathing air.

"So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army" (verse 10).

God identifies this vast group

"Then He said to me, 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel'" (verse 11). God then summarizes what He had just described in detail. "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD'" (verses 12-13). Most pictured here never really knew God during their previous human lives.

The closing verse of this vision reveals why God, who never does anything without purpose, has just resurrected all these people: "I will put My [Holy] Spirit in you, and you shall live" (verse 14). At that time all of these people will have an opportunity to be converted—that is, to repent of their sins, be forgiven and baptized, and receive God's Holy Spirit by which they can truly be converted and receive God's gift of eternal life.

The indication of this preceding verse is that the majority of this great multitude of people will obtain everlasting life in God's Kingdom.

The New Testament also speaks to this incredible, miraculous phenomenon. The apostle Paul wrote: "And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer [Jesus Christ] will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob [whose name was changed to *Israel*]; For this is My covenant with them [i.e., the New

Most in mainstream Christendom erroneously believe that today is the only day of salvation. But this belief simply is not found in the Bible.

Covenant], when I take away their sins'" (Romans 11:26-27).

By no stretch of the imagination is all of Israel being saved now during this present age of man. But God promises that the whole of Israel will have their opportunity for salvation in the future. Relatively few are being called now to join with the first-fruits of God's salvation. These called-out ones, true Christians, will be resurrected to receive everlasting life when Christ returns (1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Philippians 3:20-21).

What about other nations and peoples?

Is this great resurrection exclusively for Israel? Or will other peoples and nations also be included? Remember that our loving Creator remains "the God of all flesh" (Jeremiah 32:27). Several passages in the Gospel accounts show that non-Israelite rulers and peoples are to be resurrected as well.

The queen of the South (Sheba), the peoples of Tyre, Sidon and Nineveh (ancient nations and city-states that long predated Jesus' human lifetime), and even the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah will be resurrected to physical life alongside Christ's generation of Israelites (see Matthew 11:20-24; 12:41-42; Luke 10:12-14).

Jesus plainly stated: "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son

of God; and those who hear will live . . . Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which *all who are in the graves will hear His voice*" (John 5:25, 28).

Later Christ revealed to this same apostle John that "the rest of the dead"—referring to those not raised to life in this resurrection—"did not live again until the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 1:1; 20:5). This tells us that the timing of this resurrection is after the thousand-year period known as the Millennium.

This verse also clearly shows that there is more than one resurrection. To learn more, read our article "The Resurrection of the Dead: What Does the Bible Really Teach?" from the September/October 2008 *Good News*, available online at www.GNmagazine.org/issues.

Is today the only day of salvation?

Most in mainstream Christendom *erroneously* believe that today is the only day of salvation. But this belief simply is not found in the Bible. In fact the vast majority of mankind will receive their opportunity for salvation during the great resurrection to judgment that we have been reading about in Ezekiel 37:1-14.

The apostle John also refers to this resurrection to temporary physical life in Revelation 20:11-13: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it . . . And I saw the dead, small and great [now resurrected], standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books [plural, the books of the Bible]."

The "great white throne" judgment occurs not in an instant as people are raised from the dead, but instead *over a considerable period of time*. God will judge them over time, just as those called to salvation today are judged over time during this present age by this very same standard, the books of the Bible (1 Peter 4:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17).

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What Will It Be Like to Be Resurrected?

What will it be like for those raised to life again in the resurrection described in Ezekiel's vision? Suddenly being raised back to physical life will certainly come as a shock to just about everyone affected!

It's likely that many will find themselves in a similar condition to those at the beginning of Christ's millennial reign, where many will have lived through the terrible time of the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord (see our free booklet *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*). Their needs would be similar—food, shelter, emotional healing and someone (actually those faithful servants of God already raised to everlasting spirit life at Christ's return a thousand years earlier) to comfort them and explain what has happened—giving them hope and help through the psychological trauma (see Revelation 5:10; 20:4-6).

Many who will rise in this White Throne Judgment period after the Millennium may have died peacefully and undoubtedly will be overjoyed by suddenly having new life and breath. However, the likelihood is that just as many will have died facing disasters and distress—death on a battlefield, starvation, horrific illness, natural



disasters, drowning at sea (Revelation 20:13) and who knows what else. Some will be resurrected having been career criminals. Some will have died in accidents, others from drug- or drug-induced stupors.

From the descriptions given in Ezekiel 37:11–14, it seems unlikely that God will miraculously blot out all these memories (although He may alleviate some of the worst ones). Those mentioned in this passage remember their past lives—their memories leaving them with a sense of hopelessness (verse 11).

Perhaps God will use these terrible memories as a basis for healing of a different kind. Recovery from trauma can be a slow and painful process. While the grief of losing loved ones in death will no doubt be quickly overcome as people realize their loved ones have also been resurrected, there will be other emotional and psychological issues to deal with and overcome.

Severe anger, hatred and a desire for vengeance could be particular challenges. This kind of healing can take many months and even years—talking through, coming to terms with the circumstances and finally resolving the whole matter. Learning about the need to forgive

and how to forgive is a vital part of the process.

But why would God want people to go through this kind of healing process? Why would He not just supernaturally remove all the awful memories and angry thoughts? Because all must learn not just about how sin causes untold suffering, but also how to value the newfound opportunity for everlasting life—avoiding those sinful thoughts and actions that if unchecked would eventually result in the second death (Revelation 20:14-15). Those resurrected will have to be taught a deep appreciation of God's plan of salvation.

