



## In This Issue:

August 2009 | Vol. 12, No. 7

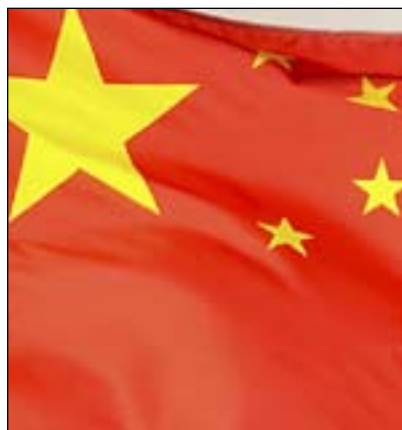
### Pope Calls for New "World Political Authority"

by Paul Kieffer. . . . . 1

### Restoration: History's Twists and Turns

by Darris McNeely. . . . . 2

### The Enormous Expansion of Chinese Influence: What Does It Portend?



©2009 Jupiterimages Corporation

by John Ross Schroeder . . . . . 5

### Redefining Hate Speech

by Gary Petty . . . . . 7

### Europe and the Church, Part 11: Germany's Dream of Conquest

by Melvin Rhodes . . . . . 9

### This Is the Way... Not One Stone!

by Robin Webber . . . . . 16

# Pope Calls for New "World Political Authority"

*Pope Benedict XVI and other world leaders are right that we do need a new "world political authority." But what does the Bible say about how it will come?*

by Paul Kieffer

Just one day before the start of the G8 (Group of 8) summit meeting in Italy last month, the Vatican released the third encyclical published during the papacy of Pope Benedict XVI. Benedict's new encyclical is titled "Caritas in Veritate" ("Charity in Truth") and addresses the theme of international social responsibility for the general economic welfare of all mankind.

The papal letter took two years to produce and continues a theme that was a favorite of Benedict's predecessor, Pope John Paul II. Its release the day before the summit meeting of the world's leading industrialized nations and Russia was apparently chosen to signal the Vatican's discontent with the way the new world economy, driven by globalization, is enlarging the gap between the planet's rich and poor.

According to Benedict, "the pernicious effects of sin are evident" in the world's current economic system. The pope singled out the desire to achieve profits above all else as a major problem in the global marketplace: "Once profit becomes the exclusive goal, if it is produced by improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, it



Reuters/Osservatore Romano

*Pope Benedict XVI signs his encyclical "Charity in Truth," at the Vatican July 6, 2009.*

*In it he called for a "true world political authority."*

risks destroying wealth and creating poverty."

### Call for a "true world political authority"

The most remarkable aspect of the pope's message was his call for the establishment of a "true world political authority" to oversee the world's

(See "POPE," page 3)



*World News and Prophecy* (ISSN 1942-1001) is published monthly, except April and October, by the United Church of God, an *International Association*, 555 Technecenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. © 2009 United Church of God, an *International Association*. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices.

The mission of *World News and Prophecy* (WNP) is to provide United Church of God members and other interested persons with commentary and analysis of selected world news topics in the light of Bible prophecy. Its purpose is to help readers discern the times and increase their awareness and understanding of the answers Christ gave to His disciples' questions: "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

Managing editor: Darris McNeely

Senior editors: Cecil E. Maranville, Melvin Rhodes, Robin Webber

Contributing editor: John Ross Schroeder  
Senior writer: Paul Kieffer

Copy editors: Mike Bennett, Doug Johnson  
Proofreaders: Becky Bennett, Debbie Pennington  
Layout/design: Elizabeth Cannon, Peter Eddington

Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

The United Church of God provides *World News and Prophecy* (WNP) as an educational service for interested persons. The purpose of WNP is to help readers discern the times and increase their awareness and understanding of current events in the light of Bible prophecy. Although the staff strives for truth and accuracy in its reporting, analysis and Bible commentary, WNP is not a doctrinal publication. Articles do undergo both an editorial and a review process.

**Unsolicited materials:** Due to staffing limitations, unsolicited materials sent to *World News and Prophecy* will not be critiqued or returned. By their submission authors agree that submitted materials become the property of the United Church of God, an *International Association*, to use as it sees fit. This agreement is controlled by California law.

**Subscriptions:** *World News and Prophecy* is sent free to members of the United Church of God and all who request it. There is no subscription price. To request a subscription, write to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, phone (513) 576-9796 or download from [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org). For international addresses, see page 15.

**Address changes:** POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

**World News and Prophecy online:** Read *World News and Prophecy* as soon as it is completed. The next issue is scheduled to be available by Sept. 3, 2009, on the Internet at:

<http://www.wnponline.org>



"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

# Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

## History's Twists and Turns

**G**reat events of history and prophecy often occur in ways we cannot foretell and arise out of events that, at least on the surface, appear to be a solution to a crisis. Such was the case with the unexpected rise to power of Adolf Hitler in Germany in 1933.

Germany was in the grip of economic depression. The Weimar Republic had failed to provide a recovery in the post-World War I years. The heavy penalty of reparations imposed by the victorious Allied powers left the country crippled, its pride bitterly bruised. Into this breach stepped Hitler and his National Socialist Party. The Austrian corporal had organized a movement in southern Germany that had galvanized many who were looking for a way forward under strong, dynamic leadership. Germans strongly desired a restoration of German pride in power and strength, along with a place among the nations. Stability, prosperity and security were fundamental promises made by Hitler's movement.

On Jan. 30, 1933, Hitler was sworn in as chancellor of Germany after a legal election. But his Nazi party did not hold a majority in the Reichstag, the parliament, thwarting his plans for total power. New parliamentary elections were called and held on March 5. The Nazis gained seats but still fell short of the clear majority that Hitler desired to establish his dictatorship by consent of the parliament.

Through a series of quick agreements, Hitler managed to gain what he wanted. The Reichstag was "asked to pass an enabling act conferring on Hitler's cabinet exclusive legislative powers for four years. Put even more simply, the German Parliament would be requested to turn over its constitutional functions to Hitler and take a long vacation" (William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 1960, p. 196).

This took place on March 23 and formed the basis for Hitler's dictatorship. Hitler was able to boast he was the legal ruler of Germany. All this occurred in less than 60 days. Events can move quickly. The rest is history.

