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# When History and Prophecy Converge

*What happens when key events of history have a connection to Bible prophecy? The result is a better appreciation for God's guiding hand in all of history.*

by Mario Seiglie

**W**hen in school, you are bound to take some history classes. Yet many of us didn't find them very interesting. I remember they weren't for me. I just recall having to memorize a lot of ancient dates and remote places that seemed to have little importance today.

But a time came in my life when history suddenly became fascinating to me.

It was when I understood how history relates to the prophetic events in the Bible. A whole new world opened up to me. It was enthralling. Historical events now became valuable evidence that the Bible was inspired by God—and prophecy provided a framework for history—covering the past, present and even the future!

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

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

Let me show you some astonishing examples. This was not something I



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*Artist's conception of Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance. The world would be much different if Assyria had destroyed Jerusalem.*

expected when I bought the book *What If?: The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*, edited by Robert Cowley.

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

Incredibly, of the 50 key events mentioned, I found that 48 of them had to do with biblical prophecy! In other words, God

(See "HISTORY," page 3)



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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

# Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

## Sleep Is Not an Option

So much is going on in today's world that sometimes it gets tiresome trying to keep up with it all and make sense of people, places and events. Even though following current events and reading history are among my favorite activities, at times I get a little tired of doing so. It is very tempting to retreat into the personal realm and take a more passive approach to life. But something always seems to jar me out of that state of mind.

Usually it is an event in the Middle East or Europe that will do this. But the most recent was something that caught my eye while reading through the Gospel of Mark. I noted how many times Christ urged His followers to "watch" what was going on in their world.

Here is what He said in Mark 13:7-8: "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows."

You will have to read a few newspapers and keep up on the Internet news sites to make sure you are aware of all these things.

Verse 14: "'So when you see the "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not' (let the reader understand), 'then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.'"

You will have to dig a little deeper on this one. This will require a reading of history, the Bible and geography to fully understand its context and end-time fulfillment.

Verse 19: "For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be."

Again, you'll need to pay attention to world history in order to appreciate the incredible magnitude of His warning. The crisis at the end will surpass any known to humankind.

Verse 22: "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

How much do you understand about the role of religion and sectarian strife in history? Religious wars have been the scourge of mankind since the beginning. Most Americans have little understanding of the world's great religions. If you are going to avoid the type of religious deception foretold by Jesus, you must know something about the world's faiths.

In verses 33 to 37 Christ says to watch, pray and then watch some more. He says that things are happening around you. People have been left with a charge to keep an idea alive and focused. That idea is the Kingdom of God, the fundamental truth Christ came announcing (Mark 1:14). The Kingdom of God was the central focus of Christ's life and work. He said it was time to repent and live by the terms of that eternal Kingdom.

Christ's followers will be watchful, always keeping one eye on the work at hand and the other firmly fastened on the future horizon waiting, and watching, for the arrival of the King. The last thing we want to be found doing is sleeping!

Reading these words in Mark is a sharp reminder to not fall asleep on the job given to all of us. It is easy to get caught up in our busy lives and lose the sharp focus of the coming Kingdom of God. There is a lot going on in our larger world, and we all need to keep watching. "Sleeping" through life is not an option that Christ gives His disciples.

Included in the objectives of *World News and Prophecy* and [wnponline.org](http://wnponline.org) is keeping you informed about the major events of today's world that foreshadow the second coming of Jesus Christ. Major events are happening at a rapid pace. Stay alert so you will not be caught dozing and miss the march of world events.



—Darris McNeely

Darris McNeely

“HISTORY” (Continued from page 1)

had a hand in it. That’s more than 95 percent of the world’s most crucial events according to these secular historians!

Space and time don’t allow me to elaborate on each one—it would take an entire book—but here are a few outstanding examples.

What is the first and most important example in this book written by modern history professors who, almost to a man, have no regard for Bible prophecy?

It is an event found in the Bible, as well as in world history. Now these secular historians naturally side more with the historical perspective of the Assyrians and not with the Jews, thus giving it their particular spin. Nonetheless, they still have to admit it was a biblical event that was confirmed in history.

### **Example #1—The plague that saved Jerusalem**

The first chapter of this book deals with the most significant event in world history according to these historians. They picked “The Plague That Saved Jerusalem.”

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

“That siege, by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was lifted after a large part of his army succumbed to a mysteriously lethal contagion. . . . But what if disease had not intervened? What if the walls had fallen, and the usual pillage, rape, murder, and forced exile of the population had been Jerusalem’s lot? What would our lives, our spiritual underpinnings be like 2,700 years later? . . . Jerusalem’s preservation from attack by Sennacherib’s army shaped the subsequent history of the world far more profoundly than any other military action I know of” (pp. 1-3).

A mysterious plague strikes the Assyrians just at the right moment to save Jerusalem. What a seemingly lucky coincidence. As the Assyrians are about to lay a siege and destroy Jerusalem, obliterating the Jewish faith, suddenly, something destroys most of the Assyrian army and frees Jerusalem.

Back in Assyria, the king has inscribed in the palace walls the battles and destruction of some of the walled cities in Judah, but these

do not include Jerusalem! In a prism still in existence, he merely claims he has King Hezekiah pent up as a bird in a cage. But as events would unfold, it is a bird that eventually escapes his cage.

Sennacherib’s defeat is not only recorded in the Bible, but by Herodotus, the Greek historian, who gives an account of Sennacherib’s humiliation in *The Histories* (written around 450 B.C.). He attributes the miraculous defeat of Sennacherib’s army in the campaign against Egypt (that included Israel) to mice overrunning the camp and wreaking great havoc.

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

Herodotus mentions mice in connection with the destruction of the army. Some biblical scholars speculate since mice often are carriers of deadly diseases, such as the bubonic plague that ravaged Europe during the Middle Ages, something like this could have happened at that time.

Yet the Bible mentions exactly what brought on that mysterious disease that killed so many in such a short time. “Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. The king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem” (Isaiah 36:1-2).

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

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

“Then the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there

were the corpses—all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. Now it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place” (Isaiah 37:33-38).

Here we see the first example of how history and prophecy converge. God had promised hundreds of years before that the nation of Judah would survive through the centuries, escaping annihilation time and time again, and eventually bringing forth the promised Messiah. By the way, Assyrian records also confirm Sennacherib was killed by his sons.

Why was Jerusalem spared? The Bible prophesied centuries before about the nation of Judah, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh [the Messiah] comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people” (Genesis 49:10).

So God acted to fulfill His prophecies. Historian Robert Cowley remarks, “What if a mysterious plague had not smitten the Assyrian besiegers of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.? Would there be a Jewish religion? Or Christianity?” (ibid., p. xv)

It’s a good question. But knowing a bit about Bible prophecy would have answered it. Instead of this historical event being just a lucky coincidence, it turned out to depend upon God’s sure Word.

