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# What Will the Next President Face? (Part 3)

*The servants God sent to the kings of Israel and Judah had difficult roles. Their message was not popular, and they were often rejected as irrelevant to those who held power. Only a few of the kings of Judah listened to these men of God. But those kings who heeded the warnings—and the nation they led—experienced relative times of peace and prosperity. What did a good and wise ruler need to do to steer his people into a right path?*

*Let's read on and see...*

by Darris McNeely

**G**ood morning, Mr. President! Good of you to make room for me in your busy schedule today. I notice your days are getting hectic and crowded as the economic situation becomes more complicated. As your travel schedule increases, I understand these meetings between you and me may become less frequent. Let me spend time today answering the question you wrote to me after our last meeting.

You asked, "What would be the one thing I could do as America's president and the leader of the free world to ensure peace and prosperity?" It is a good question. It is the right question.

It echoes what King Solomon said when he became king of Israel. He said to God, "You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" (1 Kings 3:7-9).



Reuters/Jeff Haynes

*"Mr. President, the people over whom you rule are in need of the true God... The nation is in need of a true servant of God teaching the pure law of God."*

Mr. President, you are no doubt getting spiritual advice from other counselors. What I am about to tell you will not be found in their counsel. It will be hard for you to grasp and accept. But

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**World News  
& Prophecy**  
BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT EVENTS

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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

# Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

## Prayer for Success

**T**his month America gets a new president. Barak Obama will be sworn in as the 44th president of the United States. His election marks a historic first for the nation. He becomes the first biracial chief executive and comes to office promising a new vision for the nation based on the twin pillars of hope and change.

Even as he campaigned through the fall, events were occurring that would not only change the country but define what would be the top priority for the new administration. An economic crisis of historic proportions was transforming the financial lives of millions of Americans.

Within weeks, upwards of 40 percent of the value of the stock market evaporated. Housing prices dropped nearly 18 percent during the year. The savings and retirement accounts of Americans were shredded. The core of America's manufacturing base is threatened with the possible demise of Detroit's Big Three automakers.

America's role in the world is changing as confidence in its power and commitment is reassessed. All signs point to a realignment of world power within the next two decades as Asia and Europe seek larger roles on the world stage.

When Barack Obama lifts his hand and takes the oath of office on Jan. 20, he will inherit a nation facing more fear and uncertainty than any generation since the 1930s. What should be his first priority? Where should his focus be as he places his hand on the Bible?

Were he to open the pages of that book, he would find many words that could give him direction and encouragement as president. Perhaps none are more appropriate than the words spoken by Solomon when he became king of Israel.

In a vision, God came to Solomon, saying, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

Solomon's reply showed the first mark of a true leader—humility. He knew his power came from God and that he lacked the wisdom to guide the nation at this critical juncture in its history. Solomon acknowledged he was as "a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in." He knew the nation had great power and influence among the nations of the day. So he made this request.

"Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" (1 Kings 3:5-9).

This would be the place to start for the new president.

Bible prophecy shows us the world is moving toward the fulfillment of several key events mentioned in Scripture. While we watch the horizon, we also keep our feet firmly planted in today's world, knowing that God expects His Church to sound a clear message of warning and hope to the world.

To that end we encourage all our readers to pray for the success of the new president. The apostle Paul encouraged prayers for "kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

We still have an opportunity and an obligation to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ as a witness to all who will hear.

Join us in prayers for this new president. Join with us in prayer and actions that the gospel can be preached to larger audiences. Join us in this good work at this critical juncture of history. Finally, pray with us "Your kingdom come" for the full restoration of all good things of God to this earth.

—Darris McNeely



Darris McNeely

“PRESIDENT” (Continued from page 1)

if you desire the best for the nation and its people, you will listen carefully and consider.

### A form of religion

America’s fundamental problem is it does not know the true God. Now, it claims to be a Christian nation. The founding fathers believed in God, the Bible and even invoked the Ten Commandments as vital for any nation to prosper. On the American currency is inscribed, “In God We Trust.”

The majority faith in the land is Christianity. Forty percent of those asked claim to attend church each week, but actual attendance figures say the total is much lower. I could quote a pile of statistics to you, sir, but you already know that many claim to believe in God, religion, the Bible and many things spiritual. But it is the substance of those beliefs that we are concerned about.

When actual practices and beliefs of professing Christians are examined in the light of what the Bible says, a wide discrepancy is found. Many of their central teachings about God and Jesus Christ are not found in the Bible. The list is long and ranges from the true nature of God to the teachings of Jesus about the Kingdom of God, from the timing of Christ’s birth to days on which He died and rose, from the day on which Christ worshipped to the teaching of what happens to a person at death. Confusion reigns when it comes to basic knowledge and understanding about God and His teachings.

The result of this confusion is a nation that has a form of religion but not the whole truth.

This may sound surprising. You may ask how—when all these churches do good works and proclaim God’s message—it could be said that America is not following God? The answer lies deep within the story of how God works with His people.

### The reforms of Asa

The Bible tells the story of a time in the nation of Judah when King Asa took the nation through a spiritual awakening and reform. The nation of Israel had been divided into two peoples, Israel and Judah. The resulting confusion impacted



Reuters/Carlos Barria

*Pleading for financial deliverance: A pastor prays for the future of the American auto industry during a special service called “A Hybrid Hope” in Detroit, Michigan, on Dec. 7, 2008.*

the spiritual life of the people, always a tenuous one since false religion continually lurked at the edges of society, seeking inroads against the true knowledge that God had placed within the laws and constitution of the land.

Asa began his reign by removing the altars to foreign gods and all the sacred high places, pillars and wooden images of idols—gods that were not the true God (2 Chronicles 14:3). He issued a decree urging the people to “seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment” (verse 4).

It may seem strange that the king of a nation founded by God would need to be redirected toward observance of the Ten Commandments! Yet this is what we read. Judah was a nation literally “under God,” and they had forgotten much and needed to be reformed. Mr. President, does this sound familiar?

But the story continues. Asa was a capable and sincere king. He cared for the quality of life among the people. He maintained a standing army to protect the borders and ensure peace. God, we are told, protected them and maintained their national sovereignty in the face of hostile neighbors (verses 11-12). Israel had made a covenant with God and even though the nation did not always faithfully follow that covenant, God

always upheld His part of the agreement and faithfully protected the nation. Until the day He let them go into captivity, God was patient and merciful with the nation.