They will have to learn that Christ is their personal Savior who suffered an ignominious death by crucifixion so that they could be forgiven and reconciled to God the Father. The salvation process of true repentance, water baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit for inward transformation helps bring true emotional and psychological healing (Acts 2:38).

It is the process that God uses today, it is the process that will be used during the millennial rule of Jesus Christ, and it is the process that God will use during the White Throne Judgment period. But the comfort provided by the already spiritually transformed saints of God will also be an essential part of supporting the salvation process.

—Barbara Fenney

Many Bible readers misunderstand the nature and meaning of *judgment*, nearly always associating the term with sentencing to condemnation—not realizing that God is a merciful judge who patiently evaluates human existence with righteous discernment. He earnestly desires to see the blood of His Son Jesus blot out the sins of as many as possible. Christ Himself firmly stated, “*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth [by crucifixion], will draw all peoples to Myself*” (John 12:32).

Paul writes of “God our Saviour, whose will it is that *all should find salvation and come to know the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:3-4, Revised English Bible). And in Ezekiel 18:32 we read, “‘For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘Therefore turn [to righteousness] and live!’”

This coming time of judgment will give those who never really knew God during their previous lifetime a just and fair opportunity for salvation—not a second chance. (To learn more, read our article “How Will God Judge the World?” from the September/October 2009 *Good News*, available online

at www.GNmagazine.org/issues.)

The special meaning of the biblical eighth-day festival

As mentioned earlier, the Feast of Tabernacles, also known as the Feast of Ingathering, pictures Christ's millennial reign. But immediately following this seven-day Feast is a separate one-day celebration referred to simply as “the eighth day” (Leviticus 23:34-36; Numbers 29:35; 2 Chronicles 7:9; Nehemiah 8:18). The real meaning of this celebration is rarely understood in modern theological circles. Yet it represents an essential missing piece to the puzzle of salvation.

This special Holy Day directly corresponds to the Great White Throne Judgment period, during which God will give all those who have ever lived but never really understood the truth their first real opportunity for salvation.

Because few people are aware of the God-ordained festivals spelled out in the Bible, few understand God's step-by-step plan of salvation revealed through these celebrations. The meaning of the eighth day corresponds to Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, referring to a time when

lost family members will be joyously joined together again to learn God's ways while living under utopian conditions of mutual love, peace and prosperity.

This Holy Day reminds us that God's plan promises to offer every human being the opportunity to truly repent of sin and receive a permanent place in His everlasting family, the Kingdom of God. **GN**

To Learn More...

Few people know about the festivals God commands in the Bible, and even fewer observe them. What do they mean? What do they teach us about God's plan for the salvation of mankind? You'll find a complete explanation of the Eighth Day and the other biblical festivals in our free booklet *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*. This intriguing publication explains the meaning of all of God's annual festivals in order. You need this little-understood information. Request or download your free copy today!



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Alameda ch. 28, Tue 10 p.m.
Anaheim (west) ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
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Costa Mesa ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Cypress ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Danville ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Eureka ch. 12, Fri 8 p.m.
Fountain Valley ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Fremont ch. 29, Tue 10 p.m.
Garden Grove ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Hayward ch. 28, Tue 10 p.m.
Huntington Beach ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Lafayette ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Livermore ch. 26, Fri 5 p.m.
Los Alamitos ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Los Angeles ch. 36, times vary
Marin County ch. 26, Wed 7 p.m.; Thu 1 p.m.
Martinez ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Midway City ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Modesto ch. 26, Fri 6 p.m.
Monrovia ch. 16, 98, Tue, Thu and Sat 4:30 p.m.
Novato ch. 71, Tue 9:30 p.m.
Orange ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Orinda ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Pasadena ch. 56, Sun 6 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Petaluma ch. 26, Sun 9:30 a.m. & 3 p.m.; Wed 6 p.m.; Sat 2:30 p.m.
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Rossmoor ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
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San Diego ch. 18, 19, 23, Mon 5 p.m.
San Francisco ch. 29, Sun 9:30 a.m.
San Jose ch. 15a, Sun 10:30 a.m.
Santa Clara ch. 15a, Wed 4:30 p.m.
Santa Rosa ch. 30, Sun 11 a.m.; Mon 4:30 a.m.; Wed 9 p.m.; Thu 12:30 p.m.; Fri 6 a.m.; Sat 7:30 p.m.
Stanton ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Walnut Creek ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Westminster ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.

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

Hawaii
Hilo ch. 53, Sun 10 a.m.; Thu 7:30 p.m.

Idaho
Boise ch. 11, Sun 3:30 p.m.; Wed 7:30 a.m.

Illinois
Arlington Heights ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Bartlett ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Brookport ch. 2, Sun 2 p.m.
Buffalo Grove ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Des Plaines ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Elk Grove Village ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Glenview ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Golf ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Hanover Park ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Hoffman Estates ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.

Lincolnwood ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Metropolis ch. 2, Sun 2 p.m.
Morton Grove ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Mt. Prospect ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Naperville ch. 17, Sun 10 a.m.
Niles ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Normal ch. 20, Sun 9 p.m.
Northbrook ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Palatine ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Park Ridge ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Prospect Heights ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Rolling Meadows ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Romeoville ch. 6, Sun 9 p.m.
Schaumburg ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Skokie ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Springfield ch. 4, Wed 12 a.m., 8 a.m. & 5 p.m.
Streamwood ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Wheeling ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Wilmette ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.

