

BEYOND TODAY

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Holy Bible

The Conspiracy to CANCEL GOD

Cancel Culture and the Future of Christianity 9 • Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: A Biblical Perspective 12
Growing State Tyranny: Foretaste of the End Time? 20 • A Return to 1970s Stagflation? 23

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FEATURE ARTICLES

4 The Conspiracy to Cancel God

An insidious campaign is underway right now to cancel God, His commandments and His values from people's lives. How and why is this happening? What are its effects? How will it end?

9 Cancel Culture and the Future of Christianity

A major cultural change is taking place right before our eyes. Christianity—long a traditional and accepted part of society—is increasingly being silenced by governments, courts, businesses and technology. What does this mean? Where is it headed?

12 Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: A Biblical Perspective

Russia's brutal invasion of neighboring Ukraine has stunned the world and shocked Europe out of its long complacency. Does Bible prophecy shed any light on this?

16 The Human Side of the Ukraine Tragedy

Ukraine's current tragedy is one more sad chapter in a long history of invasion and oppression.

20 Growing State Tyranny: Foretaste of the End Time?

Recent tyrannical government edicts have trampled the rights and consciences of millions of people. What's driving this? Does it have any implications for prophesied end-time events?

23 A Return to 1970s Stagflation?

Remember the 1970s' high unemployment, empty store shelves, lines at gas stations and skyrocketing inflation? History may be set to repeat.

26 70 Years of Elizabeth II, the Servant Queen

In the Queen's Platinum Jubilee year, we reflect on a beloved figure exemplifying dignity and devotion yet sadly not preserving her realms from moral plummet and decline.



DEPARTMENTS

18 Current Events and Trends

An overview of events and conditions around the world

30 Letters From Our Readers

Readers of *Beyond Today* magazine share their thoughts

31 *Beyond Today* Television Log

A listing of stations and times for the *Beyond Today* TV program



Scott Ashley
Managing editor

A Coming “Famine of the Word”

Who would’ve believed just a decade ago that our world could have changed into the world we see today?

I’m used to closely following cultural, political and geopolitical changes. But I didn’t foresee *transformations of this magnitude coming this quickly*. The world we see today is barely recognizable from a decade ago!

As an example, I’m writing this editorial in March, which is Women’s History Month here in the United States. Women certainly should be recognized for their achievements and honorable role. Yet in this month for honoring women, the following took place:

- A *biological man* was named one of 12 “Women of the Year” by *USA Today* due to his White House-appointed position as a transgender high government official.
- During judicial committee questioning on her nomination to be the first black woman on the U.S. Supreme Court, the nominee, a well-known judge, repeatedly said *she was unable to define what a woman is*.
- After competing for three years on a collegiate men’s swim team, a *biological man* won first place in the *women’s* 500-yard freestyle collegiate swimming championship, beating out a female 2020 Olympic silver medalist. (Before winning first in the women’s event, the best he had ranked nationally in men’s swimming events was 32nd, 65th and 554th.)

Such madness has begun to permeate all levels of Western society. Recently a city council member in a locale near me publicized a list of books the city’s library district promoted as “age-appropriate” for children 12 and under. Some of the titles included *Woke Baby*, *Anti-Racist Baby*, *Feminist Baby*, *Pride Baby* and *Feminist Baby Finds Her Voice*.

He rightly pointed out that even our public libraries have become indoctrination centers for pushing left-wing ideologies on children. At least one district library had instituted “Drag Queen Story Time” and several had provided children with *drag-queen paper doll kits*!

As many American parents were shocked to learn when their children took classes online from home during Covid lockdowns, public-school students are typically being force-fed a steady diet of distorted history, socialist ideology and undermining of traditional values that goes against everything the parents stand for.

Meanwhile, social media giant Twitter has repeatedly shut down the accounts of traditional conservative voices. Yet it hypocritically keeps active the accounts of Russian President Vladimir Putin (whose invasion of Ukraine has killed thousands of people), the Afghan Taliban (notable terrorism supporters and human-rights abusers) and Iran’s Ayatollah Ali Khamanei (who has repeatedly called for the destruction of Israel).

We’re increasingly seeing the canceling of Bible-based perspectives. You may have heard the term “shadow banning,” referring to Internet search engines manipulating search results to secretly ban conservative and biblical perspectives while elevating ungodly ideologies.

Here at *Beyond Today*, until recently our websites drew about a million new visitors per month, a number that was continually growing. But then those numbers started steadily dropping and now are approaching half that. We did nothing differently; in fact our *Beyond Today* print run increased during that same time.

So what happened with our vanishing website visitors? *Hundreds of thousands* disappeared apparently because major Internet search engines have deliberately begun hiding our website, articles and videos

from people searching for biblical truth and answers.

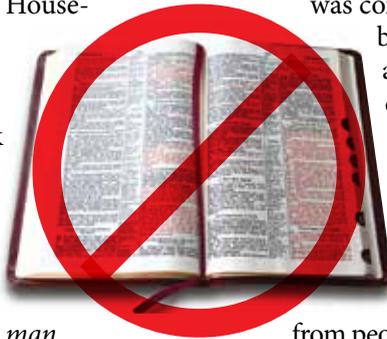
The decline is striking, but *we’ve been expecting it*. Why? Notice this sobering prophecy from Amos 8:11-12:

“‘The time is surely coming,’ says the Sovereign LORD, ‘when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread or water *but of hearing the words of the LORD*. People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from border to border *searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it*’” (New Living Translation, emphasis added).

Our world is rushing toward this. Good is now being called evil, and evil is being called good (Isaiah 5:20). God’s Word and His way of life are increasingly despised, demonized and canceled. God foretold it long ago.

What *should*—what *must*—you do? Isaiah 55:6-7 tells us: “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him . . .”

Seek mercy. Seek forgiveness. *Seek God while you can.* **BT**





Holy Bible

The Conspiracy to CANCEL GOD

An insidious campaign is underway right now to cancel God, His commandments and His values from people's lives. How and why is this happening? What are its effects? How will it end?

by John LaBissoniere

The word “cancel” is derived from the Latin term *cancellare* meaning “to cross out”—to expunge or delete—such as when terminating an airline reservation or a cell phone contract. However, in recent years, “cancel” has been used of declaring *people and organizations* unacceptable or even detestable. Such “canceling” is employed via mass media and social media in many Western countries, and it's growing.

So pervasive is this practice of public rejection or boycotting of various individuals, groups or institutions as punishment for social, moral or politically objectionable viewpoints or actions that it's given rise to the coined phrase “cancel culture.”

Cancel culture advocates delineate which views are “acceptable”—which are almost always those that are pro-abortion, pro-LGBTQ, anti-God and anti-Bible. Anyone violating these ideological criteria may be threatened with loss of job, loss of reputation, expulsion from social media or worse.

Christianity under siege

Biblical moral principles and values are often especially targeted by this onslaught. An American Thinker article describes the situation this way: “A vigorous new secular-

ism in recent years . . . has propelled ridicule of Christianity into the mainstream of acceptable behavior. Today, Bible-bashing and Christian-mocking are a favorite pastime on television, in movies, and on social media.

“The attack on the free exercise of religion now moves beyond prayer at football games and commencement ceremonies to legal battles over wedding cakes. A relatively small group of atheistic and radical activist organizations . . . have succeeded in banning prayer from schools and Christian symbols from public buildings. At the same time . . . Christianity is extricated from the common way of life. This is the culture war, plain and simple. The effect is cascading beyond America” (Jeff Lukens, “Christianity Is Under Siege in America,” June 12, 2019).

Canceling Christian values is not just a contemporary phenomenon, as Christianity has always had its detractors. Indeed, a diabolical campaign has been ongoing throughout the ages to oust God and His influence from people's lives.