While Asa had undertaken significant reforms, he had not gone far enough. One day he was confronted with another directive from God, sent through a prophet, Azariah the son of Oded. The prophet boldly walked up to Asa and spoke these words: “Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law” (2 Chronicles 15:2-3).

### A different god

Israel thought they worshipped God. But here the prophet said they didn’t worship the true God. How could that be? Easy. Their hearts had been turned away from the true God by the idols they worshipped. The promises and enticement offered by another ideology and lifestyle led them to worship the image that represented that desire. Whether it was a ritual that promised sexual fulfillment and fertility or another god that promised personal success, people were eager to fabricate an image of that god,

thus obscuring their understanding of the true God of their fathers.

That is how idolatry works. It places a veil over the eyes, the ears and the mind of man to cloud the true understanding of the true God. Whatever we as humans place in front of our eyes and worship in place of God becomes our own idol. That act renders us incapable of discerning truth in worship of God. One can profess a belief in God, but if one's actions serve another image of a substitute god, then that worship is futile.

Mr. President, America today may profess a belief in God, but in reality it worships at the altars of many different gods created in the image of the believer. Oh, most don't carve out wooden images or offer sacrifices on altars dedicated to pagan gods today. And most do not worship a god of the sun, moon and stars. People are far more sophisticated than that.

No, they worship other gods, gods of celebrity, status, power and money. People worship themselves, made in the

image of God, when they spend their energies pursuing these false values. When they think they can chart their own destiny and master their own fate alone, without God in their lives, then they are just as guilty as those in the ancient world who made a god out of every force of nature.

Psalms 115 speaks of those who fashion idols of silver and gold, the work of their own hands. Idols have hands that do not work, mouths that do not speak, eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear. They are inanimate forms that do nothing but distract the worshipper from the true reality of God. Here is the irony. Those who fashion these images become *like them*, with eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear; they are blind and deaf to true spirituality.

Mr. President, the people over whom you rule are in need of the true God. Not the false, lifeless image of a god that has been palmed off as the true God. The nation is in need of a true servant of God teaching the pure law of God and turning the people's hearts back to the love of

the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It is this God who has stood above the nation since its founding, protecting it against all enemies and blessing it through the ages. To this God America owes all thanks for the power and wealth it has amassed. Its national greatness comes from the faithful blessing of this God, not its own might, power, wisdom or genius.

It is this God who tells you today that America has been for a long time "without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law" (2 Chronicles 15:3).

The question is, what will you do with this awareness?

### Another opportunity

You have a chance. The nation has another chance. Only God knows when He will remove His hand of blessing and allow a tide of oppression to wash over the nation, sweeping away His benefits, along with America's blessed position among the nations.

You have the opportunity to listen to the warning and foresee a time of great trouble ahead. You have a chance to lead a revival, a true change that will bring the only real hope of survival.

As the prophet said to the king in the past, "When in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them... Be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!" (2 Chronicles 15:4, 7).

Mr. President, the choice is yours. ❖

## How Can You Make Sense of the News?



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

Where are today's dramatic and dangerous trends taking us? What does Bible prophecy reveal about our future? Is prophecy coming to pass before our eyes? How can you know the answers?

You're probably very concerned with the direction the world is heading. So are we. That's why we've created the World News & Prophecy Web site—to help you understand the news in the light of Bible prophecy.

This eye-opening site offers you a perspective you won't find anywhere else—the perspective

of God's Word, the Bible. Here's some of what you'll find:

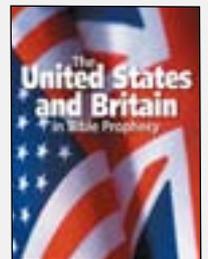
- Articles analyzing world news in the light of Bible prophecy.
- An online blog discussing the latest news and trends.
- Audio discussion (podcasts) of what's happening in the world around us.
- Links to significant news items from hundreds of news sources around the world.
- Free booklets to help you better understand Bible prophecy.

To understand the meaning behind the news and where the world is headed, visit us at [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org) today!



### 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*.

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

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# The Euro Celebrates Its 10th Birthday

*The world's most ambitious currency union in modern times has reached a milestone some critics predicted would never happen.*

by Paul Kieffer

**A**s I drove from Switzerland toward Bavaria on the afternoon of Dec. 31, 1998, I listened to a European-wide radio broadcast of historic proportions. The finance ministers of 11 European Union countries were meeting to confirm the official conversion rates of their currencies to a new shared currency, the euro.

The final day's exchange rate was announced for the 11 currencies against the "European Currency Unit," an artificial accounting value used internally for the various EU national currencies. The exchange rate for each of the 11 currencies on Dec. 31, 1998, became the official exchange rate for the euro. Germans learned that 1.95583 German marks would equal one euro, beginning the very next day at the start of 1999.

For the next three years the euro existed as an accounting value and in nonphysical form (electronic transfers, banking, etc.). The 11 national currencies of the eurozone countries had fixed rates relative to their value against the euro, effectively rendering them mere subdivisions of the euro. Prices were now quoted in both the respective national currencies and the euro.

The next step was the introduction of bank notes and coins for the new currency on Jan. 1, 2002. Preparation for the transition took months of planning and a major logistical effort as coins and bank notes were distributed to banks throughout the new eurozone. Although a two-month phaseout period for the old national currencies was planned, within just days nearly all cash purchases were already being transacted in euros.

The 1992 Maastricht Treaty on European Union provided the framework for introducing the euro. The criteria for participation were strict and reflected Europe's concern over the potential for inflation. To become a member of the eurozone, EU countries may not have an annual budget deficit higher than 3 percent of their gross domestic product, and national interest rates must be close to those in the eurozone.

The Maastricht Treaty provides for all EU members to use the euro, but the United Kingdom and Denmark were granted exemp-

tions from participating in the monetary union.

With Slovakia's addition to the eurozone at the start of 2009, the euro is now the official currency for 16 EU countries, five other countries via formal agreements and another six countries without any official arrangement.

Over 320 million Europeans use the euro as their official currency. In addition, some 40 countries around the world link their own currencies to the value of the euro, adding 180 million people who indirectly use the euro as their currency. (By comparison, about 60 countries peg the value of their currencies to the U.S. dollar.)

## A former "eurosceptic"

Nothing like the euro has ever been attempted in our modern age, and possibly ever in human history. With the economies within the original eurozone ranging from Germany, with its solid performance and low inflation, to soft economies of Italy and Portugal, with their higher rates of inflation, some wondered whether the grand currency experiment was going to work.

