



In This Issue:

June 2003 | Vol. 6, No. 5

The New European Constitution: the Last Battle for Britain?

by John Ross Schroeder 1

Restoration What Have We Learned?



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by Darris McNeely 2

From Kosovo to Conflict

by Paul Kieffer 5

The Global Reach of America and Britain—Prophesied in the Bible?

by Melvin Rhodes 8

Is Peace in Palestine Possible?

by Donald Ward 11

This Is the Way... We Read to Know We Are Not Alone

by Robin Webber 16

The New European Constitution: the Last Battle for Britain?

No nation has successfully invaded Britain since the Norman Conquest in 1066. In effect, the European Union may be about to do what the Spanish Armada, Napoleon and Hitler attempted but failed. Many do not realize that the identity and sovereignty of the grand old British nation may be in serious jeopardy. What is the true biblical perspective? Our U.K. correspondent reports.

by John Ross Schroeder

Back in 1940, courageous young British pilots went into the air on a daily basis to meet the might of the German Luftwaffe. After several months of intense engagement, they emerged victorious in what has since been called the Battle of Britain. As a result, Hitler had to call off the planned Nazi invasion of England.

Today Britain faces a different kind of battle, but one that potentially portends just as much danger to its national identity and sovereignty.

A wake-up call

It is high time for the British nation to wake up to its divine destiny. Its enemy is not the European Union so much as its own ignorance and complacency in the face of what is being planned on the other side of the English Channel. On the whole, both British and U.S. citizens have shown very little interest in Brussels. The affairs of the European Union seem remote and legalistic, not to mention vaguely dull and uninteresting.

Says Simon Heffer, a *Daily Mail* feature columnist: "Europe as a political issue has always bored the public. This has allowed politicians to get away with murder over the years in sac-

rificing aspects of our sovereignty to unelected foreigners."

So bit by bit, perhaps almost imperceptibly at times, Britain's national sovereignty has been gradually eroded by clever decision making in Brussels.



Reuters/Hugo Philpot

Valery Giscard d'Estaing meets Britain's Tony Blair to discuss the new European constitution May 19

One prominent member of the Conservative Party referred to it as "serial surrendering." In the 1980s, a (See "BRITAIN," page 3)



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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things . . ." ACTS 3:21

What Have We Learned?

I have a ritual every year on Memorial Day. I pop into my VCR an animated Peanuts special entitled, *What Have We Learned, Charlie Brown?* It's a program that takes the beloved Peanuts characters on a tour of famous European battlegrounds. Their tour includes a visit to Flanders fields from World War I where, according to the poem, "The poppies grow, between the crosses row on row." The words of this haunting poem continue, "We are the Dead. Short days ago we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, loved and were loved, and now we lie in Flanders fields."

Sadly, mankind did not learn the lesson from this "War to End All Wars." Just 21 years later the world plunged into another global war. The Peanuts characters move on to the scene of a great battle of that conflict—Normandy, where allied troops stormed the French beaches to begin the liberation of Europe from Nazi control. While looking over the calm white beaches and rocky cliffs, scenes from the invasion are superimposed. The characters walk through the American cemetery where thousands of young soldiers are buried. This plot of land was permanently deeded to America by the French government.

While walking among the graves, the words of Dwight Eisenhower, who commanded the allied forces that June morning, serve as a fitting testimony to the action. Former President Eisenhower had returned to Normandy 20 years after the invasion and recorded a documentary for American television.

He said, "Many thousands of men came here to storm these beaches for one purpose only. Not to gain anything. Not to fulfill any ambitions that America had for conquest. But just to preserve freedom, systems of self-government. Many thousands of men have died for ideals such as these. In the 20th century for the second time America, along with the rest of the free world, had to come across the ocean to defend those same values. But these young boys . . . over whose graves we have been treading . . . never knew the great experiences of going through life. I devoutly hope that we never again have to see scenes as these. I pray, think, hope that humanity will have learned more than we learned up to that time. We must find some way to work for peace and . . . gain an eternal peace."

Indeed, "What have we learned?" Wars and conflicts continue to create new graves with the same echoes of unrealized hope. In this issue we continue to point our readers to those areas of the world that will make the headlines of the future. Europe continues shaping its destiny as a global power. Our lead article gives you an analysis of the recently revealed draft of the European constitution, another milestone along the path to a European federation. While many leaders hail this as a positive step toward global cooperation, Bible prophecy indicates otherwise.

The search for peace in the Middle East remains elusive. Fresh from victory in Iraq, the United States is engineering a game plan towards establishing order and stability for this volatile region. We again point you to what the Bible says will transpire in Jerusalem prior to Christ's coming.

What have we learned? Not enough to bring peace among nations. We continue to look and wait with hope for the time when Christ will restore a government of peace upon the earth as described by the prophet Isaiah. It is his thoughts found in Isaiah 2:4 that offer us a different future. Those words state, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." —Darris McNeely

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“BRITAIN,” (Continued from page 1)

former Brussels bureaucrat, Frenchman Jacques deLors, said that by 1995 or so 90 percent of all important decisions relevant to the British nation would be made in Brussels.

He may have been a little off in his timing, but the essence of his prediction is about to become a reality, perhaps in the next year or two. A brand-new European constitution is now being prepared by Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, former French president. He chairs the convention that is responsible for producing the draft text. By June 20 a full text will have been published and then submitted to a summit discussion conference in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The road to ratification may be a long and tortuous one. As matters now stand, the constitution will not go into effect until approval by all EU member states. The target date is 2006.

In summary and essence, what does this draft document really say?

The European constitution examined

Consider several clauses about foreign, security and defense matters. Article 1.11: “The Union shall have competence to define and implement a common foreign and security policy, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy.” Article 1.15: “Member states shall unreservedly support the Union’s common and foreign security policy in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity and shall comply with the Acts adopted by the Union. They shall refrain from action contrary to the Union’s interest.”

Article 1.27: “The Foreign Minister: The European Council, deciding by qualified majority, with the agreement of the

President of the Commission shall appoint the Union’s foreign minister. He shall conduct the Union’s common foreign and security policy.” Article 1.39 (2): “The European Council shall identify the Union’s strategic interests and determine the objectives of the common foreign and



Valéry Giscard d’Estaing receives the Charlemagne Prize May 29 for contributions to European unity

security policy.” Article 1.40: “The common security and defence policy shall be an integral part of the common foreign and security policy. It shall provide the Union with an operational capability drawing on assets civil and military.”