Nevertheless, respect and honor toward God and the Bible formed the bedrock of Western culture and provided major benefits to society for many generations. As a report by the Heritage Foundation explains: “The strength of the family unit is intertwined with the prac-

tice of religion. Churchgoers are more likely to be married, less likely to be divorced or single, and more likely to manifest high levels of satisfaction in marriage. Church attendance is the most important predictor of marital stability and happiness.

“Religious belief and practice contribute substantially to the formation of personal moral criteria and sound moral judgment. Regular religious practice generally inoculates individuals against a host of social problems, including suicide, drug abuse, out-of-wedlock births, crime, and divorce. The regular practice of religion also encourages such beneficial effects on mental health as less depression,

tremendous blessings to people over the ages, antagonism against divine values has mounted steadily, especially over the past two generations in the United States. Part of the reason for this is that individuals and institutions have been subjected to increasing government restrictions on teaching and learning about God and His righteous way of life.

Consider that in 1962 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that prayer in public schools was unconstitutional. The following year it declared that public schools could no longer allow the Bible to be read in classrooms.

In 1973 the Supreme Court legalized abortion—the murder of unborn

Efforts to denigrate biblical values have severely eroded the very foundation of a sound, upright society. It should therefore not be surprising that many negative consequences arise as people engage in such destructive conduct as uninhibited sex, pornography, cohabitation and divorce—leading to fatherless homes, violence, drug and alcohol addiction, and many other evils.

An article in *The Christian Post* adds emphasis to this point, stating: “From the prohibition of prayer in school, to prohibitions of public displays of the Ten Commandments and Christian symbols, to lawsuits against Christian photographers for refusing to provide the photography for gay weddings, the war against Christian presence in America becomes increasingly open and aggressive.

“And what has happened over the last half century while this has been going on? The institutions and behavior that provide the glue holding together a faithful, civil, and virtuous society have collapsed. The traditional American family is in shambles. Forty three percent of our babies are now born to unwed mothers compared to 5 percent a half century ago . . .

“It was not by accident that America’s first president George Washington warned the young nation, in his farewell address, that religion and morality are ‘indispensable’ . . . and he cautioned against ‘the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion’” (Star Parker, “The Ongoing War Against Christianity,” April 3, 2015).

Attacks by atheistic, amoral secularists against biblical principles are intentionally designed to disparage righteous, godly morality. Government officials, judges, Supreme Court justices, journalists, teachers and many others allowed themselves to be perniciously influenced by so-called “progressive” voices. Also, most appallingly, many traditional

Keeping God’s commandments has brought many blessings to people over the ages, yet antagonism against divine values has been mounting steadily.

more self-esteem, and greater family and marital happiness” (Patrick Fagan, “Why Religion Matters: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability,” Jan. 25, 1996).

Antagonism toward Christianity continues to grow

Western civilization has benefited from Jesus Christ’s teachings by ending or greatly reducing such horrific practices as human sacrifice, infanticide and slavery. Also, Christian principles have had a positive influence in society regarding the sanctity of marriage, child-rearing and family life.

These teachings also successfully elevated the status of women by condemning sex outside of marriage, marital infidelity, divorce, incest, pornography and prostitution. Furthermore, history is filled with examples of adherents of Christianity who made vital contributions to human progress in health care, literature, government, business, law, philanthropy and the sciences.

While worshipping God and keeping His commandments have brought

babies—nationwide. Later in 1980 the court decided it was a violation of the Constitution to post copies of the Ten Commandments in public schools.

More recently, the Supreme Court in 2015 struck down any laws prohibiting homosexual marriage. And in 2020 it ruled that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 be reinterpreted far beyond its original intent as supposedly including sexual orientation and transgender rights. Issuing these and other appalling decisions to obstruct the teaching of and adherence to righteous moral standards have effectively helped to cancel God and His influence in American society. (See “America’s Christian Founding Under Assault” on page 7.)

Consequences of destructive conduct

The intensifying hostility toward religion—particularly Christian principles—is due not only to radical elements in society but also to weak or intolerant politicians, government bureaucrats, school and university officials, teachers and the mainstream media.



Christian churches—which should have stood up unwaveringly in opposition to such damaging influence—capitulated to it.

Their response to secular pressure was often to *water down* eternal truths and key moral values. By refusing to staunchly oppose moral laxity such as sex before marriage, cohabitation, same-sex “marriage” and transgenderism, many churches simply became a reflection of secular, worldly values.

Rather than *leading* their flocks in rock-solid, biblically grounded morality, ministers and church officials *deserted their responsibility to the sheep*—revealing them to be spineless, false shepherds (John 10:12-13).

This is clearly evident by the number of people who have entirely jettisoned organized religion. A Gallup poll published on March 29, 2021, found that membership in religious organizations in the United States plummeted to just 47 percent—down from 70 percent in 1999.

Also, according to a 2018 Pew Research Center survey, out of those who identify as Christian, few bother to attend church services. In the United Kingdom only 18 percent go to church on a regular basis. In Canada it’s a mere 13 percent. In the United States it’s 19 percent. In Australia it’s 17 percent, and in New Zealand just 15 percent.

Prophetic warnings about perilous times

In light of the ever-increasing erosion of society’s moral foundation, what does the Bible make known about what’s ahead?

In a stunning prophecy about the turbulent and dangerous period shortly before His second coming, Jesus Christ warned that “because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12). The consequences of the relentless secular drumbeat to cancel God and His

commandments include escalating incidents of violence, corruption, dishonesty and crime. The more society rejects God, the more it suffers from the evils of murder, assault, rape, robbery and abduction, as well as brutal, merciless acts of terrorism and war.

The apostle Paul penned this ominous prophecy: “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without

When people “cancel God” by forsaking Him, they cut *themselves* off from the *only source of true values* and are left flailing in blind ignorance and suffering.

self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure *rather than lovers of God*” (2 Timothy 3:1-4, emphasis added throughout).

As people cancel God and His perfect divine guidance from their lives, they are constrained to decide for *themselves* what is right and wrong. But what is the outcome of trying to usurp a role to which the Eternal Creator has exclusive claim?

Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 warn that “there is a way that *seems right* to a man, but *its end is the way of death*.” Also, in Hosea 4:6 God tells us, “My people are *destroyed for lack of knowledge*.” The knowledge rejected includes God’s eternal, spiritual laws expressed in the Ten Commandments and His many other flawless statutes cataloged in the Bible. God established these so all people could experience ideal joy, peace and prosperity.

While human beings have discovered countless scientific laws regulating the physical universe, they refuse to acknowledge that there are spiritual laws governing human interactions with other people and God Himself. These laws, made plain through divine revelation, are summed up



in the great principles of *love toward God* and *love toward one’s neighbors* (Luke 10:27).

When they’re out of step with God’s commandments, people invariably bring harm on themselves and others. This is because God’s laws operate with natural enforcement, bringing rewards or penalties for acting according to or against them respectively, just as does the physical law of gravity.

The devil’s ceaseless, clandestine evil work

The Almighty wants people to be fully confident that He will always carefully guide them *if they willingly* submit to Him. He tells us, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and *lean not on your own understanding*; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Sadly, the vast majority persist in thinking they know better about how to live. This profoundly foolish concept originated long ago—in the Garden of Eden where God created the first human beings, Adam and Eve, and gave them the breath of life (Genesis 2:7; 15-17; 21-22).

But Satan the devil was there in the Garden too. And what did he

do? He canceled God in their eyes—insinuating that the One who instructed them about what was good and evil was actually a liar (Genesis 3:1-5). Although Eve was deceived by the devil, Adam was not. And yet—in clear disobedience to God—he still ate the forbidden fruit along with his wife (verses 6-7).