Among the doubters was then U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan. In an interview on May 2, 1997, Greenspan told the *International Herald Tribune*: "The euro will come, but will not be sustainable."

Those who opposed the introduction of the euro in Germany were quick to quote Greenspan as a key witness on the folly of the new currency. His prediction was plastered on anti-euro posters and used in newspaper ads at the end of the last millennium in a last-ditch effort to save the German mark.

The first two years of the euro's existence seemed to confirm Greenspan's opinion. Its value dropped from US\$1.18 immediately after its introduction in January 1999 to only about 82 U.S. cents in October 2000.

Some observers had predicted that inflation rates in the eurozone would level out, with countries that had a higher rate of inflation seeing a drop and countries with a lower rate seeing a rise. But the official inflation rate for those countries in the eurozone with traditionally lower rates of

*Alan Greenspan, former U.S. Federal Reserve chairman, remarked that it is "absolutely conceivable that the euro will replace the dollar as reserve currency, or will be traded as an equally important reserve currency."*

inflation did not rise more than about 1 percent after the euro was launched.

However, public perception tended to blame the euro for higher prices, especially for the cost of entertainment and dining out. Germans were quick to find a nickname for their new currency—the “*teuro*,” a play on the word for expensive (*teuer*) and the euro.

Eight years after the euro’s low point against the dollar, the story is quite different. Prior to last summer’s downturn in the value of the euro, its value had nearly doubled. (Recently the value of the euro relative to the dollar is again on the rise.) At the beginning of 2007 the total value of the dollar notes in circulation was less than the value of euro notes.

While the dollar continues to be the world’s top reserve currency, with approximately 65 percent of worldwide currency reserves held in dollars, the euro is now the second most widely held currency portfolio. Its share of world currency reserves has increased from 18 percent in 1999 to 27 percent today.

This development prompted Alan Greenspan to remark in a September 2007 interview with the German magazine *Stern* that it is “absolutely conceivable that the euro will replace the dollar as reserve currency, or will be traded as an equally important reserve currency.”

That’s quite a statement from a man who only 10 years earlier had predicted that the euro would not be sustainable! According to Greenspan, the European Central Bank has “developed into a global economic force to be taken seriously.”

An interesting side effect of the euro’s appreciation against the dollar has been the “cushioning effect” that euro users experienced this past year. Until the recent drop in the price of oil on world markets, Europeans did not feel the full effect of the rapid rise in oil prices. Since the price of oil on the world market is pegged to the dollar, price increases for countries in the eurozone were offset to some degree by the increase in the value of the euro.

That cushioning effect actually became a sore point with some OPEC members and other oil-producing nations like Russia. Because of the dollar’s decline in value, their increased rev-

enues from the higher price for oil do not translate into increased purchasing power when petro dollars are exchanged for eurozone products.

It came as no surprise when certain OPEC members requested discussion on whether to abandon the dollar—at least in part—as the currency for setting the price of oil. More than two years ago, former Russian President Vladimir Putin speculated publicly whether his country might price part of the oil it sells on world markets in euros rather than dollars.

### The euro’s future

In a time of turmoil in financial markets around the world and a deepening recession, it might seem a bit bold to attempt to predict the euro’s future. Even without the current crisis this could be a challenge, especially in light of the variation in the euro’s value during the first 10 years of its existence. However, two key factors provide guideposts for future observation.

The first is the dollar’s position as the world’s dominant reserve currency. Since currency reserves held by foreign governments are actually like an interest-free loan to the issuing government—exchanged either for currency or goods—foreign currency reserves act as a subsidy to the country issuing the reserve currency. The dollar has enjoyed this position since it replaced the British pound as the world’s main reserve currency.

The dollar’s use as a global means of exchange for goods and services contributes to its standing as the world’s reserve currency. Since about half of the value of the goods exchanged in international trade is denominated in U.S. dollars, the American greenback benefits even when the United States is not directly involved in the exchange. This is because foreign currencies have to be exchanged for dollars to complete the transaction. One highly visible example of this is, again, the oil market.

Any move away from the dollar as a benchmark for the price of oil would weaken the dollar’s value on world currency markets—and strengthen the euro.

The dollar’s decline has countries like China concerned about preserving

the value of their large foreign currency holdings in U.S. dollars. The Chinese are already diversifying their vast foreign currency reserves, currently estimated to be worth some \$1.4 trillion. However, they are being very careful not to just dump the dollar, which would hasten the decline and only further reduce the value of their remaining U.S. dollar reserves.

Another issue likely to affect the dollar’s position as the world’s reserve currency is America’s growing national debt, which has doubled in only eight years to total \$10.65 trillion.

If corporate and private debt is included, the United States is awash in nearly \$50 trillion of debt. (The amount is even larger if as-yet-unfunded benefits already earned in the U.S. Social Security System and other entitlements are factored in.)

The U.S. government is now making interest payments of \$19 billion a month to its creditors—more than \$200 billion a year.

The current crisis will only see America’s debt situation worsen. The national debt figure does not include the \$700 billion bailout fund approved by Congress in September 2008. In October and November U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson borrowed over \$400 billion, and Scott Minerd of Guggenheim Partners predicts that America’s budget deficit for 2009 will run as high as \$1.5 to \$2 trillion, adding upwards of 20 percent to America’s current national debt.

Some wonder whether America’s growing national debt will eventually make the country a credit risk. According to Pierre Nahm, an adviser for hedge funds, the United States won’t go bankrupt because a country has the option of simply printing enough money to pay its debts. In so doing, inflation takes its toll on the debt, and debtors would be repaid in devalued dollars.

Creditors apparently think that America will not swallow her wallowing debt so easily. The rate for “credit default swaps” (CDS) for U.S. treasury securities increased fourfold after the \$700 billion bailout was passed in September. In other words, the risk premium for \$10 million of treasury securities increased from \$10,000 to \$40,000,



*On Jan. 1, 2009, Slovakia adopted the euro currency, becoming the 16th country to enter the eurozone.*

reflecting less confidence in the U.S. government's ability to repay its debt.

For the time being, it seems that America's largest creditor nation, China, has no choice but to continue to invest its dollar earnings in the United States. As long as the price of oil on world markets is pegged to the dollar and the Chinese continue to hold their dollar-denominated assets and invest in U.S. treasury securities, the United States will be able to keep running up the red ink.

If, however, either of these two factors changes, the dollar is in for rough times and its attractiveness as a reserve currency will be lessened.

