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Does Haiti Have a Future?

A massive amount of aid is pouring into the Caribbean nation of Haiti in the aftermath of a 7.0 earthquake. History has neglected this poor nation. Beyond this present tragedy, what is the best way forward?

by Darris McNeely

Another terrible tragedy has struck Haiti, the orphan society of the western hemisphere. The Jan. 12 earthquake is the latest in a string of tragedies for this poor island nation. At the time of this writing, more than a hundred thousand are feared dead, and the toll will likely rise with further aftershocks.

Haiti's buildings and infrastructure were not built to withstand a quake of this magnitude. That is why you see everything from the presidential palace to the poorest shanty lying in ruins. Decades of political corruption have robbed the country of any chance to provide a high quality of life and health for its citizens. Investment capital has fled the nation, along with many of its brightest citizens—gone to safer havens, like America and Europe, to build better lives.

Haiti has suffered almost from its beginning when it was a slave colony for France. After a 13-year uprising, the slaves threw off the French yoke and gained independence in 1804—just as America was expanding westward after the Louisiana Purchase.

Yet no major power recognized this fledgling nation, largely because other nations feared losing their own slave colonies in the



Reuters/Wolfgang Rattay

A girl waits for treatment at a makeshift hospital in a suburb of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, after a 7.0 earthquake struck the city on Jan. 12.

Caribbean. The United States did not recognize the nation until the 1860s, after the Civil War; Brazil did not recognize it until 1888.

This isolation kept needed trade relations from developing that would have led to wealth, higher education and better health. Lacking the technological development of the modern world, Haiti has largely been left in the hands of corrupt leaders. With limited natural resources, Haiti falls prey

(See "HAITI," page 3)



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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

Playing the Enemy

Some movies entertain you. Others inform you about a subject. In rare cases the power of a movie can change your life.

At the end of December my wife and I took an afternoon off to see the movie *Invictus*. It is based on the true story of how South African President Nelson Mandela used the sport of rugby to "play his enemy"—the white Afrikaner—and achieve a relatively bloodless revolution in South African politics during the mid 1990s.

The term "play his enemy" is taken from John Carlin's book *Playing the Enemy*, on which the movie is based. After seeing the movie, I read the book.

Every one of us has a measure of conflict with other people in our lives. Getting along with people is a constant challenge today. We encounter conflict on the job, at school, in our families, at church and with the next-door neighbor. People's interests naturally conflict. Someone offends. Wrongs are committed. Conflict is a fact of life. It is such an embedded part of the business world that companies spend millions each year putting employees through conflict-resolution seminars. Yet conflict persists.

I'd recommend viewing this movie and reading the book. It's a remarkable example of reconciliation in one of the world's most conflicted nations. Nelson Mandela, a black South African, was jailed for more than 27 years for political actions against the white apartheid government. During the long years of imprisonment Mandela studied the history and culture of his adversary. He learned to speak Afrikaans. He came to realize the future lay in cooperation rather than confrontation, and he used the years to prepare himself for what became a singular mission in life.

Upon his release he set out to bring together the opposing parties and create a new South Africa. Mandela faced formidable challenges. His black constituency wanted revenge for years of white rule. White South Africans feared the loss of a way of life and a complete social upheaval in a violent revolution.

After becoming president in 1994, he hit upon the idea of using the 1995 World Rugby Cup Tournament, to be held in South Africa, as a major step toward reconciliation. This was especially challenging since rugby was the national pastime of the white Afrikaner. To wear the green and gold colors of the Springbok rugby team (the South African national team) was anathema to a black. Mandela persuaded the Springbok team members to work with him toward his goal. When he wore the green and gold colors onto the playing field on the day of the 1995 finals, the crowd was stunned.

It is a remarkable story. We all face the challenges of resolving conflicts. This movie and book took me to Paul's words in Romans 12:17-19: "Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."

The title of this column is "Restoration." It speaks of a time when the Kingdom of God is on the earth. You and I have the opportunity to learn the ways of that Kingdom today. Resolving conflict with others and avoiding new conflict in the future is within our power. Nelson Mandela and South Africa offer us a practical lesson in how it can be done.

Stories entertain and inform us. In the end, it is the stories that change us that matter the most. —Darris McNeely



Darris McNeely

“HAITI” (Continued from page 1)

to other forms of corruption. It is strategically placed between Latin America and the United States, making it a natural pipeline for international smuggling and drug trafficking.

On top of this, the country lies along two geologic fault lines, one of which caused this quake. Hurricanes storming through the Caribbean often make their way over the island, leaving destruction and misery in their wake. Deforestation has left the country with even fewer natural resources.

In the wake of this disaster a great deal of international aid is flowing into the country. U.S. President Barack Obama has asked two former presidents, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, to direct America’s governmental humanitarian response. But it will take years to recover. Beyond this tragedy await others, if only because of Haiti’s geographic location. No doubt thousands of Haitians will immigrate to other nations seeking escape and a chance at a better life.

What disaster reveals

A disaster of this magnitude among the world’s poorest reveals much about the social fabric of a nation. Experts warned officials that buildings needed to be reinforced to withstand earthquakes. But there was no money to accomplish the task. Even if it had been made available, government corruption likely would have siphoned off much of the money into the pockets of the powerful.

Since hospitals were also destroyed, in the aftermath there was no place to adequately treat the injured. This means doctors had no proper instruments with which to operate, no medication to ease the patients’ pain or to treat injuries. Sanitation procedures are bypassed in the urgency of the moment.

It is likely that many Haitian health personnel were themselves victims of the quakes. Health workers flown in from other nations set up makeshift hospitals where they



Reuters/Kena Betancur

Earthquake victims hold up empty plates as they try to get food at a food distribution center in Port-au-Prince. Much foreign aid will be needed to meet immediate needs, but is money the key to an ultimate solution to Haiti’s historically unstable state?

could, nearest the victims.

The piles of bodies in the streets being lifted by scoops into waiting dump trucks testify most poignantly to the collapse of norms. The dead cannot be identified and given a proper burial. Threat of disease mandates quick removal and mass burial. They are not mourned. There is no time. For many there is likely no one left to mourn their deaths.