So the devil's venomous strategy to deceive and damage humanity worked from the beginning. Since then, this utterly corrupt spirit being has striven to convince all people that they should determine *for themselves* what is right and wrong—yet under his malevolent influence and *not* to decide to follow *God's* ways.

Satan works ceaselessly and clandestinely through unwitting human agents to convince people that it's not good enough to simply accept God's word on any subject. This master manipulator has thus brought—and continues to bring—deep darkness and horrendous evil on humanity (Ephesians 2:2; 6:11-12; 1 Peter 5:8).

When people cancel God by forsaking His ways, they cut *themselves* off from Him as the only source of true values. Without the Creator's flawless, revealed knowledge,

they flail about in ignorance—causing themselves and others terrible physical, mental and emotional anguish and suffering.

The prophet Isaiah summarized this sad quandary when he wrote: “Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths” (Isaiah 59:7).

Of course, not everything human beings do is mistaken, misguided or wrong. Where people's efforts are in harmony with God's laws, good outcomes can occur. However, where a combination of truth and error exists or where error prevails and lawlessness rules, human efforts simply cannot produce satisfactory results. Because people cancel God in their lives and make faulty choices, the world is filled with one intractable problem after another. Rejecting the Creator's perfect instructions and wisdom is the precise reason society is in constant turmoil and filled with anxiety.

So then, humanity finds itself in this terrible dilemma. Except for Jesus, all people from the beginning of history

America's Christian Founding Under Assault

In a powerful defense of religious values, former U.S. Attorney General Bill Barr addressed the Notre Dame Law School on Oct. 11, 2019. He expressed how America's Founding Fathers, in establishing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, clearly understood that religious standards are essential in upholding the workings of representative democracy. He also pointed out how secularists are engineering powerful assaults on those striving to uphold moral principles. He stated in part:

“From the Founding Era onward, there was strong consensus about the centrality of religious liberty in the United States . . . In short, in the Framers' view, free government was only suitable and sustainable for a religious people—a people who recognized that there was a transcendent moral order antecedent to both the state and man-made law and who had the discipline to control themselves according to those enduring principles.

“As John Adams put it: ‘. . . Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.’ . . .

“Modern secularists dismiss this idea of morality as other-worldly superstition imposed by a kill-joy clergy. In fact, Judeo-Christian moral standards are the ultimate utilitarian rules for human conduct. They reflect the rules

that are best for man, not in the by and by, but in the here and now. They are like God's instruction manual for the best running of man and human society.

“By the same token, violations of these moral laws have bad, real-world consequences for man and society . . . Religion helps promote moral discipline within society . . . It does not do this primarily by formal laws—that is, through coercion. It does this through moral education and by informing society's informal rules—its customs and traditions which reflect the wisdom and experience of the ages. In other words, religion helps frame moral culture within society that instills and reinforces moral discipline.

“I think we all recognize that over the past 50 years religion has been under increasing attack. On the one hand, we have seen the steady erosion of our traditional Judeo-Christian moral system and a comprehensive effort to drive it from the public square. On the other hand, we see the growing ascendancy of secularism and the doctrine of moral relativism.

“By any honest assessment, the consequences of this moral upheaval have been grim. Virtually every measure of social pathology continues to gain ground. In 1965, the illegitimacy rate was eight percent. In 1992, . . . it was 25 percent. Today it is over 40 percent. In many of our large urban areas, it is around 70 percent.

Along with the wreckage of the family, we are seeing record levels of depression and mental illness, dispirited young people, soaring suicide rates, increasing numbers of angry and alienated young males, an increase in senseless violence, and a deadly drug epidemic . . .

“Suffice it to say that the campaign to destroy the traditional moral order has brought with it immense suffering, wreckage and misery. And yet, the forces of secularism, ignoring these tragic results, press on with even greater militancy . . . But what has replaced the Judeo-Christian moral system? What is it that can fill the spiritual void in the hearts of the individual person? . . . The fact is that no secular creed has emerged capable of performing the role of religion . . .

“One of the ironies, as some have observed, is that the secular project has itself become a religion, pursued with religious fervor. It is taking on all the trappings of a religion, including inquisitions and excommunication. Those who defy the creed risk a figurative burning at the stake—social, educational, and professional ostracism and exclusion waged through lawsuits and savage social media campaigns . . . We must be vigilant to resist efforts by the forces of secularization to drive religious viewpoints from the public square and to impinge upon the free exercise of our faith.”



until now—no matter how good they may act or appear from a human perspective—have participated in lawlessness, meaning they have sinned. As 1 John 3:4 declares, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

But why do people sin? Because they have a corrupted nature opposed to obeying God’s commandments (Romans 8:6-7). It is such an ingrained condition—and one that comes to us so naturally from an early age—that people often see no need to resist its negative pulls. Our human nature is influenced behind the scenes by the devil, resulting in *sin*. And sin is a roadblock to God and the righteousness He intends and desires for us.

The delusional exercise of canceling God

God was fully aware of this human condition when He chose the tribes of Israel and offered the people His Ten Commandments along with His statutes and judgments. He told them that if they looked to Him in reverence and awe and obeyed His perfect laws, they would have a flourishing and bountiful society and be a superb example to all the nations around them (Deuteronomy 4:5-6; 6:17).

Sadly, God’s chosen people didn’t choose to follow Him and His ways. Even though God continually reminded them through His judges and prophets to be obedient for their own good, they turned inexorably to disobedience—thus reaping a terrible harvest of painful consequences (Isaiah 1:2).

And, even when God the Father sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to teach them more fully about salvation and the coming Kingdom of God, they rejected, persecuted, betrayed and murdered Him (Luke 17:25; 23:18; John 5:43; Acts 7:51-54).

Today we live in a God-denying, God-defying world with a great many people canceling Him from their lives—from individuals to governments to society at large. But they are destined to learn that this wholly delusional exercise can only result in suffering and ruin for themselves and their families and communities.

Although God is merciful and has given people freedom to choose, He will ultimately not be denied. All people need to understand that dismissing God and His laws is simply living a lie. Let’s be clear: *God is Supreme. He cannot be canceled.*

What should you do?

Considering all this, what should you and I do? The answer is to turn to God in deep and sincere repentance and to humbly and obediently seek Him.

God promises to then respond with overwhelming favor and mercy: “If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear

from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

This is just one of many promises God expresses in the Bible that have been emphasized repeatedly by His human servants throughout the ages. To be sure, He has always had spokesmen on earth, declaring that honoring Him and keeping His laws are essential to virtuous living. Sometimes it was a solitary individual, such as the patriarch Noah. Today it is the Church of God, which faithfully teaches the truth of the Bible (Matthew 16:18; 1 Timothy 3:15).

A vital part of this truth God’s Church announces is the soon-coming, marvelous period that will dawn for all humanity at Jesus Christ’s second coming. At that time He will have the devil and his demons incarcerated for 1,000 years so they can no longer deceitfully lead humankind into destruction and death. And, most importantly, Jesus will restore righteous government—the Kingdom of God on earth (Revelation 11:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

In that amazing time, humanity will end its long legacy of failed attempts in determining right from wrong. Wonderful peace, joy and prosperity will be the result of true knowledge being carefully taught and applied under Christ’s righteous rule (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-9).

Moreover, God will give His Holy Spirit to all who are willing to repent and obey Him, starting with the people of Israel. “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts” (Hebrews 8:10, quoting Jeremiah 31:33).

The insidious campaign going on right now to cancel God, His commandments and His righteous values from people’s lives will ultimately fail, yet not before it has done enormous damage to the world and people’s lives.

