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Abbas and Sharon: Showdown Over Jerusalem

How to resolve the opposing claims over the world's most controversial city, Jerusalem, was to be part of the international efforts to bring peace to the Middle East this year. The Sharon administration yanked it out of the end of the "Roadmap for Peace" and is making it an issue now. Barely established in office, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has to get help from the Bush administration, or else Abbas' ability to lead—and his ability to make peace—will end before it begins.

by Cecil E. Maranville

"This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares: 'I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves'" (Zechariah 12:1-3, New International Version).

So begins a sobering end-time prophecy about the city of Jerusalem. While the world hasn't yet arrived at the brink of that crisis, many is the nation that has attempted to reposition Jerusalem ("to move it" in the language of the oracle).

The nations of the world—a "Quartet" of the United Nations, the European Union, Russia and the United States—are poised to attempt to reposition Jerusalem yet again. It was to be part of Phase III of the "Roadmap for Peace," drawn up by the Quartet, when they would convene a conference that "leads to

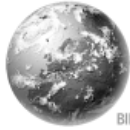


U.S. President George W. Bush gestures toward Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as they hold a joint press conference May 26

a final, permanent status resolution on borders, Jerusalem, refugees and settlements" (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs document).

(See "JERUSALEM," page 3)

Reuters/Jim Bourg



World News & Prophecy

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT EVENTS

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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things . . ." ACTS 3:21

Let Justice Run . . .

The real story was not the U.S. senators who worked out a last-minute compromise on the federal judge nominees. Nor was it the ailing Supreme Court justice who was wheeled in for his cancer treatment the same day. The real story is the battle to shape America's social and cultural agenda for years to come.

President George W. Bush's nominees to fill federal court positions have been held up for months (years, in some cases). Democrats had threatened to filibuster Senate debate in order to keep the Republican majority from approving the nominations. Instead a group of Republicans and Democrats got together and agreed to a compromise that allowed some of the judicial nominees to be approved.

Beyond the constitutional role of the Senate to give "advice and consent" on presidential nominations is a larger issue over who will set the beliefs and practices of society on issues of morality and social justice. Will the elected lawmakers at either the state or federal level pass legislation that regulates societal behavior? Or will the courts decide by overruling—declaring unconstitutional—laws passed by legislatures?

This is not something new; it has been going on since 1803, when the Supreme Court ruled that it was not bound by congressional acts it felt were unconstitutional.

In 1973 the most controversial decision of recent years concerned abortion. *Roe v. Wade* acknowledged the "right of personal privacy" for women in the matter of abortion. Abortion is an implied constitutional right, according to the decision, though who could imagine that this was the intent of the framers of the constitution?

Other cases have made the divide deeper between the opposing sides. In 2003 the Supreme Court overturned a Texas law that prohibited private, consensual homosexual acts. Many felt the court abandoned its role as a neutral observer in the culture wars. These major Supreme Court decisions, along with many others made by federal courts, are determining the social behavior and framework of the nation.

The big battle will come later this year when President Bush will likely have the chance to nominate a new Supreme Court justice. The current chief justice, William Rehnquist, is battling cancer and is expected to step down when the court's current term ends this summer. President Bush will no doubt nominate a judge who holds to a conservative interpretation of the constitution, while opponents will want to see a justice with more of an activist bent. People on all sides understand that the most far-reaching decisions, and therefore the most powerful, are being made by judges. The crucial battles in the ongoing culture wars are being fought in the courts.

God said through the prophet Amos that His people had despised His law and not kept the commandments (2:4). Justice is turned "to wormwood" (symbolic of a bitter taste) and righteousness is buried in the earth (5:7). Men did not want to hear the hard words of truth by those who carried the Word of God. Israel was full of those who by greed did not fairly consider the poor. Sin and unrighteous conduct had dulled the wisdom of leaders to enact sound legislation based on God's law. The end result was injustice. True justice could not be found in the places of justice—the "gate" (5:12) of the city where the elders typically assembled to hear and to resolve disputes.

Today we see the highest judges of the land cannot discern good from evil. The number of unborn fetuses who have been legally murdered since the *Roe v. Wade* decision is approaching 50 million.

Decisions that condone immoral behavior explicitly condemned by the Bible, and hasten its public acceptance, bring shame upon the nation.

We are a long way from a time of "justice [running] down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream" in our land (Amos 5:24). God speed the day when true justice is restored.

—Darris McNeely

“JERUSALEM,” (Continued from page 1)

The conference on Jerusalem was to have begun sometime this year. Israel may be preempting that discussion.

Israeli forces are scheduled to be completely withdrawn from the Gaza Strip by August. Pulling out of the West Bank would follow, which includes East Jerusalem. However, citing security needs, Israel is in the process of encircling East Jerusalem with a 25-foot-high concrete barrier, cutting it off from the rest of the West Bank (and seizing Palestinian territory on which to build the wall).

The Palestinians are furious, claiming that by doing so, Israel is establishing a de facto border for Jerusalem even before the permanent status talks begin. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon adamantly stated before an audience of New York’s Jewish community just a day before Abbas met with President George W. Bush that the Sharon administration would not negotiate on Jerusalem.

Circumventing the “Roadmap”

Abbas angrily points out that this yanks one of the most crucial points needing resolution off the table. And, he adds, the action further breaks the “Roadmap” agreement by denying a contiguous Palestinian territory. The Gaza territory would be joined by a peace corridor with the West Bank territory, which is about 25 miles away at its closest point. But the West Bank would be cut off from its principal city, Jerusalem.

East Jerusalem is mostly Palestinian Arab. The emerging Palestinian state is set on making East Jerusalem its capital. How could they have a capital in Jerusalem, if it isn’t even within their borders? In fact, Palestinian Authority law states that the entirety of Jerusalem is its capital, a perspective that greatly upsets the Israelis.

Israelis are uneasy about Palestinian rule over East Jerusalem, fearing that the Palestinian Authority might deny them access to two of their holiest sites, the Temple Mount and the Wailing Wall, both of which are in that area.

Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA or PA), was invited to the White House in late May where, in his words, he



A Palestinian girl attempts to climb over a wall dividing an east Jerusalem suburb Dec. 14, 2004 (Reuters/Mahfouz Abu Turk).

demand^d the strong political and financial support of the United States for the Palestinian cause.

That seems an audacious if not arrogant approach for the leader of a not-yet constituted nation to take before the world’s most powerful nation. But he has to show himself strong to the Palestinians, and talking tough to the leader of the free world is as strong as you can get.

Yet what could he give the United States in return for what he demands from it?

Ostensibly, he could establish peace with Israel, helping to diffuse Arab anger against the Jews. He could also continue to promote a democratic government within the PA, and the promotion of democracy in the Middle East is a top priority of the second Bush administration.

Perhaps this is the reason that his election was heralded as a victory for democracy by the White House, in spite of the fact that the election was far from democratic by Western standards.

Palestine was to drop the hate rhetoric

The Abbas administration has passed the first-100-days mark. How is it doing for its part of the “Roadmap”

obligations? The beginning of Phase I was to be: “Palestinian leadership issues unequivocal statement reiterating Israel’s right to exist in peace and security and calling for an immediate end to all acts of violence anywhere” (ibid.).