Whatever level of community existed before the quake vanished in some areas in the aftermath. This is not uncommon with disasters; however, it is particularly acute in Haiti given its history of political and business corruption.

Whatever is rebuilt must change the basic nature of the system and its people. New leadership must be demanded if there is to be any future for this country and its people. Haiti needs leaders with

a heart to serve the people—not themselves.

What will help Haiti?

As noted, massive amounts of foreign aid are being directed toward Haiti. Much will be needed to meet immediate needs. Much more will be needed to completely rebuild the nation. But is money the key to a solution?

Haiti has been the recipient of hundreds of millions of dollars of foreign aid. A 2006 report from the National Academy of Public Administration, titled “Why Foreign Aid to Haiti Failed,” showed the outcome of financial assistance was unsatisfactory and the long-term institutional benefits were negligible (Bret Stephens, “To Help Haiti, End Foreign Aid,” *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 19, 2010).

The report faulted a high level of financial dysfunction and mis-



A Haitian man walks past a destroyed building in a suburb of Port-Au-Prince on Jan. 17, 2010. Decades of political corruption have led to shoddy construction of buildings that were unable to withstand the shocks of the earthquake.

management in the government. The more foreign funds flowed in, the more corruption was fueled.

The *Wall Street Journal* article showed a key to building a sustainable future for the people of Haiti:

“A better approach recognizes the real humanity of Haitians by treating them—once the immediate and essential tasks of rescue are over—as people capable of making responsible choices. Haiti has some

of the weakest property protections in the world, as well as some of the most burdensome business regulation. In 2007, it received 10 times as much aid (\$701 million) as it did in foreign investment.”

Many Haitians who immigrate to developed nations create productive lives when given education and proper support. Given a good working government, one that serves the best and highest interests of every individual, Haiti could develop a much higher standard of living than it now has. They need good government with good people working to serve the people and create a just and productive society.

There is a well-known saying, “Give a man a fish, and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he will always have food to eat.” Haiti has been a neglected and forgotten nation. As the milk of human kindness pours into this devastated nation, let’s pray wisdom prevails and finally a society is established where the Haitians can create a culture where everybody fishes and everybody eats!

We pray for the people of Haiti in their present suffering. We hope a better day will rise from the rubble of their present distress. If you have opportunity to help these good people in any way, by all means do so. May God speed the day of His intervention and the coming of the Kingdom of God. ✦

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Searching for a New Global Order

Consider carefully the shifting geopolitical chessboard as many perils menace global stability. National leaders seek enduring solutions through established world institutions even as they struggle to cope with the catastrophic crises of the 21st century. What does the Bible tell us about how it all began and how a divinely appointed new world order will finally solve our age-old problems?

by John Ross Schroeder

As a battered world emerges from a tough decade of debt and disaster, what do the years to come have in store for the earth's inhabitants? The horrors of the Haitian earthquake sternly remind us that disaster and death are not likely to abate during the next decade. How do we stay sane in this world of increasing uncertainty and insecurity?

By nature humans seek at least a semblance of order in their daily lives. We do not normally relish unwelcome, unpleasant surprises.

Men and women usually organize the activities of their workdays and even their leisure time. We gradually teach and guide our young children to build order into their lives.

One British author tells us: "Man organizes his world. Even to speak of 'world' is to imply some kind of unity. A world is not a chaos. The Greeks called the world *kosmos*, 'order.' Man orders phenomena into a world" (Dr. John Macquarrie, *Existentialism*, 1973, p. 57). Yet humankind is not the ultimate source of order.

Order comes from God

The first chapter of the first book of the Bible shows that sometime after the heavens and the earth were originally created, God brought order out of chaos (see Genesis 1:2 and our free booklet *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?* pages 60-70 for a detailed explanation). God restored order to the earth in six days capped by His resting on the seventh day (the Sabbath day)—setting an example for humankind.

In the New Testament the apostle Paul clearly states that "God is not the author of

confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). From this basic truth the following apostolic instruction naturally emerges: "Let all things be done decently and in order" (verse 40).

Genesis 1:26-27 reveals that men and women were created in the image of God. So in general terms, we reflect our Maker's nature when we first plan and then execute those plans in stages.

But how did the disruption we now see in the world originally enter God's creation? Only the Bible has the true explanation.

Agewise ago, God created a super angelic being called Lucifer. We should understand that our Creator gave both His angelic and human realm the gift of free choice. This high-ranking being was made to be a light-bringer. But he became Satan.

Two chapters in the Old Testament record the devil's choice of rebellion against God and his resulting fall (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-17), causing chaos in the physical, material world. Jesus Christ said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18), an event that apparently occurred before God created humankind. (For a detailed account, request or download our free booklet *Is There Really a Devil?*)

Later when man was created, God allowed Satan (in the form of a serpent) to tempt our first parents. They succumbed to his deceptive influence, and their world of prosperity, peace and plenty suddenly became one of disruption and survival by the sweat of the brow. Instead of keeping the paradise of the Garden of Eden, they were cast out into an unfriendly environment that demanded their struggle for survival.

Left to ourselves, human beings will do what is right in our own eyes. But our own way, apart from God's help and guidance, ultimately results in misery, suffering and death. Naturally, we don't know the way to either personal or global peace.

Adam and Eve had transgressed God's governing spiritual law (1 John 3:4), designed to bring order and joy into their lives. The vast majority of humankind has followed their general pattern ever since (see Romans 5:12). In a nutshell, this tells us why our world remains the way it is today—order combined with disrupting threads of disorder. This is the fruit of human disobedience, the ongoing punishment for partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Yet, as we shall see in the conclusion of this article, God has not and will not abandon His human creation. Instead He will ultimately come to our rescue through the second coming of His beloved Son. God's generous gift of Christ's sacrifice for the sins of the world represents His guarantee of global deliverance in the age to come (see John 3:16-17; Titus 2:13-14).