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

The next example in the book is also crucial in world history. Thanks to the favorable outcome, it permitted Western culture to develop and become part of the European heritage—instead of Europe ending up being part of Persian history, culture and religion.

The famous German historian Georg Hegel said about this naval battle between the Greeks and the Persians, “The interest of world history hung trembling in the balance. Oriental despotism, a world united under one lord and sovereign, on the one side; and separate states, insignificant in extent and resources, but animated by free individuality, on the other side, stood front to front in array of battle.”

“What if the Persians had won?” asks historian Victor Davis Hanson. “It nearly

happened. It should have happened. If the rowers commanded by the Greek general Themistocles had not prevailed, would there be, some 2,500 years later a Western civilization in the form we know it? At Salamis, the Greeks were faced with a navy three to four times larger. The Persian army enjoyed still greater numerical superiority. Yet they lost, and the Greeks were able to establish their empire, and contribute to arts, culture, science—paving the way for Christianity” (p. 15).

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

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

The Bible mentions, way before it became

a reality, the ultimate outcome between the Persian and Greek empires. It predicts against all odds that the Greeks would eventually defeat the Persians and absorb their empire. The battle of Salamis was an important part of that ultimate Greek victory.

The prophet Daniel received this prophecy from God, around 540 B.C.—even before the Persian and Greek empires had arisen on the world scene!

“In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me... that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

“And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the

surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand... The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece” (Daniel 8:1-7, 20-21).

Here we see that although the Persian empire was so powerful, the Bible predicted the Greeks would eventually defeat them. So it was not a lucky fluke, but God fulfilling what He had promised in the Scriptures!

### Example #3—The near early death of Alexander

Another pivotal moment in world history had to do with Alexander the Great’s conquests. What if he would have been killed at the beginning of his career, as it almost happened? Why did he die at 33, at the height of power?

At the Battle of the Granicus River, during the first major military engagement of Alexander against the Persians, he was surrounded by enemies, and dealt a devastating blow in the head from an axe that cleaved his helmet. He was stunned, unable to defend himself, and as the warrior was about to strike the second blow to the head and kill Alexander, a friend came and stabbed the attacker with a spear. Alexander was saved, and went on to conquer most of the known world.

Why was he miraculously spared in a split second? Again, historians talk about these lucky accidents. “What if Alexander died at that moment?” asks Princeton historian Josiah Ober.

He goes on to say, “It would be a world in which the values characteristic of the Greek city-states were lost in favor of a fusion of Roman and Persian ideals... A profound reverence for ritual, tradition, ancestors, and social hierarchy—rather than Greek reverence for freedom, political equality, and the dignity of the person—defined the ethical values of a small ‘cosmopolitan’ elite that would rule over a diverse mosaic of cultures. And this could take place because there was

(See “HISTORY,” page 13)

## How Can You Make Sense of the News?



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**S**o much is happening in the world, and so quickly, that it's almost impossible to sort it all out.

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# Jamestown's Significance for Americans 400 Years On

*Four centuries ago the first English settlers arrived in Virginia, establishing a colony that laid a foundation for the future United States of America. What are the lessons of Jamestown 400 years later?*

by Melvin Rhodes

In little more than four years, the emphasis has changed.

I was in Jamestown again just a month after the 400th anniversary of the founding of the first successful English colony on the North American continent. Britain's Queen Elizabeth was there to start the celebrations, as she was for the 350th anniversary in 1957.

Jamestown was the birthplace of representative government in North America. The first democratically elected assembly met there in 1619. In 1699 the capital was moved to nearby Williamsburg, and there it remained until the birth of the United States. In 1775, members of the Virginia House of Burgesses voted to instruct their delegates to the Continental Congress to vote for independence.

During two previous visits I listened intently to enthusiastic accounts of America's birth, a long process that began with that first fledgling settlement in 1607. It was quite a miracle.

Like Roanoke before it, Jamestown almost didn't make it. An earlier Spanish settlement just a few miles away, established in 1570, had been wiped out by natives. The English settlement was threatened by both Spain and the local native population, but starvation and disease killed off most of those early settlers.

## A subtle difference

For the 400th anniversary, these things were said again, but this time there was a subtle difference, more in keeping with the times in which we live. The new emphasis was on the coming together of three distinctly different cultures—the English, the Native Americans and the African-Americans who started arriving in 1619, brought to the colonies through the West African slave trade.

The subliminal message was that, although difficult at first, these three cultures eventually were successfully brought together. The implication was that, in turn, all cultures can be brought together successfully. As it says on the Great Seal of the United States, *E Pluribus Unum*—Latin for “Out of many, one.”

But is this the real lesson of Jamestown?

## Clash of cultures

“Trouble between the Indians and the settlers started

on the first day the English stepped ashore on the banks of the Chesapeake... The native people, the Powhatans, and the English would clash again and again, seeming to try and outdo each other in terms of the bloodthirsty behavior as they battled for dominance in Tidewater Virginia, the region the natives called *Tsencommacah*, believed to mean ‘our place’” (Kieran Doherty, *Sea Venture*, 2007, p. 8).

After the massacre of almost a quarter of all Virginia's English settlers on March 22, 1622, the new arrivals were not to trust the native population again. There were to be many battles between the English settlers and the Native Americans, in Virginia and the other colonies that were later established.

Following the creation of the United States of America, Americans continued to move westward and yet more conflict followed. Eventually, through disease and conflict, Native Americans were reduced in number by well over 50 percent (estimates vary). The relationship between those of European descent and the natives hasn't been an example of peace and harmony.

Nor has the relationship between the settlers and the Africans who were brought to America.

“The year 1619 was one of the most notable in American annals. The first representative assembly in the New World convened in that year at Jamestown. A few weeks later the first Negroes were brought to Virginia” (Virginius Dabney, *Virginia, The New Dominion*, 1971, pp. 28-29).

It was in Virginia almost 250 years later that slavery was ended in the United States with the defeat of the secessionist Confederate States of America. This was not the end of racial disharmony, however, which, though greatly reduced, continues to this day.

The fact is that Jamestown in no way symbolizes successful multiculturalism. Rather, it illustrates the inevitable conflict that follows the coming together of different cultures and the significance of the triumph of one ethnic group over others!

## America prophesied in the Bible

People in the Western world today have been conditioned to deny the importance of ethnicity, in an era when the emphasis is on multiculturalism.

However, this is not universal. In Africa, I frequently

*Jamestown in no way symbolizes successful multiculturalism. Rather, it illustrates the inevitable conflict that follows the coming together of different cultures.*

hear the cry “Africa for the Africans!” Muslim countries in the Middle East do not welcome people of other religions. Westerners cannot move to India, China or Japan and expect to spend the rest of their lives there, taking citizenship. It is only in the West that immigrants can become permanent residents and eventually citizens. Immigration is strictly a one-way traffic.