If these clauses stand, it is not hard to figure out that they spell an end to the type of diplomatic and military support that Britain was able to single-handedly give America before and during the recent Iraqi conflict. Britain will be at the mercy of continental Europe.

Fears about the original draft constitution were expressed by noted British Labour Party member of Parliament Frank Field: “Under the proposed constitution, we will no longer have any real control over national policy. *We will be ruled from Brussels*, becoming nothing more than a region in the new single European country” (quoted in a *Sunday Times* editorial; emphasis added throughout). Though some crucial areas of the original draft have since been toned down considerably, the foreign, defense and security clauses remain a real concern to the British nation.

Sunday Times feature columnist and author Ferdinand Mount echoed Mr. Field’s worries: “At the heart of Giscard’s proposals is the intent to replace intergovernmental decision making with a new written constitution for a single European entity. The institutions of this European entity would exercise sovereign powers.”

Long-term biblical perspectives

Although the process may already be too far advanced to alter significantly, in the short-term euro-skeptics may partially succeed in delaying tactics and actually get their much-called-for referendum on the proposed European constitution from a very reluctant Labour government. The people of Britain may even decide to firmly reject the euro in the already promised referendum as to whether Britain will join the European currency. It all depends on how much pressure is brought to bear on the British government.

So what really counts is the Bible’s description of ultimate, end-time events in Europe. We are not told the exact day-to-day, month-by-month occurrences that will eventually result in the

How Soon Will Britain Embrace the Euro?

At this writing, there are many confusing signals in the British press as to the character and timing of the government’s intentions toward joining the European currency. Government policy doesn’t always appear completely consistent. One newspaper headline is soon contradicted by another, stating the opposite view.

The following comment by William Rees-Mogg should give the Blair administration pause for thought: “It is the

choice between self-government and European government. In the case of the euro, the choice is between United Kingdom interest rates being set by the Bank of England in the light of British economic needs, or by the European Central Bank in the light of general European circumstances. In the past three years Britain has outperformed Germany because we control our own rates and they do not” (*The Times*).

biblically prophesied Beast power in Europe. But we are told what will happen when the European Beast power eventually comes to fruition. It is a disturbing account!

A latter-day Roman Empire

The Bible foretells that a new superpower in Europe will dawn on the world. This power is prophesied extensively in the Old Testament book of Daniel and in Revelation, the final book of the New Testament.

Four extensive empires are described in Daniel, chapter 2. The last of these and the one described in the most frightening language is the Roman Empire, which would experience seven resurrections over a long period of time. The image that the prophet Daniel projects in the second chapter had 10 toes.

Comparing Daniel with Revelation shows us the ultimate result of these end-time European events. The apostle John wrote: "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour [a short time] as kings with the beast [symbolic of a powerful dictator]. These are of one mind [unified], and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb [Jesus Christ], and the Lamb will overcome them" (Revelation 17:12-14).

This biblical passage summarizes the chief events. (To understand the full impact of these benchmark occurrences, please request the following free brochures: *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*.)

The current efforts to unify Europe may only be forerunning events, building a powerful infrastructure transcending national borders. Usually dictatorship itself is brought about by severe economic, political and even psychological crises among a people, as was evident in Germany during the 1920s and early 1930s.

Britain caught in between

Noted author and journalist Paul Johnson made the following observation about Britain's continuing dilemma: "The UK is wondering, for instance, whether its future is with Continental Europe. Once again, for the British, the Channel has proved wider than the Atlantic" (*The Wall Street Journal*). Many would disagree with Mr. Johnson and say that Britain's future is definitely with the European Union—counseling the nation to downplay her longtime special relationship with the United States in favor of Europe.

Jason Beattie, chief political corre-

spondent of *The Scotsman*, reported, "The former French President Valéry d'Estaing raised the temperature in the debate over the new EU constitution yesterday by declaring Britain had to choose between a future with Europe or its special relationship with the United States."

Most observers do not comprehend the vital biblical and historical knowledge that would inform government leaders for which direction they should opt. At one point in Israel's history it was said of one of the 12 tribes: "Of the sons of Issachar *who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do*" (1 Chronicles 12:32). Britain's present-day leadership shows little evidence of possessing this gift.

A vital missing dimension in knowledge may readily be obtained by requesting our free brochure *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. It explains the historic origins of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. It reveals Britain's and America's divine commission and purpose in the world, and why Britain developed an impressive empire that stretched around the world. And, the booklet also tells why Britain finds herself in the somewhat awkward position she is in today. This is revealed knowledge you cannot afford to be without. ❖

Has America Finally Seen the Light?

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing has made much of the comparison between his efforts in writing a new European constitution and those of the founding fathers of America during the last quarter of the 18th century. This gesture does not make up for the damage done to American-French diplomatic relations by the behavior of President Jacques Chirac before and during the Iraqi conflict.

Even Giscard's comparison has its limitations. Ferdinand Mount has pointed out that "in fact, it [Europe] would be more of a superstate than the United States, where those powers not specifically granted to the federal government are reserved to the individual states. Here it would be the other way around with the Union deciding when and where it wishes to exercise its competence" (*The Sunday Times*).

For nearly 50 years, the United States has generally promoted European unity. It saw Europe's integration as a device for preventing future wars within the continent and as a benign, friendly economic partner across the Atlantic Ocean. Now there are clear signals that America is serious-

ly reconsidering this traditional position. According to *The Economist*, "The idea that the United States is now actively undermining European unity crops up regularly in the reflections of Europe's great and good."

The Sunday Times' commentator Andrew Sullivan observed that "for the first time, Washington is taking European internal policies seriously." For one thing, "Washington would not be happy to see the UK subsumed under a European security apparatus."

Times columnist William Rees-Mogg bluntly asked of the British prime minister in print: "Does he have the realism to recognise that the proposed European constitution *is intended to cut Britain away from the United States?*" This veteran journalist and commentator, formerly editor of *The Times*, sees that "since 1914 the United States has been the moon which determined the tides of power in Europe through two world wars and a cold war."

Clearly America will now be watching the architecture of this new Europe very closely.

From Kosovo to Conflict?

At the end of April, four European countries agreed on the formation of a joint military structure. Did NATO's successful intervention in Kosovo lay the seeds for a challenger to its position?

by Paul Kieffer

Just prior to the 50-year anniversary of NATO, the alliance embarked on the first real military intervention in its history in March 1999 by conducting a six-week bombing campaign of Serbian military units and the infrastructure in Kosovo and Serbia. The ultimately successful drive to halt the harassment and resulting deportation of ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo seemed to justify NATO's continued existence nearly a decade after the collapse of the Soviet system.