Intelligent observers see global problems in perspective

Clear-sighted observers of the world scene are not blind to the stubborn and intractable problems that now afflict mankind with ever-increasing intensity. Paul Kennedy is but one of them. He writes: *"Things are happening across our planet that should cause all sensible observers to be troubled...* There are the many indicators of disruptive tendencies, of environmental catastrophes, financial instabilities, ...quarrels over contested historic lands and borders, human-rights abuses, and displays of angry, egoistic nationalism. It is not a pretty sight" (*"The Voyage Onwards," International Herald Tribune* magazine, Dec. 17, 2009, p. 38, emphasis added throughout).

A few seem to understand the basic, cause-and-effect connection between our problems and our disruptive moral behavior. Daniel Johnson, the insightful editor of *Standpoint* magazine, writes: "Looking ahead to 2020, there appear to be two possible outcomes. If by then the West has stood firmly by its unique combination of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, then it will be able to withstand anything—including new attempts to import jihad into Europe and America."

Then he states the alternative: "If the West were to give up the struggle, however, the outcome would be very different. We are getting used to the idea of a nuclear-armed Iran, but this means a nuclear-armed Middle East. If the Obama administration and the European Union acquiesce



Reuters/Feisal Omar

Members of the hardline al-Shabaab Islamist rebel group assemble in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, on Jan. 1, 2010, announcing they were ready to send reinforcements to al-Qaeda in Yemen and urging other Muslims to follow suit.

in this alarming prospect, *the chances are that the situation will go from bad to worse.* The creation of a new Caliphate with ambitions for hegemony over the Islamic world is the long-term goal, not only of al-Qaeda, but of the Muslim Brotherhood and millions of other Islamists too. It is one which may be realised sooner than we expect—if we allow it to happen" (*"Ten Years After," Standpoint*, January/February 2010, p. 7).

Daniel Johnson concludes the lead editorial with this sentence: "That Judaeo-Christian fusion of faith and reason we call Western civilisa-

tion, much of which has its origins in Europe, will outlive us all—but only if we are prepared to defend it."

Our free booklet *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* explores the prophetic consequences of these Islamic ambitions in detail. It also explains the historical background of this pivotal region of the earth. Request or download your copy today.

A global structural and leadership problem

Adrian Hamilton observes in *The Independent*: "Not since the 1930s have we entered a decade in which it is quite so difficult to predict just what kind of regimes will be in power in many of the main countries. The last decade has seen the cruel demolition of the idea of a liberal 'end to history.' We really don't know what will replace it in the clash of resurgent nationalism and battered globalisation that marks the new decade.

"Add to this the tinder box of the Middle East issue, the pressures of climate change and the strain on resources and you have a recipe for almost continual conflict... The political problem is the lack of structures and leadership to contain the instability that so marks the present time" (*"The Competition of Nations Need Not Be a Zero-Sum Game,"* Jan. 1, 2010, p. 29).

Daniel Johnson adds this crucial observation: "Chaos and civilisation are never far apart. For this reason, we need to confront the forces of chaos wherever and in whatever form they may appear" (*"The Passing of Greatness," Standpoint*, November 2009, p. 3). But how do we accomplish this with our presently flawed institutional structures and world bodies? Are they really up to the task?

Paul Kennedy reminds us of our continued reliance on these flawed national and international institutions of authority: "But there are also many storms, tides and rocks ahead, which is why, again and again, we will turn to our national governments and international organizations, however flawed, however human, to keep the global ship of state afloat—and capable of sailing onwards."

(See **"ORDER,"** page 12)

He Set Ephraim Before Manasseh

As memories of the British Empire fade into the distant past, many think the United States is Ephraim and Britain Manasseh. There are sound historical reasons for this not being the case.

by Melvin Rhodes

It caused quite a stir when it happened thousands of years ago, so it's not surprising that there's still controversy over Israel's laying his hands on the heads of his two grandchildren, Manasseh and Ephraim, his son Joseph's boys.

Manasseh, as the oldest, should have received the bulk of the birthright promises, according to the accepted custom of primogeniture. But Israel deliberately and determinedly placed his right hand on the younger son Ephraim and promised him the greater blessing.

"Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn" (Genesis 48:14).

The prophecy is important even today (as our well-researched booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* shows in detail). The first verse of the next chapter shows that the 12 sons of Israel would be players on the world scene "in the last days" (Genesis 49:1).

Talking of his two grandsons, Israel said, "Let my name be named upon them" (Genesis 48:16), meaning that wherever Israel is mentioned in Bible prophecy in the context of end-time events, it is usually referring to the modern descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, not the Jews. (However, as Israel was the father of Judah as well as the grandfather of the two sons of Joseph, references to Israel do sometimes apply to all his sons and grandsons.)

"Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, 'Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.'

"But his father refused and said, 'I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a peo-

ple, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.' So he blessed them that day, saying, 'By you Israel will bless, saying, "May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!"' And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh" (Genesis 48:17-20).

Throughout the Victorian era hundreds of thousands could see these verses being fulfilled before their very eyes. The British Empire was expanding rapidly throughout the world while the fledgling United States was expanding to the west. To many, it was clear that the British Empire was the prophesied multitude of nations and the United States was the prophesied great single nation.

But now, is it time to revise that conclusion and consider reversing their identities?

Historical comparisons

The difference between now and the Victorian era is that of role reversal. In Queen Victoria's time the major power of the world was Britain; today, it's the United States. And it's been that way for about six decades, which means that few alive today can remember when the mother country was greater than the daughter that broke away. In fact, the further away we get from the British Empire, the less people know about it, which complicates things further.

However, when we compare the British Empire at its height with the United States today, we see that in many respects the British Empire was greater.

Consider the following:

The British Empire was much bigger than the United States. At its height in the early decades of the 20th century, the Empire covered a third of the world's territory. In 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, it was 11 million square miles. It kept on expanding right up until 1933 when

The difference between now and the Victorian era is that of role reversal. In Queen Victoria's time the major power of the world was Britain; today, it's the United States. But when we compare the British Empire at its height with the United States today, we see that in many respects the British Empire was greater.