In this issue of *World News and Prophecy* we continue the series on "Europe and the Church" in history and prophecy. We are writing the series to give a sense of perspective to the crisis of leadership among governments today. Revelation 17 describes a complex picture of events hinting at unexpected twists and turns. A political leader emerges with power given by others who are of "one mind" (verse 13). Later comes a twist where the "ten horns...on the beast... will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire" (verse 16). These are headline-making events, and it is frankly impossible for us to see in advance how they will happen.

But happen they will because God will put His purpose into the hearts of men to bring His prophetic plan to pass (verse 17). We don't have to know the details in advance, but God gives us the broad overview of understanding. It is our spiritual duty to watch and keep our spiritual lives above reproach. This is what Christ shows as the way to avoid the deception of the end times (Revelation 16:15).

From an understanding of history we can conclude that human events can take dramatic turns beyond what well-intentioned people can control. God controls the ultimate course of history and nothing will be done to prevent the conclusion of this age of man and the dawn of His ruling Kingdom on earth. Ground your worldview in the Bible. Continue to study Christ's warnings to discern the times.



—Darris McNeely

Darris McNeely

“POPE” (Continued from page 1)

economy and work for the “common good” of all people instead of economic pursuits being determined largely by the interests of financiers and international big business.

A Vatican spokesman emphasized that the language of the encyclical is phrased in general terms instead of outlining specific steps that need to be implemented. Nevertheless, the language of the document is quite direct in places as seen in these excerpts (emphasis ours throughout):

“Globalization is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon which must be grasped in the diversity and unity of all its different dimensions, *including the theological dimension. In this way it will be possible to experience and to steer the globalization of humanity in relational terms, in terms of communion and the sharing of goods...*

“Today, as we take to heart the lessons of the current economic crisis, which sees the State’s public authorities directly involved in correcting errors and malfunctions, *it seems more realistic to re-evaluate their role and their powers...* Once the role of public authorities has been more clearly defined, *one could foresee an increase in the new forms of political participation, nationally and internationally...*

“The significant new elements in the picture of the development of peoples today in many cases *demand new solutions.*”

The pope’s appeal for an international authority that transcends national borders is not limited just to economics. The Vatican envisions a new “world political authority” that would have wide-ranging influence in other areas as well:

“To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: *for all this, there is urgent need of*

*a true world political authority.*”

The release of Pope Benedict’s remarkable encyclical was reportedly delayed several months to include the current financial crisis. However, Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Vatican’s Council for Justice and Peace, emphasized that the lengthy document is “not an encyclical done for the crisis. If the encyclical had come out before the crisis, you would have said it was prophetic.”

Finance crisis or not, little does Cardinal Martino realize how prophetic the Vatican’s call for an international political authority is—especially one guided by a “theological dimension.”

### **A coming world power guided by religious influence**

Prophecies in the book of Revelation describe a superpower that will appear on the world scene shortly before the return of Jesus Christ. The real power behind the scenes guiding this superpower will be Satan the devil. This end-time military-political alliance will reflect aspects of the four empires described in the book of Daniel, beginning with ancient King Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian empire (Daniel 2:38) and encompassing the subsequent Persian, Greek and Roman empires.

With the fall of Rome in A.D. 476, that ancient system supposedly came to an end—as if mortally wounded. But its surprising revival, from the ashes of the Roman Empire, is described in the book of Revelation:



Reuters/Osservatore Romano

*The pope’s appeal for an international authority that transcends national borders is not limited just to economics.*

“And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast” (Revelation 13:3).

The end-time configuration of this healed “beast” will be an alliance of nations. The world will fear and marvel at the enormous power of this alliance: “So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’” (verse 4).

Notice the configuration of this political and military alliance as described in Revelation 17: “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour [a short time] as kings with the

beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them” (Revelation 17:12-14).

Revelation 17 also reveals that this final resurrection of a prophetic “beast” will be guided by a spiritual—i.e., theological—influence. That influence is pictured in the form of a fallen woman, a harlot: “And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (verses 3-5).

The fallen woman sits on and guides the first beast (the alliance of 10 kings, rulers of nations or groups of nations). She is the world’s chief advocate of Satan’s disgraceful doctrines. She artfully preserves the pagan mysteries—the fundamentals of ancient Babylon’s religion—in her traditions and teachings. She will be a fierce advocate of these ancient religious customs and practices at the end of this age, again making them internationally popular.

Who is this spiritual harlot? The ancient city of Babylon (verse 5) controlled vast empires, subjecting many nations and kings to their traditions and culture. Revelation 17 tells us: “And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (verse 18).

When the book of Revelation was being recorded in about A.D. 90, if you had asked anyone in that part of the world where Christianity was developing to name a city that fit this description, there would have been

one answer: Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. Prophecy reveals that a modern city will assume a similar role at the time of the end.

This world religious center will also be powerfully influential in this world’s political and economic arenas. By the time the fallen woman—this Babylon the Great—is destroyed by Christ, it will be the case that “all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury” (Revelation 18:3).

Just as Revelation 17 describes the spiritual influence guiding this end-time alliance, Revelation 18 describes its economic reach. It will be a powerful trading system, bringing riches to merchants all around the world (verses 11-15).

### World government the only answer

With his call for a new “world political authority,” Pope Benedict indirectly acknowledged the inability of the United Nations in its current form to solve the world’s problems.

In fact, the new encyclical “Caritas in Veritate” urges a reformation of the United Nations: “In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst

(See “POPE,” page 13)

### Recommended Reading

The book of Revelation remains mysterious to most people today but offers great insight into the events leading up to one of the world’s most momentous events—the return of Christ! For more information, request a free copy of *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download it from our Web site at [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)

**Want more**  
*World News and Prophecy?*

Join the *WNP* fan page and group on

**facebook**

Follow us on

**twitter**

Watch *WNP* seminars and stay informed. Visit our Web site at [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)

**World News & Prophecy**  
STATISTICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT EVENTS  
*online*

# The Enormous Expansion of Chinese Influence: What Does It Portend?

*Recent news reports strongly suggest that China's military, economic and political influence continues to expand aggressively both in Asia and the world at large. What are the long-term implications?*

by John Ross Schroeder

Some observers predict an Asian-centered world order—part of our ever-changing constellation of global power and influence. One renowned Indian statesman actually stated that the 21st century “will be Asia’s century.”