In contrast, the Bible shows the importance of ethnicity, of tribal identity.

When asked what would be the sign of His second coming, Jesus Christ said: “For nation will rise against nation” (Matthew 24:7). The Greek word for nation here is *ethnos*, from which we get the word *ethnic*. Ethnic conflict was being foretold. It is interesting to note that most of the conflicts in the world today are ethnic, with religious differences often an added complication.

Genesis 49 deals with the 12 tribes of Israel “in the last days” (verse 1). Clearly, these tribes were still to be of some significance. In fact, the Old Testament is full of prophecies relating to these tribes in the period right before the return of the Messiah.

In Genesis 48 we see Jacob, the patriarch of the 12 tribes, blessing his two grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh. In verse 16 he says, “Let my name be named upon them.” His name was changed to Israel.

The name *Israel* in Bible prophecy is usually not referring to the Jewish nation in the Middle East, which only came into existence in 1947. The Jews are a part of Israel, one of the 12 tribes. But the other tribes still exist at the end time. And the major tribe is Joseph, the father of Ephraim and Manasseh.

According to the prophecy in Genesis 48, Ephraim’s “descendants shall become a multitude of nations” and Manasseh’s were to be a “great” nation (verse 19). These prophesied blessings were fulfilled in the nations of the British Empire and Commonwealth (Ephraim), a powerful multitude of nations that continued for three centuries until after World War II. The great single nation that was to come out of Joseph is the United States.

God set these two nations “high above all nations of the earth” (Deuteronomy 28:1). The British ruled over 60 different nations around the globe. Americans expanded across a continent, spreading the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans.

### **Jamestown is where it all began**

One ethnic group was given the ascendancy over others as God fulfilled His prom-

ises to Israel and his descendants. Through these nations, great wealth came upon many ethnic groups, as God intended all nations to be beneficiaries of their blessings—both physical and spiritual. “I will make you a great nation. . . I will bless those who bless you. . . And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:2-3).

Jamestown and the continent of North America were dramatically changed as a result of the English conquest.

With this and other settlements not only came greater prosperity but also representative government and freedom of religion.

“When the General Assembly met in July and August, 1619, in the little church beside the river, it marked the first step in the building of this country’s democratic institutions. Antedating the Mayflower Compact by more than a year, this first Virginia General Assembly was a milestone in the history of liberal government” (Dabney, p. 29).

Now Virginia had “a legislative, administrative and judicial system much more closely in accord with that prevailing in England. . . It is interesting to note that the members of this first Assembly were elected under a franchise more liberal than that prevailing in England” (pp. 29, 31).

This was the first parliament established by Englishmen in the New World. Eventually, representative government was to be established throughout the world in other British colonies. Many of these parliaments have survived the transition to independence, but many former British colonies have not been successful with preserving their democratic systems. Independence meant the end of British domination and the beginning of domination by another ethnic group, usually one with no tradition of democracy.

### **Dominant cultures**

One of the great lessons of Jamestown is that domination by a single ethnic group can make a major difference. But what if that group no longer dominates in the decades to come? Demographic trends show that the period of dominance by the Anglos is rapidly coming to an end. This is not only true in the United States. If demographic trends continue, the present majority populations of the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the nations of Western Europe will be replaced by peoples of other cultures, mostly immigrants from third world countries and their descendants. This will

make a big difference to these nations.

The first group of settlers that dropped anchor in Chesapeake Bay on April 26, 1607, numbered only 104. Within months that number would be down to only 38. Who would have thought that those 38 immigrants, their descendants and others who followed would one day dominate the continent?

Immigration to the United States today is on a far greater scale. Whenever I fly back from Ghana, the plane is full of people, mostly Ghanaians, intending to make a new home in the United States. On each flight there are about 300 people, far more than on those first three ships that arrived in Jamestown. Ghana is just one country sending people to America. My flight is just one of dozens that arrive each day.

How significant will the arrival of these new settlers be? Could their arrival in America have a future impact as great as the arrival of those Englishmen four centuries ago?

The Bible prophesies that the modern descendants of ancient Israel will find they are taken over by strangers, foreigners of different cultures and religions. “A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually” (Deuteronomy 28:33).

The same chapter also foretells that the Israelites (the descendants of the British settlers and others of Western European descent) will find that their economy also is controlled by strangers. “He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head and you shall be the tail” (verse 44).

It is ironic that the 400th anniversary of Jamestown coincided with the announcement that America’s population has now passed the 300 million mark. A few weeks later it was announced that the numbers of “minorities” has reached 100 million, a third of the people. The ratio is constantly changing with massive immigration from third world countries. The birthrate is also a factor. The prediction is that “minorities” will be the majority by the midpoint of this century.

One day Americans of European descent will discover they have a diminished impact on the cultural and political course of America. Too late they will discover that the institutions set up over a thousand years of democratic evolution from the British Isles to the shores of the New World are transformed into something very different. They will find themselves strangers in their own country, just as surely as the Native Americans did centuries ago. ❖

# *The Wonderful World Beyond Today* Refreshing News: God's Government Is Coming!

*After thousands of years of abuse, corruption and misrule, finally there will be a government that is always for the people—truly serving with everyone's best interest in mind. Part three of a series.*

by Mike Bennett

**T**he statistics, and the human stories behind them, are horrifying. Dictators, tyrants and leaders of every stripe have cheated, robbed, starved, repressed, jailed, tortured, raped and murdered their own subjects.

- Some estimates claim Kim Jong-il is responsible for the deaths of 4 million or more of his own people, an incredible statistic considering North Korea has only about 23 million people. While he required his malnourished people to watch the public executions of people caught stealing food or trying to flee the country, he continued to spend extravagantly on his own lavish lifestyle.

According to the UN World Food Program, the average 7-year-old boy in North Korea is almost 8 inches shorter than a South Korean the same age, and more than 20 pounds lighter (David Wallechinsky, "The World's 10 Worst Dictators," *Parade*, Jan. 22, 2006).

- Saparmurat Niyazov, who named himself Turkmenistan's president for life and father of the Turkmen, also renamed the month of January after himself and April after his mother. He commissioned a revolving gold statue of himself that rotates to face the sun, and made his book the *Ruhnama* the universal textbook for his people. He considered all criticism treason and punished dissenters with imprisonment, incarceration in psychiatric facilities and torture. He ordered the doctors to give up the Hippocratic Oath and to swear allegiance to him instead (Wallechinsky).