This painting by Benjamin West, titled “Jacob Blessing Ephraim and Manasseh” (1766-68), depicts Jacob deliberately and determinedly placing his right hand on the younger son, Ephraim, thus promising him the greater blessing.

it was 13.9 million. This compares to the United States, which is 3.65 million square miles.

In terms of population, the British Empire was also bigger. The United States today has a population of approximately 310 million. In the last Indian census under British rule, the population of India alone was 320 million. Add to this millions in Britain, Africa, the Caribbean, Hong Kong, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere.

The British Empire also had a longer time in power. It’s difficult to say exactly when Britain became the preeminent nation of the world. Some would say it was in 1759 when the British defeated the French in Quebec and the whole eastern seaboard came under the control of the English-speaking power. After the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, it was clear to everyone that Britain was the undisputed master of the globe—the British alone of all the European powers had held out against Napoleon and led the allies to victory.

A century of “Pax Britannica” (British peace) followed before German

militarism triggered World War I in 1914. During that period, no nation came close to effectively challenging Great Britain’s mastery of the seas and global economic power.

Historian James Morris described it vividly in his book *Pax Britannica*: “The nineteenth century had been pre-eminently Britain’s century... Ever since the triumphant conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars they had seemed to be arbiters of the world’s affairs, righting a balance here, dismissing a potentate there, ringing the earth with railways and submarine cables, lending money everywhere, peopling the empty places with men of the British stock, grandly revenging wrongs, converting pagans, discovering unknown lakes, setting up dynasties, emancipating slaves, winning wars, putting down mutinies, keeping Turks in their place and building bigger and faster battleships” (1968, pp. 21-22).

In terms of longevity, Britain’s Empire lasted until after World War II, meaning that its global empire lasted well over two centuries. American power began after World War II and is, arguably, already on the wane.

The United States today has greater firepower than Britain had due to advances in technology, but in terms of relative power Britain was greater. This was acknowledged in 1947 when Washington first came to realize it was taking over from London as the world’s policeman.

After World War II, Britain was broke. At the time, the British were faced with two major conflicts in their empire, one in India between Hindus and Muslims and the other in Palestine between Jews and Palestinians. Additionally, Britain was aiding the anticommunist forces in Greece and Turkey.

In February 1947 Britain had to ask the United States to help.

In his book *Picking Up the Reins* Norman Moss gives a sense of this event’s impact: “It was not being asked to provide aid to Greece that was shocking. The State Department was already preparing a plan for aid. It was the fact that Britain was pulling out and preparing to hand over responsibility. After all, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff had advised the previous year: ‘The defeat or disintegration of the British Empire would eliminate from Eurasia the last bulwark of resistance between the US and Soviet expansion... Our present position as a world power is of necessity closely interwoven with that of Great Britain.’

‘This was a momentous change. For two centuries Britain had been the dominant power in the eastern Mediterranean. Now it seemed to be surrendering that role in two key countries. It is often said that Americans lack a historical sense that Europeans have, but on this occasion it was the Americans who saw the historical significance of that moment. To British ministers, battling from day to day to keep the country’s head above water, this seemed to be just a temporary retrenchment in one area. None of them appeared to see any larger implications in the decision.

“The American view was put in grandiloquent terms by Joseph M. Jones, who was in the State Department at the time: ‘Reading the messages, [it was] realized...that Great Britain had within the hour

handed the job of world leadership, with all its burdens and all its glory, to the United States” (2008, p. 64).

Three days later, Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson confided to a friend, “There are only two powers left... The British are finished. They are through. And the trouble is that this hits us too soon, before we are ready for it... As he recalled later in an interview: ‘It didn’t really strike home to us that the British Empire was gone, the great power of France was gone... I still looked at the map and saw that red on the thing, and... that was the British Empire’” (ibid., p. 66).

It was also Acheson who realized the limitations of American power, that the United States was not going to have the unrivaled international power role the British had had under the Pax Britannica. “Not since Rome and Carthage, he said, had there been such a polarization of power, and it was between democracy and dictatorship” (p. 68).

From the moment that the United States realized it was assuming Britain’s historical role, it had a major rival, an effective restraint on its power, in the form of the Soviet Union. It wasn’t until 1991 that the United States had undisputed global mastery. Ten years later, its power was to be greatly reduced in the aftermath and uncertainty of Sept. 11, with its economic power diminishing and its ability to definitively win its wars coming into question.

Other reasons

There are also other reasons why the British Empire and Commonwealth fulfill the prophecy about Ephraim.

Consider the political nature of the Empire compared to the United States.

The United States is a federation, one country composed of 50 states, that are all very similar to each other. The British Empire and Commonwealth was truly a multitude of nations, each one different from the others, each with its own government. The only connection between them was, and remains, the monarchy. Queen Elizabeth II remains head of the Commonwealth, the successor organization to the Empire.

This unique political system is illustrated beautifully in the film *A Queen Is Crowned*, a documentary narrated by the late Sir Laurence Olivier, made shortly after the queen’s coronation on June 2, 1953. At the time, the British Empire and Commonwealth, though in decline, was still a major political and military force.

Following the coronation, the queen left Westminster Abbey followed by the prime ministers of the independent countries of the Commonwealth. These included India and Pakistan, which had come to blows following independence in 1947, both still members of the organization. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and Ceylon were other independent countries that were present.

Of course, the British prime minister, Sir Winston Churchill, was also in the parade of dignitaries that followed the monarch into the wet streets of London.

In the decade that followed, most of the colonies (ultimately ruled from London) were given independence but chose to remain in the Commonwealth. As an organization of independent countries, the Commonwealth ceased to be militarily relevant. But at the height of its power, the British Empire was truly a multitude of nations. The prime ministers of each of the independent countries within the Empire met on a regular basis to coordinate policy, especially in the area of defense.