But you don’t need to be part of that. The exhilarating good news is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth and establish His right way of life everywhere, bringing wondrous peace and prosperity to all humanity. At that time, as Habakkuk 2:14 tells us, “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

Therefore, let’s turn to God in deep repentance and obedience while looking forward to that magnificent coming time when “canceling God” will itself be canceled! **BT**



LEARN MORE

These are unprecedented times. What’s at work when governments, societies and huge numbers of people defy and deny God? you need to understand what’s going on! Download or request our free study guide [Are We Living in the Time of the End?](#) to learn more!

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Cancel Culture and the Future of Christianity

A major cultural change is taking place right before our eyes. Christianity—long a traditional and accepted part of society—is increasingly being silenced by governments, courts, businesses and technology. What does this mean? Where is it headed?

by Mike Kelley

In the streets of Jerusalem, the apostles Peter and John experienced great success in preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. Following the spectacular response on the Day of Pentecost, when some 3,000 had been converted, God had opened the minds of hundreds of others to the gospel message. Before long the Church at Jerusalem numbered in the thousands (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:1).

The Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish judicial council, took notice of the apostles' success. Largely composed of Sadducees, a priestly sect who controlled the Jerusalem temple, they viewed the growing power and influence of Jesus Christ's message as a threat. Peter and the other apostles had to be stopped.

An occasion to arrest Peter and John presented itself when they miraculously healed a man who was lame from birth (Acts 3). With the temple guard to provide muscle, the Sanhedrin leaders swept in and seized the two apostles (Acts 4:1-6).

"By what power or what name did you do this?" they demanded of Peter and John (verse 7, New International Version). Peter answered them, "It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed" (verse 10, NIV).

The Sanhedrin could not deny that many had witnessed the healing. This was no fluke. So in what was in essence an early case of attempted cancel culture, the Sanhedrin put a gag order on the apostles, ordering them to cease preaching in the name of Christ. But Peter boldly responded: "*Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard*" (Acts 4:17, NIV 1984, emphasis added throughout). They refused to be canceled!

Today in America we see cancel culture everywhere, but no one is more targeted than religious Americans, especially Christians. Traditional morals, ethics and values are under assault. Those who hold the Judeo-Christian values that were common for the first 200 years of the nation's existence now find themselves mocked, belittled and attacked

if they dare to express or stand up for their views.

As the influence of atheistic, secular humanist culture grows, it strives to obliterate references to God and Christianity in the workplace, on social media, in the classroom, in government and in mainstream media. And when God and Christianity *are* mentioned in these venues, it's often in a hateful, disparaging way.

Traditional values banned as Christian belief declines

Despite being founded on a Judeo-Christian ethic, religious influence in America has steadily waned, as shown by the most recent statistics from the Public Religion Research Institute.

Its survey showed that the proportion of white Americans identifying as evangelicals dropped from 23 percent in 2006 to 14.5 percent in 2020. White Catholics dropped from 16 percent to 11.7 percent. During the same time, the percentage of respondents of all ethnicities *not* affiliated with any religion *increased* from 16 percent to nearly 24 percent.

This has gone hand-in-hand with assaults on traditional values. Anti-God secularists have conducted a decades-long war on Christianity with the goal of expunging it from American life.

Classroom prayer, for example, was common in American public schools for the first nearly two centuries of the nation's history. But in a complete corruption of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1962 that the practice violated the First Amendment—in spite of the amendment's plain wording that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . ."

Free exercise of religion in schools was banned overnight. The following year the Supreme Court banned Bibles from schools. These two rulings have been used to suppress the free exercise of religion in the United States ever since.

Vile practices legalized and normalized

God is the Creator of life. All life is precious to Him,



and that includes the life of unborn children. Yet just 10 years later the court declared that American women had a “constitutional right” to abort the tiny lives growing within them—despite not seeing such a right in the Constitution in the nearly 200 years before. Some *60 million* unborn babies have been murdered in America since then—a number greater than the population of most countries.

If that weren’t bad enough, in 2015 the court struck down all restrictions on homosexual marriage. Then in 2020 it issued a ruling that redefined the meaning of “sex” (in discrimination law) to include sexual orientation and personally chosen gender identity—so that men could now claim to be women and women could claim to be men, with everyone legally obligated to accept such obvious fantasies as true and normal.

As a result, speaking out against abortion or the LGBTQ agenda as being opposed to basic morality and even scientific reality brings a torrent of pushback, with these views excoriated as hate speech and homophobia.

Now gender roles are seen as “culturally defined,” ignoring obvious biological differences. Don’t want to identify as male or female? No problem, says Facebook, which since 2014 has offered 56 ways to self-identify in terms of one’s sex, including *agender* (no gender at all), *transgender* (gender identity opposite from biological gender), *MTF* (transitioning from male to female) and *pangender* (being all genders simultaneously).

Not to be outdone, Apple has introduced a new emoji for its phones—a *pregnant man*. And the rest of us are expected to accept such absurdities as normal and true.

Free speech: an antiquated notion

America has come to the point where only one set of beliefs, one worldview, is allowed by those who control the levers of power, with any divergence from that censured and banned. Whatever happened to free

speech, to the right to express a wide variety of views?

America’s Founding Fathers viewed freedom of speech as a basic right. Our rights, the signers of the Declaration of Independence understood, came not from government but from our Creator.

When many of those same men later came together to frame the U.S. Constitution, they took the additional step of securing people’s rights in a series of amendments to the Constitution known as the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment guaranteed freedom of speech, religion and the press. For more than two centuries these freedoms have allowed Americans to speak out on virtually any issue. Government for the most part protected these rights, even on highly controversial or unpopular positions.

But over the past decade, respect for these rights has quickly eroded. Freedom of expression has given way to a new orthodoxy. What started out as “politically correct” attitudes in the 1990s have now morphed into broad requirement, with heavy societal pressure, to express only what liberal-progressive “thought police” permit. With breathtaking speed, this new “woke” culture has vilified and in some cases even criminalized free speech in America.

Social media a driving force for censorship

Historically, the American media has championed freedom of speech and the press. But evidence is mounting that the media establishment now actually wants to *limit free speech*. Religious and conservative people increasingly find their views censored and canceled.

More than two-thirds of all Americans use social media—Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok and others—to stay connected to friends, family, coworkers and others. But as we have seen these platforms grow in popularity, we have also seen them grow in power. And these platforms

have clearly stepped over the line into censorship and manipulation of political and cultural thought.

They and their corporate leaders especially dislike religious and conservative expression.

Facebook employs a small army of “content monitors,” whose job is to filter out religious or conservative content. Their guidelines on hate speech explicitly condemn speech that might offend anyone based on sexual orientation, gender or gender identity. But those guidelines have been used to cancel speech that expresses religious, traditional or conservative views.

It isn’t hard to understand the bias of these tech giants. They largely reflect the attitudes and practices of the far-left “woke” culture. They apply those biases as the new arbiters of information, controlling what information gets disseminated and what gets canceled.

Their power in this regard is breathtaking. Twitter banned then-President Donald Trump after he raised allegations of voter fraud in the 2020 election.

Twitter, Facebook and Google-owned YouTube have been proven to routinely block and delete conservative or religious content. While their guidelines claim fairness to all groups and prohibit obvious hate speech, religious and conservative groups have reported deletion of their posts, and others have reported their posts as “shadow banned”—deliberately hidden from most public viewing.

Major Internet search engines like Google, Yahoo and Microsoft Bing have been accused of manipulating results to deprioritize and hide conservative and religious content and news unfavorable to liberal causes and politicians—conveniently labeled “misinformation.”

How did it get this bad?

There is growing awareness that the progressive left has for a long time been waging a war on God, Christianity and biblical morality. But why

does it seem that the war has intensified in recent years?

While the leftist cause to bring a secular humanist form of salvation to an evil, unjust world has been ongoing for nearly 200 years, its efforts to drive God out of American life shifted into overdrive relatively recently with the radical “free speech” movement of the 1960s.