*Foreign Affairs* also comments: “China’s extraordinary economic growth and active diplomacy are already transforming East Asia, and future decades will see even greater increases in Chinese power and influence... *Will China overthrow the existing order or become a part of it? And what, if anything, can the United States do to maintain its position as China rises?*” (January-February 2008, emphasis added throughout).

But before we address these questions posed by *Foreign Affairs*, let’s take a more searching look at Chinese expansionist efforts in Asia itself.

## The military implications of Chinese expansion

David Blair, diplomatic editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, writes: “*China is building a web of influence across South Asia. Many of Beijing’s immensely ambitious projects are years away from fruition, yet the repercussions of these ventures are already being felt*” (“China on the Rise Once More Across the East,” *Telegraph.co.uk*, May 20, 2009).

The Chinese are currently constructing ports in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and on a Burmese island. Recall that China gave Sri Lanka its support during the conflict with the Tamil Tigers. Ports like the one in Sri Lanka could possibly be used as Chinese naval bases in the future, raising questions as to whether China will extend its naval strength into the Indian Ocean.

Kerry Brown, an official of the Asian program of the British Chatham House think tank, states: “*China is marching toward regional dominance* and that brings it into conflict with India on one flank and Japan on the other. *It will at some point become much more active as a military power in that region*” (ibid.).

But Mr. Brown does not believe that China necessarily wants conflict. His thoughts are that the Chinese “are seeking a stable international environment within which they can continue their economic development.” Nonetheless, other countries in the general region are understandably worried about China’s intentions. Australia is one.

## Australian reaction to China’s growing military

According to Bonnie Malkin, reporting for *The Daily Telegraph* from Sydney, “Australia is conducting the biggest expansion of its navy since the Second World War and will spend an extra £35 billion on the armed forces over the next 20 years” (“Australia Expands Navy as Chinese Power Grows,” *Telegraph.co.uk*, May 19, 2009).

It seems highly likely that Australia’s military buildup could very well be related to Chinese expansion. “The potential instability caused by the emergence of China and India as major world powers was cited as the most pressing concern for this military build-up in particular. Australian defence planners are believed to be concerned about China’s growing naval strength *and America’s possible retreat as a global power in the decades ahead*” (ibid.).

This article goes on to discuss the doubling of Chinese submarine patrols in the past year, calling attention to the extension of

*Certainly in today’s world, America appears to be on the wane and China and Asia on the ascent. Why is the United States suffering so many setbacks in the world? Are there both historic and prophetic reasons?*



Reuters/Tom Chong

*Australia's Trade Minister Simon Crean and China's Commerce Minister Chen Deming attend a news conference at the APEC 2009 trade ministers meeting in Singapore July 22, 2009.*

China's navy into Australian territorial waters. While specifically denying any plans for any future war with China, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd stated categorically that his government would "make absolutely no apology" for taking whatever steps were needed to guarantee the country's security."

### **China and Russia**

China and Russia have a long history of both cooperation and conflict. According to Andrew Boyd's *An Atlas of World Affairs*, "In a long series of conquests, from 1500 to 1900, Russia and China took over all of northern Asia. Between them, they subdued the Mongolians and all the Turkic-language peoples, from

the Azerbaijanis of the Caucasus to the Yakuts of eastern Siberia, and including the Kazakhs, Tatars, Uighurs and Uzbeks" (10th edition, 1998, p. 173).

But cooperation can turn into conflict, and the two giant empires clashed periodically, principally over territorial tensions. Fast-forwarding to the late 20th century, Sino-Russian relations grew considerably warmer.

"In 1989 the USSR withdrew its troops from Afghanistan and began to reduce its forces in Mongolia and on the Chinese frontier; this satisfied some of China's requirements for a 'normalizing' of relations. Tension was eased, and work was resumed on the completion of a [transnational]

rail link... The break-up of the USSR created a buffer zone in central Asia, and Russo-Chinese relations continued to improve" (ibid., pp. 174-175).

Relations between these two geographic giants had apparently deteriorated to the point in the early 1970s that Leonid Brezhnev had reputedly asked President Richard Nixon for permission to "nuke" the People's Republic of China. Reportedly, the stern reply was a firm "No."

The Sino-Russian relationship continues to wax and wane. "In the early 1990s, massive sales of arms to China made up 2% of Russia's exports. Russia needed the money badly, but its generals grew nervous about China's new military strength" (p. 175).

China's relationships with other countries on its border also warrant observation, in terms of possible prophetic overtones for the end time. Consider India.

### **Chinese disputes with India**

After many decades of relative stagnation, both China and India have seen remarkable growth rates over the last two decades and more. These two Asian giants alone have almost two fifths of the entire world population. Although set back somewhat by the current world recession, economically both nations could still be viewed to be on the march.

These two Asian countries have a long history of border tensions and disputed territorial claims on their 2,100-mile border. Threats of war and even a few serious skirmishes have occurred. David Blair recently reported, "The tension between China and India over their bitterly disputed border has spread to the Asian Development Bank [ADB], where Beijing has blocked almost £2 billion for its neighbour" ("China Blocks £2 Billion in Aid to India," Telegraph.co.uk, May 19, 2009). Part of the total amount has been earmarked for a northern Indian water project on territory China claims for its own.

India would need U.S. support if it ever hopes to be able to persuade the Chinese to relent and ask the ADB to release the funds. Such

(See "CHINA," page 12)

# Redefining Hate Speech

*Hate speech—it can incite racism, prejudices and even violence. But is it hate speech to disagree with others in the public arena on important moral issues? The debate over what is and is not hate speech is much more important than you may realize. There may come a time in the near future when it may be illegal to promote biblical standards concerning abortion, homosexuality or marriage.*

by Gary Petty

**D**o you remember this childhood comeback? “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” That old saying just is not true. Anyone who has suffered ridicule, slander or verbal attacks knows that words are powerful and can be used as weapons to hurt others.

Tell a child long enough that she is stupid or that he is ugly, and eventually he or she will begin to believe you. Parents and children, husbands and wives, the dearest of friends have been separated for a lifetime because of hurtful words spat out in a time of anger.

Words have been used to incite riots and wars, promote racism and ruin the reputations of good people. *Hate speech* is a term used for words used to denigrate and hurt others.