Germany's military contribution

Among the member nations contributing aircraft, personnel and air bases for the joint effort was Germany. NATO's intervention in Kosovo was a historic event for the German people, moving well beyond previous peace-keeping missions (German soldiers had come under fire once in 1993 during their United Nations assignment in Somalia). In Kosovo, German military units were involved in an armed conflict for the first time since World War II. With its all-weather deployment capability, Germany's squadron of Tornado aircraft proved itself on numerous missions over Kosovo and Serbia.

For Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and his foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, Germany's involvement in the military effort to coerce Serbia's Slobodan Milosovic to the negotiating table was quite a domestic political challenge. Germany's post-war constitution requires parliamentary approval for German armed forces to be used internationally. Pacifist elements in Schroeder's Social Democratic party and in Fischer's Green party threatened to veto the Bundeswehr's participation in the NATO intervention. Emphasizing his country's responsibility within the international community, Chancellor Schroeder got the needed majority support to allow his country's military contribution to the NATO effort.

Even with European participation, the NATO strike force comprising hundreds of aircraft was quite a lopsided alliance in favor of America. At one point during the six-week air campaign, Gerhard Schroeder complained

about America's lack of willingness to share its satellite intelligence with its NATO allies on the positioning of Serbian forces and the impact the bombing was having on them. Requests and complaints were of little use, however, as Schroeder himself admitted to his aides, since the United States was supplying more than 90 percent of the military hardware and personnel for the joint effort.

As a consequence, France and Germany discussed developing a joint space-based intelligence gathering system, by no means an unrealistic goal given France's proven ability to put satellites into orbit from its launch facilities in French Guiana. Overall, however, a major side effect of NATO's military campaign against Serbia four years ago went largely unnoticed until April of this year: the determination that Europe needs to do more for its own military defense.

Proposal for a European defense force

In a historic meeting in Brussels on April 29, 2003, the leaders of Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg agreed to create a joint command structure, which they hope will become the cornerstone of a future "European Defense Union." At the conclusion of their talks, the four leaders declared their intent to create "the nucleus of a joint planning and command center for European Union military operations to be carried out *without NATO assistance*." In addition, their proposal envisions a "mutual defense clause *similar to NATO*" for this new "European security and defense union" (Reuters, April 29, 2003, emphasis added throughout).

In their statement, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker were careful not to use the term "EU military headquarters." The proposed joint command center is scheduled to be operational by the summer of 2004 and will be located in the Brussels suburb of Tervuren. Belgian and Luxembourg military units are to

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In a historic meeting in Brussels on April 29, 2003, the leaders of Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg agreed to create a joint command structure, which they hope will become the cornerstone of a future “European Defense Union.”

be integrated into the existing French-German brigade, which will then be the initial unit of a future rapid deployment force. This new mobile strike force “will be available for engagements on NATO’s behalf as well as for the European Union” (ibid.).

The four founding members of this new European defense effort also want the proposed European Union constitution amended to include a provision allowing those EU members who so desire to cooperate in joint military ventures. Even without this constitutional provision, however, the agreement reached at the 1998 EU summit in Amsterdam permits individual countries to proceed on the path to greater cooperation and integration when other EU members are unwilling or unable to do so. After the Brussels meeting, former French General Philippe Morillon, now a member of the European Parliament, even called for a “military euro zone,” comparing a joint European defense agreement directly with the already existing “euro zone” and its common currency, the euro.

Interestingly, a survey conducted in

all EU member countries on behalf of the European Commission showed 71 percent of EU citizens in favor of a common EU security and defense policy. The number responding positively to this question was even higher than for a common EU foreign policy, which 63 percent of those surveyed support (*Hamburger Abendblatt*, May 2, 2003).

No competition for NATO?

Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, who invited his colleagues to Brussels for the April 29 meeting, sees the proposed joint military command as a much-needed opportunity to strengthen the European Union’s foreign policy role.

In several interviews prior to the Brussels summit, Verhofstadt emphasized that the initiative was not directed against NATO. Instead, one could view it as a strengthening of NATO’s European pillar: “We get nothing from a NATO with a single superpower and 18 smaller and larger dwarfs trying to keep up,” Verhofstadt emphasized. “We need a NATO with a strong European pillar alongside the American one”

(Deutsche Presse Agentur, April 28, 2003).

During a debate in Germany’s Bundestag on April 3, 2003, Gerhard Schroeder also emphasized the need to strengthen Europe’s joint defense and security arrangements. In an interview before Schroeder’s speech in the Bundestag, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer had said that Europeans “may not make the United States responsible for Europe’s weakness. Instead, Europe must strengthen the European pillar itself” (*Bonner Generalanzeiger*; April 4, 2003).

Others are concerned that the proposed joint defense structure will have a negative impact on the NATO alliance. Among them is Bavarian Governor Edmund Stoiber, who demanded the cancellation of the Brussels summit, which “could be viewed as a signal for the development of an expensive duplicate structure and an initiative directed against NATO” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, April 20, 2003).

In an interview with the *Financial Times*, British Prime Minister Tony Blair voiced similar concerns and rejected the idea of a “multipolar” world. “Some desire a so-called multipolar world having different centers of power, but I believe that these would soon develop into competing centers of power.” In Blair’s opinion, the world currently needs “only one center of power”—the United States of America (April 28, 2003). In comments following the Brussels meeting, Blair accused the four countries involved in the summit of having rejected his proposal for binding any European defense system to the NATO alliance.

America’s Secretary of State Colin Powell called the summit agreement a “type of plan for developing some kind of headquarters,” despite the careful wording chosen to describe the formation of the joint defense structure (*Hamburger Abendblatt*, May 2, 2003).

The wrong signal at the wrong time

Under other circumstances the Brussels meeting might have been inter-

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pretended as an effort to strengthen the European side of the NATO alliance. However, sharp disagreements within NATO in recent months prior to ousting Saddam Hussein by force had some observers questioning whether the alliance has a long-term future. The decision in Brussels to initiate a joint European defense structure is the wrong signal at the wrong time as far as the future of the NATO alliance is concerned.

The distance between the European Union and the United States will continue to grow. The American-led military action against Iraq revealed serious differences with major European allies and showed that the single remaining superpower is willing to discard its post-World War II approach of seeking the approval—or at least the quiet tolerance—of its European allies for its military intervention. Many Europeans now see America as unpredictable, as an “untethered Gulliver” (a term used by the German news-magazine *Der Spiegel*) needing a counterbalance on the world scene.