Author David Horowitz was himself a student radical during the 1960s who became a conservative in the early 1980s after he became disgusted with the evils of the left. In *Dark Agenda: The War to Destroy Christian America*, Horowitz shows how the left mocks Christians for prayer and belief in God. He shows the depth of hatred Marxists have towards Christianity.

Referring to the millions of Christians murdered in totalitarian regimes in the 20th century, Horowitz writes: “Radicals in America today don’t have the political power to execute people and destroy their houses of worship. Yet they openly declare their desire to obliterate religion. In their own minds, their intentions are noble—they want to save the human race from the social injustice and oppression that religion allegedly inflicts on humanity” (2018, p. 4).

In other words, the left sees those who believe in biblical values as ignorant, superstitious people who need to be reeducated—or eliminated if they can’t be reformed—to *save the world*.

Growing government persecution of Christianity

In recent years Australia, Canada, Great Britain and other Western nations have passed “hate speech” laws that prohibit teaching what the Bible says about homosexuality, transgenderism and false religion. As a result, pastors and others speaking out on morality have been fined and jailed for simply quoting what the Bible says. Similar laws have been pushed in the United States but so far have been blocked—yet that might not always be the case.

During his 2008 campaign for the presidency, Barack Obama openly ridiculed several biblical laws. In an unguarded moment at a San Francisco fundraiser with wealthy donors, he revealed his personal contempt for small-town religious Americans: “They get bitter, they cling to their guns or religion or antipathy to people who are not like them . . . as a way to explain their frustrations.”

When, as president, he managed to get his Obamacare legislation passed, he took aim at religious organizations that opposed the law’s mandates to provide contraceptives and even abortion-inducing drugs. A Catholic order, the Little Sisters of the Poor, opposed these requirements.

Obama vindictively retaliated with all the power of the federal government, forcing the Little Sisters to undertake years of costly legal battles. This went on until in 2016 the Supreme Court ruled, in a rare unanimous vote, in favor of the Little Sisters and their First Amendment rights.

National, state and local governments of major Western countries used the recent Covid pandemic to openly discriminate against and persecute churches. Regulations shut down or tightly restricted what churches were able to do while allowing other businesses, including bars, liquor stores and marijuana shops, to stay open. Some churches successfully sued over such blatant discrimination, only then being allowed to reopen.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military denied 99.9 percent of approximately 16,000 requests for religious exemptions for mandated Covid vaccines and is in the process of expelling thousands of valuable trained personnel.

At the same time, the U.S. Supreme Court repeatedly refused to hear appeals on Covid vaccine mandates from individuals and groups arguing that being forced to take vaccines they saw as potentially harmful, many of which were developed using aborted fetal cells, violated their religious beliefs and convictions. Millions of

Americans were forced to violate their conscience or lose their jobs.

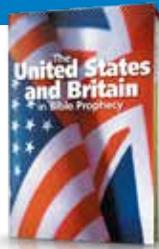
Enduring the dominion of the demonic

What is all of this leading to? Is there an endgame in play in which canceling God from the public arena is a major step? Revelation 13 describes an emerging worldwide governmental system called “the beast” that arises with control over much of humanity. That system will wage war against those who follow God’s Word, while gaining the admiration of most of the world.

The Beast is the term used for both the evil political empire and its tremendously powerful leader operating under the influence of “the dragon,” identified as Satan. “The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority” (verse 2, NIV).

The prophecy also shows the Beast aligning with a false religious system masquerading as Christian. This coalition goes on to “wage war against God’s holy people,” with the world at large submitting to its rule, so that “all inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast” (verses 7-8, NIV).

Already, cancel culture’s war on biblical morality has done much to turn nations toward that darker path. Your Bible indicates this situation will only get worse. Individuals cannot change this, yet there is hope and purpose for each person who commits to resisting Satan’s grip on society and on his or her own life. Stand for God and His ways! **BT**



LEARN MORE

Why are major Western nations like America, Canada, Australia and Great Britain increasingly turning their backs on God? Believe it or not, this trend was foretold thousands of years ago in the Bible! Discover the reasons—and where this is leading—in our free study guide *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.

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Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: A Biblical Perspective

Russia's brutal invasion of neighboring Ukraine has stunned the world and shocked Europe out of its long complacency. Does Bible prophecy shed any light on this?

by Darris McNeely

There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks when decades happen.” This quote is attributed to Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the Soviet Union. It certainly fits the times.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in March has set in motion events that might not have happened for decades to come. Throughout Europe and beyond, governments are nervously reassessing aspects of the global order that have prevailed since the end of the Cold War, and even the end of World War II.

This war is a big event that demands we pay attention with respect to the Word of God and a sobriety regarding the awful human impact.

As this article is being written, Russian troops are largely in a stalemate in Ukraine, meeting stiff resistance from the Ukrainian army and citizen volunteers who have taken up arms. Russian troops are using missiles to indiscriminately bomb cities, seeking to create fear in the civilian population leading to collapse of the nation. Millions of citizens have fled to neighboring countries for safety. Europe's worst humanitarian scenario since 1945 is taking place.

Many wonder whether Bible prophecy tells us anything to help us understand what is occurring. Yes, it does. In this article we will discuss a passage from the book of Daniel

that gives a prophetic perspective on events taking place.

This invasion is a big event, one that demands we pay attention with respect to the Word of God and a sobriety regarding the human impact of this war. The scenes we have watched of missile attacks on hospitals and public buildings sheltering civilians show the vicious ferocity of the Russian invasion. Coming without just cause, it drives home the cold, hard forces at work here. The underlying reality is that there are spiritual forces at work from another dimen-

sion. The war we see here is born in the mind of the devil, the original murderer and liar (John 8:44).

Jesus Christ's overview of end-time events

Near the end of His ministry on earth, Jesus' disciples asked Him, “What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age” (Matthew 24:3). In His response, Jesus listed several major trends or conditions. The first four of these correspond to the first four seals of Revelation 6, the opening of each revealing a rider and horse representing a major trend that builds in intensity in the end time. Together these are often

simply called the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—the latter term being the Greek name of the book.

Let's note how Jesus listed these in Matthew 24, starting with the first: “Take heed that no man deceive you. For *many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many*” (verses 4-5, King James Version, emphasis added throughout unless otherwise noted).

Then continuing: “And you will hear of *wars and rumors of wars*. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For *nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*. And there will be *famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places*. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (verses 3-8).

False religion, war, famine and plagues of pestilence and disasters are listed as the beginning of sorrows or, as other versions translate, “birth pains”— which increase in frequency and intensity.

All these problems have been a part of the world condition throughout human history. However, the setting of the end of the age and the opening of the seals by the Lamb (Revelation 5:9) indicate *increased severity* preceding even greater judgments of God and the wrath of the devil during the time of global turmoil known as the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21).

Two years ago we saw a forerunner of disease pandemic when the world



20 percent of the world grain crops and account for about 30 percent of world wheat exports. Poorer developing nations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East depend on this for much of their food supply. Nations like Kenya and Egypt import vital grain from this region.

But Ukrainians will not be planting much, if anything, this year as they fight for their very survival. Sanctions on Russia will hinder what they will be able to ship. The food supply chain will be further disrupted, and people will suffer and starve. Further exacerbating the problem is that fact that

Ukraine will not plant crops this spring or summer. The world has lost one of its largest and most reliable sources of wheat, sunflower, safflower and barley.

“Nor will Ukraine return to the ranks of major food suppliers any-time soon. Russia’s wave of deliberate destruction will soon reach the port city of Odessa. Not only is Odessa Ukraine’s commercial capital, not only will its fall signal an end to Ukraine’s maritime frontage, Odessa is also *the* export point for nearly *all* of Ukraine’s agricultural bounty. Until it is freed from Russian control and

south [in relation to Jerusalem] push at him [a future king of the north]: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon” (verses 40-41).