## Christian hate speech?

Sometimes Christians are accused of hate speech because of their positions on abortion and gay rights. Some opponents claim that Jesus said that we should not judge one another. This becomes an excuse to accept almost any behavior as Christian. In reality, not only non-religious people but also most religious people would be terribly offended if they read the Bible and knew what Jesus really taught.

Here is the heart of the problem. A person, if he or she is to be a true Christian, must not only accept Jesus as Savior, but also accept the teachings of Jesus and live by them. The hard truth is that many professing Christians don't know or have outright rejected the teachings of Jesus. It is these teachings that provide a moral compass, a direction finder on how to deal with life's problems. Without this moral compass, a set of rules that define right and wrong for

everyone, people simply make up their own definitions of morality.

Christ expects Christians to influence society through example. He told His disciples that you cannot hide the light of a city on a hill. True Christianity isn't meant to be lived in the shadows. When one takes a stand for the good of family values, sexual morality and the human dignity of a fetus, one will draw the criticism of detractors.

However, how can Christianity have a positive impact on society when so many of those who claim to follow Christ do not live by what He taught? Christianity is losing the public battle because we are losing the private battles inside our own lives. All too many Christians would rather “trust their hearts” than actually follow the teachings of the Founder of their religion.

The result is that in many churches what passes for the teachings of Jesus is based more on postmodernism or New Age thought than the Bible.

Then there is the inevitable accusation, “Christians just want to force their ways on others, and they're a bunch of hypocrites who don't live by what they preach.” We need to face these detractors and admit that there are no perfect Christians, but there is a perfect way of life taught by the Creator of life. That way of life is worth striving to achieve because it is the only way to universal peace and happiness.

## The positive message

Christians who understand the teachings of Jesus do not use words to incite violence, but they must speak out against issues like racism, abortion, dishonesty and injustice.

*True Christianity isn't meant to be lived in the shadows. When one takes a stand for the good of family values, sexual morality and the human dignity of a fetus, one will draw the criticism of detractors.*



*Jesus' entire message hinged on two main ideas of how human beings should respond to God: love toward God and love toward neighbor. The way of give.*

Because Christians are sometimes noted for what we stand against, it is easy to forget what Christians support—family, the basic value and dignity of every human life, the message of the Creator's desire to change our lives for the better, the eternal meaning found in suffering and death, and the promise of an afterlife. What good is it to claim that something is wrong without presenting solutions to the problems?

True Christianity is about change—change at the very core of who you are. Human beings naturally want to live a way of get—“get what is mine,” “defend my rights,” “blame my problems on someone else.” Jesus Christ taught a way of give, personal responsibility and dedication to standards of behavior established by the Creator.

Be honest with yourself. How different would everything around you be if you, and everyone else, approached every situation with the simple idea of, “What can I do that is good for the other person?” Don't use the excuse, “No one else will live that way, so why should I?” The world changes one person at a time. Let it start with you.

The way of life taught by Jesus isn't easy. It is the only way that will bring real happiness, meaning and peace into your life.

### **The message of Jesus**

Nearly 2,000 years ago Jesus of Nazareth walked the dusty roads of Judea promoting a message of God's love. His entire message hinged on two main ideas of how human beings should respond to God: love

toward God and love toward neighbor. The way of give. It's really a simple concept—treat your neighbor as you wish to be treated and commit your life to loving, obeying and worshipping the Creator.

You might wonder why such a simple message would get the Messenger killed. You see, Jesus also was quick to point out the moral weaknesses of society. He openly denounced religious practices that were not acceptable to the worship of the Creator. He avoided political entanglements and criticized leaders who were unjust. He told people that they had to take responsibility for their lives and be willing to admit when they were wrong.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said that it's not just immoral to commit murder, a truly moral person learns to control anger. He even condemned real hate speech. Jesus also taught that a truly moral person not only avoids sexual relationships outside of marriage, but avoids sexual thoughts about someone who isn't his or her spouse.

This may seem like an impossible standard, but Jesus taught that it is one worth striving to achieve. It is time for Christians to stop being intimidated by those who attack the teachings of Jesus and the Bible as hate speech. In the arena of debate about the meaning of human life, the only workable answers come from the Creator of life. ❖

### **Recommended Reading**

Jesus Christ said, “I will build My church.” He declared that His Church would never die out. But can we know whether Christianity's bewildering variety of customs and teachings faithfully represents those of Jesus Christ?

Request or download a free copy of *The Church Jesus Built*.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download it from our Web site at

**[www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)**

# Europe and the Church, Part 11

## Germany's Dream of Conquest

*At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the country of Germany did not even exist. But a century later it had risen to seriously challenge the greatest European empires and forever change the history of the world.*

by Melvin Rhodes

**T**he year 1914 saw “the outbreak of war on a scale unknown and undreamed of in all history” (*The Book of Knowledge*, Vol. 7, 1954, p. 478).

Less than one 14th of the world's population escaped the greatest conflict in history.

Known as the Great War until, 25 years later, a second world war followed, the 1914-18 war saw the end of the old order. A world that had been dominated for four centuries by European empires witnessed the collapse of most of them. Only the British and French empires survived. These two powers were among the victors. But even they lost their empires in the aftermath of the second conflict that inevitably followed the first.

The central power that was their adversary was Germany, a country that did not even exist at the end of the Napoleonic period a century earlier.

At the Congress of Vienna, held after Napoleon was exiled to Elba, leaders of over 200 different sovereign European countries laid the foundation for a century of relative peace on the continent. This century coincided with the *Pax Britannica*, the century of British dominance that came about largely due to Britain's command of the seas. British dominions and colonies scattered the globe forming the “multitude of nations” that was promised to Joseph's son Ephraim in Genesis 48. It was also the period of American expansion westward as the United States fulfilled the birthright promise to Ephraim's brother Manasseh to become a great single nation (verse 19).

The Congress of Vienna met in 1814. In the following year, Napoleon was to

return from exile and once again embark upon his military adventures. His final defeat came in June 1815 at the Battle of Waterloo. The fifth attempt at reviving the Roman Empire had ended. It was to be a century before another power would rise, set on uniting Europe by conquest.