Indiana
Bloomington ch. 3, Sun 9:30 p.m.
Evansville ch. 7, Mon 5:30 p.m.; Tue 6:30 p.m.
Ft. Wayne ch. 57, Sun 6:30 a.m.
Valparaiso ch. 99, Tue 8:30 p.m.

Iowa
Des Moines ch. 17, Sun 11:30 a.m.

Kentucky
Owensboro ch. 72, Sun 8 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Paducah ch. 2, Sun 2 p.m.

Massachusetts
Cambridge ch. 22, 23, 83, Sun 7 a.m.; Wed 10 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.
East Longmeadow ch. 5, Sun 11:30 a.m.
Fall River ch. 95, Wed 2 p.m.
Greenfield ch. 17, Tue 6:30 a.m.; Sun 6 p.m.
Palmer ch. 12, Tue 11 p.m.
Worcester ch. 13, Thu 10 a.m.

Michigan
Ann Arbor ch. 17, Thu 4:30 p.m.
Cadillac ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Charlevoix ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Cheboygan ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Grand Haven ch. 22, Mon 4 p.m.
Grand Rapids ch. 25, Tue or Wed 11 a.m.
Kalamazoo ch. 95, Sun 9 & 9:30 a.m.
Mackinaw City ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Manistee ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Michigan City ch. 99, Tue 8:30 p.m.; Thu 7 p.m.
Midland ch. 99, Tue 5:30 p.m.
Mt. Pleasant ch. 3, times vary
Petoskey ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Redford ch. 12, Mon 6 p.m.
Traverse City ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Ypsilanti ch. 17, Thu 4:30 p.m.

Minnesota
Albert Lea ch. 13, Sun 10:30 a.m.
Austin ch. 13, Sun 10 a.m.
Blaine ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Bloomington ch. 16, Wed 10 p.m.; Thu 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.
Brooklyn Center ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Brooklyn Park ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Centerville ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Circle Pines ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Crystal ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Eden Prairie ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.
Edina ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.
Golden Valley ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Ham Lake ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Hopkins ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.

Lexington ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Lino Lakes ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Litchfield ch. 10, Sun 2 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 7 p.m.; Wed 3 a.m., 8:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.
Maple Grove ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Minnetonka ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.
New Hope ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
New Ulm ch. 72, Sun 5 p.m.; Thu 10 a.m.; Fri 7 p.m.
Osseo ch. 14, Thu 9 a.m.
Plymouth ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Richfield ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Robbinsdale ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.
St. Charles ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Spring Lake Park ch. 20, Sun 2 p.m.; Wed 3 p.m.
Wabasha ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Winona ch. 20, Sun 2 p.m.; Wed 3 p.m.

Missouri
Cape Girardeau ch. 993, Sun and Sat 9 a.m., 5:30 p.m.; Tue and Thu 5:30 p.m.
Jackson ch. 993, Sun and Sat 9 a.m., 5:30 p.m.; Tue and Thu 5:30 p.m.
Jefferson City ch. 3, Wed 6 p.m.
Poplar Bluff ch. 54, Tue 4 p.m.
Springfield ch. 26, Sun 8:30 a.m.; Wed 7 p.m.

Montana
Helena ch. 11, Sun 3 p.m.
Missoula ch. 7, Sun 11 a.m.

New Mexico
Santa Fe ch. 16, Sun 10 a.m.; Mon 6:30 p.m.

New York
Binghamton ch. 4, Thu 5:30 p.m.
Bronx ch. 70, Mon 3 p.m.
Brooklyn ch. 56, 69, Sun 10 a.m.
Canandaigua ch. 12, Sun 2 p.m.
Long Island ch. 20, Mon 10 p.m.
New York ch. 57, Sun 7 a.m.
Oneonta ch. 23, Mon 6 p.m.; Wed 9 p.m.
Queens ch. 35, Tue 8 p.m.; Thu 3 p.m.
Woodbury ch. 56, Thu 3 p.m.; Sat 12:30 p.m.
ch. 20, Sat 8:30 p.m.

North Carolina
Burlington ch. 5, 10, Mon 8:30 p.m.
Charlotte ch. 21, Sat 1 p.m.
Durham ch. 18, Wed 7:30 a.m.
Hickory ch. 10, Sun 11 a.m.
Mebane ch. 5, 10, Mon 8:30 p.m.
Raleigh ch. 22, Tue 6:30 p.m.

North Dakota
Bismarck ch. 12, Sun 2:30 p.m.
Fargo ch. 12, Tue 10:30 a.m.

Ohio
Athens ch. 23, Sun 7 p.m.; Wed 7 p.m.
Brunswick ch. 21, Tue 7 p.m.; Wed 12:30, 4:30 & 8:30 a.m.; 2:30, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Bryan ch. 4, Sun 11:30 a.m. & 8:30 p.m.; Mon 5 p.m.
Cincinnati (Union Twp.) ch. 8, Sun 2:30 a.m.; Tue 9:30 a.m.; Wed 11 p.m.; Sat 2:30 p.m.
Dayton ch. 12, Tue 11 a.m.; Sat 3 p.m.
Defiance ch. 5, Sun 12 noon; Thu 6 p.m.
Fairborn ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Greenville ch. 3, Thu 8 p.m.
Huber Heights ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Oberlin/Wilmington ch. 12, Sun & Sat 9 a.m.
Springfield ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Trotwood ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Urbania ch. 1, daily 6 a.m., 10 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Vandalia ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Wash. Court House ch. 3, Wed 2 p.m.; Sat 10 a.m.
Xenia ch. 23, Sun 5:30 p.m.