### **The eurozone**

The other key factor affecting the euro's future is the cohesiveness of the eurozone itself. Several internal challenges hinder the euro's further development as a competitor to the U.S. dollar as the world's major reserve currency. National budget deficits of some eurozone members in excess of the 3 percent GDP limit, weak economies of its newest members and inertia on the path toward coordinated economic and taxation policies are important reasons the euro remains in second place among major world currencies.

When the euro was introduced 10 years ago, analysts warned that the internal structure of the eurozone might precipitate the collapse of the new currency. Sixteen countries are now members of the EU's monetary union, but each country still determines its own economic policies and taxation rates. For example, income tax rates are not uniform within the eurozone, and VAT (value-added tax) on goods and services sold varies from 15 to 21 percent. (The EU mandates a minimum 15 percent VAT for all EU members.)

Predictions of the euro's demise have been proven wrong to date, but the fact remains that the eurozone is not a homogenous economic unit. However, the worldwide financial crisis is forcing eurozone members to cooperate and coordinate their efforts more than ever before.

In October eurozone countries and the European Central Bank (ECB) announced their intention to prevent the collapse of any major financial institution within the eurozone. In a joint statement, eurozone countries pledged to coordinate their efforts and provide liquidity for banks for periods of up to five years.

The ECB agreed to create an unsecured lending facility to buy commercial paper from banks, similar to an earlier move by the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank. The ECB action guarantees the availability of funding for banks in the eurozone.

The eurozone action came only one week after an EU summit meeting that failed to produce an EU bailout plan for the entire EU. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown attended the eurozone meeting but was not involved in its formal decisions because his country does not use the euro and will not receive direct support from the ECB.

Last month eurozone finance ministers rejected a call by the European Commission to lower the standard EU VAT rate as an economic stimulus measure for Europe, which has been in recession officially since the third quarter of 2008.

The closer coordination among eurozone countries is a noteworthy development reflecting a "united we stand, divided we fall" attitude. Eurozone member states voluntarily became part of what is now a mutually dependent financial community, making it more than just an alliance that one could leave at any time.

Any country that exits the eurozone would be on its own, and the only country that could possibly afford to do that would be Germany. However, as a member of the eurozone, Germany's multinational companies enjoy the benefit of simplified bookkeeping in one currency across national borders, making it highly unlikely that Germany with its trade-dependent economy would unilaterally withdraw from the eurozone.

With a country's currency part of its national sovereignty, eurozone members have in effect transferred part of their own sovereignty to the ECB. Bible prophecy indicates that this pattern in Europe established by the introduction of the euro will continue and intensify, culminating in a final transfer of authority to a central power called the "beast" (Revelation 17:12-13).

For the full picture of this detailed prophecy, read or download *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* at [wnponline.org/litreq/](http://wnponline.org/litreq/). ❖

# Europe and the Church, Part 7

## Charlemagne, Father of Modern Europe

*Over three centuries after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Charlemagne, king of the Franks, was crowned by the pope in the year 800. The second mountain “on which the woman sits” (Revelation 17:9) was set to inspire Europeans for centuries, including those behind today’s European Union.*

by Melvin Rhodes

*“The dignity of his person, the length of his reign, the prosperity of his arms, the vigour of his government, and the reverence of distant nations, distinguish him from the royal crowd,” wrote Edward Gibbon, in The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

**H**e may have been crowned over 1,200 years ago, but Charlemagne still inspires people. The people of his capital city of Aachen, the spiritual and political capital of Western Europe 1,200 years ago, each year present the Charlemagne Prize to the person who has contributed the most to the fulfillment of the present-day goal of European unity. This coveted award was named after the man who is considered the founder of Western culture.

Readers of the British newsmagazine *The Economist* see his name every week at the end of the European news section. “Our weekly column on the European Union is named after one of the continent’s early unifiers: Charlemagne, born in 742 and crowned first Holy Roman Emperor in 800,” states the magazine’s Web site.

This column about the development of the EU’s “ever closer union” illustrates the link between Charlemagne’s medieval empire and today’s EU.

Charlemagne is a towering figure in European history. Crowned by the pope on Dec. 25 in the year 800, his dream of a united Catholic Europe, a revival of the Roman Empire, still inspires millions of Europeans today.

### After Justinian

Following the death of the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian in 565 (see part 6 of this series in the November 2008 issue), the reunited empire again fell apart. For a brief moment, the “two legs” of West and East had been brought together once again under the leadership of one emperor, but after his death “the imperial restoration” crumbled.

The Eastern Empire, ruled from Constantinople, continued to decay until 1453 when it fell to the invading Turks, one of the monumental events that led to the creation of our modern world.

In the West, the empire fragmented into warring kingdoms and tribes. Eventually, a powerful kingdom rose in the West, the kingdom of the Franks, ruled by the Merovingian kings. Founded by Chlodio in A.D. 427, their most famous monarch was Clovis (481-511), who was baptized a Catholic on Christmas Day in 496 along with 3,000 of his warriors.

Clovis’s baptism makes him the first Catholic king of the dynasty. The distinctive mark of authority of these dynastic kings was long hair, from which they believed they received their great power.

In 751 the dynasty was overthrown in a palace coup that was inspired by the pope. Replacing the last of the Merovingians, Childeric III, was Pepin the Short, the first monarch of the Carolingian dynasty.

Pope Stephen II (752-757) later commanded that the last Merovingian king’s long hair be ritually shorn. He then ended his days in a monastery. However, the bloodline of the Merovingians survived through marriage, in the line of the dukes of Hapsburg-Lorraine. The Hapsburgs ruled Austria for centuries until 1918 and remain a powerful European family to this day.

### The Carolingian dynasty

The name of the new dynasty derived from Pepin’s father, Charles (Carolus) Martel, who had served his king as mayor of the palace before Pepin. Charles was known as “The Hammer” for his defeat of

the Saracens at the Battle of Tours in October 732. This famous battle stopped the advancing Muslims from conquering the whole of Europe after their subjugation of most of Spain. In celebration of the Frankish victory, the bakers of nearby Paris created the *croissant*, shaped like the Islamic symbol of the crescent moon.

Thanks to this victory, the Franks were seen as the greatest power in the West and the saviors of Western civilization against Islam. The papacy was deeply grateful, long since having given up on the decaying power of Constantinople to the East. The Catholic Church now looked to the Carolingians as their protector.