- In Equatorial Guinea, "human-rights groups report detention without trial, torture, the disappearance of opposition activists and the plunder of the country's vast oil resources." In the 1996 election Teodoro Obiang Nguema received well over 100 percent of the vote in some parts of the country, and in 1994 he expelled the U.S. ambassador who was "accused of using witchcraft to try to help the opposition win elections."

More than \$700 million was funneled into accounts he controlled, while most of his people live on less than \$1 a day. "On one occasion, his wife deposited a suitcase containing 30 kilograms of \$100

bills at a Washington bank" ("The World's Top 10 Dictators," Sept. 4, 2006, [www.newstatesman.com](http://www.newstatesman.com)).

Sadly, there are many more stories like these today, as there have been throughout history. Think of Suharto, estimated to have embezzled \$15 to \$35 billion during his rule of Indonesia, and Stalin, who killed thousands in his purges of "enemies of the people," and starved millions more Russians with "the worst man-made famine in human history" ([www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com); [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)).

Before them were countless others—from Nimrod to Nebuchadnezzar to Nero to Napoleon—with power and the corruption that seems to inevitably ensue.

## **An image destroyed**

Since so many leaders seem to set up idealized images of themselves, it is only fitting that a prophecy of the end of human misrule includes the toppling of a huge statue.

One night God gave the great Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar a vivid dream that troubled him so much he called all his experts together to tell him the meaning. To ensure they didn't just make up an interpretation, he insisted they first tell him exactly what he had dreamed.

They knew he wasn't kidding when he threatened, "If you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap" (Daniel 2:5).

No one could do what the king demanded; but Daniel, a Jewish captive serving in Nebuchadnezzar's court, asked God to reveal the dream and its meaning to him.

With God's inspiration, Daniel was able to remind the king of the great image he had seen in his dream. It had a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

Daniel explained to Nebuchadnezzar, "You are this head of gold" (verse 38). The other parts of the image were revealed to be other human empires to follow him—Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian and Roman—all the way up to Christ's return.

*Before today's crop of oppressive leaders, there were countless others—from Nimrod to Nebuchadnezzar to Nero to Napoleon—with power and the corruption that seems to inevitably ensue.*



*God gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream foretelling the future despotic kingdoms of man, as well as the coming of God's perfect Kingdom.*

"You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces... And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (verses 34-35).

The towering image of human government and corrupt rulership will finally come to an end and "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 2:44).

It seems this vision did little to squelch the pride and arrogant anger of Nebuchadnezzar, who went on to command his people to bow down to a 90-foot gold statue or be thrown into a blazing furnace (Daniel 3:1-6, NIV). But Daniel's prophecy has given hope to millions of oppressed people through the ages. Regime change is coming! The despots and petty bureaucrats will no longer cheat and abuse them.

### **A dream come true!**

Jesus Christ promised to return and not simply clean up the corruption of ongoing earthly rule, but completely replace all temporal entities with a completely new and perfect government—one that truly serves the people.

This is more than "day one" after an election or a coup, but a completely astounding intervention by the Kingdom of heaven now brought to this earth and imposed on a desperate population in need of relief from human nature. In other words, man is going to be saved from himself, by none other than his Creator. Are you ready?

The beloved apostle John foresaw the time when the returning Christ will destroy those who destroy the earth (Revelation 11:18). He heard a loud announcement of the best news this troubled world could hear: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (verse 15).

This begins the time of refreshing, the time of restoration that the apostle Peter and all the holy prophets had

proclaimed (Acts 3:19-21). It was not to be a restoration of some idyllic golden age of man, but a restoration of the perfect government of God that had been lost when man rejected God in the Garden of Eden.

Actually, it seems this earth lost God's government even earlier when Lucifer arrogantly rebelled against his Creator. He started the pattern of selfish government that the Bible identifies with Babylon and that has continued to this day (Isaiah 14:12-15; Revelation 18:1-5).

### **Real civil service**

Why will God's government be different from all that have gone before? Christ described the contrast in a gentle rebuke to His own students, who had been themselves vying for power.

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).

Jesus Christ led the way. He gave up all the power of the universe to come live as a humble carpenter and teacher (Philippians 2:5-8). He never took advantage of others, but freely let everyone take advantage of what He had to offer. He looked out for the poor, hungry, sick and disabled. He took the role of a slave to wash His disciples' feet, and

took the role of a martyr willing to die in our place (John 13:12-15; Romans 5:6-8).

This is certainly not to say that God's government will not exercise power when necessary to prevent people from harming each other. But the difference will be that all decisions will be based on just laws that are for the real benefit of those governed (Psalm 119:172; Deuteronomy 6:24).

Love is the underlying foundation of all God's laws (Matthew 22:37-40), and these good and fair laws will be administered by perfect leaders and judges who have learned to apply justice with mercy (Matthew 12:7; 18:23-35; 23:23).

### **Perfect leaders**

In the human realm, even the best leaders are too often stymied by red tape, corrupt bureaucracies and humanly insoluble problems. And, sadly, too many of them also get trapped in the web of corruption and scandal.

But God has been working with people today to form in them His own righteous character so that He can make them incorruptible in every way at Christ's return. Those who have been faithful, some even to death as martyrs, will be changed or "raised incorruptible," with godly power and immortality (1 Corinthians 15:50-53).

Christ promised His people: "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on



*David learned as a shepherd to care for those in his charge.*

My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21). They will assist Him in fairly, mercifully and effectively serving those who survive the catastrophes of the end of man's age.

With the power and love of the Creator

behind them, these resurrected servants of God will be able to clean up the corruption and cut through the Gordian knots that have had humanity in a stranglehold.

Who will rule with Christ in His Kingdom? The Bible actually mentions a few people with their specific job assignments in God's future government.

For example, in Ezekiel 34 God compared His nation of Israel to a flock of sheep. (This includes both the people of Judah and the northern 10 tribes that had previously gone into captivity and become lost in history. See the booklet *The United States and*

*Britain in Bible Prophecy* for more about this fascinating part of the story.)

During this time of man's misrule, the people of Israel have been mistreated by their "shepherds" and been preyed upon by those around. But God promises to save them at Christ's return. "I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David" (verse 23). David will be resurrected and will again serve as king of the whole nation of Israel (Jeremiah 30:9).

The Bible also reveals who will serve with David as leaders of each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jesus said to His disciples,

"Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28).

The Bible doesn't tell the exact job titles of most of the saints. But it is clear that Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, Moses and Rahab, and many more heroes of faith in the Old and New Testaments and beyond, will serve with Christ in bringing a fair and compassionate government to a world that so sorely needs it (Hebrews 11). ❖

## "Rod of Iron": A User's Guide

What does the book of Revelation mean when it describes the saints helping Christ rule the nations with "a rod of iron"? What training is necessary to use this tool?