Oregon
Eugene ch. 29, Tue 2 p.m.
McMinnville ch. 11, Sun 5:30 p.m.; Wed 8 p.m.

Medford ch. 15, 95, Sun 5 p.m.
Monmouth ch. 17, Sun 11 a.m.
Portland ch. 22, Fri 4:30 p.m.
ch. 22a, 33, Sun 7:30 p.m.
ch. 23, Mon 6:30 p.m.
ch. 23, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Fri 2 p.m.; Sat 9 a.m.

Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh ch. 21, Wed 2 p.m.

Rhode Island
Entire state ch. 14, Fri 10:30 a.m.

Texas
Austin ch. 11, Mon 8:30 p.m.
Del Rio ch. 19, Sun 9 a.m.; Wed 5 p.m.
El Paso ch. 15, Mon, Fri, Sat 1 p.m.
Fort Worth ch. 28, Tue 5:30 p.m.; Thu 1 p.m.
Longview ch. 26, Tue 2 p.m.; Sat 9 p.m.
San Antonio ch. 20, Mon 10:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Virginia
Charlottesville/Albemarle County ch. 13, 14, Mon 5:30 p.m.; Wed 10 p.m.; Thu 4:30 p.m.

Washington
Bainbridge Island ch. 12, Sun 9:30 a.m., 6:30 p.m., 11 p.m.; Sun-Sat 1 a.m.; Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat 5 a.m.; Tue & Thu 5:30 a.m.
Everett ch. 77, Wed 5 p.m.
Kennewick ch. 13, Sun & Tue 8:30 p.m.
Olympia ch. 22, 29, Sun 9 a.m.; Thu 10:30 p.m.
Spokane ch. 14, Sat 5:30 p.m.
Vancouver ch. 11, Sun 11 p.m.; Mon 5 p.m.; Sat 11 a.m.

West Virginia
Morgantown ch. 3, Mon, Wed & Fri 6:30 p.m.; Sat 10 a.m.

Wisconsin
Beloit ch. 96, Thu 6:30 p.m.
Eau Claire ch. 96, Sun 2 p.m.
Kenosha ch. 14, Sun & Mon 7:30 p.m.
Madison ch. 4, Sun 12:30 p.m.
Milwaukee ch. 96, Mon 2 p.m.; Tue 7 p.m.; Wed 2 p.m.
Omro ch. 19, Sun & Sat 1 p.m.
Stevens Point ch. 96, 984, 984-1, Mon 5 & 9:30 p.m.; Tue 10 a.m. & 3:30 p.m.
West Allis ch. 14, times vary

CANADA

NATIONWIDE CABLE TV

Vision TV Sun 10 p.m. EST, 9 p.m. CST, 8 p.m. MST, 7 p.m. PST
Star Choice Digital ch. 399, Sun 10:30 a.m. EST, 9:30 a.m. CST, 8:30 a.m. MST, 7:30 a.m. PST

LOCAL CABLE TV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Could Jesus Christ Return Tomorrow?

by **Beyond Today** host Gary Petty

A little-noticed prophecy in the biblical book of Revelation shows that Jesus Christ's return couldn't take place without a revolutionary change in global mass communications—a change that has taken place only in the last few years.

nology, billions of people are connected through the Internet. Satellites, orbiting thousands of miles above the earth, make it possible to receive or send images from the most remote areas of the globe. With the advent of instant visual technology, there are few places where people can't learn of news as it happens.

But did you know that this explosion in communication technology was foretold in a prophecy in the mysterious book of Revelation?

A prophecy unfathomable until our day

Revelation, the last book of the Bible, is an advance newscast of events that will happen before Jesus Christ's return. In this book the apostle John writes about two "witnesses," two divinely appointed individuals who will announce to the world the urgent need to turn to God because Jesus Christ's return is imminent. According to Revelation, these two men will perform amazing miracles.

John tells us, "And if anyone wants to harm them [these two witnesses], fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies . . . These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues" (Revelation 11:5-6).

After 3½ years of proclaiming the return of Jesus Christ, the two witnesses will be killed at the behest of the political and religious leaders who oppose them, and their bodies will be left in the streets of Jerusalem. John describes the scene: "Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies for 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" (Revelation 11:9-10).

This passage reveals two important points if you want to know the answer to



Instant communication to all corners of the world through the recent proliferation of global satellite television and Internet technology has now made it possible for an end-time prophecy to be fulfilled.

I have in my office a newspaper from 1858. The front-page story is about how a mob in Lexington, Kentucky, broke into a jail and lynched an unfortunate prisoner. On the second page is a report about an upstart political candidate named Abraham Lincoln.

In the 1850s it could take weeks, even months, for a news event from another part of the world to be published in a newspaper like this. Most people had little knowledge of events outside their own community.

A simple technology like glass insulators made it possible to string tens of thousands of miles of wire for telegraph and telephone lines. Because of telephones and faster vehicles like trains, by the early 1900s the speed of communication was much faster than in the days of news

delivered by horseback.

Then came radio, and soon those with a receiver could listen to a news event halfway around the world the moment it happened. Everything changed. During World War II, people in New York City or on a farm in Iowa could listen to nightly reports of the Nazi bombings of London.

In the mid-20th century the technologies of radio and motion pictures were combined to create what was called "the miracle of television." Now people could, in the comfort and safety of their own living room, watch earth-shaking events, first in black and white and then in "living color." People marveled in 1969 at the surreal images of the first man stepping onto the moon.