The next threat to the Catholic Church came from the Germanic Lombards who were occupying much of Italy and wanted the rest, including the temporal Papal States ruled from Rome. When the Lombards threatened Rome, Pope Stephen II crossed



Wikimedia Commons/ James Steakley

*Charlemagne was crowned with the Iron Crown of the Lombards after defeating them in 774. It has become one of the most ancient royal insignia of Europe.*

## The Making of Emperor and Empire

“On November 24, 800, Charlemagne entered the ancient capital in state; on December 1 an assembly of Franks and Romans agreed to drop the charges against Leo if he would deny them on solemn oath; he did; and the way was cleared for a magnificent celebration of the Nativity. On Christmas Day, as Charlemagne, in the chlamys and sandals of a *patricius Romanus*, knelt before St. Peter’s altar in prayer, Leo suddenly produced a jeweled crown, and set it upon the King’s head.

“The congregation, perhaps instructed beforehand to act according to ancient ritual as the *senatus populusque Romanus* confirming a coronation, thrice cried out: ‘Hail to Charles the Augustus, crowned by God the great and peace-bringing Emperor of the Romans!’ The royal head was anointed with holy oil, the Pope saluted Charlemagne as Emperor and Augustus, and offered him the act of homage reserved since 476 for the Eastern emperor.

“If we may believe Eginhard, Charlemagne told him that had he known Leo’s intention to crown him he would not have entered the church. Perhaps he had learned of the general plan, but regretted the haste and circumstances of its execution; it may not have pleased him to receive the crown from a pope, opening the door to centuries of dispute as to the relative dignity and power of donor and recipient...

“The coronation had results for a thousand years. It strengthened the papacy and the bishops by making

civil authority derive from ecclesiastical conferment; Gregory VII and Innocent III would build a mightier Church on the events of 800 in Rome. It strengthened Charlemagne against baronial and other disaffection by making him a very vicar of God; it vastly advanced the theory of the divine right of kings. It contributed to the schism of Greek from Latin Christianity; the Greek Church did not relish subordination to a Roman Church allied with an empire rival to Byzantium.

“The fact that Charlemagne (as the Pope desired) continued to make Aachen, not Rome, his capital, underlined the passage of political power from the Mediterranean to northern Europe, from the Latin peoples to the Teutons. Above all, the coronation established the Holy Roman Empire in fact, though not in theory.

“Charlemagne and his advisers conceived of his new authority as a revival of the old imperial power; only with Otto I was the distinctively new character of the regime recognized; and it became ‘holy’ only when Frederick Barbarossa introduced the word *sacrum* into his title in 1155. All in all, despite its threat to the liberty of the mind and the citizen, the Holy Roman Empire was a noble conception, a dream of security and peace, order and civilization restored in a world heroically won from barbarism, violence, and ignorance. Imperial formalities now hedged in the Emperor on occasions of state” (Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Charlemagne the King*, 1950).



The Coronation of Charlemagne by Raphael, 1516-1517.  
Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III  
in A.D. 800 in the Vatican Basilica.

the Alps seeking Pepin's winter camp to request assistance. He personally anointed and crowned Pepin as king and blessed his sons and heirs, thereby establishing a close relationship between church and state that was to continue after Pepin.

Pepin responded positively to the pope's request and defeated the Lombards, granting the conquered territory to the pope as a gift that became known as the "Donation of Pepin."

Following Pepin's death in 768, his sons Carloman and Charles succeeded to the throne. In 771 Carloman died under mysterious circumstances, and Charles became sole ruler.

At age 27, Charles was a commanding figure. He was at least a foot above average height at 7 feet, stately and dignified, warmhearted and charitable. He spoke a form of Old High German. He was well known for his zeal and devotion to the Roman Catholic Church. His goal was to reestablish the political

unity of Western Europe, an area that had been largely fragmented and divided since the fall of the Western Empire.

During the following three decades, Charles the Great (Charlemagne) fought 18 campaigns against the last remaining stronghold of paganism, the German Saxons. In 804 the defeated tribes of Saxons were forcibly Christianized and incorporated into Charlemagne's empire.

During his long reign, Charlemagne conducted 53 military expeditions in wars against 12 different nations, thereby uniting by conquest most of Western Europe.

When the Lombards again threatened Rome and the papacy in 772, Charles received an urgent appeal for help from Pope Adrian I. Defeating the Lombards in 774, Charles became master of Italy. Charles took the title *Rex Francorum et Longobardorum atque Patricius Romanorum* ("King of the Franks and Lombards and Patrician of the

Romans"). The Iron Crown of the Lombards became one of the great symbols of Europe and was to be used by many European sovereigns, including Napoleon over a thousand years later.

Charles had now united Italy for the first time in centuries. He donated even more territory to the papacy. The monarchy of the Franks and the papacy were now partners in the defense of Western civilization!

"What Charles was not prepared to do was yield to the pope any degree of political preeminence. He had responded as a dutiful son to the [pope's] appeal. He had invested an enormous amount of energy and time in disposing once and for all Rome's enemies. But he was determined to set his own agenda. He would not be dictated to by the pope, no matter what spiritual arm-twisting the latter might try to use.

"In this nascent Christian empire claims were already being made, and questions posed, about the balance of spiritual and temporal power. On the one side was the authority claimed by Hadrian and succeeding popes to dictate, in the name of God, even to kings and emperors. On the other was the divine sanction that Charlemagne and his heirs asserted as men exercising rule under God in all the affairs of their subjects... The first round of this contest, which was destined to run for centuries, was clearly won by Charles" (Derek Wilson, *Charlemagne*, 2006, p. 42).

Charlemagne's relationship with the papacy was clearly an uneven one and set the tone for centuries, thereby fulfilling the prophecy of Revelation 17:1-2: "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters [the false church], with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication..."

Unlike a marriage, where a husband and wife give themselves to each other in a committed and lasting relationship, fornication is based on each partner trying to get, seeking his or her own advantage! So it has been in the relationship between church and state in Europe for most of the last 2,000 years.

# The “Christian Caesar”

“In AD 800, Charlemagne (Charles the Great), a zealous Roman Catholic, was crowned *Imperator Romanorum* (Emperor of the Romans) by Pope Leo III. He became Western Europe’s ‘Christian Caesar’—a Roman Emperor born of a Germanic race. The West once again had an emperor, and his coronation was to become the central event of the Middle Ages.

“He was proclaimed *Rex Pater Europae* (King Father of Europe) and espoused the ideal of a unified Christian Empire—albeit Christianized at sword point—in close alliance with the Pope. The fact that Charlemagne received his crown from the Pope was seen by the populace as equal to a divine

bestowal. It confirmed the perception that the imperial crown was a papal gift, and that the kingdoms of this earth belonged to the Bishop of Rome; they were his to give and his to take away...