### Germany unites

Before Napoleon, there were 360 German states. These were not states like the American states. The United States is a federal republic. The 360 German states each had their own sovereign: a king, duke or prince. Many of them owed nominal allegiance to the Holy Roman emperor. Napoleon abolished the empire in 1806. A few years later, the Congress of Vienna established a German Confederation (or *Deutscher Bund*) under the presidency of Austria. The number of sovereign German states was reduced from 360 to 39. German unity remained elusive, leaving Austria as the dominant German-speaking power.

But Austrian ambitions were soon challenged by Prussia, the other powerful German nation. The Prussians, under King Frederick the Great (1740-86), had become a major rival to Austria for domination of the rest of Germany. In 1834 Prussia set up a German customs union called the Zollverein, effectively creating a free-trade area among all the German states. This also had the effect of undermining Austrian ambitions over the German lands. It was the first step on the road to German unification.

A little over a thousand years earlier, Charlemagne had united the French

*In less than a century, dominance of Europe had passed from France, under the Bourbons and later Napoleon, to the Germans. On Jan. 18, 1871, King William I of Prussia was proclaimed emperor of Germany and took the title of kaiser, the German word for caesar.*



*This painting by artist Anton von Werner depicts the crowning of Kaiser Wilhelm I in the Hall of Mirrors at the French palace in Versailles on Jan. 18, 1871. Otto von Bismarck can be seen in the white uniform in the center of the painting.*

and the Germans in one kingdom, the second revival of the Roman Empire. After Charlemagne, France and Germany gradually developed their own separate identities, but, as neighbors, their destinies were set to be entwined.

In the aftermath of Napoleon, the French were to struggle through decades of political uncertainty. The dynasty overthrown in the Revolution of 1789 was restored to power in 1815, but remained unpopular and fell 15 years later. The new king, the duke of Orleans, was popular at first but was himself overthrown in 1848, when France's Second Republic was established.

Three years later, a coup led to the restoration of the empire under Napoleon III. In turn, he was also overthrown in 1871. Ironically, in view of the long conflict with England during the time of Napoleon, the three monarchs who lost their thrones in 1830, 1848 and 1871 all went into exile across the Channel.

Napoleon III had the misfortune to rule France when the German states united under Prussia, making

Germany a formidable European power at the very center of the continent. Germany was to defeat France three times in 70 years. Some people lived to see German troops arrive in their country three times!

It was Otto von Bismarck who successfully and skillfully united the German territories under the Prussian dynasty of the Hohenzollerns. Bismarck was popularly known as the Iron Chancellor following a speech he gave at the outset of his premiership. He said, "The great questions of our day cannot be solved by speeches and majority votes, but by blood and iron."

Bismarck expanded Prussia's military in preparation for war with Austria. The Seven Weeks' War in the middle of 1866 saw the Austrian Habsburgs defeated, resulting in Prussian domination of Germany. Following Prussia's victory, the German states north of the Main River formed a confederation (the *Norddeutscher Bund*), with Berlin as the capital. Four large southern German states formed a separate confederation but were in alliance with Prussia.

In defeat, Austria's ruling dynasty established a dual monarchy, which encompassed the empire of Austria and the kingdom of Hungary under one hereditary sovereign. The two nations were independent of each other under the Habsburgs.

When a German prince was offered the vacant Spanish throne in 1870, France objected. Bismarck skillfully raised tensions between France and Germany, with France declaring war on July 19. The northern and the southern German states fought side by side against the French. The French were defeated at the Battle of Sedan on Sept. 1, 1870. Paris fell to the Prussians in January of the following year.

During this war a strong desire grew in the north and the south for a fully united Germany. On Jan. 18, 1871, just 10 days before German troops entered Paris, King William I of Prussia was proclaimed emperor (kaiser) of Germany in the Hall of Mirrors at the French palace of Versailles. After a peace treaty in which France lost territory to Germany, German troops withdrew back to their own borders.

In less than a century, dominance of Europe had passed from France, under the Bourbons and later Napoleon, to the Germans. The title of *kaiser* was derived from *caesar*. The kaisers of both Germany and Austria and the czar of Russia all followed

## Recommended Reading

The book of Revelation remains mysterious to most people today but offers great insight into the events leading up to one of the world's most momentous events—the return of Christ! For more information, request a free copy of *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download it from our Web site at

[www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)

in the traditions of imperial Rome. Bismarck became the reich chancellor of Germany's Second Reich, the successor to the First Reich abolished by Napoleon earlier in the century.

In 1871 Bismarck was given the title prince. Having united Germany, he was also appointed imperial chancellor the same year. He had been prime minister of Prussia from 1862 and remained in that office until 1890. He served under all three kaisers of the Second Reich.

### World War I

Under Bismarck, Germany continued to get stronger and stronger. When Kaiser Wilhelm II came to the German throne in 1888, he was jealous of his chancellor and dismissed him from office. Wilhelm had great ambitions for Germany, wanting to see his German empire become as great as the empire of his grandmother Queen Victoria (the kaiser's mother was the eldest daughter of the British monarch). It was rather late for Germany to acquire many overseas possessions, as most had been taken, but building up the greatest army in Europe gave it opportunities closer to home.

War became inevitable and was finally triggered by a Serbian nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, who assassinated the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand and his wife on June 28, 1914. Within weeks Europe was at war. As most of the world was under European domination, the war was a world war. The United States entered the war in April 1917.

No war in history has ever seen so many casualties. By the end of the four-year conflict, the German, Austrian, Russian and Ottoman emperors had all lost their thrones. The old order had ended, and the world had now entered a totally different phase. Whereas, prior to 1914, many ethnic groups were united under one empire, in the aftermath of war many ethnic groups sought independence, a universal trend that continues down to this day.

It can also be said that, aside from minor conflicts in South America (one continent that was largely unaf-



Wikimedia Commons

*Taken by amateur photographer Milos Oberajger, this photograph shows the hasty arrest of Gavrilo Princip, the man who assassinated Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, the event that sparked the First World War.*

ected by World War I), every war in the world, wherever and whenever it has taken place, can be traced back to the war of 1914-18. Recent conflicts in the Persian Gulf, for example, owe their origin to the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Even the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a direct consequence of World War I.

The kaiser's abdication and the creation of a German republic in November 1918 did not bring closure. The Second Reich had fallen, but the Paris peace treaty resulted in a great deal of resentment among the German peoples. Reparations left the country much poorer with punitive damages having to be paid. Economic problems in the aftermath of the war continued on and off through the Great Depression of the 1930s.