Commentators in Germany openly call for a strong Europe as a counterweight to the United States, writing opinions that would have been unthinkable just 10 years ago. For example, the respected *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* described the current situation this way: “The growth of American power and the resulting growing asymmetry to Europe has reached the point not only for the German government where the formation of a strong European counterbalance is needed. Via integration Europe has mastered many of its own conflicts and should also bring peace *beyond its borders and help fill the vacuum that would otherwise be left entirely to America*” (April 4, 2003).

An editorial in the *Donaukurier* from the city of Ingolstadt used even stronger language: “Now that Russia has vacated its superpower status there are completely new opportunities for the EU. It would not only be foolish but

even criminal for EU state and national leaders not to make use of them . . . It isn’t good when a superpower can act as it pleases on the world scene. *The world needs a counterweight to the U.S.A. With its traditions and experience,*



Many Europeans now see America as unpredictable, as an “untethered Gulliver” needing a counterbalance on the world scene.

Europe is predestined for the role” (April 16, 2003).

While no major changes are expected next year, the impetus from the Brussels mini-summit shows what Europe must be prepared to do in the event the NATO alliance does collapse: provide for its own military defense.

The Brussels proposal had commentators using the term coined by German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer two years ago: a “core Europe” of European Union nations proceeding toward full political integration while other EU member states proceed at a slower pace—or do not participate at all.

What biblical prophecy reveals

As described in an earlier issue of *World News and Prophecy*, the “core Europe” concept possibly reflects the

final stage of four successive world ruling empires predicted by the prophet Daniel in his interpretation of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, described in Daniel 2. Nebuchadnezzar, representing the Babylon empire, was the first of those four empires (Daniel 2:38). The fourth and final empire, pictured by the lower portion of the humanlike image King Nebuchadnezzar saw, is the Roman Empire. Its final appearance is represented by the toes of the image, and they are prophesied to be kings at the time Jesus Christ returns to the earth. He will end their reign by establishing the Kingdom of God (Daniel 2:34, 44-45).

The toes of the image are comprised of iron and clay, picturing a union that will feature strengths and weaknesses. In his interpretation of the dream, Daniel makes clear that this combination of iron and clay represents a mixture for the final appearance of the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire. That mixture will not be cohesive (verse 43).

In the years ahead, the NATO alliance will undergo further serious internal challenges and be strained to the breaking point. Finally, a European, non-NATO military alliance will evolve into a replacement for NATO, likely comprising some, but not all, of the member states of the European Union.

For a fuller analysis of these prophecies write for our free booklets *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* and *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*. ❖

Recommended Reading

What does the Bible prophecy about Europe in the end time before Christ’s return? And what will the coming final reappearance of the Roman Empire mean for the rest of the world? *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* and *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* will help answer these questions. They are provided free of charge.



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The Global Reach of America and Britain—Prophesied in the Bible?

With victory in Iraq, another ruthless dictator has fallen, thanks to American, British and Australian military forces. For over four centuries defeating dictators has been a central role for the modern descendants of the biblical patriarch Joseph.

by Melvin Rhodes

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher inadvertently predicted the outcome of the second Gulf War 10 years before it was fought. Interviewed on an American morning television program, Lady Thatcher observed: “The great lesson of the 20th century is that whenever the American and British peoples stand together, they always win.”

Certainly, the first two wars of the new century in which both have been involved were also won. The victorious allies triumphed over the radical Islamic Taliban in Afghanistan and over the fascist regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

Prior to the 20th century, the great 19th-century German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck predicted that the most important geopolitical fact of the coming 20th century was that Britain and America spoke the same language. This was to prove fateful for the German-speaking peoples, defeated in two world wars by the two English-speaking allies.

Britain and America do not always speak the same language, of course. Sir Winston Churchill, whose father was British and mother American, remarked that “English is the common language that divides us.” There are often subtle differences between the two language variations (as with English elsewhere around the world) that can lead to misunderstandings.

Figuratively, America and Britain do not always speak the same language either. Their national interests sometimes fail to coincide. Geographical location has a lot to do with this—sometimes the British more readily see the European perspective in matters than their American brothers do. This has been more the case since Britain joined the European Union (formerly the EEC) in 1973. There are many British people who remain fully committed to the ideals of European unity, though many others are either anti-European or skeptical, at best.

But Mrs. Thatcher’s dictum remains true, nonetheless. In both world wars and throughout

the Cold War, the United States and Britain usually fought together—and won. Two notable defeats were Vietnam (a conflict from which Britain refrained) and Suez (where America’s president did not support British action against Egypt). These two failures only serve to underscore the truth of Mrs. Thatcher’s observation.

Baroness Thatcher’s insight parallels something that was revealed in your Bible thousands of years ago. It’s a prophecy about the “latter days” and the military role that both the United States and United Kingdom would play.

Joseph’s historic role

In Genesis 49 we see Jacob calling his sons together in order that he might tell them what would happen to them “in the last days” (verse 1). Jacob (Israel) had 12 sons from whom the 12 tribes of Israel are descended. The Jews are descendants of just one of those sons, Judah. Together with the descendants of Jacob’s youngest son, Benjamin, these two tribes remained as the Kingdom of Judah, following the division of the 12-tribe kingdom after the death of King Solomon. The 10 other tribes formed a new kingdom, the Kingdom of Israel. This kingdom went into captivity more than a century before the peoples of Judah. Since then, they have been lost to the world; historians often refer to them as the lost 10 tribes of Israel.

Lost to the world, but not to God. In Genesis 49 we note that God foretells the destiny of these tribes “in the last days” prior to Christ’s return. In other words, in our time, now. God knows where the descendants of these ancient tribes are today and knew thousands of years ago the significant role they would play at this time.

In verse 22, we begin reading a description of Joseph’s destiny. “Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall.” The physical descendants of Joseph were destined to be a fruitful people, a productive people who would bring economic prosper-

When we look back at the wars of the United States and Britain, we find a common theme. These two nations have fulfilled a common purpose. What has that purpose been?

ity and development wherever they went.

In the previous chapter, chapter 48, we read more detail about Joseph's destiny.

Jacob here is giving his blessing to the two sons of Joseph, promising them future greatness. Although Jacob had 12 sons, Joseph was his favorite. Of Joseph's two sons, Jacob says, "Bless the lads; let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth" (Genesis 48:16).