Today, with computer networking tech-

the question, Will Jesus return tomorrow?

One is that these two men are killed and *seen by the entire world*. This wasn't possible until the explosion in satellite and computer technology. People in Beijing, the outback of Australia, the Amazon and the major cities of Europe will all see this event from Jerusalem.

This prophecy now comes alive! Television, satellites, cell phones, computers—these kinds of technologies make it possible for those the world over—"the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations" of this planet—to see the dead bodies of the two witnesses.

There's another important point in these verses: Prior to their death, these two individuals will have achieved worldwide acclaim in announcing God's message for the nations, performing miracles and stirring up opposition among political and religious leaders and many of the common people. This also hasn't happened yet.

So we're back to our original question: Will Jesus Christ return tomorrow?

Since the two witnesses haven't yet appeared on the world scene, we know that Jesus isn't returning tomorrow. But the explosion in communication technology reminds us that key conditions foretold in Bible prophecy *are* coming into existence

and that Christ's return *is getting closer every day*. He's not returning tomorrow, but the stage is being set for that dramatic, earth-changing event!

By the way, the death of the two witnesses isn't the end of their story. Their bodies will lie in a street in Jerusalem for 3½ days. The entire world will see them on their electronic devices like television sets, computers and cell phones.

But then—all activity screeches to a halt as all human beings look to the sky and witness the majesty and power of the second coming of Jesus Christ! Life enters into the bodies of the two witnesses and they are resurrected to meet the Christ they were killed for proclaiming!

What does it matter?

So how does this prophetic information about technology and the biblical two witnesses affect your life?

You are part of this big picture. The God of the Bible is the Creator of the universe. He is also the God of history. In all this human mess we see around us, the Creator has a plan. He has a plan for humanity. He has a plan *for you*. Your life can change. In all this suffering and chaos you can actually become part of God's solution!

Christianity has enough adherents merely paying lip service. Jesus Christ wants *committed disciples*—men and women willing to emulate His way of life. If you're tired of powerless Christianity, it's time to find out what Jesus really taught and to live as He tells us to!

Prophecy is one way that God shows us that He really does exist and that He is involved in His creation. It is also a way for God to show you that *you* can have a personal relationship with Him.

He tells us the future. It's up to you to *prepare for that future!* **GN**

To Learn More...

The Bible tells us that no man knows day or hour of Jesus Christ's return. But that doesn't mean God's Word doesn't give us clear indicators that the time is approaching and that we'd better be alert and paying close attention to our spiritual state of readiness! You need to read our eye-opening booklet *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* Request or download your free copy today!



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Lost Its Way

Continued from page 17

fuller understanding of this, download or request our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.)

Americans in recent decades tend not to know their history and repeat the mistakes other nations made in the past. For example, Afghanistan has been called "the graveyard of empires" for obvious reasons. The last major power to fight a war there, the Soviet Union, collapsed after more than a decade of fighting.

It was the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that led to the current war in Afghanistan. There are other ways to prevent another 9/11. Remembering that all 19 suicide hijackers that day came from the Middle East, changes in the country's immigration laws—or even enforcement of the laws already in place—would seem a logical place to start!

From blessings to curses

It wasn't so long ago that Americans could boast that they had never lost a war. Why has this not been the case in recent

decades? The Bible gives us the answer.

Two chapters in the Old Testament, Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, are often called the "blessings and curses" chapters. These chapters promise blessings for obedience to God's law and negative consequences or curses for disobedience. In Deuteronomy 28:7 the Israelites were promised victory as a result of their dedication to God. But in verse 25 they were told they would suffer defeat due to turning away from God and His laws.

This has been the history of the United States, one of the modern nations descended from the ancient Israelites. The nation was founded on Christian principles by a deeply religious people. In the last 50 years, however, it has become increasingly secular, rejecting and even denying its Christian roots. Now we are increasingly seeing the negative consequences mount up.

The prophet Isaiah put it well when he wrote: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it" (Isaiah 1:5-6).

Today it seems that America's leaders

make few, if any, sensible decisions—that when the United States is confronted with a challenge, any challenge, the *wrong* decision is made. Moreover, it seems increasingly clear that the decisions these leaders make are the exact *opposite* of what earlier generations of U.S. leaders would have said or done. Thus it seems as if the country really has reversed course.

America has truly lost its way as it enters dangerous and uncharted waters! **GN**

To Learn More...

America is in a mess—its economy badly faltering, its military struggling in two faraway wars, its confidence in its leaders plunging, its time-honored values eroding and being replaced with something far different and dangerous. What's behind its great fall from grace? Believe it or not, this was all foretold in Bible prophecy thousands of years ago! You need to read *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. Request or download your free copy today!



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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

Discoveries at Goliath's hometown support accuracy of the Bible

Bible critics have long dismissed its stories as myths, fables written centuries after they were claimed to have occurred. Yet time and time again, as reported in *The Good News*, significant details have come to light that illuminate and support the biblical record. This summer two significant discoveries at Tell es-Safi, identified as the site of biblical Gath, have been announced that support the historical accuracy of the Bible.

Gath is one of the largest tells (mounds formed from successive building over the ruins of ancient cities) in Israel. In Old Testament times it was one of the principal cities of the Philistines, enemies of the Israelites. Located about halfway between Jerusalem and the coastal city of Ashkelon (once Philistine as well), Gath is described in the Bible as being the hometown of Goliath, the giant slain by David.

This summer, archaeologists excavating the site uncovered the remains of what they have identified as a temple. Within it they found bases to support two large pillars, which in turn would've supported the entire structure. Why would this be significant?