Even today, 16 of the Commonwealth’s 54 member nations still recognize Queen Elizabeth as their own head of state, principally Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Also consider investment. It was recently announced that London is once again the world’s leading financial center. For over two centuries it held that role before losing it to New York after World War II.

The two-volume definitive work on British economic power is *British Imperialism* by P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, published in 1993. It’s absolutely staggering how great London’s economic power was. The British not only developed all the nations of the empire, they were also the greatest investors (and developers) of the United

States, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the Chinese and Ottoman Empires in the 19th and well into the 20th centuries. It was a London bank that financed the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

Often, there’s a great deal in a biblical name. Whereas Ephraim, which means “fruitful,” could apply to either Britain or the United States, Manasseh, which means “causing to forget” or “forgetful,” aptly describes the United States. Americans have often been described as the most forgetful nation on earth, rapidly forgetting and forgiving former enemies and routinely failing to learn the lessons of history.

Finally, it should also be pointed out that it simply doesn’t work the other way around. If the United States is Ephraim, the multitude of nations, Britain could hardly be described as the great single nation that was also prophesied. Without its empire, Britain is no longer a great power.

When we examine this issue, the traditional explanation, identifying the countries of the British Empire and Commonwealth as Ephraim and the United States as Manasseh, is the only one that works. The scriptures clearly show this with the wording, “He set Ephraim before Manasseh” (Genesis 48:20). British power came before American power.

Time may have diminished the full import of this, but a closer look at history establishes the truth of the Victorian understanding of the world in which they lived. ❖

Recommended Reading

The United States, Britain, Australia, Canada and other English-speaking peoples have played a major role in modern world history. What does the Bible say about the role they will play in the future?

Request a free copy of *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.



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“I Will Build My Church”!

What comes to mind when you hear the word church? Do you think of a magnificent cathedral or a smaller church building with a spire? God's Church is much different from the conventional religious meaning of the word church, and that difference can affect your future.

by Jerold Aust

After experiencing the Cologne Cathedral, one may find other ordinary churches insignificant in comparison. Yet the Bible focuses on a totally different type of church. God's Word defines and describes its humble yet powerful composition, construction and value.

Impressive Christian cathedrals, especially those in Europe, such as the Cologne Cathedral in Germany, the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France, and the Duomo Cathedral in Milan, Italy, awe visitors throughout the world. These are representative of cathedrals dedicated to Christian worship throughout the world. Many of them display spectacular spires, which can signify strength (from the word “spear”), piety, wealth, prestige and even martial power.

Most people view the church as a building. But the Bible defines the term *church* quite differently, focusing on the *people* God calls instead of a building.

What then did Jesus mean when He said, “I will build My church” (Matthew 16:18)? Was He referring to the magnificent cathedrals that would eventually be built?

Cathedrals of the world

The architecture of the great cathedrals of this world is sometimes astonishing.

The Cologne Cathedral “is the seat of the Catholic Archbishop of Cologne. Cologne Cathedral is the greatest Gothic cathedral in Germany and has been this city’s most famous landmark for centuries. Once the tallest building in the world, Cologne Cathedral still boasts the world’s largest church façade.

“The foundation stone of Cologne Cathedral was laid on August 15, 1248... The completion of Germany’s largest cathedral was celebrated as a national event in 1880, 632 years after construction had begun” (www.sacred-destinations.com/germany/cologne-cathedral; this Web site is an ecumenical guide to more than 1,250 sacred sites in over 60 countries around the world).

The Cologne Cathedral rises some 515 feet (157 meters).

The external architecture of this imposing edifice boggles the mind. How could the builders of such a great cathedral construct such high-rising spires when technology was so rudimentary? The interior is equally as impressive.

After experiencing this remarkable building, one may find other ordinary churches insignificant in comparison. Yet the Bible focuses on a totally different type of church. God’s Word defines and describes its humble yet powerful composition, construction and value.

How do the Bible and Jesus define the Church?

In the New Testament, *church* is translated from the Greek word *ecclesia*, which can be defined as a calling out, an assembly or a congregation.

Church, in the Bible, is not described as a cathedral or any sort of building. The first-century Church brethren met in members’ private residences (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19), as they sometimes do today. The apostle Paul sometimes spoke to brethren, as well as potential converts and perhaps curious listeners, in various Jewish synagogues.

The Bible uses the word *church* to represent God’s people as “called-out ones.” Paul wrote “to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

The very early true Church of the New Testament had no cathedrals. These huge buildings began to be built a few hundred years later after another church organization with different doctrines and

beliefs, emerged, competing with the true Church of God.

This false church organization developed outside the apostolic influence of the Bible and worked assiduously to avoid anything that appeared Jewish, attempting to use Paul's writings to construct unbiblical Christian dogma. How ironic: Christians claiming Christ while ignoring that Jesus was a Jew. This worldview made it easier for them to exchange Sunday for the weekly Sabbath and Christmas and Easter for God's annual festivals (see Leviticus 23).

The Catholic Church speaks for itself: "Nothing in the comportment of Jesus gave the slightest hint that he would have considered it preferable to transfer the Sabbath observance to any other day. With the spread of Christianity to a Gentile milieu surrounding, especially by Paul, the problem had to be posed and decided: Christians were not bound by Jewish practices as such but only insofar as these embodied the natural law" (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, second edition, 2003, "Natural-law and Transfer to Sunday," Vol. 12, p. 459).

"The earliest Christians did not immediately dissociate themselves from the observance of the Jewish feasts. Many references in the New Testament indicate that Jesus and His disciples, as well as the early Palestinian Christian communities, observed the Sabbath and the major annual festivals" (*ibid.*, "Early Christian Feasts," Vol. 5, p. 656).

But over time it seems new Christian converts refused to give up their pagan festivals, so new religious teachings and celebrations were created to help "Christianize" them. And as this new church became recognized by the state, the cathedral became the grand sanctuary and a focal point for this new religious blend.

How does this square with Jesus' declaration, "I will build My church"?