We should take careful note of the wording here. "Let my name be named upon them." What was Jacob's name? His name was changed by God to "Israel" (Genesis 32:28). Israel (Jacob) is the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. The Jews are just one of those tribes, although most people today assume that the Jews constitute all of Israel. The modern Jewish nation in the Middle East calls itself Israel, but a more accurate name would be Judah. Jacob's new name, Israel, was to be carried by his favorite son and that son's two boys, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Jacob upset his son Joseph by promising the greater part of the birthright promise to Ephraim, the younger son. Israel's action overrode the custom of primogeniture, whereby the eldest boy receives the birthright. The inheritance passed down from Abraham through Isaac to Jacob and now to Joseph's two sons, the present-day peoples of the United States and Great Britain, as well as some nations that were formerly part of the British Commonwealth.

Under God's inspiration, Ephraim was to become "a multitude of nations," while Manasseh was to "become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he . . . And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh" (verses 19-20).

The multitude of nations was to become great before the great single people/nation. It would also be greater in size, in wealth and in duration.

This prophecy was never fulfilled in the Jewish people.

It was, rather, fulfilled in the British Empire and the United States of America, two brother nations that are the modern descendants of the tribe of Joseph (for more information on this, be sure to request our free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*).

The United States has been the dominant nation in the world since World War II, a period of almost 60 years. Before American preeminence, the British Empire was the dominant power for two centuries. In size and population, the British Empire was greater than the United States. British territory at the fullest extent of its empire was a total of 13.9 million square miles. America's today is 3.9 million, 10 million less. America's population is also smaller than was that of the British Empire.

Although the prophecy in Genesis 48 shows that the British Empire—"a multitude of nations"—and the United States were to be separate political entities, the following chapter does not mention Ephraim or Manasseh. Rather, the prophetic term used to describe both of these peoples "in the last days" is Joseph, their shared common ancestor.

Genesis 49:22 prophesies that Joseph would be fruitful, bringing economic development wherever his descendants went. When we look at the British Empire a century ago and at the United States as the American people moved westward, we see that this has been very much the case.

Verse 23 adds a further prophecy of the role these two peoples would fulfill. "The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob" (verses 23-24).

Keep in mind the setting for this prophecy is "the last days." Here we see Joseph having a powerful military role to go along with its dominating economic power.

The implication of these verses is that the sons of Joseph would fight many conflicts, but that God would give them victory. Interestingly, the term "archers" is used, suggesting attacks from afar. One of the great blessings the British and American peoples have enjoyed is a long period of peace at home. For the most part, the wars they have fought have been overseas, sparing their own people from much of the suffering that comes from conflict.

Joseph's historic mission

When we look back at the wars of the United States and Britain, we find a common theme. These two nations have fulfilled a common purpose. At first, it was

the British Empire—their Commonwealth of independent nations, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, together with the colonies that were ruled by Britain itself—which fulfilled this destiny. Since World War II the United States has supplanted Britain in this role, but Britain and oftentimes those same Commonwealth nations have supported the United States as partners in an alliance of common purpose. In the latest conflict, Australia was the third military force supporting the United States and Britain.

What has been that purpose?

To understand this, we have to go back to the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. During a tumultuous period in English history, the nation was able to break away from Rome, initially under King Henry VIII, but more completely under the rule of his daughter, the first Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603). This year marks the 400th anniversary of her death, the death of one of the most significant monarchs in world history.

Protestants got their name from the fact that they were protesting against the corruption of the Roman church and the church's hierarchy. They broke the pow-



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Queen Elizabeth's England defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588

er of Rome, which for over 1,000 years had dominated and held back the development of the continent of Europe. Not only did they break Rome's authority, they also gave us the Bible. A banned book under the Roman church, the Bible was given lip service by the Protestants,

as being a higher authority than the church.

The enthusiasm with which the people greeted the publication of the King James Bible in 1611 lasted for centuries, right up until 1900, the first year in which more secular books were published in England than books of a religious nature. This English translation of the Bible gave people ideas that led to fundamental changes in society, including the form of governance. Democratic institutions, already in place, were gradually strengthened as an educated and self-disciplined Christian people began increasingly to rule themselves. Wherever the British went in settling the world, they took with them their Bibles and established parliaments. Thirteen of these parliaments, or Houses of Assembly (or House of Burgesses) later formed the United States of America.

Meanwhile, continental Europe remained largely under the influence of Rome, with absolute monarchs claiming rule by “divine right.” Encouraged by Catholics in England, some of these monarchs attempted to bring the nation back under the authority of Rome. This was the reason King Philip II of Spain, the most powerful monarch in the world at the time, launched the Spanish Armada against England in 1588—and lost. Numerous other similar struggles were to take place in the following centuries against the forces of despotism. At first these wars were mainly, or partly, over religion. Later, as Britain became a global power, they were mostly against tyrants and despots trying to expand their control over other nations and peoples.

The historical role of the British peoples was to fight for freedom against despotism. A cornerstone of British foreign policy for four centuries was to stay out of Europe and rather concentrate on its empire beyond the seas. The only times Britain would involve itself in European affairs was when one European country was becoming so powerful it threatened the balance of power on the Continent.

Through the centuries, the British defeated, among others, the forces of Louis XIV of France, who tried to extend his influence into the Iberian Peninsula during the War of the Spanish Succession; his great-grandson, Louis XV, who tried to conquer the American colonies during

the French and Indian Wars (1755-63); and Napoleon, who brought two decades of war to Europe in an attempt at continental subjugation, ending in 1815. They thwarted Russian Czar Nicholas I’s attempt to take over the crumbling Turkish Empire in the Crimean War (1854-56), a move that would have given Russia control over the Middle East. And later, together with the nations of the British Empire, fought against Kaiser Wilhelm II in World War I and Hitler in World War II. Many of these major conflicts were against powers that saw themselves as a continuation of the ancient Roman imperial system.

Additionally, there were numerous smaller wars around the world, as the British often tried to keep warring tribes apart in the interests of peace and trade.

After World War II, exhausted, the British retreated from their global responsibilities, instead choosing to support the United States, which had effectively taken over Britain’s role. The Cold War followed for over 40 years, with the United States and Britain as allies. In the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, nations fell apart and new despotisms reared their ugly heads. Again, these two nations were at the forefront in defeating tyranny.

Mistakes have been made and errors of judgment committed. Although descended from the tribe of Joseph, the two peoples have moved significantly away from God’s laws in recent decades, but God has still chosen to bless their military efforts. Will this continue?

Will America and Britain continue to win wars?