By this time, many Germans had had enough of democracy and voted Adolf Hitler into power. Hitler restored Germany's economy and pride. His Third Reich was to last a

thousand years. It collapsed in ruins after only 12!

### Perversions of the Millennium

Hitler's planned thousand-year reich (empire) was intended to be the successor to the First Reich, the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, which lasted for a thousand years. Both were satanic perversions of the biblical Millennium, the prophesied period of rule by Jesus Christ, which will start at His second coming (Isaiah 9:6-7; Revelation 5:10; 20:6).

The First Reich was a union of church and state where the church was supposedly the Kingdom of God on earth. The emperor was considered the temporal authority appointed by God. In reality, between them, the temporal and spiritual authorities kept the people in ignorance and bondage.

Hitler's Third Reich was even worse. An estimated 20 million people died and 90 percent of Europe's

heritage was destroyed by Hitler's military machine. The Jews were singled out in Hitler's "final solution," and 6 million died in concentration camps across Europe.

Like the Holy Roman Empire before it, the Third Reich was a revival of the Roman Empire. Hitler's ally, Italy's Benito Mussolini, leader of the Fascist Party, proclaimed the revival of the Roman Empire in 1922, prior to Italian invasions of other countries in pursuit of a global empire.

Their mad dream of universal conquest almost succeeded. Again, there was a spiritual element. The church was involved (which will be covered in the next installment), but, more importantly, Satan was behind this revival of the Roman Empire, as he was the other revivals. "The dragon [Satan] gave him his power, his throne, and great authority" (Revelation 13:2).

The three great powers that presided over their defeat were the British (who were in the Second World War from September 1939 until its European end in May 1945), the Soviet Union (June 1941 until the end) and the United States (December 1941 to the end). At the end of six years of conflict, Britain was broke and was soon forced to begin dismantling its empire.

With Germany's defeat and most of Europe in ruins, Europe's ascendancy was effectively over. The two great powers were now the United States and the Soviet Union. The latter, although partly in Europe, had always been out of the mainstream of European civilization. Under communism, the Soviet Union had cut itself off from the rest of Europe. At the end of World War II, Moscow had taken control of most of Eastern Europe, dividing the continent with what Winston Churchill described in 1946 as an "Iron Curtain."

But Europe soon rose from defeat. The sixth revival of the Roman Empire—these attempts by the central European powers led by Germany to achieve world conquest—may have ended, but a new chapter was beginning, with a totally different approach to achieving the elusive unity of the ancient continent. ❖

**"CHINA"** (Continued from page 6)  
events shift relations between nations. But in spite of serious periodic differences between these three countries, could China, Russia and India come together at the time of the end?

Certainly in today's world, America appears to be on the wane and China and Asia on the ascent. Why is the United States suffering so many setbacks in the world? Are there both historic and prophetic reasons?

### A prophetic picture of the time of the end

Bible prophecies in the book of Revelation and the book of Daniel dovetail together to give us an intriguing picture of events at the time of the end.

Daniel 11:40 mentions these occurrences "at the time of end" and the fact that the king of the North (identified prophetically as the charismatic leader of a Central European combine of nations), while entering the Holy Land, attacks the king of the South (probably the leader of an Arab-Islamic confederation). Then verse 44 tells us of "news from the east" that will trouble this king of the North.

Revelation 9:13-16, also describing end-time events, describes an eastern army 200-million strong that unleashes great devastation, killing a third of mankind. Several chapters later, in Revelation 16:12, we read of "the kings [leaders] from the east" crossing the Euphrates River.

It would appear that one of these forces is an Islamic counterattack to the king of the North entering the Holy Land. The other, it appears, is likely from further east, from China, India and other Asian nations that lie to the east of the Holy Land. Regardless of which is which, demonic forces will influence "the kings of the earth" to gather together at Armageddon for that final battle against Jesus Christ (Revelation 16:14).

In effect this will be the final World War. The returning Jesus Christ will be the undisputed winner of truly "the mother of all battles." It will constitute mankind's final rebellion against his Creator during this age of man. But the outcome has already been deter-

mined. "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15).

### To learn more

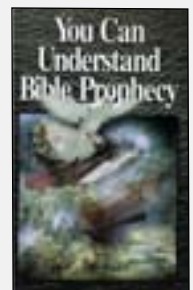
This article can only briefly summarize the significance of these end-time events. Our free booklet *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* will give you a basic overview of all the major events accompanying the time of the end and even well on beyond. A companion booklet titled *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* highlights the telltale signs that signal that we are indeed approaching the close of an age.

Another publication, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*, shows how to truly comprehend the message of that mystery book. The booklet *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* brings a needed perspective of historic events such as the four empires revealed in the book of Daniel and the rise and fall of ancient Israel.

Since no power identifiable as the United States is found depicted in the events described in the book of Revelation, this fact strongly indicates that some combination of major factors leads to America's prophesied collapse before the very final events preceding Christ's return. To learn more about this whole story, historic and prophetic, request or download our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. ❖

## Recommended Reading

Can you really know what the future holds? Request a free copy of *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*. This booklet gives a helpful overall picture of God's prophetic plans for humankind and the good news beyond today's troubled world.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download it from our

Web site at

[www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org)

“POPE” (Continued from page 4)

of a global recession, for a reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth.”

Even UN leaders like former Secretary-General U Thant have admitted that their organization lacks the authority to bring lasting change to the earth.

In 1970 Thant called for the creation of a “global authority with the support and agreement of governments and of other powerful interests, which can pull together all the piecemeal efforts now being made.”

Nuclear physicist Edwin Teller, who helped develop the atomic bomb, urged the creation of a world government with “real teeth”: “We must work for the establishment of a world authority sustained by moral and physical force—a world government capable of enforcing worldwide law.”

Pope Benedict is obviously not the first to call for the establishment of a new “world political authority”—nor will he be the last to do so.

In a confrontation with Jesus, Satan the devil boasted of his power and control over “all the kingdoms of the world” (Matthew 4:8-9). Satan, the master deceiver, often deludes human agents into marketing his deceptive arguments. He uses them to champion his basic concepts, even masquerading as true servants of God (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

At the time of the end, Satan’s philosophy will be vigorously promoted as mankind’s final hope for world peace and security (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). It will be championed as the world’s greatest opportunity to work together for the good of all.