Abbas would have to change the way of thinking drummed into the consciousness of Palestinian youths from their earliest years—that their highest and happiest purpose in life would be to slaughter Jews.

Yasser Arafat ordered the PA press and schools to promote propaganda that calls Israel and everything it has built since 1948 “illegal.” “The state of Israel . . . is consistently portrayed [in PA history books] as ‘occupied Palestine’” (*Modern Arab History and Contemporary Problems for Tenth Grade*, part 2, p. 95, cited by Kenneth R. Timmerman, *Preachers of Hate*, 2003, p. 157).

The *Reader and Literary Texts for Eighth Grade* of Palestinian schools requires the memorization of a poem titled, “Palestine.” It calls for a battle to the death against Israel. “My brothers! The oppressors [Israelis] have overstepped the boundary. Therefore jihad and sacrifice are a duty . . . are we to let them steal its Arab nature? . . . Draw your sword . . . let us gather for war

with red blood and blazing fire . . . Death shall call and the sword shall be crazed from much slaughter . . . Oh Palestine, the youth will redeem your land” (ibid., p. 158).

On goes the message throughout the school years. It is small wonder that the youths of Palestine are eager recruits for Hamas and Islamic Jihad’s suicide missions against Israeli soldiers and civilians. After 100 days in office, Abbas has not ordered any change in the textbooks.

Nor has Abbas done anything to change the tenor of PATV. On the first Friday after his government announced it would control and vet all sermons delivered in the West Bank and Gaza, a PA-employed cleric, with Abbas in the audience, celebrated International Women’s Day by encouraging mothers to send their children to their deaths on suicide missions against Israel (Joel Mowbray, “The Real Mahmoud Abbas,” April 4, 2005, www.townhall.com).

“Arafat in Western clothing”

Mowbray calls Abbas “Yasser Arafat in Western clothing.” Abbas is an educator by profession, and he advocates a more genteel approach to overthrowing Israel than did Arafat. First the PA should establish a Palestinian state, and then it should revert “to violence to wipe out all of Israel.” Mowbray says that Abbas’ criticism of terror “is based on his belief that slaughtering innocent civilians is merely strategically unhelpful” (ibid.)

Abbas is an effective fund-raiser for the PA cause. Nothing has been said publicly about the billions in international aid that Arafat siphoned off and squirreled away in private bank accounts.

But apart from past aid, Abbas has secured promises of \$12 million from China, \$15 million from India and \$100 million from Japan (on top of \$60 million given since the death of Arafat). Additionally, the EU gives 10 million euros *per month* (about \$13 million U.S. dollars). The U.S. Congress recently approved a \$200-million aid package, and it is considering another \$160 million in aid next year. Burned by the larceny of Arafat’s crowd, Congress is attaching many restrictions on its grants.

Many are clamoring for reforms in

the PA, but making changes isn’t easy. In “The 100 Days of Abu Mazen [another name for Abbas],” Uri Avnery warns that the Palestinians are watching Abbas too (*Counterpunch*, April 20, 2005). They are waiting to see if there is any benefit to his trusting in American promises to ensure a fair and even pursuit of the “Roadmap.”

Abbas secured a ceasefire from Palestinian militants against Israeli settlements in Gaza. Palestinians are watching Abbas to see if his way works. Avnery points out that the *hamulah* (“extended family”) is important in all Arab societies, especially so in the Palestinian. Abbas, he says, must move cautiously, building consent as he does so, lest he lose the ability to govern.

PA preparing for war

There are voices of warning from people who are watching Abbas from outside Palestine, people who doubt that he wants to make a lasting peace with Israel. Clearly, Joel Mowbray’s is one such voice. Caroline Glick’s is another. She is the senior Middle East fellow at the Center for Security Policy in Washington, D.C., and the deputy managing editor of *The Jerusalem Post*.

She warns that both the United States and Israel are wrong to trust Abbas, noting that the PA is greatly increasing its capacity to make war by acquiring SA-7 Strella anti-aircraft missiles from Russia. The Palestinians are reorganizing, not disbanding their “military-terrorist forces in a way that will prepare them for the next round of terror war against Israel.”

Further, she notes that “Abbas’ offer [in mid-March] to the Palestinian terror groups outside the PA umbrella to move their headquarters from Damascus to Gaza after Israel’s evacuation of the area shows that in his strategic thinking, the territory, once empty of Israeli presence, will be transformed into a *center for global terror*” (“The Palestine Problem,” April 4, 2005, emphasis added).

Equally chilling is Kenneth Timmerman’s warning that when Palestine is a legitimately constituted state, it could sign a mutual defense pact with Iran, each pledging to defend the other if either comes under threat of attack. Obviously, Palestinians could do

nothing to help Iran, but imagine the scene of the Iranian navy anchored off Palestine’s seaport, and Iranian air force jets landing at Palestine’s airport.

Has Washington thought through the consequences of its present course of sponsoring a Palestinian state and its backing of Mahmoud Abbas?

On her recent commendable good will tour of the Middle East, Mrs. Bush was heckled by protestors in Jerusalem. She told them, “We’re reminded again of what we all want, what every one of us prays for. What we all want is peace.”

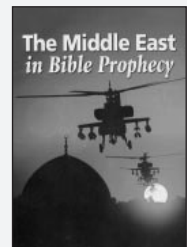
Indeed, we do. But peace sought through complex politics and entangling alliances is an illusion of the genuine article. As the prophet Zechariah warned, the consequences of “repositioning” Jerusalem will be injurious to all parties.

In John 14:27, Jesus contrasted His peace with the peace that the world gives. The United Church of God looks for His peace that will only come when the Prince of Peace returns to Jerusalem and establishes an entirely different form of government than any created by men. Only *that* government, the Kingdom of God, will be able to bring peace to this weary city.

For additional insight into end-time prophecy about this region, see our booklet *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. And, for the biblical vision of the one government that can and that will bring peace, see our booklet *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. ❖

Recommended Reading

What is happening in the volatile Middle East, and where will it lead? For more information, request or download our informative booklets *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*, as well as *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. They are free of charge.



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Thousand-Year-Old Lessons From the Crusades for Today

Kingdom of Heaven is a movie about the Crusades, a clash of civilizations between Islam and Christianity that lasted two centuries. Could a similar clash of civilizations lie ahead?

by Melvin Rhodes

Kingdom of Heaven is a new movie about the Crusades. So far as historical movies go, it's fairly accurate. However, that in itself is a cause for concern.

To most Westerners, the Crusades are ancient history. For Americans, it's ancient history about something that occurred thousands of miles away, totally irrelevant to anything going on today.

Not so in the Middle East, where the Crusades are remembered as a fairly recent event and where the word *crusade* (Arabic: *al-Salibiyyah*) is highly emotive. Soon after Sept. 11, President Bush called for a "crusade" against Islamic fundamentalism. He has never used the word again!

The concern about the movie is that the Muslims end up looking better than the so-called Christians. "So-called" because the Crusader version of Christianity was not, to put it mildly, biblically based. When the Crusaders took Jerusalem, they slaughtered all the Muslims and Jews. By contrast, when the Islamic forces recaptured Jerusalem, they let the captives go.

The fear is that this movie could stir up anti-Western passions throughout the Islamic world.