This key prophecy details the invasion of the Middle East by a power called the king of the North. History and prophecy identify this power as a successor to the Syrian Greeks and Romans—an end-time Roman revival centered in

Europe. The king of the South is a power based in the Middle East and North Africa and likely applies to a confederation of Arab/Muslim states that make a “push” (attack) at this northern power, provoking a retaliation. This European power from the north then sweeps into the “glorious land,” the Holy Land of Israel and Jerusalem. Likely there will be a religious connection to this act, as indicated by other prophecies.

This scenario follows a long pattern in history dating back to the rise of Islam and its penetration into the regions formerly part of the Roman Empire—Israel, Egypt, North Africa, Spain and Gaul (France), where they were stopped at the Battle of Tours in A.D. 732 by the armies of Charles Martel, grandfather of Charlemagne. Later in the 12th century Christian Europe launched the Crusades by sending armies to recapture Jerusalem from Muslim control. Twice in the Middle Ages through the Renaissance, Muslim armies tried again to take Europe but were stopped at Vienna by armies of the Holy Roman Empire. Daniel’s prophecy shows yet another clash between these two powers at the time of the end.

With Russia’s invasion into Ukraine, we can now see Europe stirring and rising out of a slumber, like a beast awakening. *Europe has had a jarring wake-up call.*

Russia and Ukraine are also among the world’s largest fertilizer exporters, and those supplies will shrivel for the same reasons. Fertilizer costs are already skyrocketing around the globe, which will lead to higher costs and lower crop yields.

Geopolitical strategist Peter Zeihan wrote this in his column of March 7, 2022: “Russia is the world’s largest exporter of wheat, and it has invaded Ukraine, the world’s fifth-largest exporter. Russia’s war strategy uses techniques pioneered in the flattening of Grozny in the Second Chechen War, that were then honed during the destruction of Aleppo in the Syrian Civil War. Russia’s artillery is now obliterating Ukraine’s civilian infrastructure one city at a time.

“We are being treated to a feast of visual violence in the ongoing destruction of Ukrainian cities we have recently become familiar with: Kyiv, Kharkiv, Mariupol. But lost in the noise of the burning of Ukraine’s large population centers is Russia’s far more methodical, downright Hitlerite, annihilation of Ukraine’s towns and villages. The towns and villages that are the bone and sinew supporting the Ukrainian agricultural sector.

rebuilt, large-scale Ukrainian exports will remain beyond reach” (“The Ukraine War: Agriculture Edition,” Zeihan.com, emphasis in original).

Again, this is a forerunner of what we see in Christ’s prophecy and Revelation’s scenario. War leads to disruption, which leads to food shortages, which leads to famine, which leads to disease epidemics—which then leads to more of all these things.

It should give us all pause to consider what the Bible tells us will happen in the years ahead. Prophecy is as real as anything in today’s headlines—in fact more real, as there are so many lies being told by media and governments. The more we understand about prophecy, the better equipped we are to deal with upset and turmoil. God gives us advance warning of what will take place in the world so that we may repent and embrace the gospel of His coming Kingdom of peace and salvation.

So what’s next?

Daniel 11 contains the longest, most detailed prophecy in the Bible. Beginning at verse 40 it specifically describes end-time events: “And at the time of the end shall the king of the

Many have long wondered how this could occur. For decades Europe has lacked the military capability and the will to do something like this. How could this geopolitical reality change to allow such things to happen? With Russia's attack on Ukraine, a sovereign nation next door to the European Union, we can now see Europe stirring and rising out of slumber, like a beast awakening. *Europe has had a jarring wakeup call.*

Russia apparently plays a part in Daniel's prophecy. Verse 44 says, regarding the king of the North, who will then be in the Middle East, that "news from the east and north shall trouble him." That could mean the two directions of east and north or the combined direction of northeast, for which there was no specific word in the Hebrew language in which Daniel wrote. Either way, Russia is north of Israel and the surrounding region as well as northeast, stretching all across Asia.

The king of the North's invasion of the Holy Land has ripple effects in other parts of the world. The Muslim nations surrounding Jerusalem near and far will likely consider this another "Crusade" against Islam and will react. Muslim tradition still sees conflict with Europe and the West as part of the ages-long jihad, or struggle, for supremacy.

Beyond these Muslim nations to the north there is only one major power and that is Russia. The prophecy does not limit the likelihood that China could be involved in this action, particularly if "east" is meant separately—and Revelation shows multiple kings from the East moving against Europe's Mideast occupation.

These other prophecies in Revelation describe two major troop advances from the east involving the Euphrates River, the eastern boundary of the ancient Roman Empire. Armies will advance on the Holy Land in preparation for what is described as the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation

16:14). For more details on these important prophecies, download or request our free study guide *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*.

Why does this matter?

For most of us Ukraine may seem far away and mostly irrelevant. Are other nations rushing to spill the blood of their soldiers in Ukraine? After last year's disastrous abandonment of Afghanistan, most analysts believe that America would not send troops, and it seems likely that other European nations would not either.

Beyond the terrible human toll and economic fallout in other nations, why does this international crisis matter? Why should a student of the Bible be concerned with an event such as this?

The general thought among many is that this has nothing to do with the Bible and one's spiritual life. But that would be wrong. As we have shown, what is happening now in Ukraine is changing the face of Europe. And it could further alter the rapidly evolving world we know into something radically different, with consequences that could affect many countries and millions of people.

When the Cold War ended with the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, the world entered what some have called "a holiday from history." The following year political scientist and economist Francis Fukuyama wrote a book called *The End of History and the Last Man*. It was thought major world conflicts would finally end and a period of benign global order would emerge.

That dream was shattered on 9/11. Today, two years after the unleashing of Covid-19 as a global pandemic, China seeks to replace America as the global leader in every major category. America is going through internal upheaval that threatens its historic role among nations. In a matter of weeks we are watching a new Europe awaken from decades of slumber. The world will be shocked at the final

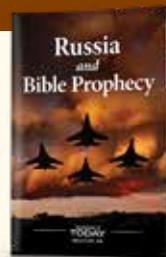
picture that emerges. It may not be immediate, but it *is* coming.

The corollary to "a holiday from history" is "a holiday from prophecy." You may not think you have any real need to understand Bible prophecy and its relevance to today's world scene. But nothing could be more wrong. You cannot take "a holiday from prophecy" and be a serious student of the Bible.

World events do not go on holiday, nor does God. Bible prophecy is the only tool to properly understand what is happening in our current geopolitical, cultural and religious scene. With a sound foundation of prophetic understanding, you can have a calm confidence and assurance that God controls history and major world events.

When properly understood, Bible prophecy should motivate us to a serious understanding of life and to godly conduct (2 Peter 3:11). We are living at a serious moment in modern history. The weeks are rushing by. Events of the past two years have drastically changed the world, and in our lifetime it will be further and devastatingly upended. You need to be prepared!

Let these events serve as a wake-up call for you personally, as the apostle Paul wrote to fellow believers in Romans 13:11: "And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed." **BT**



LEARN MORE

You can gain a better understanding of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and what the Bible says about end-time events. Download or request our free study guide

Russia and Bible Prophecy for more detail on this vital topic. A free copy is waiting for you!

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The Human Side of the Ukraine Tragedy



Ukraine's current tragedy is one more sad chapter in a long history of invasion and oppression.

by Victor Kubik

More than 5 million Ukrainians—mostly women, children and the elderly—have been displaced from their homes in Russia's barbaric invasion of Ukraine. Russian forces have even attacked defenseless civilian areas, striking apartment buildings, schools and hospitals.