Scripture refers to Satan’s main advocate in the time of the end as “the man of sin..., the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

His efforts will be “according to the working of Satan, with all power,



Reuters/Tony Gentile

*Italy’s Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, France’s President Nicolas Sarkozy, Russia’s President Dmitry Medvedev, U.S. President Barack Obama, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Libya’s leader Muammar Gadhafi stand for a photo at the G8 summit in L’Aquila, Italy, July 10, 2009.*

signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie” (verses 9-11).

This man’s persuasive powers will be enormous, and the book of Revelation confirms Satan’s direct religious influence over the final resurrection of the Beast by means of a religious system—itsself described as “another beast” that will claim to represent Jesus (Revelation 13:11-12).

Tragically, multitudes from all nations will believe his clever lies. They will enthusiastically endorse the concepts Satan introduced at the Tower of Babel. They will be thoroughly deluded into believing deceptive assurances that these satanic concepts will produce world peace and harmony. Rather than enjoying peace and safety, mankind will fall victim to Satan’s desperation and wrath. The devil will once again pit mankind against the true God.

### Right and wrong

Despite their inability to implement an equitable system of inter-

national peace and welfare for all, visionary leaders are right about one thing: Our modern-day problems do require a global solution—a globalization of another sort.

We do need a world-ruling government equipped with the authority to enforce world laws and maintain peace. However, that world government will not be brought about by Satan’s attempt to control mankind via a religiously dominated union of nations, a final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. Instead, it will be achieved by Jesus Christ upon His return when He establishes the Kingdom of God on this earth—a literal world-ruling government.

Pope Benedict XVI and other world leaders are both right and wrong: We do need a new “world political authority.” However, it won’t be brought about by the goodwill of human beings working together to solve their problems.

Instead, it will be achieved by divine intervention in human affairs, despite resistance from a final union of leaders deceived by Satan to give their power and authority to a central figure in an attempt to overcome the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ of Nazareth (Revelation 17:12-14). ❖

“STONE” (Continued from page 16)

the name of the LORD.” This is pretty sobering stuff to absorb if you had been in earshot.

Immediately after such stern judgment is rendered, let’s ask ourselves, “What course of action will the disciples embark upon?”

Matthew 24:1 sets up the rest of the story. “Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.” It was like saying, “Hey, we’re in the big city. Let’s look at the sights!”

### Not all that glitters is of God

William Barclay in his commentary paints a picture of what the dis-

ner of the temple’s angles, stones have been found that measured 20[-foot] to 40[-foot] in length weighing up to 100 tons. How they were cut and placed in position is one of the mysteries of ancient engineering” (*Barclay’s Commentary*, Matthew, Vol. 2, p. 305). It is little wonder that the disciples said “wow” and wanted Jesus to join them on the tour.

That’s when Christ has to whack them with a verbal two-by-four just as much as the previous audience. In effect, He says, “Take a look! Soak it all in, real good. Not one stone will remain standing. It’s all coming down.”

Here, Christ is attempting to rouse His followers from the powerful spell of distraction from disciple-

Now, Christ reveals in advance the broad prophetic overview of world history from the time of His ascension till His second coming. He describes the pattern of human history apart from worship of the true God. He reveals a cyclical pattern of religious deception, warfare, famine and pestilence that ultimately comes to a final global crescendo before the return of Christ.

### The brutal honesty of Christ

It is noteworthy that He not only informs them about world events affecting others but also what lies in store for His followers. He told them, “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will



Wikimedia Commons

*A model of Herod’s temple adjacent to the Shrine of the Book exhibit at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem depicts an artist’s rendition of the temple Jesus and His disciples might have seen.*

ciples beheld. “The summit of Mt. Sion had been dug away to leave a plateau 1000[-foot] square [that’s more than the length of three football fields each way]. At the far end was the temple built with white marble, plated with gold, that shone brilliantly in the sun’s light so brilliantly that at times it was hard to view.

“The temple area was surrounded by great porches, Solomon’s Porch, and the Royal Porch. These porches were upheld by 38[-foot] high solid marble pillars cut in one piece—so thick that it took three men to wrap their arms around them. At the cor-

ship. Here, Jesus is days away from His death. He is challenging His disciples to view, review and renew their thoughts as to what they will choose to build on for a spiritual foundation. Will it be the massive stones of a temple that they can see, touch and feel? Or will it be a different structure with a different foundation that will require their total focus and life’s devotion?

Now that He has their attention, they ask the big question: “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3).

be hated by all nations for My name’s sake” (verse 9).

Here, as always, Christ is brutally honest about what this new supreme loyalty to Him might entail. It would divide His followers from others who could not understand or would not accept the truth.

Christ’s own words and devotion to His Father’s will would cost Him dearly. Is it any wonder that His followers could expect similar treatment?

The religious people of His day would twist Jesus’ words regarding the resurrection of His own body,

which He referred to as “this temple” (John 2:17-22), as an immediate act of destruction on their holy shrine. Ultimately, they would claim that His statements were a sacrilege worthy of death.

Their hatred of Christ puts into play the prophetic reality that the temple of His body would be destroyed and yet be raised to life in three days. Just a short time later, the first Christian martyr, Stephen the deacon, would be led to execution over a charge centering on the destruction of the temple (Acts 6:13). Prophecy is coming true.

### It came to pass as He said

Eventually Jesus’ words did come to pass regarding the most beautiful building in Jerusalem. Some of those same people who heard those chilling words were alive when the temple was sacked and the Roman General Titus hauled off its sacred instruments of worship to Rome in A.D. 70. The prophecy of “not one stone shall be left here upon another” had begun.

But prophetic development often comes in stages. In A.D. 130 Emperor Hadrian decided to change the name of Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina in tribute to Jupiter whose major temple was situated on “the Capitoline” in Rome. He further cleared the ruins of the previous holy structure and built over it a temple to Jupiter.

This caused a tremendous revolt among the Jews known as the Bar Kochba rebellion. The Romans decided to finish what they had begun nearly 60 years before. Christ’s words had come true—the house was left desolate.

### The big question needing your answer

But allow me to conclude with a question that only you can answer: Is there a broader application for what appears to be an event-specific prophecy whose time has come and gone? Does the phrase “not one stone” touch our present circumstances and reach into our future?