“The two had become joint sovereigns on earth, in a Holy Roman Empire which was the political foundation of the Middle Ages. Throughout this era, the memory of the once-great Roman Empire lived as a vital tradition in the hearts of many Europeans. The entire future of the Continent was bound up in this coronation, and the alliance between the papacy and Germany has been of great significance ever since” (Adrian Hilton, *The Principality and Power of Europe*, 1997, p. 26).

## Emperor of the Romans

In 795 Pope Leo III was given protection by Charlemagne after accusations of adultery, perjury and simony (attempting to buy one’s way into religious office) were made against him. In November 800 Charlemagne presided over the trial in Rome. After swearing his innocence on a copy of the Gospels, Pope Leo was cleared and reinstated on Dec. 23.

On the same day an emissary of the caliph of Baghdad, Harun al-Rashid, arrived in Rome carrying keys to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The keys were presented to Charlemagne, thereby symbolizing the caliph’s recognition of him as the protector of the Christian holy places in the Holy Land, now under the caliph’s rulership.

Remaining in Rome, the king of the Franks attended a nativity service on Christmas Day, two days later. The central event of the Middle Ages was about to take place! As Charles knelt before the altar in worship, there was a hush throughout the church. As the king rose from prayer, the pope turned suddenly and placed a golden crown on his head, proclaiming him *Imperator Romanorum*, “Emperor of the Romans.”

More than three centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire, the West once again had its own emperor!

The idea of a united Western and Catholic Roman Empire had been revived. Once again, a Roman

Caesar reigned, only this time he was of Germanic origin! The foundation of the medieval Holy Roman Empire had been laid. Charlemagne was a German inspired by the spirit of ancient Rome. A close relationship between Germany’s leaders and the papacy had begun and would continue down to modern times.

Edward Gibbon, looking down the long corridor of history, insisted: “Europe dates a new era from [Charlemagne’s] restoration of the Western empire” (quoted by Derek Wilson, p. 82).

Charlemagne’s empire was the second of the “seven mountains on which the woman sits” (Revelation 17:9). Because he was crowned by the pope, the people saw him as having been crowned by God. The implication was that the pope had the authority to give power and to take it away. This was to lead to much conflict between church and state throughout Western Europe in the centuries that followed. For a while following the coronation of Charlemagne, the two were joint sovereigns of the world!

In 803 Charlemagne had the words “*Renovatio Romani Imperii*” (“Renewal of the Roman Empire”) stamped on his official seal. Charlemagne began organizing his empire on the Roman model, setting a precedent for future European monarchs down to the 20th century.

In 812 he received recognition from the Eastern Roman Emperor

Michael I. The two halves of the empire were equal. However, the relationship between East and West was never to be the same again (see sidebar “The Making of Emperor and Empire”).

But the power of Charlemagne’s empire was not to last. On Jan. 28, 814, Charlemagne died at the age of 71. He was succeeded by his weak and ineffectual son Louis, who reigned until 840. Following Louis’s death, the empire was racked by civil war as Louis’s three sons fought among themselves. The Treaty of Verdun in 843 divided the empire into three parts, and Western Europe fell into warring feudal states.

The second imperial restoration had fallen! More were to follow. ❖

## 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)

# Waves of Destruction

*Not long ago, a newscaster commented on the financial struggles facing the United States in the wake of yet another venerable financial institution failing. He said, "Just when we think we've recovered from the storm, another wave comes and knocks us off our feet."*

by Rick Shabi

**M**any observers have compared the global financial crisis to a tsunami.

We've all heard stories about the powerful tsunami that hit Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and other areas surrounding the Indian Ocean in 2004. Hundreds of thousands of lives were lost, and the lives of the survivors were forever changed. Can you imagine thinking that everything is in order one moment, just to have a series of unexpected tidal waves hit the next, washing away life as you knew it?

One man who knew about tsunamis was on the beach in Sri Lanka that fateful morning of Dec. 26, 2004. He tells the tale of how the waves seemed calm enough, but as he watched, he could see the tide washing out further with each wave. More sea bottom was visible with each ensuing wave—much more than normal. It all looked innocent enough to the unknowing eye, but to those who know about tsunamis, this was an ominous sign of impending disaster.

He yelled for his family to run from the beach, climb and hang onto a nearby strong tree to save their lives. He was right. Within minutes, they would have been dead. Suddenly, the waves stopped receding and a towering wall of water raced toward shore, washing away unsuspecting life.

He and his children survived, because he watched. He knew the warning signs, and he took the necessary action to keep his family from certain death.

## Financial tsunami

How does this relate to the current global financial turmoil?

Since the \$700 billion "economic rescue" package was passed by the U.S. Congress, things haven't quite settled the way government leaders thought they would. But is there yet another "wave" coming that will knock us off our feet?

The Bible warns of a time at the end of this age when warning after warning will come to the modern-day descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel because they have turned from God. (For a careful biblical and historical analysis of where the key "lost" tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim are today,

download or request our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.)

Time and again, though, these descendants of Israel fail to heed the warnings. They fail to see the danger that lies ahead when they ignore the initial waves that warn of impending doom.

Notice what God says to Israel through Moses in Leviticus 26:14-35. Describing what will happen "if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments," God says, "I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever, which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you" (verses 14, 16-17).

Far from merely ancient history, this has a direct bearing on the present day. God was telling the modern descendants of Israel that when things like that happen, they should consider them as "warning waves" from Him.

God does not want to bring harm on anyone, but He allows painful events to occur in order to warn us that we have wandered from Him and to impel us to turn back to Him. He is not willing that any perish, but desires that all repent and turn back to Him so He can richly bless them (2 Peter 3:9).

Apparently, end-time Israel does not pay attention to the first warning "wave" described in Leviticus. After God sees their failure to heed that warning, notice what He says: "*And after all this [after the people failed to heed the first warning], if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze*" (Leviticus 26:18-19, emphasis added throughout).

When the people don't pay attention to that "wave," God sends additional waves to warn them of what is coming. In verses 21 to 35, three more "waves" hit and the people still don't perceive the "tsunami" that is approaching. God allows disaster to strike. "I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation. . . I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall

*How many more "waves" can we endure before a final "tsunami" washes away our society? When and from where will the next "wave" hit?*

be astonished at it” (verses 31-32).

The initial waves of destruction have gone unheeded. Israel doesn't turn to God and suffers ultimate destruction.