Many of Christ's followers are familiar with the scriptures that reveal their destiny to have rulership over this world. In Revelation 5:10 Christians are described as being made "kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

The prophecies of Daniel describe the time when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High" (Daniel 7:27). Jesus indicated to His disciples in the parable of the pounds that some are to have rule over 10 cities, some five, etc. (Luke 19:17, 19).

One of the most dramatic scriptures, however, is that found in the message to the Thyatiran church. "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— *'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'*—as I also have received from My Father" (Revelation 2:26-27, emphasis added).

Is the Kingdom of God to be a time when those still living out physical lives on the earth will be kept in subjection by a divine dictatorship? First notice an interesting point from the Greek text. The verb translated "rule" in Revelation 2:27 is *poimanei*, derived from the word for a shepherd (*poimen*). It is the same word used by the apostle Paul in Acts 20:28 to describe the care that overseers are to show toward the Church of God.

The Concordant Literal Translation renders Revelation 2:27 as: "He shall shepherd them with an iron club." The rod or club carried by a shepherd was, of course, primarily for the protection of his sheep, not to frighten or punish them.

In Zechariah 14:16 we read that God will issue an edict commanding all nations to send representatives to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. What if a nation refuses to heed the command? Is such disobedience conceivable or even possible in a world of immortal saints each armed with an iron rod? The answer may be surprising.

"And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain" (Zechariah 14:17). There will be

a response from Jesus Christ and His saints to this stubbornness, but it will be a measured and merciful response that will allow time for carnal attitudes to change.

Jesus Christ is a kind, loving, patient God who reveals Himself in these terms: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20, Revised Standard Version).

He has no desire to smash the door down and force His will on us, even though He has that power. He prefers us to willingly open the door and welcome Him into our lives. He wants the obedience that comes from our love and gratitude for what He has done for us, and from our unshakable conviction that He knows what is best for us, not from the fear of punishment if we do not obey. And He wants just the same from all the billions on the face of this earth.

Although the Kingdom of God will certainly have to be ushered in with a terrifying show of divine power, this is not how God intends to rule the earth for the next thousand years. In the Millennium, the new world leader, Jesus Christ, "will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young" (Isaiah 40:11).

He says of the people living at that time: "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods... They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid" (Ezekiel 34:25, 28, RSV).

If God just needed people to wield iron rods, He would have no need of His saints. There is no shortage of thugs and bullies—people accustomed to dominating and terrorizing others—who would qualify for that job.

What He needs are those who have spent their lives developing the character of Jesus Christ—those who can be trusted to exercise great power with love and mercy as well as firmness and justice.

The "rod of iron" will come with a warning label: "Use only as directed by the Holy Spirit."

—Kevin Ford

# Pope Benedict XVI Puts His Church “on Edge”

*In the last two years, Pope Benedict’s clear positions on controversial issues appear to have given the Roman Catholic Church an “edgy” new decisiveness.*

by Paul Kieffer

**W**hen Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger succeeded the popular John Paul II as Pope Benedict XVI in the spring of 2005, people wondered what the hallmark of his papacy would be. A little more than two years after Benedict’s election, there seems to be a pattern emerging. Pope Benedict appears to have put the Roman Catholic Church “on edge.”

“On edge” here doesn’t mean nervous. Instead, it takes its meaning from the way the phrase is sometimes used in the German language, where it conveys having a clear position on a particular issue being discussed. Germans like their leaders to be “edgy” in that sense, and that’s the approach the German pope seems to be taking in his papacy.

## **Family Day puts pressure on Italian lawmakers**

This May’s Family Day demonstration in Rome is an example of the Vatican’s new approach. The demonstration took place on May 12 and was organized by the Italian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Vatican. Members of Catholic organizations from all over Italy traveled to Rome on buses and special trains to take part.

Radio Vatican estimated the crowd to number approximately 1 million people, who came to Rome to protest against proposed legislation that would give same-sex couples and unmarried heterosexual couples rights similar to those that are provided for traditional married couples.

The purpose of the demonstration was to put pressure on the centrist, left-leaning government of Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi. It’s no surprise that former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was one of the protesters. Italian Christian Democratic politician Rocco Buttiglione was also among those who participated in the demonstration. Buttiglione is a spokesman for those who oppose what he describes as the new anti-Christian “religion” currently gaining ground in Italy.

“There is of course a new religion, an anti-Christian religion, an atheistic and agnostic religion which claims that there is only one truth, and



Reuters/Dario Pignatelli

*Italian Catholics protest May 12 against a proposed law to give gay and unwed couples more legal rights*

that truth is that there isn’t any truth,” is the way Buttiglione put it prior to Family Day.

Even some of Romano Prodi’s own cabinet members participated in the demonstration and were criticized by Italian media for doing so only to please the pope who had called for widespread support of the demonstration. Prior to the show of force in Rome, public opinion in Italy seemed to be divided over Family Day, with many Italians believing that the Catholic Church was stepping over the line with its involvement in the demonstration.

However, Family Day really reflected a new decisiveness of the Roman Catholic Church under Pope Benedict. Italian Vatican observer Sandro Magister commented, “The pope’s call for support was the impetus for putting on a big show. This demonstration fits the new image that the Church now has under Pope Benedict. It is the image of a Church that decisively sticks to its position on a select number of key issues.”

The Italian constitution provides for the neutrality of the state in religious matters, and smaller Christian churches in Italy are concerned about the direction the Vatican is headed. They want the

*This May’s Family Day demonstration in Rome is an example of the Vatican’s new, more decisive approach.*

Vatican to respect that neutrality even if it is by far the largest denomination in Italy.

According to Paulo Ricca, professor at the Waldensian University in Rome, "The differences of opinion among Christian churches in Italy concerning social issues are becoming more pronounced." Ricca's evangelical church supports giving non-married couples certain rights, as is currently the case in other European countries.

He added, "As Christians we cannot ignore certain questions in our society. But that is what the Catholic Church is doing, even though we should be trying to find solutions. That's why the gap between Catholics and Protestants has been growing recently."

### **Benedict not afraid to challenge social change**

The new edge of the Catholic Church hasn't been evident only in Italy. Pope Benedict wasn't in Rome during the Family Day demonstration. Instead, he was on a trip to South America to attend the Latin American Catholic Bishops conference in Brazil.

One of the potential hot topics on the pope's trip to Brazil was a threat made by church leaders in Mexico to excommunicate local officials in Mexico City who had voted in favor of liberalizing abortion. The church's stand in Mexico sparked interest in Brazil, where there are an estimated 1 million illegal abortions each year, inciting a call to liberalize Brazil's abortion law.

In a talk with journalists on his plane to Brazil, however, Benedict said that "killing innocent children is inconsistent with [taking] communion."