That's happened anyway. Thanks to *Newsweek* magazine, which ran a story in its May 9 issue claiming that American forces desecrated the Koran, anti-American riots took place in a number of countries, leaving more than a dozen people dead.

Although *Newsweek* retracted the story, their columnist Eleanor Clift pointed out on NPR's *Diane Rehm Show* (May 20) that this does not mean the story is false. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice apologized to Muslims on behalf of the United States and assured them that the American government has great respect for Islam and the Koran.

Interestingly, nobody in the mainstream media realized the full implications of these developments. The cold reality is that Islam in general and the Koran in particular cannot be criticized. This goes to the very core of free speech issues upon which our modern Western civilization has been built.

Remember Theo van Gogh? Mr. Van Gogh, a



Kingdom of Heaven, a recent Hollywood epic about the Crusades, is a reminder of this bloody period. Could it happen again?

Dutch filmmaker, was ritually slaughtered on the streets of Amsterdam last November for producing a 10-minute film called *Submission*. The film's title was a play on words—Islam means "submission." The short documentary exposed the cruel way in which many Muslim women are treated by their husbands, to whom they must be submissive. A prominent Islamic female Dutch politician had helped with the making of the film. In a country that prides itself on a long history of freedom of speech, she had to go into hiding.

A couple of days after the riots, my local newspaper carried an article by Ellen Goodman attacking "Intelligent Design." The article was titled "Creationism, by Another Name," and was nothing more than an attack on the biblical account of creation (*Lansing State Journal*, May 16, 2005).

No apology to Christians has been heard from anybody in the Bush administration following this article! None is expected. But then, Christians were not out on the streets rioting. Why would they? Prominent intellectuals have been attacking the Bible for two centuries.

These attacks may actually increase now that it's clear that criticism of the Koran will not be tolerat-

One concern about the movie Kingdom of Heaven is that the Muslims end up looking better than the so-called Christians. The fear is that this movie could stir up anti-Western passions throughout the Islamic world.

ed. Christian fundamentalists are set to be targeted in a way that Islamic fundamentalists cannot be! Many Europeans already see President Bush as a more dangerous “religious fanatic” than Osama bin Laden. Appeasement didn’t end with pre-World War II British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain!

None of this should be surprising. The increasing secularization of the West was a constant throughout the 20th century. In the ’60s “God is dead” was a popular expression, meaning that religion had become irrelevant. Two generations have since grown up with little or no knowledge of the Bible. Morality came under assault in the same decade, with few now having any qualms about committing adultery or fornication.

In the same decade many former colonies got their independence from European powers. Those same European powers are filled with guilt about their colonial past, though their record was, on balance, often better than what has followed.

Put these two factors together—religious ignorance and postcolonial guilt—and we can only expect the appeasement of Islam to continue! But as with Neville Chamberlain on the eve of World War II, there will come a point when even the liberal appeasers will not be able to deny the threat facing Western civilization.

Will Israel reach 100?

Religious ignorance and postcolonial guilt affect European thinking on Israel. The only nation in the Middle East that embraces Western values, including the democratic political system, Israel is seen by many as a latter-day colonial power, imposing an alien way of life on an area previously dominated by Muslims. Israel, somehow, is equated with European colonialism.

And the Crusaders. Just as the Catholic Crusaders went into the Holy Land and imposed their religion and way of life on the area, so Israel is seen as doing the same. The Jewish state is simply viewed as one more Crusader castle planted in the Islamic realm by a guilt-ridden post-World War II Western world.

Many even feel that just as the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem lasted less than a century, so will Israel. Even Israelis are concerned about this.



After a long period of being pushed around by the forces of Islam, the pope rallied Europeans to fight back. Could the same happen again?

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An article by Benjamin Schwarz in the May 2005 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* asked the question: “Will Israel Live to 100?” The article highlights Israel’s demographic dilemma, that its very low birthrate contrasts sharply with that of the Palestinians and neighboring Arab states. This threatens Israel’s future security. Demographic trends show that if the situation doesn’t change, the country will not be able to sustain itself long-term.

“Israel’s long-term prospects are bleak. The Zionist enterprise has never been able to transcend the demographic realities that have haunted it from its inception,” writes Mr. Schwarz.

These demographic pressures are a primary reason Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is agreeing to Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and why he is anxious for a peace agreement with the Palestinians. However, this may make things worse, since the Palestinians demand the right to return to their ancestral homelands within Israel’s borders. It is doubtful that many would actually return, but if they should, this alone would result in a Palestinian majority in Israel, giving the Palestinians a majority in a future Israeli election.

Adding to pressure on Mr. Sharon is the fact that the extremist organization Hamas is gaining support among the

Palestinians. This seems to be a trend across the Middle East. Extremists in neighboring Egypt and Syria would likely win any free election, making it problematic for the United States to push too much for democratic reform in the region.

Lessons from the Crusades

There are remarkable similarities between the time of the Crusades and now. During the 11th century, shortly after the end of the first millennium and the beginning of the second, there was a widespread belief in Europe that the end of the world was imminent. There was also a widespread peace movement, as there is now.

The Crusades followed centuries of Islamic encroachment on Europe and European interests. After Muhammad’s death in A.D. 632, his followers rapidly conquered North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. Exactly a century after the death of the prophet, they reached the gates of Paris, where they were defeated by the forces of Charles Martel, grandfather of Charlemagne, crowned Holy Roman emperor by the pope.

In the east, they kept eating away at the territory of the Byzantine Empire, the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Eventually, it became impossible for Christians to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and other cities in the Holy Land.

With Islamic forces close to the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus appealed to the West for help. His appeal came only four decades after a major schism between East and West, separating the two branches of European Christianity. Pope Urban II likely saw an opportunity here to heal the breach and restore Christian unity by helping out in the Middle East. In 1095 at the Council of Clermont in southern France, the pope called for a Crusade to defend the Holy Land from Islam.

After a long period of being pushed around by the forces of Islam, it was the pope who rallied Europeans to fight back. Could the same happen again?

A coming clash of civilizations

Bible prophecy shows us that “at the time of the end” there will be a clash between two powerful forces, the kings of the North and of the South. You can read about this in Daniel 11, beginning at verse 40.

Formerly, the kings of the North and South were the Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties that dominated the Middle East from after the time of Alexander the Great until the Roman Empire conquered both kingdoms. They greatly impacted the Jewish people, who were often caught in the middle as these two powers, one to the north of Jerusalem and one to the south, fought each other.

There is a major leap in the prophecy from the ancient world to modern times, a period during which there was no Jewish nation in the Holy Land. The Jewish nation of Israel was reestablished in 1948, just 57 years ago. Only in these 57 years has it been possible for the last few verses of this chapter to be fulfilled. Again, two powers, one to the north of Jerusalem and the other to the south, are going to play a major role in the world.

“At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him” (Daniel 11:40). The King James translation uses the expression “push at him.” It does not have to be a direct attack. “And the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.”

Continuing, in verse 41: “He shall also enter the Glorious Land,” the Holy Land

given to the tribes of Israel thousands of years ago.

Many Muslims have long wanted to unite those who share the same faith. Arab peoples, mostly Muslim, have wanted similar unity for their peoples, presently divided into 22 different countries.