### Amos's warning

The prophet Amos, who wrote to a flourishing Israel in the eighth century B.C., also warned that God would send punishment if the nation did not turn from its wicked ways.

The *Open Bible Commentary* records this about the nation of Israel at the time of Amos: “Business was booming and boundaries were bulging. But below the surface, greed and injustice were festering. Hypocritical religious motions replaced true worship, creating a false sense of security and a growing callousness to God's disciplining hand. Famine, drought, plagues, death, destruction—nothing could force the people to their knees.”

Through Amos, God warned Israel what would happen if they didn't turn from their ways and obey Him. Notice the five “warning waves” described in Amos 4:6-11. In addition to “waves” of hunger, drought in various cities, failed crops and war, a fifth wave is recorded in verse 11, where God says: “I overthrew some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; yet *you have not returned to Me.*”

When the ancient Israelites fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C., they suffered the first four warning waves of destruction Amos describes. But they did not suffer the fifth wave. God did not send fire from heaven to devastate Israel then. But for modern-day Israel, fire and brimstone from heaven, perhaps in the form of weapons of mass destruction that can devastate cities and “lay them waste,” could be a final dire element of God's impending punishment if Israel does not turn back to Him.

### Disaster upon disaster

Since 2001, modern-day Israel—nations such as the United States, Britain, Canada and Australia—have experienced disaster upon disaster. The Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon were a disaster unlike any before experienced by the United States. In 2006 Hurricane Katrina devastated



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New Orleans. The United States has experienced an energy crisis and wars on two fronts that are draining the nation's spirit and coffers.

Those disasters have been capped by the current global financial crisis that has required the government to pour hundreds of billions of dollars into failing financial institutions. The financial crisis that has gripped Wall Street and Main Street has decimated retirement funds, threatened the capitalization of many corporations and is the greatest threat to the American economy since the Great Depression.

Many wonder how many disasters the United States can endure before it crumbles and falls. Every disaster costs vast amounts of money. How many more “waves” can we Americans endure before a final “tsunami” washes away our society? When and from where will the next “wave” hit?

How much will it really take to save the U.S. automotive industry? Will there be another war that will even further drain our human and financial resources? Will the next wave of option ARMs (adjustable rate mortgages) and other “creative” mortgages create the same financial havoc as they mature in the next few years? Will there be a wave that finally breaks the bank?

“Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel: Because you despise and spurn this [My] word and trust in cunning and oppression, in crookedness and perverseness, and rely on them, therefore this iniquity and guilt will be to you like a broken section of a high wall, *bulging out and ready...to fall*, whose crash will

come suddenly and swiftly, in an instant” (Isaiah 30:12-13, Amplified Bible).

### Watching and taking action

The man in Sri Lanka saved himself and his family because he saw and understood the waves that warned of the impending tsunami and was ready for what was coming, while others, seeing the same things, did not heed the warning waves. He took the right action to save his family's life, hanging on to a stable tree as the waves crashed in and washed so many others away.

If the United States wants to avoid the consequences that God prophesies, it, too, must heed the warnings and turn and cling to the true God, who is the only One who can save it from the results of its national sins.

“Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord GOD. “Therefore turn and live!” (Ezekiel 18:30-32).

None of us can turn a nation around, but we can individually respond to God's warning. If enough individuals were to take that responsible action, collectively they would indeed make a difference. These booklets can help: *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion* and *The Road to Eternal Life*. Allow us to whet your appetite: God's way isn't what most people expect. Prepare to be surprised. ❖

“DREAMER” (Continued from page 16)

favor, whether as a servant (Genesis 39:4), a prisoner (Genesis 39:21) or standing before Pharaoh interpreting his dreams (Genesis 41:25-41). Sometimes it takes a dreamer to know a dreamer.

Joseph’s dream never wandered from him. It gave him purpose and created a discipline to meet the future. His dream would serve as the defining vision of his life. The dream never changed. Joseph changed!

Yes, Joseph and Martin Luther King Jr. have something very much in common. They were dreamers. Their dreams cost them dearly, yet each held to his vision.

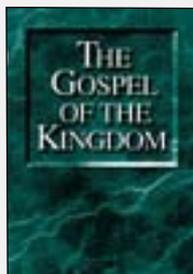
### Dripping with freedom

Forty-five years down the lane of time, what do we gain from the dream of this latter-day dreamer, who would feed a nation and world with the sustenance of personal dignity and freedom? So often we only hear the echo of the famous last words of his speech: “Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!” Little do most people realize that the entire speech is soaked, saturated and dripping with one thought and one thought alone—freedom!

Dr. King began his speech with homage to Lincoln by echoing the thoughts of the Gettysburg Address: “Five score years ago, a

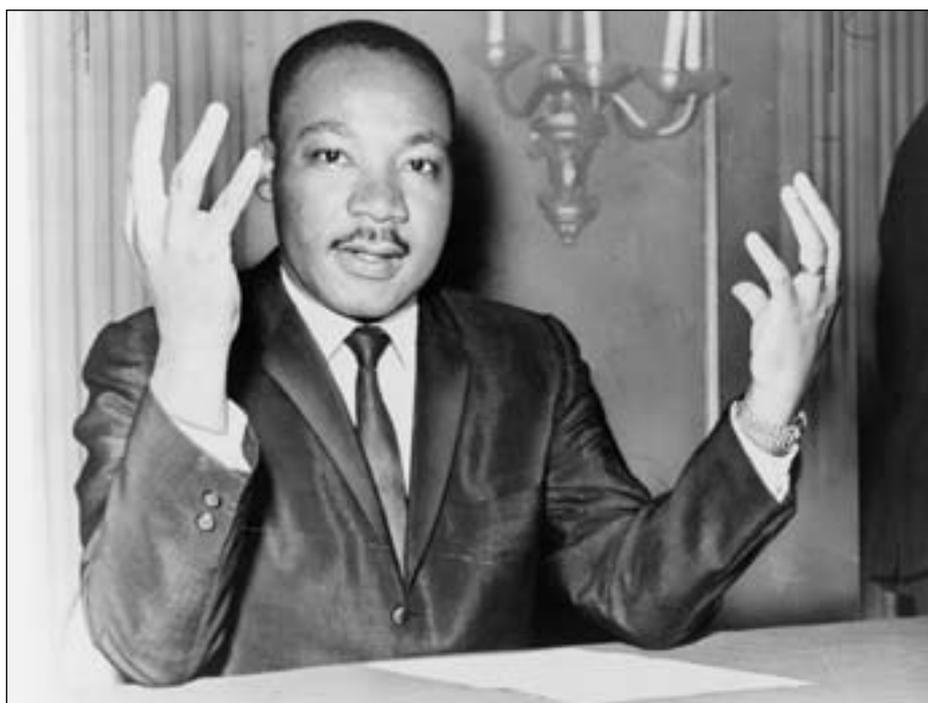
### Recommended Reading

Jesus Christ brought good news—the gospel—but few understand why His promise of a coming Kingdom is the best news this world could ever hear. Request or download our free booklet *The Gospel of the Kingdom* for the biblical answers.