The Bible warns these two nations, the nations upon whom Israel placed his name, of the consequences of turning away from God. God is a very patient Father. He does not always punish immediately when sin is committed. But there are always consequences for sin that naturally follow the action without any divine intervention to bring them about. And the peoples of the United States and Britain, once nations dedicated to the Bible, even though they did not always interpret it correctly, have turned progressively further and further away from God, reveling in sin.

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people,” Proverbs

14:34 tells us. When the United States and Britain were perceived as righteous, Christian peoples, they enjoyed great respect around the world. Today the perception is very different, as the two nations turn their backs on God and churn out endless filth and violence in the name of entertainment, which is then exported around the world. This greatly fuels the rhetoric of radical Muslim elements, whose terrorist actions now threaten the American and British peoples *at home*, removing their long-enjoyed sense of security.

This is a message for these nations, if they do not turn back to God: Eventually, “the LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth” (Deuteronomy 28:25).

God alone will decide when that moment has arrived, the time when He removes His hand from these two nations, whose alliance has been such a formidable force for as long as anybody alive today can remember.

Most people today do not appreciate God’s involvement in the history of the British and American peoples, the descendants of Joseph. But the Bible makes it clear. Joseph’s great military strength, witnessed again in the latest Persian Gulf conflict, was directly attributable to God. “And the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob” (Genesis 49:24).

What God gives, He can also take away. ✧

Recommended Reading

Where do such nations as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia appear in Bible prophecy? Does the Bible neglect to mention them? This thoroughly researched, eye-opening brochure, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*, will help answer these questions. It’s provided free of charge.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download it from our

Web site at
www.ucg.org

Is Peace in Palestine Possible?

The current U.S. administration is embarking on a familiar path followed by several previous administrations—attempting to bring genuine peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. It's a joint effort, involving many nations. Dubbed the "road map" to peace, will this succeed where numerous previous attempts failed? Bible prophecy gives us a different kind of road map to help us sort out these events.

by Donald Ward

Just as the Bush administration had begun to think they were getting an upper hand on al Qaeda, it again raised its ugly head and sent shock waves of spine-chilling terror around the world. Terrorism from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to Casablanca, Morocco, to the streets of Israel has again rocked and shocked the peoples of the world. These actions came on the heels of a recent comment by President Bush that he estimated that the United States had destroyed 50 percent of al Qaeda's organization.

And just as the Bush administration was beginning to push its "road map" to peace in Palestine, the terrorist organization Hamas unleashed another round of deadly suicide bombings in Israel. This latest peace plan presents the combined efforts of the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia. It marks the most comprehensive attempt to end violence in the Middle East since the start in September 2000 of the second Intifada, a word that literally means "uprising," but has come to mean "revolution." It is applied to the Palestinian paramilitary and terrorist actions against Israel.

Even though the road map to peace is a collaborative plan, it stills falls the lot of the Bush administration to serve as the primary negotiator in the process. The principal plank calls for the creation of an independent Palestinian state within a year. The blueprint envisions that Israel should, in principle, recognize a neighboring state before the two sides resolve the pivotal issues that have crippled previous peace efforts.

Plan interrupted even before implementation

But as usual, the process was instantly hamstrung by the Israelis insisting that the Palestinians must first stop their terrorist attacks—and the Palestinians insisting that the Israelis first stop developing new settlements on the West Bank along with military incursions into Palestinian residential areas.

The latest round of terrorist attacks in Israel was set off just hours before Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was to leave for Washington for a meeting with U.S. President Bush, forcing the prime minister to cancel the meeting, as he was forced to deal with the new crises.

Western leaders were hopeful that the new Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, also called by the honorific name Abu Mazen, would crack down on the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, a militant offshoot of Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement that has claimed responsibility for a string of suicide bombings in Israel.

Arafat had opposed Abu Mazen's appointment for several reasons, especially because he feared losing his powerful influence over the Palestinian Authority. Arafat went so far as to infer a Palestinian civil war might erupt if Abu Mazen moved against the Al Aqsa and other militant groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Arafat obviously remains a powerful personality to be reckoned with in any future negotiations. So, circumstances may well defeat the peace plan before it really begins. Both sides are filled with unabated fear, hate and lingering suspicions of each other's motives.

So what is going to happen now?

Jerusalem is the key

Over and over in this publication we have informed our readers of the importance of Israel and Jerusalem in geopolitics. Jerusalem's significance in geopolitical affairs can hardly be overstated. Jerusalem's importance centers on its strategic and symbolic value. Ultimately, its importance to the final grand crescendo between the forces of good and evil centers on its spiritual significance. Jerusalem is the spiritual capital and birthplace of Christianity and Judaism. The peoples of Islam view it as the third most sacred place on earth.

One of the great symbols of peace is located in the courtyard of the United Nation's headquar-

The "road map" to peace represents the combined efforts of the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia. Can it succeed?

ters in New York City; it is a statue of a man beating a sword into a plowshare. The symbol for this statue is taken from the words of the prophet Isaiah. The prophet writes of a time when Jerusalem will become the civil and spiritual capital of the world. The people of the world will flow into Jerusalem and be taught God's ways—His culture, which produces peace.

Isaiah concludes this inspiring and encouraging prophecy with these words: "Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house 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 2:3). These are the sure words of God.

The United Nations was founded on the noble principle of building a world organization to stabilize the nations of the world and bring peace. It has sought to reach its goals through various agendas that range from issues of health, environment, education and economic matters, to dealing with the numerous political squabbles among nations.

For the UN to achieve success, it must depend upon cooperation among the peoples of the world. But the nature of human beings is not given to cooperation and goodwill. God created humans subject to vanity, and gives humans the opportunity to choose which way they will go (see Romans 8:20; Deuteronomy 30:19-20). Humans consistently reject the way of God and choose to go their own way, trying to solve problems apart from God.

People do not want to follow God's peace plan

There are powerful forces determined to usurp God's plan for Jerusalem and take the city for their own purposes. When all is said and done, what are political affairs all about? Are they not about who is going to rule over the sons of men?

From the days of Cain, who killed righteous Abel because of jealousy, to the present day, various pseudomessiahs have sought to be in charge, oftentimes through the most evil Machiavellian tac-

tics imaginable. On the other hand, there are men of good will who desire to bring peace for noble causes.

There are factions in Israel that believe Israel is destined to rule the world through a human Jewish Messiah. Furthermore, they believe that the land of Palestine belongs to them by decree from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

On the other hand, there are also factions in the Middle East that believe God wants them to kill all those who don't agree with them and that they are destined to impose their culture on the peoples of the world.