In the 1950s and '60s hopes were raised that revolutionary leader President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt would bring about Arab unity, but the dream was never realized. Today, Islamic fundamentalists share the same zeal. Their following grows across the Middle East, fueled by fears of American domination following the Iraqi invasion of 2003, often considered another Crusade.


At the same time, Europeans dream of uniting their continent, just as Pope Urban II did almost 1,000 years ago. The same book of Daniel that prophesied the future kings of the North and South, mostly fulfilled in ancient times, also predicted the coming of the Roman Empire. A final revival of that empire is still to take place, when “ten kings . . . receive authority for

one hour as kings with the beast” (Revelation 17:12). “One hour” is symbolic, meaning that their union will not last long. This union of nations will exist immediately prior to Christ’s return as they “will make war with the Lamb” (verse 14). Once again, the Catholic Church is involved in this drive toward European unity.

These two forces are set to clash again, just as they did in the 11th century. The buildup to this clash of civilizations is taking place even now. As massive immigration into the West from Islamic countries leads to greater pressure on the West to accommodate the Islamic religion, so the prospect of a backlash increases. Additionally, there is the economic threat from a region that controls most of the world’s oil. Added to both is the constant threat of Islamic terrorism.

Eventually, the European nations will have to act or face extinction. Once again, it could be a pope who calls the various countries of Europe together to defend their interests against the forces of Islam. ❖

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60 Years After the War in Europe

Do you ever wonder what prevents evil from triumphing in the world? This year marks the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe and the Pacific. Looking at that war should make us think about the deep currents of good and evil that flow in this world.

by Darris McNeely

On May 9, more than 50 world leaders gathered in Moscow to celebrate the end of World War II. Over 40 million people perished in that conflict. It is fitting that Russia hosted the event since it lost more people, 27 million, than any other nation. Sixty years later they still reflect on what that conflict meant to the world.

Later this year there will be the commemoration of the end of the war in the Pacific theater and we'll see more ceremonies marking that event. Last year it was the 60th anniversary of D-Day that brought leaders to France to remember. Many observers feel this will be the last great commemoration for the generation that fought in that global conflict.

Recently I heard U.S. Senator Robert Dole, himself a veteran who was wounded in Italy during the last days of the war, commenting on radio about how few Americans who fought then are still alive. The "greatest generation" is rapidly leaving us. Their story is truly one of heroic proportions.

Evil defeated—yet forgotten

Good and evil were clearly defined in that war. Nazi fascism was embodied in Benito Mussolini of Italy, Emperor Hirohito of Japan and, worst of all, Germany's Adolf Hitler. Had this original "axis of evil" won, it is likely I would not be writing to you in English. The entire history of the past 60 years would be much different.

But they did not win. America came late to that conflict, but made the decisive difference, turning the tide along with the other Allied powers. America's role in that conflict is not fully understood, nor, some would say, fully appreciated, by a new generation in Europe. This collective amnesia is part of the growing divide between Europe and the United States and has some serious consequences.

One is that few Europeans today feel indebted to America for the major role it played in saving them from Nazism and returning freedom to their

soil. World War II is the one item of European history about which Americans are likely to be well versed. For the past 60 years it has been the theme of movies, books and personal stories of those who lived through it.

This is why Americans puzzle over the European failure to support American intervention in Iraq. "We spent our blood to give you freedom; now why can't you support the same for another nation?" The past is forgotten, as if it didn't happen.

Europeans avidly consume American films and follow American politics. They are generally better informed about America than Americans are about them, and can explain reasons for the vast gulf. The European view of America was largely shaped before the recent Iraq war, but it seems the U.S. role in WWII has been forgotten.

Another consequence of this amnesia is the failure to see potential for a sudden shift in governmental policy toward a reduction of personal liberties. People will vote for anti-immigration parties without thinking they are voting for ideas that once led to the ovens of Treblinka or Auschwitz. Sadly, some have even forgotten what these names stand for.

Some observers speculate that an attack on a major European nation on the scale of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on America could quickly tip the scales of democracy toward a totalitarian form of government. Sixty years after the war one hears the strains of Kipling's poem, "Recessional," with its haunting refrain of "lest we forget, lest we forget!"

A war that shaped the century

The 20th century was one of mankind's bloodiest periods. World War II was really a continuation of World War I and represents the high-water mark of a century of tragedy. It cast its defining shadow over the next 50 years, not only for nations, but for individuals as well.

My father went to the war as a young man, newly married and with a newborn son, my older

Few Europeans today feel indebted to America for the major role it played in saving them from Nazism and returning freedom to their soil.

brother. Three of his brothers went off with him. They were descended from a stock of people who historically heeded their country's call to fight its battles.

My father left the small family farm near a small Missouri town, not knowing anything of the horrors of war. He fought his way from the beaches of France to the forests of Germany before returning home.

What he did and saw during that time was locked deep within his mind and heart. But it altered his personality just enough that the woman he married could tell. Years later my mother would say, with a note of melancholy in her voice, that my father was not the same man when he returned from the war. The war cast a long shadow in our family.

How much have we learned?

From the ashes of this global conflict came the idea for the United Nations, a world body dedicated to preventing another global catastrophe. The United Nations has a spotty record. It hasn't prevented many wars and sometimes its own troops have participated in acts of atrocity. At times it has given its stage to despots such as Yasser Arafat whose legacy is terror and conflict rather than peace.

Senator Dole summed up much of the legacy of the past 60 years in a piece he recently wrote for the *Wall Street Journal*. He said: "Admittedly, our victory was not total. No victory ever is. As the Cold War demonstrated, our way of life remained imperiled, and millions of east Europeans were trapped in tyranny.

"Today, many have still not fully accepted the state of Israel, and the Middle East remains troubled. Many governments are no more willing than before to grant freedom to their people. The slaughters orchestrated by Hitler and Stalin have given way to mass murder in Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur. Though many claim to have learned from the unparalleled horrors of the 20th century, it is often not evident. Sadly, we know there will be more genocide" (May 6, 2005).

God is in control

So let me go back to my question, *What keeps evil from triumphing in this world?* The answer is that there must be a God who controls the course of nations in this world and keeps one nation, empire or ideology from gaining total control over all

others. Should that ever happen, the world could be plunged into another dark age.

Notice what the prophet Daniel was inspired to tell one of the world's first despots, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It is a message that helps us understand that God controls the course of world events.

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him" (Daniel 2:20-22).

Here is one of the little-known keys to understanding world history. You won't hear it taught in most classrooms or discussed by newsmen and commentators.

Nebuchadnezzar ruled over a vast realm and desired to bring his version of "the good life" to all others. History has seen that when messianic rulers arise with the ambition to extend their world vision over all others, the result is always war and destruction.

You see, there has never been one political, religious or philosophical system on which all races and nations could agree. The world is too divided by language and ethnic custom to see everyone come together under one banner of thought.

Jesus Christ's window on the future

Christ said that our day, the biblical "time of the end," would be one of nations rising against other nations in constant conflict. Notice what Christ said to His disciples in the Olivet Prophecy of Matthew 24.

"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places . . . All these are the beginning of sorrows" (verses 6-8).