The Church that Jesus is building

If great Christian cathedrals or even modest church buildings with pagan accoutrements do not exemplify the Church that Jesus said He



Wikimedia Commons

The Cologne Cathedral is the greatest Gothic cathedral in Germany and has been the most famous landmark for centuries. Even though such architecture is striking in its appearance, the Bible describes God's Church not as a cathedral or any sort of building but as His people.

would build, how did Christ go about building His Church?

Matthew shows that Jesus built His Church on Himself. "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it [i.e., it will never die out]" (Matthew 16:18).

Contrary to conventional religious opinion, Jesus didn't say He would build His Church on Peter. He simply acknowledged that Peter was a small piece of rock (Greek, *petros*), but that He would build the Church on Himself, a great mass of rock (Greek, *petra*).

This key opens the door to the Church that Jesus is building. The Church built on Jesus Christ is made up of humble people (1 Corinthians 1:26-31), not ostentatious buildings.

Another key to entering Christ's Church is what constitutes His build-

ing materials. These include spiritual values such as love, hope, faith, joy, peace, patience, wisdom and humility, to name a few. Only the Master Builder, Christ Jesus, can build His Church with these spiritual materials.

At Christ's return, God's Church will grow prodigiously and cover the entire earth throughout His millennial rule (Isaiah 11:9; Daniel 7:27).

Paul speaks of the New Testament Church as Christ's building that He now inhabits and that He causes to grow. "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for

a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

The apostle Peter further refers to the Church as *living stones*. “Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:4-5).

This is why Jesus said, “I will build My church.” Remarkably, this is only the beginning.

A much greater Church to come

The current Church of God, important as it is to Christ, is a type of what God has in mind for humanity’s future. Although God the Father calls out many, He chooses only a few (those who respond to His call), in this present evil age (John 6:44; Acts 2:39; Galatians 1:4).

After Christ returns and removes all deceitful human and angelic tyrants (Revelation 19:11-21; 20:1-3), He will reign as the sovereign ruler of this earth. His established Kingdom on earth will allow all humanity to become a part of God’s Church. At that time, all people will understand the pure truths of God. “For all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Hebrews 8:11).

Jesus Christ prophesied that He would praise God the Father before an international congregation in the 1,000-year period and beyond (calling those things that aren’t yet as if they were; see Romans 4:17). “My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him” (Psalm 22:25).

This, then, is a more complete picture of what Jesus meant when He said, “I will build My church.” With God’s calling, you can become a part of God’s Church if you desire. In addition, if you do, Christ can make you a substantial part of His growing spiritual temple: “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God” (Revelation 3:12).

To understand yet more, request our free booklets *The Church Jesus Built* and *This Is the United Church of God*. ❖

“ORDER” (Continued from page 6)

His concluding words are: “Still, no one should assume that it will be an easy voyage” (“The Voyage Onward,” *International Herald Tribune* magazine, Dec. 17, 2009, p. 39).

Order imposed by empires— past and yet future

The Hebrew prophet Daniel spoke of four great successive empires that ruled over much of the known civilized world of their day: Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman (see Daniel 2:27-43). There have been other notable empires throughout history, including the British, Spanish and Ottoman Empires. Each one imposed a certain order on an often chaotic world.

Left to ourselves, human beings will do what is right in our own eyes. This is the basic lesson of the Judges era in ancient Israel’s history (see Judges 17:6; 21:25). “That is the way I see it,” we often hear from others. But our own way, apart from God’s help and guidance, ultimately results in misery, suffering and death (see Proverbs 14:12; 16:25; Jeremiah 10:23-24). Naturally, we don’t know the way to either personal or global peace (Romans 3:17). Yet order and authority are essential elements to human survival.

The choices and options that confront our nations today remind one of trying to choose the lesser of two or more evils. Noted *Financial Times* columnist Philip Stephens sums up a fundamental choice now on the geopolitical chessboard. “The choice now is between a world in which powerful states are held in check by co-operative multilateralism; or one that is riven by the clash of narrow nationalisms. During the present decade everything changed. The next will be described by whether the great powers—old and rising—prove themselves masters or victims of a new global order” (“A Global Order Swept Away in the Rapids of History,” Dec. 18, 2009, p. 13).

This could very well constitute a serious dilemma. What if an instrument of multilateralism becomes so powerful in itself that in effect it becomes yet another world empire—dictatorially ruling the nations and states within

its sphere of influence? Sooner or later, potentially powerful world bodies like the European Union could well become undemocratic instruments of oppression in which national sovereignties are cruelly trampled underfoot. To some extent this is already an ongoing, ostensibly irreversible process. Just ask the British.

So what real hope are we left with?

A benevolent world-ruling empire in waiting

In Britain the political party not in power, but instead in parliamentary opposition, always has a shadow administration. Counterpart individuals matching the cabinet posts of the authorities currently in government are already named, and those selected busily study their possible future responsibilities. This shadow administration remains in constant readiness to assume office if and when the loyal opposition wins a national election. Until then they are standing in the wings.

The above human analogy to the Kingdom of God is far from perfect, but it may help us to grasp what God has planned for Jesus Christ’s future millennial reign on this earth. The Bible reveals that a divine ruling structure has been in preparation since creation. Some future leaders have already been chosen.

King David and the 12 apostles have already been named (and qualified) to hold specific positions in the administration of this divine government to come (Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25, Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30; Revelation 21:14). Faithful Christians since Christ’s ascension (those called and chosen who will be glorified at the first resurrection) will also be an integral part of Christ’s ruling administration (Revelation 2:26; 3:21).

The good news is that you, too, can participate in this divinely appointed new world order. It is the only real and workable solution to the stubborn problems that confront mankind today. Only the future government of God can and will bring peace, prosperity, righteousness and salvation to humankind. God speed that day. ❖



In Brief

News and trends that affect your life

The New Population Bomb and Prophecy

A recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, titled “The New Population Bomb,” shows that one problem with the current population explosion is not so much *how many* people there will be in the future, but *where* this increase will be located.

“Twenty-first century international security will depend less on how many people inhabit the world than on how the global population is composed and distributed... which countries are relatively older and which are more youthful, and how demographics will influence population movements across regions” (Jack A. Goldstone, January-February 2010).