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*“No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until ‘justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream’”—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation.” He quickly moved to the present by stating: “But one hundred years later, the Negro is still not free... And so we’ve come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.”

### Rays of hope and optimism

But Dr. King, while ever the realist of the present plight, injects rays of hope and optimism by further declaring: “We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we’ve come to cash this check—a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.”

He recognized there was hard work ahead. A work that could be deterred by seeking immediate gains of payback—hurt for hurt and injury for injury. Therefore, he stirred the audience toward better passions by reminding them to “forever conduct our struggle

on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.”

A few lines later, he would pepper this thought with the basic Christian rule of thumb to “continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.” It is here that Dr. King expressed the redemptive optimism of people of faith given by Paul in Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good [not that all things along the way are good] to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

### Hammering home the point

With the force of a blacksmith’s hammer on an anvil, Dr. King nine times declares, “I have a dream.” The rhythm of his speech carried his listeners toward a vision of the dynamic future foretold by the

prophet Isaiah: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40:4-5).

With this picture of a godly world in place, Dr. King then concluded with eight lines of "let freedom ring" from the heights of America.

But it is in the ninth verbal sounding of "let freedom ring" that Dr. King purposefully introduces the last tolling with an inclusive "when we let freedom ring." It is here that Dr. King avoids the mistake of the younger Joseph. The dream is not solely about him, but about the good of others. It is now no longer an exclusive dream; now it is everyone's dream and everyone's responsibility to bring it to pass.

### "The fierce urgency of now"

It is a 45-year-old dream that has stood well the test of time. But it is a dream not yet enjoyed by all people around this globe. We, the staff of *World News and Prophecy*, also have a dream. In spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, we still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the Christian dream. It is rooted in the words of Jesus Christ, who stated in John 8:32, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

There are times when people will say to our staff, "Why be so critical? Why not leave some issues alone? Why do you have to keep bringing up matters like the rise of a Beast power, the deception of a False Prophet, the ungodliness of society, the future demise of these United States, the wrongfulness of abortion, the sin of practiced homosexuality and on and on?"

Why? These matters aren't simply going to get better or go away by putting our heads in the sand and being satisfied with the ever diminishing nature of the moral and spiritual status quo. The fierce urgency of now places personal

and divine demands on us to "cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression" (Isaiah 58:1).

### We choose to ring a bell

Yes, like Dr. King, we choose to ring a bell of moral clarity in a world that wants to be left alone to go its own way. We choose to ring a bell of warning to awaken those nations that mistakenly interpret the patient mercy of God for the lack of a sure Judgment Day that is coming upon the nations. We rejoice in ringing a bell of freedom's joy that the very real Kingdom of God under Jesus Christ is coming to this earth.

We choose to see a world beyond this troubled moment. We look forward to a world free from Satan, free from sin and free from selfishness. *Freedom* is a beautiful word. Freedom in Christ is a beautiful experience. For a Christian, freedom cannot be an afterthought; it must be a value laced throughout our thoughts, words and deeds.

In the midst of his famous speech, Dr. King asked the rhetorical question some were asking regarding his civil rights crusade, "When will you be satisfied?" His answer resonates with the fullness of the millennial refrain of Isaiah 30:21, "This is the way, walk in it." He proclaimed, "No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until 'justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream'" (referencing Amos 5:24).

Those times are yet ahead, so we remain dissatisfied in a world apart from godly freedom. Oh yes, the way of a dreamer can be lonely, be it Joseph in the pit or Martin standing alone before throngs of people in the shadow of Abraham Lincoln. The path of a dreamer is never easy, but worth the wait. Thus, we wait along with you. Hold on to the dream! ❖



Robin Webber

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by Robin Webber

## A 45-Year-Old Dream With Shades of Eternity

**F**orty-five years ago this past August, a relatively young man stood before an audience of a quarter of a million people gathered in the National Mall between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. There he shared a dream with his fellow citizens. One man, with one dream, in one speech, spoke of one cherished treasure that had eluded his people—freedom.

The moment had arrived. Martin Luther King Jr. walked onto the national stage and into history by bringing a message marked with his even-paced and ever-rising oratorical crescendo that mixed words, metaphors and thoughts from the biblical prophets of old, Shakespeare and slogans of long ago New Deal optimism. In his now well-known conclusion, he defined his dream with word pictures of mountaintops ringing with freedom (crafted from “My Country ’Tis of Thee”) and then punctuated all he had said with the valiant cry of joy from an old “Negro spiritual.”

The “I Have a Dream” speech would be the oratorical catalyst that would awaken social consciousness to such an appropriate level that the U.S. Congress would ultimately pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, forever changing the country. Dr. King would be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, but he would also be cruelly rewarded with a martyr’s death in 1968 for his life’s work “for the cause of brotherhood and peace.”

### Another dreamer, another time

Dr. King would not be the first dreamer to be faced with the taunt of, Who does he think he is? Neither would he be the first dreamer to seemingly be silenced or cruelly struck down by people seeking to maintain the status quo. Long ago, another young man shared a dream that placed him in harm’s way. It is recorded in your Bible in Genesis 37.

Joseph, Jacob’s next-to-youngest son, came to his half brothers and declared, “Please hear this dream which I have dreamed” (verse 6). This and an accompanying dream (verse 9) plainly indicated that young Joseph would ultimately hold an influential position over his family and ultimately the world of his time.

The key word and concept that distanced Joseph from his brothers was the term *bowing*. Joseph interpreted it in the sense of “preeminence” and his family members interpreted it as “subservience.” Based upon immediate reactions and no time for reflection, both sides handled the dreams poorly. Both were wrong and both would have to grow in maturity. But for the moment, selling him into the living death of slavery seemingly silenced “the dreamer.”

But Joseph held to this simple dream God had planted in his heart. He held on through being cast into a pit, being sold in the slave market and being falsely accused and put in prison. Whatever position Joseph was placed in, he ultimately found

(See “DREAMER,” page 14)