Here in this prophecy Christ gives a great deal of warning about some pretty bad world conditions. It reads like a lot of our news headlines today—war, famine, pestilence and bad government causing a lot of suffering.

Yet through this chapter runs a thread of promise from Christ that the Father is in

control of events. He says, "He who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). He indicates that His protection will be on a small group of people who can discern the times and see the hand of God behind world events, and who remain close to Him no matter what.

He also says that for the sake of that small group called "the elect," this time of turmoil will be cut short and the human race will not be extinguished.

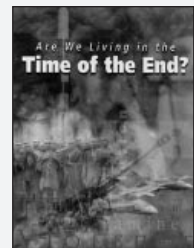
The horrors of war are both arbitrary and complete. The great wars of the 20th century destroyed and altered the faith of so many. The story of one 10-year-old girl perhaps says it best. One of the German bombing raids on London blew the roof off her parents' house. She struggled to understand where God was in all the destruction of her neighborhood: "I wondered why the God that my mother prayed to had taken our neighbors' lives, but left our piano untouched."

Now that is indeed a lot to understand. God is the one who keeps evil from overcoming this world and bringing the human experience to a tragic close. God is the one who is in control of events, and He is guiding this world to a time when His good and His way triumph over all other ideas.

We have a booklet titled *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* You can begin reading this booklet to understand our times and how God is guiding and directing world events to a conclusion that will usher in a time of peace that will have no end. ❖

Recommended Reading

The Bible describes the time leading up to the return of Jesus Christ to this earth as the time of the end. How can we know when that time is upon us? Is it here now? For more information, request *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* as well as *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*. They are free of charge.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download them from our Web site at www.wnponline.org

When the Gas Pumps in Europe Run Dry

Because of its dependence on imported energy, the EU is an economic giant standing on feet of clay.

by Paul Kieffer

It is unusual for a well-known European politician to make the rounds soliciting better trade conditions. It is even more unusual that two influential Europeans visit the same region within a matter of weeks to express Europe's interest in an important commodity. That's the way it was earlier this year when German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs both visited the oil-rich Persian Gulf region.

In February Schroeder made a stop in Kuwait during his weeklong trip through seven Persian Gulf countries. There he expressed his unease about the high oil prices by stating, "We are very, very concerned." He added, "We are interested in the most reasonable oil price as possible." Schroeder also had a solution for rising oil prices: Increase production.

At the beginning of April Piebalgs also visited Kuwait, voicing interest in good trading relations with the Persian Gulf countries and other OPEC members. Piebalgs met with Kuwaiti Minister of Energy Sheik Ahmed Fahad al Ahmed al Sabah, who is also the chairman of OPEC, to discuss stabilizing the price of oil.

Europe's dependence on foreign energy

Thirty years after the oil shock resulting from the Yom Kippur War, Europe is still dependent on foreign energy sources. It has been possible to slow the consumption of oil through other sources of energy (especially natural gas) but not to reverse the ever-increasing demand. At the beginning of the 1970s it took 12 million barrels of oil to meet Europe's daily needs. By 2001, European consumption had grown to 14.4 million barrels daily.

Europe's energy demands increase 1 percent to 2 percent a year, small in comparison to the increased energy usage in the United States. Since 1991, oil consumption in the United States has increased 17 percent compared to 7 percent for the "old" European countries. However, its smaller increase in oil consumption does not change the fact that Europe is heavily dependent on foreign energy sources.

Piebalgs emphasized the importance of energy in the daily lives of Europeans: "Energy affects

every aspect of our life—it gives us light, heating, and provides us with fuel allowing us to use transport and various appliances. Did you know that in 2030 most—70%—of European Union's energy needs will have to be covered with imported energy, if the current energy consumption trends in Europe are not reversed?"

The estimates of the European Commission for the two most important energy sources are sobering. By the year 2030 the EU would have to increase total oil imports from 75 percent to 90 percent. Currently OPEC countries supply half of the EU's oil imports. The increase in oil consumption could be contained by using more natural gas, but the EU is also dependent on foreign sources for gas. If present trends continue, the EU will have to increase importation of natural gas from 40 percent to 70 percent of total consumption by 2030.

Europe is an example of how global developments can affect an area that is lacking its own energy sources. Since the oil embargo of 1973, Europe has tried to improve energy conservation, but despite a measure of success, Europe is faced with increased energy costs—because the demand for energy worldwide is growing and the supply is limited. Speculation about an increase in the price of oil to \$100 per barrel by summer has led Commissioner Piebalgs to consider an EU speed limit of 55 miles per hour, which would represent a drastic change for Europeans' driving habits.

Growing demand for oil worldwide

With a share of 40 percent, oil remains the largest component in the world's energy equation. Even though natural gas usage is expected to increase (it is currently 20 percent of world energy consumption), oil will retain its share.

The economic law of supply and demand cannot be avoided when it comes to the price of oil. The equation is quite simple: Worldwide demand is increasing and production is either stagnating or not increasing fast enough.

The increase in demand is often attributed to China's growing consumption of oil. China's annual consumption has grown each year for over a decade. However, energy consumption in America and Europe is growing as well. There

Thirty years after the oil shock resulting from the Yom Kippur War, Europe is still dependent on foreign energy sources.

doesn't seem to be any limit to America's thirst for oil.

Despite being in third place on the list of oil producers with an estimated 7.5 million barrels pumped a day, America is the only major oil producer dependent on imports. With its consumption of 20 million barrels a day, America is the unchallenged leader in oil usage, leading China by more than a 3 to 1 margin. Even more amazing is a UN analysis showing that the United States consumes about 25 percent of all fossil fuels (coal, gas and oil) burned worldwide.

During the first 90 years of its oil production, America needed no imports whatsoever. Just a few years after World War II America needed to import oil to meet its needs, and imports now make up about 60 percent of daily consumption. Some of that oil comes from America's neighbors like Mexico, but 15 percent of the oil used in the United States is imported from Saudi Arabia.

Oil consumption in China has grown by 150 percent in the last 10 years, including last year's increase of 14 percent. Two years ago, China replaced Japan as the world's second-largest consumer of oil.

Will tight oil market soon ease?

Some observers believe that the recent spike in oil prices is only temporary and will be relieved by the end of the year because of a "hard landing" in the booming Chinese economy. True, a slowdown in China's economic growth could help ease world oil markets. However, it is a complete illusion to believe that this will permanently solve the world oil crisis.

The energy crisis of the 1970s proves the point. A worldwide economic slowdown and better fuel efficiency—even in the United States—alleviated tight market conditions. The result was that world oil consumption in 1993 was only slightly more than at the height of the crisis in 1979.

Oil consumption grew at a fast pace in the 1990s. The current high price for oil on world markets is all the more remarkable in view of the general economic slowdown in Western countries. How much oil would be consumed if growth rates in industrialized countries were to reach the level of the mid 1990s?

Regardless of what happens in the West, demand for oil in Asia will continue

to rise. The potential for increased consumption appears to be sky-high. Just look at China's per capita consumption when compared to the United States: Each American consumes on average 24 barrels of oil a year. A Chinese citizen, by contrast, uses only two barrels of oil annually.