Today’s global population is 6.83 billion people. According to the United Nations Population Division, the population of the world will be around 9.15 billion by the year 2050.

However, as the population of Western countries continues to decline, the fastest-growing populations will be located in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Latin America. Except for Latin America, huge elements of these fast-growing, youthful populations will be concentrated in Muslim countries, such as Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.

According to *Foreign Affairs*, in 2009 the above-mentioned six countries were the world’s most populous Muslim-majority countries and had a combined population of 886 million (2009). Their populations are expected to increase by 475 million more between now and the year 2050.

The descendants of Ishmael are generally considered to be today’s Arab people, but their descendants expand further than just the Arab peoples. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* points out that the term “Ishmaelite” has a broader significance in the Scriptures. “The Ishmaelites were not confined to the descendants of the son of Abraham and Hagar, but refer to desert tribes in general, like ‘the children of the East’” (p. 906).

Some of them are listed in another prophecy in Psalm 83, which mentions a confederacy of tribes that correspond to Arab and Muslim nations today. This confederacy will apparently attempt to destroy the modern descendants of the tribes of Israel: “They have said, ‘Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more’” (Psalm 83:4).

The article in *Foreign Affairs* issues a warning to the Western world. Describing the Muslim nations that will experience such enormous population explosions, it says that the majority of people “live in poor communities vulnerable to radical appeals and many see the West as antagonistic and militaristic” (p. 37).

The tensions between Muslim and Western societies will also lead to the prophetic scenario of an end-time king of the South pushing at the European-centered king of the North (Daniel 11:40).

For more on these prophecies, see *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*.

Global Political Trends Threaten America’s World Leadership

Americans appear to be very edgy these days. According to a Gallup Poll sponsored by *USA Today*, “Almost three-fourths of them... don’t like the way things are going in the country. Given economic deprivation and political division, plus war [and] terrorism..., who would?” (Jan. 6, 2010).

Gideon Rachman, a regular columnist for the *Financial Times*, provides us with some specifics. “Ever since 1945, the US has regarded itself as the leader of the ‘free world.’ But the Obama administration is facing an unexpected and unwelcome development in global politics. Four of the biggest and most strategically important democracies in the developing world—Brazil, India, South Africa and Turkey—are increasingly at odds with American foreign policy.

“Rather than siding with the US on the big international issues, they are just as likely to line up with authoritarian powers” (“America Is Losing the Free World,” Jan. 5, 2010, emphasis added throughout).

For a short time following the collapse of the Berlin Wall in late 1989, the previous bipolar world of the United States and the Soviet Union became the undisputed unipolar world of an economically and militarily unchallenged America.

This didn’t last long. British journalist Bryan Appleyard observed in *The Sunday Times Magazine*: “Japan, having grown rich since 1945 under the umbrella of American security..., began to look to China for its trading future. And auto-craic regimes are realising they may not have to listen to Western lectures about human rights any more. They can turn to the pragmatic Chinese” (“The Gathering Clouds,” Dec. 27, 2009).

During the past 100 years, the United States has been accorded a singular opportunity to provide leadership in the world at large. Now, American influence is rapidly beginning to wane in the world. Why?

One pivotal reason, often discounted by a largely secular media, involves our disappearing moral standards. Paradoxically this most prosperous of the nations also ranks among the most immoral. Larger numbers of Americans increasingly ignore the plain teachings of the Bible—casting aside the Ten Commandments as a basic moral code and guide to our national conduct.

The essence of the whole American story—historically, morally and prophetically bound up in its legacy as one of the major modern descendants of the biblical patriarch Joseph—remains relatively unknown to the general public. To understand the implications of this intriguing truth, read online or request a free printed copy of our booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.

Contributors: Fred Nance and John Ross Schroeder

“WATERS” (Continued from page 16)

ogy, we can appreciate what the expansiveness of waters that “cover the seas” truly means. The oceans are gigantic! It has been estimated that 71 percent of the earth is covered by ocean water. In one sense there is one vast expanse of a singular global ocean set apart by continental masses. Even so, we break down this mass with names like Pacific, Atlantic, Indian and Arctic.

The average depth of many of these oceans ranges from 8,000 to 12,000 feet. In such waters, you could put 10 Empire State Buildings on top of one another. Some spots plunge to nearly 6½ miles below the surface. You could easily drop Mt. Everest in “the deep” and never see it through the darkened waters. Just imagine this liquid universe, most of which never sees the light of day because of its depth.

How does oceanography help explain God’s eternal truths? Let’s understand that where light can’t invade, God does pervade. The Psalms remind us, “The sea is His, for He made it” (Psalm 95:5). Yes, God owns it.

The psalmist further engages our mind to consider the reach of God by asking: “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your Hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me” (Psalm 139:7-10).

Yes, God’s reach is unfathomable. Nothing remains apart from Him and the impact of His sovereignty. While my eyes could only see that which was directly in front of me in time and space, God has chosen to open the eyes of all of our hearts by allowing us to



Photo by Susan Webber

Unlike the powerful and churning waters of the sea, the knowledge of God will penetrate the strongholds of the human heart until every inch of that heart surrenders to the power and perfection of God’s Spirit.

peer into the future social and spiritual environment of a brand-new age that the Bible portrays as a stark contrast to the society we currently experience.

Isaiah 11 speaks of the triumph of God the Father through Jesus Christ. It tells of the pervasiveness of the Messiah’s reign of 1,000 years that will transform every aspect of the human condition. Over the years, when considering Isaiah 11:9, I have often thought of the length, depth and breadth of this statement. But I never fully comprehended the pervasive nature of water that fills and impacts every inch of space below the surface. Water fills everything in between. There is no isolating its impact.

Isaiah’s watery analogy is in stark contrast to the story of Noah and the impact of water on his times. Those waters brought death to all living things. The element spoken of by Isaiah, the

water of God’s Word (Ephesians 5:26), brings life to a future society by a greater Noah, the Messiah, who not only cares for the temporary well-being of mortal animals, but the spiritual well-being of humanity’s eternal salvation.