Just like the disciples of old, we, too, can pretend that Christ’s proph-

ecies about our times are not really going to come to pass. We, too, can suffer from momentary disbelief. We, too, can call a spiritual time-out and become bedazzled by what seems so big, so beautiful, so very permanent.

We, too, can receive the word of God by eye or ear but then, just like the disciples, want to go on our own “temple tour” of what God says has been found wanting and will pass away.

I believe Jesus designed the words of “not one stone” for a modern audience as well in order to jolt us from a world of distractions that can lure us from the high calling of being transformed.

The words the apostle Peter expresses in 2 Peter 3:11 seem to concur with this broad application, as he grabs our spiritual attention by declaring, “Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?” He’s not just speaking of a few stones on a hilltop in the Middle East; he is saying that “not one stone” of society as we know it will exist.

God doesn’t want to see you tumble down like those stones of old. He is building a new temple made out of flesh and blood and, yes, Spirit.

What do I mean? Let the apostle Paul fill in the details. He said, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Oh no, this time stones won’t do! He wants heart. And He shows us the way by pinpointing what eternal foundation He is building on to secure His dwelling in us, even as the exterior world of alluring sights and sounds comes tumbling down.

So where do we start? The encouraging directive of Isaiah 30:21 (“this is the way, walk in it”) is mirrored by the apostle Paul’s encouragement in 1 Corinthians 3:11, which gives us the foundational blueprint of the new temple: “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” ❖



Robin Webber

## How to Contact Us

AFRICA and ASIA (except as listed below): United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

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

BRITISH ISLES: P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts. WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020 8386 8467 Fax: 020 8386 1999

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada. Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 876-0569 E-mail: [info@ucg.ca](mailto:info@ucg.ca)

CARIBBEAN: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

EAST AFRICA (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda): United Church of God—East Africa, P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200 Kenya. E-mail: [kenya@ucg.org](mailto:kenya@ucg.org)

EASTERN EUROPE AND BALTIC STATES: United Church of God, Head Sõnumid, Pk. 62, 50002 Tartu Postkontor, Estonia

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

FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

GERMANY: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228 - 9454636 Fax: 0228 - 9454637 E-mail: [info@gutenachrichten.org](mailto:info@gutenachrichten.org)

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy. Phone/Fax: (+39) 035-4523573 E-mail: [info@labuonanotizia.org](mailto:info@labuonanotizia.org)

MALAWI: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi. E-mail: [malawi@ucg.org](mailto:malawi@ucg.org)

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes. E-mail: [mauritius@ucg.org](mailto:mauritius@ucg.org)

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Shortland St., Auckland 1140, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

NIGERIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 2265, Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone: 01-8113644 E-mail: [nigeria@ucg.org](mailto:nigeria@ucg.org)

PHILIPPINES: United Church of God, P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines. Phone: (+63) 82 224-4444 Cell/Text: (+63) 918-904-4444

SCANDINAVIA: Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 3535, 111 74, Stockholm, Sweden E-mail: [sverige@ucg.org](mailto:sverige@ucg.org)

SOUTH AFRICA (and Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland only): United Church of God, Southern Africa, P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205. Phone/Fax: 043 748-1694

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

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

UNITED STATES: P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. Phone (513) 576-9796. E-mail [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

ZAMBIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. Phone: (02) 226076. E-mail: [zambia@ucg.org](mailto:zambia@ucg.org)

ZIMBABWE: United Church of God, Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 928, Causeway, Harare. Cell Phone: 011716273 E-mail: [zimbabwe@ucg.org](mailto:zimbabwe@ucg.org)

### Internet access on your computer:

Along with [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org), the United Church of God’s home page [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org) gives you access to *The Good News*, booklets and links to our international Web sites: [www.ucg.ca](http://www.ucg.ca) (Canada), [www.ucg.org.au](http://www.ucg.org.au) (Australia), [www.labuonanotizia.org](http://www.labuonanotizia.org) (Italy), [www.goodnews.org.uk](http://www.goodnews.org.uk) (British Isles), [www.ucg.org.ph](http://www.ucg.org.ph) (Philippines), [www.ucgeastafrica.org](http://www.ucgeastafrica.org) (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) and [www.ucg-rsa.org](http://www.ucg-rsa.org) (Southern Africa).



by Robin Webber

## Not One Stone!

**T**wo thousand years ago, Jesus Christ shocked His audience with one of the most incredible statements ever uttered. He made a startling declaration that the religious centerpiece of His people would come tumbling down.

He framed the statement by saying, “Assuredly, I say to you.” Next, He broke the news—“Not one stone shall be left here upon another” (Matthew 24:2).

What was He talking about? He was pinpointing the total destruction of the sacred temple, which was the crowning jewel of a massive religious complex. It is hard for the modern mind to grasp the impact of such words on His audience.

Why did Christ declare such a target-specific prophecy? This statement is often regarded as the opening salvo to the Olivet Prophecy of Matthew 24. But unfortunately, as with other biblical studies, people are prone to start studying from verse 1 of any given chapter rather than exercising a basic key of Bible study, which is to find “the beginning of the story.” The context often begins in previous chapters. Matthew 24 is no exception. In this case, the story actually begins in chapter 23.

### Let’s understand the setting

The setting of Matthew 23 places us in the last days of Jesus Christ’s human existence. He had only a few days to complete His calling as the “Son of Man.” Jesus foresaw this moment and knew what He had to say. He directs His message to the religious audience, to people of the covenant who should have been more spiritually aware and mature.

He chides them by saying, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness” (Matthew 23:27).

He was basically saying, “Spiritually speaking, you are empty suits, and on top of that, you stink in how you proclaim your own spiritual self-worth.” You know, sometimes, religious folk, even those who sincerely believe they are doing God a favor by their devotion, just need to be whacked with a strong verbal two-by-four to understand that God is much more concerned about who we are inside than He is about the outward appearance of righteousness. Here, Christ supplied the whack!

### Your house is left to you desolate

Jesus completes His thoughts by stating His judgment, tempered with love. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’” (Matthew 23:37-38).

Christ is basically setting up the parallel reality that as their hearts are empty and apart from God, so too their houses are left empty. That is, God is removing His presence and blessing from that spot until they would recognize that He is the One who “comes in

(See “STONE,” page 14)