However, China's economic development is producing a Chinese "middle class" that wants to own and drive cars. Consider this: China's per capita oil consumption is about one third as high as Mexico's, and Mexico's is 75 percent less than in the United States. If per capita consumption in China were to rise to the level of Mexico's, *world oil production would have to double to meet the increased demand!*

And China isn't the only Asian country with a growing appetite for oil. India and its more than 1 billion people are using more oil each year—11 percent more last year alone. The growth rate in Indian oil consumption means that India will soon replace Germany as the world's fifth-largest oil consumer. Within seven years, daily oil consumption in India will reach 5 million barrels; and by the year 2020 India will be the third-largest consumer and importer of oil, trailing only the United States and China.

Limited supply

The situation in countries like China and India is different from that of the United States or Western Europe. Years of continued development lie ahead of China and India for their people to have a standard of living similar to that of the West. The only way that goal can be achieved is for world oil production to increase.

There's just one problem: Where is the additional oil going to be produced? Experts point out that there has not been a major new oil discovery in the last 30 years. Oil production in countries that are major producers but also big consumers—America, China, Russia, the United Kingdom and even Mexico—has peaked or will peak soon.

England is a prime example of declining oil production. The North Sea fields (British and Norwegian) produced about 9 percent of the world's oil in 1998. With their North Sea fields the British were net exporters of oil for more than 20 years. With the decline in British North Sea production, the British are again among the

net importers of oil, and the economic viability of their North Sea oil fields is predicted to be minimal in another 10 years.

In view of current trends, former British Secretary of Energy David Howell predicts the demand for oil will reach 122 million barrels daily by 2025. Current daily consumption is estimated to be about 82 million barrels, about 35 percent more than the 60 million barrels consumed daily in 1980.

Why haven't any major oil fields been found in recent years? Some experts believe that they have all been found. In addition, some of the major fields currently utilized have already reached the midpoint of their economic viability. Once that happens, oil production peaks and then drops rapidly, simply because more and more pressure is needed to pump the remaining oil to the surface.

One thing is sure: In the long term the price of oil can go no place but up. The question isn't *if* but *when*.

"It's every man for himself"

Considering the tight conditions on world oil markets and the expectation of future supply problems, it is only prudent that the European Union seek improved trade relations with the Persian Gulf region. Doing nothing would be a fatal mistake, especially since other countries are looking out for their own needs.

China's leaders know how vulnerable their country's economic development is when it comes to oil. "Since 2003 China's foreign policy is geared to securing raw materials and energy worldwide . . . In international circles concern is growing that authoritarian China could use its military muscles to secure its energy needs" (*Die Welt*, March 14, 2005).

Military intervention as a means of securing raw materials is nothing new. Many experts view the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 as a response to America's prohibition on exporting scrap iron and other materials to Imperial Japan for its war machine.

America also knows how to protect its economic interests. In his book *A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order*, American author F. William Engdahl takes his readers through a history of the oil industry's influence on the world economy.

(See "GAS PUMPS," page 15)

A Downsized Lifestyle Is Coming—Will You Make the Adjustment?

Our world is changing in ways we never considered. The dominance that affluent nations have enjoyed is about to end. Will peoples of the rich world downsize their lifestyle? Will people who have rarely if ever had to “tighten their belts” be able to make the painful change?

by Graemme Marshall

For most of their lives, working people have trusted that upon retirement they would be able to receive a livable pension or social security. Why? Because the government promised it! But many today now find that when retirement age comes around, they can no longer afford to stop working.

If you have been paying into a retirement fund, do you expect to get back your due? What change in lifestyle would happen to you if there were no retirement fund available? What social security could a government pay out if it is bankrupt?

Is government-funded retirement certain?

U.S. President George W. Bush sounded an ominous warning in a speech in South Carolina recently. Reuters reported on April 18, 2005, that President Bush painted a “dire picture of Social Security’s future if nothing is done,” saying the problems would start in three years when the first baby boomers retire.

He added, “By 2034 the annual shortfall will be more than \$300 billion and by the year 2041 the entire system will be bankrupt.” He urged younger workers to consider private retirement accounts. That’s too late for older workers. Bush also cited a proposal to further raise the retirement age, perhaps even to age 70.

Canada’s pension funds also are in jeopardy. Mercer Human Resource Consulting said of Canadian health and corporate pension plans, “The financial health of Canadian pension plans ended the first quarter of 2005 as weak as at any point in the last few years” (Canwest News Service).

They further explained that at the end of last year about 70 percent of pension funds wouldn’t have had enough money to fully cover their pension promises if they were wound up, and that was

no improvement over the year before. Think of that, 70 percent wouldn’t have had the money to fulfill their pension promises!

So, it’s fair to ask, what are the realistic chances of your receiving your paid-for pension fund in your lifetime? The source above offered some comfort by saying that pension plan members should still receive the retirement benefits they’ve been promised, as long as their employer doesn’t go bankrupt.

Go bankrupt? Many companies have been doing just that and turning their pension obligations over to the government to fulfill. But what is the chance of the government going bankrupt? The answer is actually very high.

Investigative journalist Michael Harris wrote, “People with money are always worried about it. So when two of the richest Americans in the world start selling their U.S. dollars, it should get at least as much attention as the Super Bowl. Warren Buffet and Bill Gates don’t like what they see on the economic horizon. How could they? The world’s ‘richest’ country, their country, is awash in unprecedented debt” (*Ottawa Sun*, Feb. 4, 2005).

He explains that if we add up *all* the debt in the United States, the number is four times that of the gross domestic product. To run a deficit like that, governments must borrow from others to service the indebtedness. Who do they tap? Certainly not the citizens who have little savings. So they look to foreign governments. In order for Americans to continue to live beyond their means (maintain their lifestyle), their biggest creditors are now foreign governments.

This sounds like a biblical warning bell to us from something God said to His people about withdrawing His blessings from them. Deuteronomy 28:44 describes a curse to come when the foreigner “will let you have his wealth at interest, and will have no need of yours: he will be

If you have been paying into a retirement fund, do you expect to get back your due? What change in lifestyle would happen to you if there were no retirement fund available?

the head and you the tail” (Bible in Better English).

Michael Harris explains that the giant economies of Asia, including China, Japan and India, now hold \$2.2 trillion of America’s debt in the form of U.S. dollars. He poses the question of what would happen if America’s creditors decide to reduce their lending. He answers by saying, “Our credit-driven consumer merry-go-round would lurch to a halt and the illusion of prosperity would disappear.”

Up until now, people have believed that no creditor would ever call in Uncle Sam’s IOU. But last year when China’s reserves grew massively, the Chinese kept only 25 percent of their reserves in U.S. dollars. What would happen if there was a major retreat from U.S. dollars to other currencies like the euro?

If the U.S. dollar collapsed as the accepted international currency, the lifestyle we have been accustomed to for the past several decades would be drastically altered.

Would you and your family, neighbors or friends be able to adjust? What would “belt-tightening” mean for us all? Are we rapidly approaching a prophesied time when, for North America in particular, we must now borrow to maintain “the good life”?

Applying Deuteronomy to the modern Israelite nation of the United States indicates a dramatic shift from being able to bankroll much of the world to becoming a nation bankrolled at the pleasure of other nations. If an international creditor ever pulled the plug on America’s national borrowing, what sort of downsizing would happen? Are you ready to tighten your belt? How much downsizing of your lifestyle is around the corner?