You may recall the account of mighty Samson, who, as we read in the Bible, was a man of legendary strength and exploits against the Philistines. Deceived, taken prisoner and blinded by them, he was put to work like an ox or donkey grinding grain. Samson's death is memorialized in Judges 16:23-30:

"Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice . . . So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, 'Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.' So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars . . .

"And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. Then Samson said, 'Let me die with the Philistines!' And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life."

Bible critics long dismissed the story, claiming that temples in the Middle East weren't constructed with a pair of pillars supporting the structure. Yet now they are confronted with clear evidence that Philistine temples were constructed exactly that way!

In fact, this is now the third Philistine temple excavated in Israel—and *all three* show that they had two main pillars supporting a roof!

The first such temple was excavated in the 1970s near what is now Tel Aviv. There archaeologist Amihai Mazar found two column bases close enough together that a man could reach both pillars at once, exactly as described in the account of Samson's death. Then in the 1990s, archaeologist Trude Dothan excavated another temple at the Philistine city of Ekron featuring the same design.

While no one is claiming that any of these three temples is the one where Samson literally "brought down the house"—that happened at the Philistine city of Gaza, unexcavated because it lies underneath a modern city—these finds are nonetheless important in supporting the historical accuracy of the Bible record.

Archaeologist Bryant Wood explained their significance in a 1974 edition of *Bible and Spade*: "The pillars were made of wood and rested on stone support bases. With the pillars being about six feet apart, a strong man could dislodge them from their stone bases and bring the entire roof crashing down. The archaeological findings match the Biblical story perfectly and attest to the plausibility of the account . . .

"The Bible writer knew his facts. He knew that Philistine temples were supported by two pillars and that this was how Samson pulled the temple down. The report is that of an eye-witness, again demonstrating that indeed the Bible is the world's most accurate textbook" ("Samson and the Temple of Dagon," pp. 53-54).

Excavators at Gath also found evidence of another event recorded in the Bible—a major earthquake that occurred during the reign of Judah's King Uzziah around 750 B.C., mentioned in Amos 1:1 and Zechariah 14:5. Surprisingly, Zechariah wrote more than *two centuries* after the former quake happened. So it must have been a monumental event for it to have remained so long in the national consciousness!

Concerning the excavation of Gath, according to *The Jerusalem Post*: "Seismologists who examined the site confirmed that a major earthquake occurred there, one that they estimated would have measured 8 on the Richter scale. The main evidence was the presence of several brick walls that had been thrown apart and had collapsed 'like a deck of cards.'"

"If the seismologists are right, an 8 on the Richter scale would have leveled a major city. The intensity of the energy required to move the walls seem to have been from something very powerful,' [Bar Ilan University excavation director Aren] Maier said . . .

"What we have here is very strong arch-evidence of a dramatic earthquake, a natural event that left a very significant impression on the biblical prophets of the time" (Ben Hartman, "Temple Found in Philistine Home of Goliath," July 29, 2010).

Indeed, Gath is only the latest place that proof of this

quake has been found. It was evidently a region-wide event. Researchers writing in the scientific journal *International Geology Review* reported back in July 2000:

"Widely separated archaeological excavations in Israel and Jordan contain late Iron Age . . . architecture bearing evidence of a great earthquake. Masonry walls best display the earthquake, especially walls with broken ashlars [large, rectangular stones], walls with



The two circular stone bases in the foreground, found in what has been identified as a Philistine temple, supported large pillars which held up the entire structure. This unusual design agrees with the biblical account of Samson, who died by dislodging two pillars, causing the collapse of a Philistine temple.

displaced rows of stones, walls still standing but leaning or bowed, and walls collapsed with large sections still lying course-on-course.

"Debris at six sites (Hazor [in northern Israel], Deir 'Alla [in northwestern Jordan], Gezer, Lachish [both near Jerusalem], Tell Judeideh [in northern Syria], and 'En Haseva [south of the Dead Sea]) is tightly confined stratigraphically to the middle of the eighth century B.C. . . . Biblical and post-biblical sources indicate a single, regionally extensive earthquake in the year 750 B.C. . . .

"The earthquake was at least magnitude 7.8, but likely was 8.2 . . . [It] appears to be the largest yet documented on the Dead Sea transform fault during the last four millennia" (Steven Austin, Gordon Franz and Eric Frost, "Amos's Earthquake: An Extraordinary Middle East Seismic Event of 750 B.C.," Vol. 42, p. 657).

It should be further pointed out that the Gath excavation has also yielded other significant discoveries, including evidence of the earliest known Philistine settlement in the area and evidence of the city's destruction at the hands of Hazael, king of Syria, another figure mentioned in the Bible (2 Kings 12:18). For much more evidence of the accuracy of Scripture, send for or download our free booklet *Is the Bible True?*

Excavations will continue at Gath in July 2011, and volunteers are welcomed. More information on the project, including how to volunteer, can be found at www.dig-gath.org and <http://gath.wordpress.com>.

“How Can We Cope in a World of Rapid Change?”

I just read Becky Sweat's article “How Can We Cope in a World of Rapid Change?” in the July-August *Good News* magazine. I want to congratulate Mrs. Sweat on a very well-written article. I enjoy almost all of the *Good News* articles, but I have never taken the time to send in a note to an author to show my appreciation. I feel remiss in not having done so, and I want to let Mrs. Sweat know that her writing is very much appreciated. I really do appreciate all the time and effort all the United Church of God ministers, elders and volunteers put in to serve us—“the flock.”