The fullness of God’s Kingdom in motion

As we glance at the beginning of Isaiah 11, we discover what is actually covering the earth at the time of Christ’s return is not water, but the personal qualities of the Messiah found in verses 1 through 5. Again, not water, but life-giving components like “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (verse 2).

The intervention of Jesus Christ in earthly affairs even permeates the nature of the animal kingdom, as declared in verses 6-8. “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them” (verse 6). The changed nature of bears and even cobras is mentioned.

In a grand sense there is a return to Eden. The One known as the Word, the LORD of the Old Testament, will again live among His people just as He

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did with Adam and Eve. Animals will no longer be adversarial or threatening to one another or humanity. The curse upon the serpent and its enmity toward the woman will be healed.

But why such a change?

Isaiah's rollout of incredibly good news is but a lead-up to verse 9 that actually focuses on why this evil age will be transformed to what God initially intended at Eden. It is because of the "knowledge of the LORD" being made available to all and, for the first time, being accepted on a grand scale by the descendants of Adam and Eve.

Unlike the powerful and churning waters of the sea, this knowledge is not only going to stretch across the earth, but it will penetrate the strongholds of the human heart in a new way until every inch of that heart surrenders to the power and perfection of God's Spirit.

This expansive, deep and far-reaching knowledge is going to break down the barriers between peoples who have experienced antipathy toward one another for ages. Verse 10 speaks of the inclusion of the gentiles and their recognition of the Messiah by rallying around His banner. The prophet shows how the Messiah will reclaim the remnants of Israel for His purposes in verses 11-12.

The impact of God's unbridled Word, which offers knowledge of our incredible human destiny, will create a seamless environment that will touch every living person. People will no longer react in horror and dismay at God's precious truths and commandments but will passionately stream to Jerusalem proclaiming, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3).

As humanity absorbs such precious knowledge, there is one casualty left behind in the trash bin of human nature. It is war! Isaiah 11:9 proclaims, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." Why? The answer follows immediately on the heels of the proclamation. "For the earth shall be

full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

Again, just imagine, as I did as those waves came rolling ashore with the rhythmic whisper of "as the waters...as the waters...as the waters." That means no more war! And yes, it means no more internal conflicts that separate people, folks like you and me, from others—because the source of all war will be pinpointed and dealt with. The Word of God does not defuse bombs but defuses the hearts that make the bombs (James 4:1-2) .

Considering the sand castles of my heart

As the sun began to sink lower on that day of my personal reflections along the Southern California coastline, one more thought came to me as I saw my family come closer and I knew it would be time to go.

With a quick glance I looked at the quiet, yet powerful, surge of the encroaching tide, and then I looked at the sand directly in front of me. I asked myself, "With all that God is sharing with me today by this moment in time with this tool of His creation, how many personal sand castles—plans of my own making—do I continue to place and strive to prop up in the path of His living words?" God had granted me a living workshop in prophecy not to be wasted.

Why? Peter reminds us that the words of prophecy are not designed to simply inform us and excite our external senses but to transform our very nature. We are to consider the manner of people we should be, "in holy conduct and godliness" (2 Peter 3:11).

Perhaps the words of Isaiah 30:21 ("This is the way, walk in it") are granted best voice by the host of heaven when they proclaim, "And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth *and such as are in the sea*, and all that are in

them, I heard saying: 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!'" (Revelation 5:13, emphasis added). ❖



Robin Webber

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by Robin Webber

“As the Waters...”

I recently sat on the sandy shores of a Southern California beach enjoying a balmy winter day with my wife and two oldest granddaughters. They had ventured down the beach to collect rocks and seashells, leaving me alone to muse about the panorama unfolding before me.

The sea that day was soft and still and was like an endless glassy mirror with no end in sight. Its color was a steel gray-blue, and the waters were gently framed with high cirrus clouds that cast a slightly brooding tone over the already still body of water.

As my eyes drank in the watery expanse to the clear line of the distant horizon, my ears were drawn back nearer to shore, as I began to pick up the rhythmic sound of the lightly crashing waves coming one after another to take their turn in touching the shore. It was as if the waves began to steadily pound in a whispering manner, “As the waters...as the waters...as the waters.”

It propelled my thoughts back to the prophetic declaration and encouragement of Isaiah 11:9: “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

Sitting on the beach with prophets

Now before I go any further, please understand, I was not having any out-of-body experience or trance. I say this, chuckling as I type. But I do feel it was a personally inspiring moment of time set in the midst of God’s creation that activated all my senses to transport my mind and heart beyond simply a solitary seaside moment to a future time.

I began to think I wasn’t the first to sit on the beach and have God “talk to me” through such waterscapes.

I began to recognize that I needed to move over and share my rocky perch with Isaiah and the prophet Habakkuk, who repeated the same thought (Habakkuk 2:14). Furthermore, I recognized that I needed to scoot down on my rocky bench a bit more to make room for the apostle John, who spoke of “no more sea” in Revelation 21:1.

How did they come to record such things? Have you ever thought about it? Just where was Isaiah when he wrote his message, and how did he experience God’s prophecies? Was he taking dictation from God in a hut in some remote desert spot? Did he say: “Sorry, God, could you repeat that one more time for me—I didn’t quite get it—‘as the waters cover the sea’? Uh, I don’t understand what that means. What’s a sea?”

No! Isaiah must have seen the sea. Habakkuk must have walked on a sandy beach along the Mediterranean. John the apostle with his aged eyes must have longingly gazed across the straits that separate the island of Patmos from the mainland and viewed the expansive “sea” as a barrier between him and his beloved Church family in Asia Minor. He must have sighed and longed for the day when there would be no such barriers as “seas” or hostile ocean waters to hinder relationships between God or people.

Just how big is big in modern terms?

These conveyors of God’s truth, perched in their small vantage points along an ancient coastline, were inspired to write “God-breathed” concepts in tangible terms. In modern times due to exploration and technol-

(See “WATERS,” page 14)