North America in a shifting world

We are on the verge of major power shifts and economic changes. In recent decades, Canada, for example, has enjoyed some influence in the world. But is this era over? Canada is now faced with the critical challenge of repositioning herself in a much different world.

With tighter U.S. border restrictions, Canada finds its productive role becoming increasingly dependent, almost as a satellite of the United States. Canada has not maintained its military, and its ability to respond to global challenges has dimin-

ished. And the United States has changed; it no longer needs Canadian airspace for defense and its priorities have shifted to the war against terrorism. Canada will be affected by the emerging new global powers of China, India and Europe.

The next several decades will see stunning shifts in world power and activity. The U.S. National Intelligence Council, in a recent report called “Mapping the Global Future,” warns that “at no time since the formation of the Western alliance system in 1949 have the shape and nature of international arrangements been in such a state of flux.” The chart below, “Percentage Share of World GDP,” is how it forecasts the change.

The likely emergence of China and India and others as new major global players will transform the geopolitical landscape. The report explains that we could see change “with impacts potentially as dramatic as those in the previous two centuries. In the same way that commentators refer to the 1900s as the American century, the 21st century may be seen as a time when Asia, led by China and India, comes into its own.”

The report further adds that globalization in the 21st century is more likely to have an Asian face than an American one, as China and India boost their investments and build their own multinationals and expand their economic reach.

What will this mean for North America?

For one thing, there certainly will be a redrawing of the world geopolitical map. The report continues, “How we mentally map the world in 2020 will change radically. The ‘arriviste’ powers—China, India and perhaps others such as Brazil and

Indonesia—have the potential to render obsolete the old categories of East and West, North and South, aligned and non-aligned, developed and developing. Traditional geographic groupings will increasingly lose salience in international relations.”

Energy needs will affect our lifestyle

Note the projected figures in the sidebar “Number of Cars Owned” from the U.S. National Intelligence Council. While Russia, Japan and Germany are projected to have modest gains, note the huge changes expected for China and India. Consider what this will do through competition for fuel supplies. It is inevitable that North American fuel prices will dramatically increase. Michael Harris, quoted earlier, explained, “Asia’s huge and aggressively expanding economies are now competing with the U.S. for energy resources.”

Will two-, three- and four-car North American families be able to afford to run even one of them in the future? World forecasters cannot accurately say what the future will bring, nor predict the inevitable surprises that will occur. But we do know, from revealed Bible prophecy, that the years ahead will bring great challenges in maintaining the so far pleasantly enjoyed North American lifestyle.

Will you be able to make the adjustments when they come? For further study, be sure to request our free booklet *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* It will help prepare you for the times ahead. And to understand the Bible prophecies about America, Britain, Canada, Australia and other English-speaking areas and what they mean for today, be sure to request *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. ❖

Percentage Share of World GDP (in terms of purchasing power parity)

	Current		2050
United States	27.2	down to	18.6
China	16.2	up to	27.4
India	6.1	up to	17.5
Russia	3.4		3.1
Brazil	3.4		4.3
Japan	9.3		3.2
Germany	5.6		2.3
UK	4.0		2.0

(Source: Goldman Sachs estimates)

Number of Cars Owned (thousands)

	2005	2030	2050
U.S.	148,656	195,651	233,174
China	19,251	273,760	514,041
India	9,039	114,812	610,902
Brazil	27,917	95,545	147,343

(Source: Goldman Sachs BRICs Model projections)

“SEEING,” (Continued from page 16)

Coaxing the field to give up its bones

Their spot of death has now become the place of search. The rhythm of the seasons brings the melt of snow and the thaw of ground. Two thousand victims have been recovered, but it is believed 9,000 yet remain. The searchers come with shovels, spades, metal detectors and probes. Each is used to coax the grassy field to give up its secrets—to give up its bones!

Murphy happened upon two weeks of work that uncovered the remains of 94 men. There were pelvic bones, skulls, ribs and knee bones lying on plastic sheets. Though many bones are found, many soldiers still go unnamed because the troops often considered it bad luck to carry the small plastic ID capsules. Thus, between the scattering of bones and the lack of ID, only one in 100 can be identified.

Murphy shared one of the “identified finds” of this year. The remains were almost “Pompeian,” captured in freeze-frame. This man’s ID capsule was in place, revealing him to be Pavel Potilysen, a 36-year-old soldier from the village of Bateni. His skeletal fingers were found clutching a pair of binoculars. His death seemed to have been caused by the shrapnel of an exploded grenade that left him frozen in death’s grip. Finding his name was encouraging to searchers, for most remains will not be identified.

In 1941 and 1942, Stalin put up a great wall of men to try to stop Hitler in his tracks. Modern historians are beginning to attribute Hitler’s defeat as much to the staggering number of men Soviet generals were willing to sacrifice as to the shrewdness of their battle tactics.

Life-changing effects

Yuri Smirnov, chairman of the Union of Search Teams of Russia, bluntly states: “It turned out there are not dozens or hundreds of thousands of people missing, but millions. It turns out that from Brest in the West to Sakhalin, the country is covered with bones. And I decided I should take time to look for these people.” It is often the case that people have a good suspicion of where the skeletal remains lie, but no one has the time to sift, and time is what it takes. Time to find men who were thrown into tank trenches, thrown into bomb

craters or blown to smithereens when their corpses were used as barricades by their own troops to thwart the advancing German tanks.

Murphy gives not only an account of the dead, but of how the living honor those who have fallen. The operation is accomplished through many young volunteers who may have had grandparents in the war. Others are sent by parents who feel such an opportunity might have a life-changing effect on their wayward child. No matter where they are from or why they came, they are faced with the rigors of three-week stints of life in the forest and field camps.

Murphy captures the essence of the experience through the voice of Yevgeny Shtukaturov, a Moscow search club organizer who explains, “When the young person excavates remains with his own hands, his thinking changes completely. He begins to grow interested in his history.”

They need to be buried

One such young person is 14-year-old Igor Lazarev. He hails from Saratov on the Volga River, which was the home of the 32nd Rifle Division. Most of his friends can’t understand why digging would be interesting. He retorts: “I’m here to find soldiers that died here. They died for us. They need to be buried.”

But perhaps the most telling comment captured by Murphy is in the voice of 40-year-old Vladimir Kharlov, who traveled all the way from the Urals. Kharlov shares his keen insight: “You need to come here to do it, if only once. You need to bring this all through your nervous system, through your heart. You need to see it with your own eyes when a grandmother, after 60 years, gets the document that shows what happened to her husband, how she receives it with tears in her eyes. You need to see the people still waiting for news.”

Memorial Day is every day in the spring and summer fields of Mozhaysk. The noise and clatter of shovels and spades speaks well of a younger generation that not only wonders but does something to seek out “where have all the soldiers gone, long time passing.”

And yet these poor souls have not even “gone to graveyards one by one.” These young Russian volunteers desire to carry out a tradition as ancient as the biblical patriarchs of old, whose descendents

would gather them to their people (Genesis 25:7-10). When it was all said and done, it was about gathering bones and placing them in honor so as to allow future generations to connect with the past.