C.S., Columbia, South Carolina

The Good News

I am writing to thank you for *The Good News* magazine. In this age of e-mails it is actually a wonderful experience to receive something in the mail other than bills. I must confess that I was somewhat excited to receive the last edition since I haven't received any in a while.

I work in international relations and your magazine provides me with insights [about other parts of the world] I don't usually pay much attention to. For instance, what is happening in Europe? For a long time now I have been wondering how all these global events fit in with the Scriptures. Gladly I came across your magazine, which provides a different insight into these issues than the one we read in the newspapers every day.

V.R., Guyana, South America

Thank you for the subscription to *The Good News*. I greatly appreciate it along with the booklets and other magazines that you send me. All the literature has been such a blessing and has encouraged me to study the Word more. The magazines and booklets are changing my outlook for the better and moving me towards my destiny with God. I would like to renew my subscription for this next year.

S.T., Birmingham, England

We have received your magazine safely in our home, and thank you very much for sending it to us. Actually, we were Muslims who have converted to Christianity. We are so appreciative of your ministry.

J.H. & R.S., Malaysia

Many thanks for your latest issue of *The Good News* magazine. It abounds with a massive amount of extremely interesting information that would never have surfaced, let alone be made public for all to read.

Yes, I agree, the end time is fast approaching when confronted with the news on the world scene today. Prophecy and archaeology are just two subjects that my wife and I are interested in, and to read about Noah's Ark was of tremendous interest to us. Keep up the good work, and I must say we are both thankful that such a publication is available. May God bless you all.

Reader, Cook Islands

Thank you for the recent magazine you sent. I enjoyed reading all of the

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I really enjoy *The Good News* magazine. It gives a good understanding of the Bible and highlights information not given in mainstream Christian faiths. I highly recommend this magazine to all.

- K.T., *Good News* magazine Facebook fan



www.facebook.com/GoodNewsMagazine

articles. About six months ago I was experiencing a lack of faith, but after reading these articles I am once again on the road to recovery.

L.B., Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

This note is just to say that *The Good News* has truly been an encouragement to me. I turned away from church and God for 11 years and, as time went by, life got gradually worse to the point where suicide became an option. I felt that God had cast me off, and no matter how much I cried out, I didn't feel accepted. It wasn't until I found your magazine in a library that I felt for the first time that God was still there and could hear my cry. Many thanks. Your magazine saved my life.

Reader from Tasmania

Our free booklet You Can Have Living Faith may be of help for any readers experiencing difficulties in their relationship with God.

Bible Study Course

I have been thoroughly delighted to participate in your cogent and thought-provoking *Bible Study Course*. This study course seems to be structured to allow the readers to learn and experience their purpose on earth and the obtaining of grace in following God's plan to fruition. I anxiously await each progressive lesson and seem to be experiencing a gradual spiritual enlightenment.

R.B., Miami, Florida

I want to grab this opportunity to thank you for the wonderful work you are doing. I have been gaining a lot of knowledge about God and His purpose for creating mankind. I have just finished studying my *Bible Study Course* lesson 4, titled “Why Does God Allow Suffering?” In fact you have answered most of the questions that had previously baffled me.

M.U.C., Nigeria

Is it necessary to keep God's law?

I read your magazines. Please read Galatians and Romans concerning adherence to the law. You can't have law and grace. It's one or the other.

P.S., Internet

You need to read our free book The New Covenant: Does It Abolish God's Law? It thoroughly explains how theologians have grossly misunderstood the apostle Paul's writings in Galatians and Romans. You should also read the next letter.

I've been reading your essay on Paul's letters in reference to the annual feast days. At last an article that makes sense. I've been looking at other Web sites addressing these issues that make no sense at all. But yours is by far the most comprehensive, instructive and accurate interpretation of Paul's letters. I knew that Paul could not be nullifying the law. My understanding of the Bible is much enhanced by your research.

S.S., Gloucester, Virginia

Concerning God's Sabbath Day

I am wondering why the church does not keep God's Sabbath day, which is Saturday and not Sunday. Why do most Christians believe in the Bible, but have different ways to worship the same Jesus that we all believe in? These are questions that church leaders should get together on and find the truth, teaching all Christians the same thing. Help me to know the truth.

I.A.K., Norfolk, Maine

Your questions are answered in our thoroughly researched booklets The Church Jesus Built and Jesus Christ: The Real Story. Download or request your free copies.

Recently my first access to *The Good News* was in a beauty shop. Having received the magazine and many of the wonderful booklets, I must say that my most treasured ones are *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest and Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Really Matter Which Days We Observe?* Little did I know that the Sabbath day is also for gentiles. God did not alter that. Man did.

L.M.T., Grove, Oklahoma

Cuban comes to truth

I am from Cuba and am a Christian from a Baptist church in Havana. Recently



Q: I am interested in being a coworker with you. Would you please advise?

J.B., Omagh, Northern Ireland

A: Jesus Christ clearly assigned to His Church the work of proclaiming the gospel—the good news—of the Kingdom of God, of making disciples and of caring for those whom God may call (Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; John 21:15-17; Acts 2:39). Without His divine assistance to His “little flock” (Luke 12:32), it simply could not be done.

Christ instructed His followers to freely give as they have freely received (Matthew 10:8). God’s way of life is one of giving and serving. So it should come as no surprise that Jesus told His disciples to share and spread the gospel without charge.