The pope's comments irked Brazilian Minister of Health José Temporão, who accused the pope of interfering in Brazil's internal affairs. "You can't force one religion's dogmas and commandments on an entire society. That's not appropriate. If men would get pregnant, they would have a different opinion on the subject," was Temporão's response shortly before Benedict met with Brazilian President Luiz Inácio.

One of the main topics on the agenda during May's Latin American Catholic Bishops conference was the growth of Protestant groups in Latin America, which is the unstated reason Benedict called on Latin American Catholics "to renew their drive and missionary zeal."

Nearly half of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics live in Latin America, and Brazil has the most Catholics of any country on earth. However, when surveyed in opinion polls, less than two thirds of Brazil's 190 million people still call themselves Catholic.

Benedict apparently believes that liberalizing Catholic viewpoints is not the solution for the drain on church membership. As long as Benedict is pope, expect the Catholic Church to remain "on edge" in an attempt to provide a clear distinction between itself and non-Catholic Christian groups.

### **Benedict, Nicolas Sarkozy and Turkey**

Benedict's predecessor is credited with a major contribution to the demise of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe. Pope John Paul II's influence, initially in Poland and then elsewhere in the Communist countries east of the iron curtain, was largely behind the scenes. Could it be that Pope Benedict may have a similar influence, but this time on all of Europe?

An intellectual who is not afraid to state his views in clear terms, Benedict may already be influencing more than just how his own church will position itself on key societal issues that also involve church doctrine. In a speech in Regensburg during a visit to his homeland of Bavaria last September, Benedict quoted a 14th-century Byzantine emperor who was critical of Islam. His remarks caused a furor in the Islamic world, and he said later that it was not his intention to offend Muslims.

On the other hand, Benedict surely understood the impact his words might have, especially since his earlier view was well known on the question of whether a Muslim country should become part of the European Union.

Prior to his election as pope, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger called the start of negotiations with Turkey on EU membership a mistake. He has not made any official statement since becoming pope, although Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan claimed that Benedict had voiced support in a private meeting last November.

On the day that Pope Benedict is supposed to have made his comments, Radio Vatican had this to say:

"Erdogan, who is about to have the EU put his chair outside the door, seized the favorable moment to use the pope of all people as a crown witness for Turkish EU membership. Has Pope Benedict really changed his mind on this question, or did a politician put one over on the pope? It does seem a bit strange that it would be the pope who would now promote Turkey's bid for membership when the EU itself appears ready to put negotiations with Turkey on hold" (Nov. 28, 2006).

By using a quote critical of Islam at a time when Muslim Turkey's entry into the European Union is a subject of concern to many Europeans, Benedict appears to have sent a signal to European leaders. Perhaps that is why newly elected French President Nicolas Sarkozy wasted no time letting his country and the rest of Europe know what he thinks of Turkey's bid to join the EU. "Turkey has no place in Europe," he declared in an interview with the French daily newspaper *Le Figaro* (June 6, 2007).

"After the EU Council meeting in June I will propose a strategy that will open a way for us to drop the strategy of pursuing membership without dividing Europe," Sarkozy added. He intends to have his proposal on the agenda for discussion at the EU summit meeting scheduled for December 2007.

Just one week after assuming office, Sarkozy expressed his views on Turkey during his inaugural visit as French president to the European Commission in Brussels. Sarkozy envisions some kind of "Mediterranean union" with Turkey involving a "privileged partnership," but short of full membership.

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso restated the official EU position that any decision on whether to admit Turkey will only be made when negotiations have been completed, which are expected to last at least 10 years. Under the existing EU framework, which permits any nation to veto treaties or proposals, observers have speculated that France could block negotiations with Turkey at any time by simply exercising its veto right.

Like John Paul II did during the Soviet era, Pope Benedict will also influence developments in Europe, but likely in a more direct way than his predecessor. ❖

# Poland Defies the EU

*In the European Union's desperate efforts to turn key points from its derailed constitution into a treaty last month, Poland became the principal impediment to the wishes of EU leaders. Why such Polish opposition?*

by John Ross Schroeder

Journalist Quentin Peel, writing in favor of breaking the EU constitutional deadlock, stated the following: “The Poles are much more difficult to understand. *They are afraid of Germany.* It seems to have nothing to do with the 21st century. It is a fear that cannot be solved by treaty changes” (*Financial Times*, June 11, 2007, emphasis added throughout).

One EU diplomat involved in current constitutional treaty deliberations said that the French and the British could be relied upon to “play the [diplomatic] game.” But representatives from Poland, now an EU member country, were described in a different way. “But the Poles. They are something else. I am not sure they understand the game at all” (*The Times*, June 21, 2007).

One cannot really understand Poland's behavior with respect to current affairs between nations apart from its checkered history. EU foreign policy spokesman Javier Solana clearly stated: “History lies at the heart of many disputes that are causing such angst in today's EU” (*The Economist*, May 19, 2007).

## Poland's troubled history

Poland's governmental administration is unique in the world today in that its leaders are twin brothers, Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski and President Lech Kaczynski. Their parents fought Nazi Germany in the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944.

More recently, Polish leaders were angered when former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder bypassed Poland in his agreement with the Russians to construct a gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea.

As a result of these and other historical events, the two brothers “*deeply mistrust Germany and Russia* and battle harder for Polish interests than any of their predecessors” (*International Herald Tribune*, June 21, 2007).

A thousand years of Polish history has been marked by a periodic loss of territory and national independence. The lust in national hearts for ever more territory and the vagaries of international politics are not the only factors here. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto writes in his history book *Millennium*:

“*Eastern Europe's geography is hostile to political continuity.* Cut into and crossed by invader's corridors, its open flat expanses, its good communications and dispersed populations contribute to an environment in which states can form with ease, survive with struggle and thrive with rarity. It favours vast and fragile empires, vulnerable to external attack and internal rebellion. In our millennium [the last 1,000 years], they have come and gone with bewildering rapidity” (p. 79).

To many Poles, World War II only ended in 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell and the iron curtain crumbled.

Territorial pressures from Germany began at the very inception of Polish statehood. Historian J.M. Roberts' *Pelican History of the World* states: “Another enduring national entity which began to crystallize at about the same time as Russia was Poland. Its origins lay in a group of Slav tribes who appear at the outset, in the tenth century, *struggling against pressure from Germans in the West*” (p. 357).

Another source, *Chambers Dictionary of World History*, tells us, “The Poles under the Piast Dynasty emerged as the most powerful of a number of Slavic groups in 1025” (pp. 652-653).

The Polish Empire reached its zenith of European influence under the reign of John Sobieski. In the siege of Vienna of 1683, his army swung the balance toward victory for the citizens of the Hapsburg's capital and stopped the last great Turkish advance in Eastern Europe. But any glory or gratitude was short-lived. The nation that had assisted so valiantly in halting the Muslim Turks would soon be gobbled up by others.