There is something special about bones and their intimate connections. It’s been that way since creation, when Adam said of Eve, “this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23).

Knowing family, caring for them in life and death, tells people about a person, about a family, about a nation. A resting place is not only about a tombstone, but it is equally a touchstone to the future, for each of us is a part of all that has gone before us. Honoring the dead gives us roots that anchor our existence in the topsy-turvy world that swirls around us and seemingly demands of us to only care for ourselves.

Another Valley of Glory and Valley of Death

Ultimately, it is only God above who can answer what lies below in the mud of Mozhaysk and all the battlefields of earth and sea that speckle this globe. It is only God who can answer the ballad’s earnest inquiry, “When will they ever learn?” It is only God who can supply the names to the nameless and not only restore their identity, but give them a new hope. The same God who knows the names of the unreachable stars of heaven and calls them all by name (Psalm 147:4) is, once more, going to reach into the bowels of the earth and recover those who were lost and give them a name.

Did you realize your Bible speaks of another Valley of Glory and Valley of Death? Yes, another valley of bones! Ezekiel 37 is one of the great prophetic chapters of Scripture. It is one of the ultimate joyous events of prophecy that each headline and article in *World News and Prophecy* points you toward.

No article in this publication is an end in itself, but guides your mind and heart beyond the problems of today into the future God has planned, such as the moment God sets Ezekiel down in the Spirit into a valley full of bones (Ezekiel 37:1). It is here in this valley of bones that God directs the prophet to utter these words: “O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! . . . Surely I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live. I will put

sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD" (verses 4-6).

"Breathe on these slain"

And then an incredible reaction occurs. No probing, or hit-and-miss discoveries of human remains. No day-in and day-out coaxing of the earth to give up its dead. While the recovery effort in Moz-haysk is commendable, it is but a glimmer compared to what God will perform.

Verses 7 and 8 vividly declare, "There was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them." And then verses 9 and 10 describe the awesome glory of God's visitation upon these unearthed bones: "Prophecy, 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."' . . . And breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet."

Yes, a deliverance of the fallen, the lost, the unidentified to a new life. He will introduce them to a world in which "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4). Yes, a day is coming when the question "When will they ever learn?" will be answered. For every effect there is a cause. The same prophet declares the reason in Isaiah 11:9. "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."

Until that day, something small and meaningful is happening in the fields of Russia.

The good news and the bigger story is that it is but a harbinger, both in deed and name, of how God will reveal His unfathomable glory. It is the words of Vladimir Kharlov that capture the essence of God's words in Isaiah 30:21, "This is the way, walk in it." Kharlov points the way by urging: "You need to come here to do it, if only once. You need to bring this all through your nervous system, through your heart. You need to see it with your own eyes . . ." God speed the day when He says to all the bones, "Live!" ❖

"GAS PUMPS;" (Continued from page 11)

Engdahl sees America's intervention in Iraq as part of a struggle over oil reserves: "Today, much of the world is convinced the Bush Administration did not wage war against Iraq and Saddam Hussein because of threat from weapons of mass destruction, nor from terror dangers. Still a puzzle, however, is why Washington would risk so much in terms of relations with its allies and the entire world, to occupy Iraq . . . It is increasingly clear that the US occupation of Iraq is about control of global oil resources . . . The Iraq war is but the first in a major battle over global energy resources" ("Iraq and the Problem of Peak Oil," *Current Concerns*, 2004, No. 1).

The problem of tight supply could be addressed if all oil-consuming nations were willing to agree on a common standard of living for the people of the world. There is just one catch: The world's energy resources are insufficient to provide everyone with a Western standard of living. So the world's richer countries would have to be willing to lower their standard of living in order to raise the standard in poorer countries. Human history teaches us that no such agreement will be made.

The fact that disagreements over material possessions can lead to war is no new revelation. Nearly 2,000 years ago the apostle James wrote: "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight" (James 4:1-2, NIV).

As long as oil remains the primary energy source for the world economy, tensions will increase in the world oil market and among oil consuming nations. Like China and the United States, the European Union has no other option but to pursue foreign policy and promote trade relations to secure a stable supply of oil.

Which region of the world will be of greatest interest to these world leaders? Can it be any other than the region having the most proven reserves and the highest production capacity? Half the world's remaining oil supply can be found in five Persian Gulf countries: United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Will the European Union succeed in defending its interests in the region? ❖

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"Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying,
This is the Way
walk in it. . ." **ISAIAH 30:21**

by Robin Webber

Seeing It With Your Own Eyes

As a teenager growing up in the 1960s I remember sitting around the campfire singing the folk ballad "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" As the campfire glimmered, sparkled and glowed, we would ultimately sing the painful fourth stanza with its melodic woe: "Where have all the soldiers gone? Long time passing. Where have all the soldiers gone? Long time ago. Where have all the soldiers gone? Gone to graveyards every one. When will they ever learn? When will they e-v-e-r learn?"

Perhaps some of you are already humming, but the purpose of my writing is to move beyond yesteryear's summer in the woods, and touch upon an awesome future that is being given a preview in another set of forests and fields on the other side of the globe.

Americans are even now planning to fire up their barbecues and warm their tummies on hamburgers and hot dogs during the coming summer months. Yet there is another kind of warmth and glow emanating from the hearts and minds of a number of Russian folk far away from the great military spectacles found in Red Square commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Allied victory over the Nazi regime. This sneak preview with prophetic implications is found in the still and quiet of a long abandoned farm field. This pastoral setting is given color, light and meaning by *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Kim Murphy in an article titled, "A Somber Realization in Battlefields of Bones," which appeared May 7, 2005.

The Valley of Death

The dateline is Mozhaysk, a Slavic word that is hard to pronounce for the English tongue. But it is here, in what is simultaneously called the Valley of Glory and the Valley of

Death, that the annual thaw of spring brings forth an earnest search for the bones of 9,000 men who still lie buried in a long-abandoned collective farm field that is slowly being encroached upon by the surrounding forests.

Over 60 years ago, it was here that the Soviet Union's 32nd Rifle Division, with its defensive back to Moscow, moved forward during the great counteroffensive of Soviet troops against the German foe.

What first appeared as a triumphant break through the enemy's ranks, slowly became a noose around the Red Army as they had moved too far ahead of any support system. In February of 1942, the Germans slowly tightened the noose around the stranded division, and 14,000 soldiers were trapped by their foe. They were starved, frozen and ultimately slaughtered. Only 3,000 would get away.

The battle at the Valley of Glory and the Valley of Death, Mozhaysk, is credited in part with slowing down the German army enough to save Moscow. It is but one battlefield on what was that awesome and dreadful wall of despair called "The Eastern Front." Reporter Murphy reminds us that nearly 26 million Russians died in World War II. That's nearly 60 times the number of American deaths in the same war.

The chilling news is—some historians believe the death toll was even higher. The Siege of Leningrad (St. Petersburg) is famous, as is the Battle for Stalingrad (Volgograd); but it is here in a field of sod that we connect with the grim reality that no one truly knows how many actually died or where they fell. Unlike Allied military cemeteries with their neat rows of crosses and stars of David, it is believed many a Red Army casualty was buried in mud on the very spot that he fell.

(See "SEEING," page 14)