Outsiders considering joining the fight against the aggressors face Putin's threats to use nuclear weapons, which would escalate the crisis to World War III and bring apocalypse to our doorstep. Already, advanced hypersonic missiles have been fired, and fears grow about the use of chemical weapons. So we all watch helplessly in disbelief as carnage not seen for generations—since Stalin and Hitler's time—continues. We can only hope it somehow abates.

Masses of refugees have been taken in by neighboring Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary, as well as points further west. Men in Ukraine under age 60 are not allowed to leave, but are expected to defend their country. The United Kingdom, Canada and others have initiated programs to shelter the growing number of exiles.

My beginnings with Ukrainian refugees

I am an American of Ukrainian origin and speak the language fluently. My parents and I were part of a refugee wave of millions of people in post-World War II Europe. Providentially, my parents ended up in a United Nations refugee camp in Germany where I was born. They



bided their time there for four years before being permanently resettled in the United States.

Now, more than 70 years later, I'm involved in a new Ukrainian refugee crisis, providing relief to people who've left Ukraine and also to those remaining.

Growing up I was tutored in Ukrainian language, history, religion and culture, and I've absorbed the pathos of its people. Over the years I saw an oppressed Ukraine languishing under the boot of godless and domineering Soviet communism.

And I also saw when, to the astonishment of the Ukrainian diaspora around the world and everyone else, Ukraine suddenly became a free nation in 1991. The bloodless revolution opened a renaissance to 30 years of freedom and interaction with these people. But that door of opportunity may be closing.

You don't really know Ukrainians until you understand the pathos of a people traumatized in a long 1,000-year history of subjugation at the hands of the Moskali, or Russians, as well as Mongols, Turks, Poles and Hungarians.

Many are interested in what's happening "over there in Ukraine" in light of geopolitics, economics and prophecy. My Ukrainian roots have been awakened by the humanitarian crisis. Millions of people are suffering, their lives upended or, in some cases, suddenly and tragically ended.

Over decades I have traveled to Ukraine many times—as a translator, photojournalist, minister and humanitarian. I have worked with government leaders, foundations, media, youth, churches, and medical and educational institutions throughout the country. Through a non-profit that I founded 22 years ago, we have



share parts of a letter from Dr. Vasyl Pasichnyk, who founded and manages the center, to give you an idea of what it's like on the ground in the invasion:

“Dear friends Victor and Beverly!

“We are writing this letter as explosions are heard all the time outside the window (at a distance of about 1–2 kilometers from us).

“From the first day of this disgraceful invasion of Ukraine, our beautiful city of Chernihiv has suffered from ballistic missile attacks, cruise missiles and the hail of airstrikes.

“On the first day, administrative buildings and military facilities were completely destroyed or damaged. Enemies approached the city but met with formidable resistance from our defenders, so the invaders were determined to change tactics. On the second day, in the city began massive airstrikes on peaceful objects—homes, schools, daycare centers. All this cannot be considered accidental, because there are no military facilities nearby. Our city is on fire with lots of smoke.

“Since yesterday, residential areas—high-rise buildings and private houses—have been shelled with severe brutality. Many civilians were killed but some were rescued. The house of our pediatrician/head of the department was destroyed. Fortunately, she and her two daughters and four grandchildren survived in a shelter.

“We do not understand how such cruelty and lawlessness can take place in the modern civilized world! The hypocrisy, lies and cynicism of Putin and his entourage know no bounds!

“There are 36 employees who work in the Center. One died in an explosion. We provide assistance to 50 children (mostly with psychoneurological disorders) and their mothers. As of yesterday, we have

taken in babies with their mothers. Many residential buildings in the city lack electricity, gas and heat.

“People are stressed, but they work to help children and support each other. We remember your help. Thank you and the Lord God for everything.

“We believe that God will give us the opportunity to live on this earth and meet you in a peaceful and rebuilt Chernihiv!

“With love,
Vasyl and Natalya”

You can see ongoing reports about relief work in Ukraine at lifenets.org.

This is a time for us to sigh and cry, as Ezekiel wrote in a sobering warning about the evils we see in the world and culture around us (Ezekiel 9:4).

Jesus Himself wept concerning the horrible fate that would befall Jerusalem and His countrymen because of their rebellion against God: “And when he drew near and saw the city [Jerusalem], he wept over it, saying, ‘Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you, and your children within you’” (Luke 19:41-44, English Standard Version).

We live in dangerous and sobering times. Let us pray for the people of Ukraine. Let us pray earnestly for the Kingdom of God to come! 

aided child victims of Chernobyl and have helped establish a children's rehabilitation center 30 miles east of the ill-fated nuclear power station. The accident here in 1986 and its aftereffects have etched a deep scar into the psyche of this nation that has been oppressed and exploited by the Russians for centuries.

In the present crisis, we have been providing relief in a few places inside Ukraine. I have helped with the resettlement of my family members from heavily bombed areas such as Kharkiv to “safer” areas in western Ukraine.

A tragic on-the-scene report

Another area where we have dear friends is Chernihiv, about 100 miles north of Kyiv and close to the Russian border. This city is where we've worked and helped establish the Revival Center of Rehabilitation for Disabled Children. I would like to

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Why do we see bad news everywhere we look? Why is the world filled with increasing violence, crime and corruption? Where can we look for hope? Download or request our free study guide *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* to discover the answers!

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Prepare for coming food shortages, price inflation

Geopolitical analyst Peter Zeihan recently wrote about possible ominous outcomes from the war in Ukraine beyond the current suffering. He warns of impacts on global food supplies, titling his piece “The Return of the Third Horseman”—in reference to the Four Horsemen of Revelation, the third signifying food shortages and famine. Zeihan notes, “Whatever you think will happen, the reality is almost certainly worse.”

He notes that poor harvests and low exports from Russia back in 2010 sent food prices skyrocketing in the Middle East, leading to the protests and revolutions we know as the Arab Spring and Syrian Civil War, which allowed Islamic fundamentalists to gain control. Yet, as he further says, this time it’s far worse.

He goes on to detail a fertilizer supply crisis. This will devastate Third World nations and bring years-long shortages even to the affluent Western nations.

Giving further context to all this, a list of 20 alarming facts concerning an emerging global food shortage compiled by analyst Michael Snyder was posted to the web in early April. We summarize these here.

1) France’s foreign affairs minister said the European Union must come to grips with the prospect that the war in Ukraine could prompt an “extremely serious” global food crisis.

2) Joe Biden admitted that food shortages are going to be real, with his administration using the word *famine* for what’s coming.

3) Reuters and others report that German supermarket prices will soon increase by 20

to 50 percent.

4) Spain has already started rationing, with sporadic shortages of different products like eggs, milk and sunflower oil.

5) Greece too has begun rationing products like flour and sunflower oil.

6) The head of the giant investment management company BlackRock said that this “very entitled generation that has never had to sacrifice” is “for the first time . . . going to go into a store and not be able to get what they want.”

7) Since the previous year, some fertilizer prices have gone up as much as 300 percent.

8) Many farmers in Africa won’t be able to afford fertilizer this year, reducing grain production by an amount that would feed 100 million people.

9) Russia’s role as one of the biggest exporters of fertilizer is impeded, leading to shortages and higher prices.

10) Russia and Ukraine’s exporting of wheat, typically 30 percent of global wheat exports, is being hindered.

11) Africa will not be receiving the half of its wheat imports that usually come from Russia or Ukraine.

12) Other nations of Central Asia and the Middle East, even more reliant than Africa on wheat from Russia and Ukraine, will also not receive the normal larger part of their wheat from these places.

13) Russian security official and former president Dmitry Medvedev has threatened that Russia will limit its food exports to only those nations deemed friendly, cutting off the West.