## Caught between two burdens

In a summary account *Chambers Dictionary of World History* explains, “Eventually in 1772, 1793 and 1795 Poland was partitioned between Prussia [part of what became Germany], Russia and Austria, and was deprived of its independent statehood. *Russia gained the lion's share of its territories*” (p. 653).

Fast forward to the beginning of World War I. Noted British historian Norman Davies laments

*“History lies at the heart of many disputes that are causing such angst in today's EU”— EU foreign policy spokesman Javier Solana.*



Polish Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński and President Lech Kaczyński.

that “in August 1914, when Europe entered the ordeal of the Great War, *Poland did not exist in any practical sense. ‘Poland’ could not be found on the map of Europe:* Between twenty and thirty million people who might have called themselves Poles lived as subjects of the Russian Tsar, the German Kaiser, or the Emperor-King of Austria; and there was no one alive who could remember the time when Poland had been an independent state” (*Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland’s Present*, p. 95).

As a result of the outcome of this first 20th-century world conflict, Poland was reborn as a full-fledged nation in 1919. Yet in less than a quarter century, Polish independence became just another memory as Germany and Russia (the Soviet Union) oppressed its peoples. Independence had lasted only 20 years. This time foreign domination would remain for 50 years.

Germanization and Russification have marked much of Polish history. Nations, such as Poland, that rest between two dynamic societies bent on molding the world in their image suffer greatly. And who is to say that history won’t repeat itself?

### Poland’s present—and future

Norman Davies positively summed up Poland’s present situation at the beginning of 2001. “For despite its problems, Poland is in

better health today than for several centuries. It provides a wonderful example of how the human spirit can triumph over prolonged adversity. In this sense, Poland can only be regarded as a great asset to the Europe, at whose heart it has always lain” (*Heart of Europe*, preface to edition 3, p. xvi).

However, how Poland will eventually fit into the structure of the European Union remains to be seen. The Scriptures indicate that in the “last days” of human government a vast and powerful religious system will have incredible influence on a union of nations that is gradually, but surely, emerging on the European continent (Revelation 13).

This religious system has all the markings of what has been the dominant religious force on this continent for 2,000 years—Roman Catholicism. We should note that Poland remains to this day one of the most vigilant Catholic societies in what is otherwise increasingly becoming a secularized European civilization. This is the same union of nations that currently wants no mention of God in its constitution.

Negotiations between the 27 members of the European Union over the EU constitution are a long-term breaking story. Norman Davies warns that “no history book that sets out to relate the Past to the Present is ever written at the right moment. By the time the author’s observations are published the present will always have moved on...

“In this respect the work of the contemporary historian is more akin to the shifting assignments of the leader [lead editorial of a newspaper or possibly a magazine] writer than that of the dispassionate analyst of completed histories” (*ibid.*, p. vii).

Yet the eventual outcome of the biblical prophecies relating to Europe are not in question. The overall progress of the European Union over the last 50 years has been punctuated by many setbacks (mostly small, but some of a major character). Yet the EU plows on relentlessly, and its presence and influence is increasingly felt throughout the world.

To understand the essential historical and prophetic background relevant to the European scene, request or download our free booklets *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*, *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* and *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. ❖

“HISTORY,” (Continued from page 4)  
no long and brilliant ‘Hellenistic Period’—and so no integration of a wider world into a Greek cultural/linguistic sphere.

“Without the challenge of strong Greek cultural influence and subsequent Roman mismanagement in Judea, Judaism would have remained a localized phenomenon... The New Testament (whatever form it took) would never have been composed in ‘universal’ Greek and so would not have found a broad audience” (pp. 55-56).

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

Let’s now go to Bible prophecy. Why was Alexander destined to survive and become a conqueror, establishing the Greek empire and then die at the height of his power, at an early age? As you will see, it was all prophesied hundreds of years in advance.

In example #2 we quoted Daniel 8:1-7 about the goat (Greece) defeating the ram (Medo-Persia). Let’s continue in verse 8:

“Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, *the large horn was broken*, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven... And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is *the first king* [Alexander the Great]. As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power” (Daniel 8:8, 21-22).

There is even a further elaboration of this prophecy, given to Daniel years later, when the Persians had risen to power after defeating the Babylonians. It predicted which Persian ruler would suffer the consequences of Alexander’s conquests (Daniel 11:1-3), as well as what would happen to Alexander:

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

As prophecy predicted, Alexander died an early death (33 years old) and his empire was divided up into four parts and ruled by four of his generals—not by any of his family or descendants.

These three examples remind us that Bible prophecy is behind much of world history—and more importantly, it also predicts what will happen in the future! ❖

“PRAY” (Continued from page 16)

human history. Roosevelt had slipped away for a few days to a favorite retreat with his daughter, Anna, who is thought to have been a contributor.

The D-day invasion of Operation Overlord was postponed for a day due to inclement weather and then on June 6 the prayer was made available to the evening newspapers so that the public could recite the prayer with the president on his evening broadcast at 10 p.m.

Padilla quotes former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, as saying, “You have a president who was going on national radio and bringing the entire nation together in a six-minute prayer that is very direct and very powerful.”

Gingrich added, “When you read the prayer, Roosevelt is sending a clear message with almost every sentence... He warns that the road will be hard.”

As news of the massive invasion of Fortress Europe began to hit the public, many people understood the magnitude of the times for troops and nations alike and sought a place of prayer. Padilla, the reporter, quotes famed historian and author Doris Kearns Goodwin as stating, “Roosevelt understood the nation’s mood. Beyond his own faith, he was expressing, so perfectly, exactly the right tone for what his people needed to sustain them through those worrisome hours when people didn’t know how D-day would turn out.”

### Join with me in prayer

At 10 p.m., Eastern Time, Americans would hear the voice of one of the greatest communicators in U.S. history.

“And so, in this poignant hour, I ask you to join with me in prayer: Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our Nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion, and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity. Lead them straight and true; give strength to their arms, stoutness to their hearts, steadfastness in their faith. They will need Thy blessings. Their road will be long and hard. For the enemy is strong. He may hurl back our forces. Success may not come with rushing speed, but we shall return again and again; and we



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*“Roosevelt understood the nation’s mood. Beyond his own faith, he was expressing, so perfectly, exactly the right tone for what his people needed to sustain them through those worrisome hours when people didn’t know how D-day would turn out”—Doris Kearns Goodwin.*

know that by Thy grace, and by the righteousness of our cause, our sons will triumph. They will be sore tried, by night and day without rest—until the victory is won...

“And let our hearts be stout, to wait out the long travail, to bear sorrows that may come, to impart our courage unto our sons wheresoever they may be.