Christians who really know the Bible know that Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth and Jerusalem will become the civil and religious capital of the world. But there is a powerful spirit being, a fallen evil spirit, Satan the devil, and his legions of demons, who are obsessed with usurping God's authority and becoming the object of worship.

Satan knows the prophecies concerning Jerusalem, and he is determined to lead the world into great deception. This powerful fallen angel will cause the peoples of the world to believe that the human being he possesses and empowers is the great spiritual messiah that the world's major religions expect to appear in the near future and lead the world into a new age of peace and prosperity.

Buddhists look for the appearance of the fifth Buddha; Hindus look for the appearance of Krishna; Islamic peoples look for the appearance of a great imam Mahdi; Jews look for the first appearance of the prophesied Messiah; New Agers look for the appearance of Myatria. But Christians rightfully look for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

As we have already noted from the book of Isaiah, the Bible clearly reveals



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Over and over in this publication we have informed our readers of the importance of Israel and Jerusalem in geopolitics.

that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, the Prince of Peace, who is going to lead the world into a new age of godly peace. In the interim, Bible prophecy reveals that evil men and seducers are going to wax worse and worse (2 Timothy 3:13). The state of the world will continue to deteriorate to the point that people will cry out for a strong ruler whom they hope will insure peace and prosperity.

Jerusalem will increasingly become the focal point of world leaders, and some type of pseudopeace is going to come to the Middle East.

Religious leader to play a major role

So far, the principal players trying to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian problem are political leaders. But a great religious leader, who will wield powerful spiritual influence, is going to enter the equation in the near future. At the present time, the Roman Catholic pope and

that church's adjuncts are aggressively promoting ecumenism—that is, encouraging the world's religions to work together and develop common ground for cooperation.

Philosophers, intellectuals, religious leaders and politicians have written extensively on the role that religion plays in dividing the various peoples of the world into warring factions. The solution for some is to do away with religion—while the solution for others is to merge the world's religions. But religion and spiritual forces are not going to disappear from the stage of world affairs.

The Bible reveals that there will be a powerful religious figure who will declare that he is God. In fact, he is a deceiver, led by Satan the devil. Note what the apostle Paul writes about this time: "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-5).

The Greek word for falling away is *apostasia*, meaning "false teaching." Apparently, the false teaching is that Christ has returned in the person of the one who sits in the temple of God proclaiming that he is God.

Paul goes on to show that this person is led by Satan. "The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

The key to avoiding deception is to develop a personal love affair with the truth. But some might ask, what is truth? Jesus answers this age-old question, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

Jerusalem placed under international rule

The Bible reveals that nations will divide Jerusalem and rule over it. A geopolitical power is going to impose a pseudopeace that will deceive the peoples of the world. The apostle John describes the measuring and dividing of Jerusalem: "Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months'" (Revelation 11:1-2).

The full details for the new road map to peace in the Middle East had not been released at this writing. But it clearly calls for an independent Palestinian state. The great question concerning the disposition of Jerusalem will surely be one of the principal questions that will have to be addressed and settled. Past negotiations have called for some kind of division of the city of Jerusalem. The original UN Resolution 181 of November 1947 called for the creation of independent Jewish and Palestinian states with Jerusalem being under international control. The prophet Daniel makes it clear that the end-time global political leader is going to plant his headquarters in Jerusalem (Daniel 11:45).

During the same period that Jerusalem is given over to the nations, the world will be deceived into worshiping this global leader, who prophecy names "the beast." He will be aided by one the Bible calls "the false prophet."

John describes this: "So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?' And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given

him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:4-8). This brings us to the great question for each of us: Is my name written in the Book of Life of the Lamb?

God will prevent mankind's destruction

We can take consolation in the fact that there is a great God in heaven who is going to intervene in the affairs of men.

"I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'" (Revelation 6:12-17).

Christ's intervention will prevent the annihilation of human life from off the planet (Matthew 24:21-22). The "day of God's wrath" will not lead the masses to repentance, as their deception will be too deep and complete (Revelation 9:20-21).

Sadly, after God begins to intervene in world affairs there is no record of anyone repenting. God's Spirit does not always strive with men. So today is the day to begin your love affair with the truth. Write for our free booklet, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*. It will show you the positive message of hope contained in this capstone prophecy of the Bible.

The question is, Will you be deceived? Will you avoid the great deception to come? God's Word urges you, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart" (Hebrews 4:7). ❖

“**READ,**” (Continued from page 16)

detailing the bravery of Marines awarded the Medal of Honor. He says, “I want them to understand the organization that they’ve joined. There is something special about remembering those who preceded you.”

Even as they wait in Kuwait for the eventual foray into Iraq, the Marines spend off-hours reading books about their history. The corps has an official reading list, with different books recommended for different ranks. At the top of the list is the “commandant’s favorites.” Second Lt. Richard Wilkerson, 27, of Knoxville, Tennessee, was reading *With the Old Breed* by E.B. Sledge. It’s the story of Marines at Peleliu and Okinawa.

What does such emphasis on reading about one’s forebears produce? Wilkerson puts it this way: “Ask someone in the Army when the Army’s birthday is, and you’ll get a strange look. Ask any Marine about the birthday and they will tell you ‘Nov. 10, 1775.’” What happened then? It was on that date the Continental Congress in Philadelphia ordered that a “few good men” might be raised to form two battalions of Marines to serve as landing forces for the Navy. Not only was a good slogan of “A Few Good Men” born, but also an American institution. The Marines, the smallest branch of the U.S. military, pride themselves in moving and striking quickly in seizing territory and establishing a beachhead for the other forces arriving later.

Richard H. Kohn, military history professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, explains that young men and women want to “define their identity with what has become almost a legendary institution in American life . . .” Almost uniformly the younger members say they are eager to see if they measure up to the heroes they’ve read about.”

Such a methodology of reading about your history and honoring those who have served before you creates an incredible tension between the past and the present. Reporter Terry comments, “Even as Camp Pendleton was consumed with preparing Marines and their gear to deploy to Kuwait, the base held a memorial service to honor the 58th

anniversary of the amphibious assault at Iwo Jima by the Third, Fourth and Fifth Marine divisions. It’s as if there is simply one continuous troop composed of young and old, dead and living, wounded and serving and those yet to serve. As Sgt. David Anderson, 30, of Hammond,

the end of his life. Here’s the man who has written more books in the New Testament than any other individual. He’s said and written much. Yet he asks for books! “Bring . . . the books,



Modern Marines learn the details about the bravery of Marines awarded the Medal of Honor in the past. “There is something special about remembering those who preceded you,” said Chief Warrant Officer John Johnson of Detroit.