Yet there remains a real financial cost that somehow must be met. How does the Church meet the expensive publishing and postal costs incurred by such efforts as mailing out our three magazines (*The Good News*, *World News* and *Prophecy* and *Vertical Thought*), as well as the *Bible Study Course* and our many booklets, all totaling millions of copies each year?

Further, how do we defray the expenses incurred by a ministry involved in teaching and personally caring for Church members and others who are interested? The apostle Paul clearly explained that “*the Lord [Jesus Christ] has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel*” (1 Corinthians 9:14, emphasis added throughout).

Having commissioned His true disciples to continually carry on doing His spiritual work, Jesus Christ as head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23) has provided it with a growing family of coworkers and donors. They generously support the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom.

Some are in a position to help out more often than others. Plainly, some of our readers are simply *not able* to assist financially, and God certainly does not expect people to give what they don’t have. But there is always a way to contribute apart from finances, and that is through prayer. People praying to God for the success of the work is a very effective ministry in itself (Ephesians 6:18-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:1).

In any case, if we recognize a work to be of God, we then have the responsibility of standing behind and supporting that work. Paul stated: “*We are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building*” (1 Corinthians 3:9). John adds that we are “fellow workers for the truth” (3 John 5-8).

Paul also refers to the inspiring spiritual bonds that develop between those called into the “fellowship in the gospel” (Philippians 1:3-5). He further reminds us that we are “*workers together with Him [Jesus Christ]*” (2 Corinthians 6:1). Paul speaks of “my fellow laborers” as well (Philemon 24).

Still, on a practical level, there needs to be an effectively organized infrastructure in place to assist with the needs of our readers and those who watch our *Beyond Today* television program. Not a few need their biblical questions answered in a competent manner. The United Church of God has a dedicated team of ordained elders doing just that.

Though God’s people are scattered, the Church has developed an international infrastructure that offers extensive resources ultimately designed to lead true Christians to fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

Where possible, this godly fellowship clearly includes worship with others of like mind on the seventh-day Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 1:7). Through God’s blessing, a trained and educated ministry has been provided, but many more dedicated laborers are desperately needed (John 4:35; Matthew 9:37-38).

How can you help with proclaiming the priceless gospel to many others? How do you become a coworker or donor? Those residing in the United States who wish to send in a contribution may do so by mailing it to our home office. As listed on page 2, the postal address is: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.

If you wish to make a contribution online, you may do so through our main Web site at www.ucg.org. In the left hand column, below the search box under Quick Links, you will find a button marked “Online Donation.” Click on it, and it will take you to another page that explains the correct procedure to follow.

As we are an international organization, the postal addresses of our other offices around the world are also listed on page 2. Since the reader who asked the question here resides in Northern Ireland, we respectfully advise anyone who lives in the British Isles and wishes to contribute online to write for the needed information at P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts WD19 6UT. Alternatively, you may telephone the church office in England on 01494 875003.

For further information about related financial matters, request or download our free booklets *This Is the United Church of God, Managing Your Finances* and *What Does the Bible Teach About Tithing?*

I began to read some articles from your Web site, and I am sure that your doctrine is the closest to real Christianity. I think it is in line with the first Christians. In contrast, almost all of the doctrines in other churches have some kind of errors. Reading the Bible I discovered with the help of God that the Ten Commandments are applicable for all of the people of God. Food matters are also very important. I am sure that God selected what is good for us and He wants to preserve our health. Do you know if there is any United Church of God in Cuba?

L.B., Havana, Cuba

The reader is likely referring to the eating of certain meats, explained in our free booklet What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats? We hope and pray that God will bring about a change in Cuba’s circumstances, making it possible for us to have a United Church of God congregation there.

Helping to proclaim the true gospel

Thank you for continuing to send me your *Good News* and *World News* and *Prophecy* publications. I treasure receiving them very much. It is a fine thing to get up-to-date news about what is really going on as opposed to the sometimes biased reports that we so often receive on network television. Enclosed is a check for use in your work.

C.A.K., Mifflintown, Pennsylvania

I was quite amazed at the amount of material you have sent to me to assist with my Bible study. For this I extend my most sincere thanks. Please accept this small check to assist with your finances.

W.T., Glasgow, Scotland

Thank you for this wonderful *Bible Study Course*. I intend to go through it again as you suggest. You advise me to continue reading and studying my Bible. I find it as refreshing and exciting as when I first began to read it. Please find enclosed a donation to help in the spreading of the Word.

R.T., Pontypool, South Wales

The United Church of God, an International Association, deeply appreciates all the help and support of our growing family of coworkers and donors around the world. To understand more about what it means to be a coworker with Christ, be sure to read our “Questions & Answers” feature above.

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 (please be sure to include your full name, city, state or province, and country).

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Will the World Ever See a Time of Lasting Peace?



Today's headlines are filled with bad news—war, famine, natural disasters, government scandals and the like. With all this bad news, what kind of future can we look forward to?



Almost 2,000 years ago, a prophet came bringing a vital message for this world. That prophet was Jesus Christ, and His message was “the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Mark 1:14). The word

gospel means *good news*. But what was the good news Jesus brought? What is the kingdom of which He spoke? And does it have anything to do with the problems that threaten us today?

Most people don't understand the truth about the Kingdom of God. Yet it is the central theme of the Bible—and truly the best news the world could ever hear!

In *The Gospel of the Kingdom* you can discover the truth of the surprising message Jesus Christ brought. This booklet shows you, from the pages of your Bible, exactly what that message is—and what it means for you. For your free copy, visit our Web site or contact any of our offices listed on page 2.

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