“And, O Lord, give us Faith. Give us Faith in Thee; Faith in our sons; Faith in each other; Faith in our united crusade. Let not the keenness of our spirit ever be dulled. Let not the impacts of temporary events, of temporal matters of but fleeting moment—let not these deter us in our unconquerable purpose. With Thy blessing we shall prevail over the unholy forces of our enemy... Thy will be done, Almighty God.”

It is amazing to envision such a call to prayer in these timid days of political correctness that have dulled and hushed our inner spiritual man. And yet, then and there, Roosevelt offered a plea to a greater force, not in boastful pride, but in humility defined by words,

because on that day the outcome could not be fully known or managed by any human being—even the president of the United States.

Oh no, no pep rally here. Only a plea to God for victory over evil.

F.D.R.’s words and the tone he used remind me of God’s message to Solomon: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked way, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place” (2 Chronicles 7:14-15).

### Words of humility

The words of F.D.R. express a realism and humility that the path would be long and hard. His tone was frank and honest. Meacham in his work likens Roosevelt to Abraham Lincoln in the way he drew on “language and ritual of public religion to do the best one could at an hour when events were

beyond the control of any president: help Americans see the crisis in the largest possible context reminding them that nothing would be easy but that the cause was worth the sacrifice. This is verbally demonstrated by the Commander in Chief's choice of words regarding 'how some will never return. Embrace these, Father, and receive them, Thy heroic servants into Thy kingdom.'"

Padilla concluded his article with a note of astonishment "that Roosevelt led what was, at the time, one of the largest single mass prayers in human history."

Yes, in retrospect it was amazing what one man did with six minutes of time. Which begs the question: What are we doing 60 years later? How are we approaching life and seeking the providence that comes from above? While the Fortress Europe of the 20th century was ultimately demolished by Allied troops, there are greater conflagrations yet ahead. Yes, events of such enormity are coming that, incredibly, will cause the horrific events of the past century to pale in comparison.

The prophet Daniel was divinely inspired to look into our very times and record for our warning that "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time"(Daniel 12:1). That's talking about the events preceding the return of Jesus Christ. Yes, the last days!

In the walk and battle that we have been called to as followers of Jesus Christ, it has been made painstakingly clear that the road will not be easy in this lifetime. The apostle Paul reiterated Christ's realistic message by "strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God'" (Acts 14:22).

As a matter of record, time and again, Jesus made it abundantly clear that before we wear a crown, we must bear a cross. Oh no, He never promised it would be easy, but He did make it crystal clear it would be worth it.

### **"Your prayers have come up"**

And with all the challenges that would and will come, Jesus, in His

divine revelation to John, painted a clear picture of the actions of His loved ones here below. He focused on people who moved beyond complaining to explaining to their Heavenly Father the need for the return of His Son to this earth. And those prayers rise up, as much as F.D.R.'s radio signal was transmitted across America.

In Revelation 8:3, it speaks of how "another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." This represents the prayers of Christ's followers. They are prayers that rise as "a memorial before God."

Let's remember that the Christian walk is not a sprint, but may better be likened to a marathon. Some have said that about one third of the Bible is prophecy and that 90 percent of that is yet to occur. With the momentous times ahead of us, you and I should have more than two words to put together in this deep well of world events and biblical prophecy.

### **On our lips**

When we follow the admonition of Jesus to pray, perhaps we can gain a sense of perspective from another section of that prayer given on June 6, 1944.

It's a line of wisdom that reverberates with the godly admonition of "this is the way, walk in it" (Isaiah 30:21). That way is a way that moves beyond the moment and causes us to wage a battle every day on our knees and in our hearts ensuring that our prayers of "thy kingdom come" sustain their vibrancy.

President Roosevelt said, "Many people have urged that I call the Nation into a single day of special prayer. But because the road is long and the desire is great, I ask that our people devote themselves in a continuance of prayer. As we rise to each new day, and again when each day is spent, let words of prayer be on our lips, invoking Thy help to our efforts." ❖



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by Robin Webber

## “When You Pray...”

It has been said that the most effective position for prayer might be dangling upside down from a rope, 60 feet down a well shaft with your nose just 6 inches from the water.

All that might be heard coming up to the surface from the dark recess below would be, “God, help!” Yes—short, sweet, well-directed and most effective.

But whether we’re in a well or not, our task remains the same. The urgency and sincerity of a personal plea toward a strong hand from beyond to rescue us is part of every Christian’s calling.

It is noteworthy that in all the words recorded in the Scriptures, Jesus didn’t give His disciples a lecture on how to be public speakers, but He did teach each of us how to “dial in” and pray to the only One who can make a difference in our lives.

Christ made it perfectly clear that He has demands on our time and hearts when He said, “When you pray” (Luke 11:2). The bottom line is simply this: Heaven above has expectations of us here below. We are to pray!

Imagine for a moment if 100 million people were listening in “when you pray” as you offer your deepest, heartfelt plea to the Almighty. And imagine facing a situation so critical that you desire all 100 million to join you in a united prayer to the One who can make things happen. Yes, imagine the very survival of civilization is at stake!

Does this seem too unreal or too large a task? Well, you can put your imagination button on pause, because history shows that this has already occurred and not that long ago.

### History hung in the balance

Recently, Steve Padilla of the *Los Angeles Times* documented this action in an article titled “A Prayer for Extraordinary Times”

appearing on June 9, 2007. This special prayer is additionally documented in *American Gospel* by Jon Meacham under the heading “The D-Day Prayer” (2006, pp. 168-172).

It is in these two works that the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt are captured for us as he offers a prayer on behalf of the nation on the evening of the D-day invasion of June 6, 1944. The largest amphibious-based assault in human history was underway, and the president recognized history hung in the balance.

As Padilla brings out in his article, it is not unusual for an American president to invoke God’s name in a public proclamation, but what makes F.D.R.’s words so distinctive is that he would ask the American public to join him in a prayer of his own composition.

As Meacham brings out in his book, “The reckoning was at hand; D-day, what the Allies hoped to be the beginning of the end of Hitler’s Fortress Europe, was scheduled for Monday, June 5. Twenty thousand men might die in the first waves to strike the beaches of Normandy; failure would be catastrophic, perhaps bringing down Churchill’s government in London, costing Roosevelt the presidential election in November, and giving the Nazis world enough and time enough to finish the work they had begun in the death camps of Eastern Europe and possibly complete an atomic bomb of their own.”

As Meacham sums up the moment, “If there were ever a time for prayer, no matter what one’s conviction or creed, Roosevelt thought, this was it.”

### Words that embraced wisdom

It would be a thought-filled prayer and not simply a momentary expression. It was one of the gravest hours of

(See “PRAY,” page 14)