Christians are called to be soldiers for Christ, and can be encouraged by the examples of faith that have gone before.

Louisiana, so aptly puts it, ‘In civilian life, we’d be castaways. But in the Marine Corps, we all click and come together. We’re a brotherhood just like the history.’”

There is no more widely known historical maxim than George Santayana’s, “Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.” Likewise, those who do not read the lessons of history or read about the lives and exploits of courageous men and women are doomed to never equal or surpass them. It is for this reason that the pen truly is mightier than the sword. A sword is an incredible instrument, but the greater question is, who wields the sword? And the yet greater question is, what values have a grip on the holder of the sword? The level to which one rises is determined not by the steel, but the heart behind the steel.

But now consider the spiritual thrust behind this thesis. Have you ever taken a good look at 2 Timothy 4:13? Paul is imprisoned in Rome. He’s near

especially the parchments.” In addition to editing his works, is it possible that the very same man who coined the phrase “fight the good fight” (1 Timothy 6:12) needed to “read to know he was not alone” to step up to the next level of spiritual engagement? To have wisdom, he needed to read about wisdom. To have courage, he needed to read about courage acted out by “men of like passion.” To be able to forgive his enemies before he died, he would have to read about how Christ did it.

Paul, the soldier for Christ

Like the Marines, Paul, the soldier for Christ (Philippians 2:25), knew he was but a part of a small contingent called to create a beachhead for others to follow. He was not destined to witness the beginning or the end, but he was commissioned to do his utmost and finish the course set before him. The one who stopped him on the road to Damascus is the same one who described His followers as just a “little

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flock” in Luke 12:32. They were the smallest of the small, just a few good men and women.

Paul came to the same conclusion that Sgt. David Anderson came to about his companions. In any other life the people he was working with would be considered “castaways.” Paul said as much in 1 Corinthians 1:27, when he stated, “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.” Yet, those very same castaways—given identity, a purpose and a shared history of spiritual heroes who had gone on before them—would “turn the world upside down.”

Ask any Christian the birth date of the Church that Christ founded, and he or she will tell you “Pentecost, A.D. 31.” Why do they know it? Because they have read the story of Peter and the apostles and the 3,000 people who were baptized, and in so doing the readers know they are not alone. Pentecost, A.D. 31, is not simply the beginning of the story of the Church, but also the beginning of the story for each Christian. The story is greater than the reader. It offers identity and companionship.

Paul tells his beloved assistant Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1-3 to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” Is it possible that Paul desired to reread his own words to encourage himself to persevere through the challenge of being executed?

“Of whom the world is not worthy”

Is it possible he wanted to read one more time the unfolding accounts of bravery and heroism found in Hebrews 11? Imagine him reading at night, using only the faint glimmer produced by a little clay oil lamp, to make out the words he most likely penned in what would become known as Hebrews 11:32-40:

“And what more shall I say? For the

time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens . . .

“Still others had trial of mockings with scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment . . . of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.”

In such a reading Paul would in no way be alone. In a darkened cell, standing around him were many examples of God’s people who sacrificed all to be a part of the greatest adventure ever bestowed on mankind—following Christ.

Your Bible clearly pinpoints your reality in the incredibly challenging future before the return of Jesus Christ. The articles you read in *World News and Prophecy* pull no punches about where this world, apart from God, is headed. The question is not, What is God going to do? The question is, What are you going to do? As spiritual soldiers in Christ’s service, we had better know what we stand for!

Are you filling up now with the marvelous examples of courage, wit, wisdom, sacrifice and humility of those who have already “fought the good fight”? Such “good fights” don’t come by wishful thinking, but by diligent study, motivated by heartfelt need.

Perhaps the encouragement of, “This is the way, walk in it,” found in Isaiah 30:21 is best personified by the words of Chief Warrant Officer John Johnston, whose quest in life is to make sure those under his command “understand the organization they have joined. There is something special about remembering those who have preceded you.” After all, that’s why we read—to know we are not alone! ❖

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by Robin Webber

We Read to Know We Are Not Alone

It's been nearly 10 years since I became acquainted with the comforting wisdom of the phrase "we read to know we are not alone." It's wonderful advice that has never wandered too far from me. It was a twice-repeated line from the movie *Shadowlands*, which focused on C.S. Lewis, a noted British theologian. Lewis was transformed by the suffering he experienced through the premature death of his wife. When the phrase is first mentioned in the movie by one of his students, it simply bounces off his carefully constructed nonemotional intellectual armor. Only later, when he experienced the pain of losing a "special someone," did he come to understand the weight of shared emotional experience.

About three months ago, this powerful life-changing concept of "we read to know we are not alone" was again brought to light through an article titled, "The Marines: Always Faithful to Their History" written by *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Tony Perry, which the paper ran on March 6, 2003.

Far from the setting of the ancient halls of Lewis' Cambridge University, this journalistic entry puts us down into the sand of Kuwait as U.S. Marines prepare to "kick in the door" to neighboring Iraq. There is probably no greater contrast than that of a theological mind like Lewis and a young "can-do" Marine. Yet, each in his own time came to profit from the wisdom of "we read to know that we are not alone."

Carrying on the tradition

Reporter Perry begins by introducing us to Marine Lance Cpl. William Figlesthaller of Naples, Florida. He's a

member of the Camp Pendleton-based First Marine Division, which is the oldest, largest and most decorated division in the Marines. The division's nickname is "Old Breed."

But, just a moment. Figlesthaller is only age 19. What makes such a young man want to be a part of the "Old Breed"? He emphatically states, "The Marines have got the best history and now I've got a chance to carry on that tradition—it's awesome." How did he achieve that level of purpose at such a young age?

The article makes a blunt assertion that "while each branch of the military teaches its recruits about its history and heroes, none does so as thoroughly as the Marine Corps."

Perry builds on this assertion by sharing the game plan of how Marines become larger than themselves and become a part of a greater story. He explains, "The emphasis on history starts with recruiting, which stresses the legacy of the corps. In boot camp, drill instructors deliver history lessons; in the final physical challenge, a 72-hour outdoor ordeal called 'the crucible,' recruits are ordered to discuss the heroism of Medal of Honor recipients. Then, officers and senior enlisted members pick up the task once new Marines report to their first duty stations."

Something special about remembering

An example of extended training by reading is the methodology employed by Chief Warrant Officer John Johnson of Detroit, 40, who occasionally has young Marines assigned to his command read the commendations

(See "READ," page 14)