14) Another 5 million egg-laying chickens in Iowa had to be put down because of bird flu.

15) This pushes Iowa’s chicken deaths in the face of bird flu to more than 13 million.

16) Overall the national death toll of poultry from the bird flu stands at 22 million egg-laying chickens, and several more million broiler chickens, young hens and other commercial chickens, and turkeys.

17) China’s agricultural minister announced that China’s winter wheat harvest could be the worst in history.

18) We’ve been warned that the U.S. winter wheat harvest will be disastrous because of severe drought.

19) A prominent U.S. farmer stated in an interview that most Americans won’t like it when their grocery bill is up \$1,000 a month.

20) The UN World Food program says that what we’re facing now is unlike anything seen since World War II.

And, again, this could be just the beginning. Unrest will grow, and worse events will transpire. Even if the current problem were somehow dealt with, the world will see increasing war and famine. The images coming out of the war in Ukraine are awful and heartbreaking. Such warfare is pictured in the ride of the second horseman of Revelation. “But,” as Zeihan concludes, “it is the return of the Third that gives me nightmares.”

We are on the cusp of dire troubles, and it’s time to start preparing—both physically and, more importantly, spiritually. Download or request our free study guide *The Horsemen of Revelation* to learn more.

Florida seeks to stop kids’ LGBTQ indoctrination in schools

A preschool corporation with branches in 40 states and an extensive LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning) curriculum offers this activity for celebrating Pride Month: “Switch the caps on a set of markers so they don’t match the colors inside. Talk with children about whether the color of the marker cap should match the color of the marker itself. Does it matter to children if what they wear on the outside represents how they feel on the inside?”

This is followed by discussion of terms such as “queer,” “gender fluid” and “non-binary” along with a redefinition of family. Many recognize this as social engineering and even grooming of children to accept alternative sexuality and become activists for it.

This corporation has 50 centers in Florida, but the curriculum it

advances becomes illegal under what some call Florida’s “Don’t Say Gay” bill recently signed into law, claiming it’s homophobic and repressive. In fact this legislation has no language in it telling people to not say “gay.” What it actually does is to forbid institutional teaching of kindergarten through third graders about such concepts as sexual orientation and gender identity. It’s more accurate to call it *parental rights* or *anti-grooming* legislation.

When pollsters with Public Opinion Strategies presented the actual language to voters, it had overwhelming support. And some other states may follow. Yet as always, we see loud media voices decrying such protection of children. It’s sad and shameful, but not unexpected in this increasingly immoral world.

Transgender-promoting agenda gets some pushback

In March 2020, the gold medal in the NCAA women's 500-yard freestyle swimming race went to a transgender athlete, who before adopting a female identity competed for three years on the University of Pennsylvania men's team. This clearly wasn't fair. Hormone blockers do not erase the size, muscle and strength advantages of being a biological male athlete. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a proclamation declaring Emma Weyant, who took silver in the race, to be the actual winner, noting, "We need to stop allowing organizations like the NCAA to perpetuate frauds on the public. And that's exactly what they're doing. They are putting ideology ahead of opportunity for women athletes."

Sadly the Biden administration has introduced new rules to mandate the allowance and furtherance of such fraud throughout America based on Title IX, a 1972 law banning sex discrimination in education—which was never intended to allow what it's now being used for. How long will it be before women's sports are completely dominated by biological males claiming to be female? This will destroy women's sports.

In Texas, Gov. Greg Abbott issued a directive in February ordering the state child welfare agency to investigate reports of gender-transitioning coaching and procedures on minors as child abuse. A chorus of celebrities erupted in howling protest at the supposedly inhumane and ghoulish position of the Texas government.

It calls to mind a biblical warning: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness" (Isaiah 5:20). Yet that is increasingly the way of the world around us.

On March 31, the "International Transgender Day of Visibility," the Biden administration marked the occasion as one to celebrate and released a series of documents encouraging gender reassignment surgery and hormone treatments for minors. Psychiatrist Carole Lieberman called this "child abuse, pure and simple."

The president in his speech and proclamation

said: "We recognize the resilience, strength, and joy of transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people. We celebrate the activism and determination that have fueled the fight for transgender equality." He spoke further of celebrating those affirming the identities of transgender children, declaring them all so brave and that he has their back.

Shockingly, he even invoked God in this, declaring them "made in the image of God and deserving of dignity, respect, and support." The implication is that God made them transgender or approves of their choice in that—when the Bible is clear that when God created people in His own image, "male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). Promoting transgenderism is rebellion against God's created order, and invoking Him in this cause is blasphemy.

Last year, the president elevated Pennsylvania's transgender Secretary of Health, a pediatrician identifying as a woman, to federal appointment as Assistant Health Secretary for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and then a four-star admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps—as if there is anything healthy about transgenderism!

A number of conservative and Christian commentators have been censored or banned from Twitter and other social media for hate and misinformation for simply declaring the reality that this person is actually a man. *USA Today* named this person one of 12 "women of the year!"

The president's recent nominee for U.S. Supreme Court justice, who met his stated discriminatory criteria of being a woman of color, was asked in her Senate hearing if she could define what a woman is. She ridiculously answered that she could not as she was not a biologist. This from a nominee to the nation's highest court!

Former Democratic U.S. House Rep. Tulsi Gabbard remarked, "The hypocrisy and absurdity of this is that she was nominated by President Biden in large part because she is a woman."

Others have pointed out that the political left

actually doesn't care what a biologist would say anyway. Transgender identity is not about biological reality but about societal restructuring, destruction of natural roles and personal feelings.

Even some liberals acknowledge things have gone too far. Kara Dansky, a Democrat who's president of the Women's Human Rights Campaign, said in an interview in December 2021: "We're seeing the total invasion of women's spaces—prisons, bathrooms, locker rooms, changing rooms and sports—by men on the basis of their so-called female gender identity... Words like 'gender identity' don't have any meaning... They're defined variously, inconsistently and vaguely in ways that don't make any sense. Every single human being is either a male person or a female person. Everything else is a lie."

North Carolina's Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson boldly declared before a church to supportive cheering: "There's something else I'm not supposed to say: Ain't but two genders... Ain't nothing but men and women... Get every word of this here... You can go to the doctor and get cut up. You can go down to the dress shop and get made up. You can go down there and get drugged up. But at the end of the day, you're just a drugged up, dressed up, made up, cut up man or woman. You ain't changed what God put in you, that DNA. You can't transcend God's creation. I don't care how hard you try... If there's a movement in this country that is demonic and that is full of the spirit of antichrist it is the transgender movement... It's time for grownups and it's time for Christians to start standing up and being unafraid to tell the truth... They're dragging our kids down into the pit of hell."

We can and should have compassion on those suffering from the mental illness of gender confusion. But we must not be cowed into accepting lies as reality. The real problem is not this small sliver of the population but the vast numbers of "woke" advocates promoting these evils—including far too many government leaders.

How can you make sense of the news?

So much is happening in the world, and so quickly. Where are today's dramatic and dangerous trends taking us? What does Bible prophecy reveal about our future? You're probably very concerned with the direction the world is heading. So are we. That's one reason we produce the *Beyond Today* daily TV commentaries—to help you understand the news in the light of Bible prophecy. These eye-opening presentations offer you a perspective so badly needed in our confused world—the **perspective of God's Word**. Visit us at ucg.org/beyond-today/daily!





Growing State Tyranny: Foretaste of the End Time?

Recent tyrannical government edicts have trampled the rights and consciences of millions of people. What's driving this? Does it have any implications for prophesied end-time events?

by Michael Kelley

Our Sept.-Oct. 2021 issue cover story, “The Great Reset: Where Will It Lead?” revealed plans currently underway to “reset” the world’s political structure by replacing mankind’s centuries-old system of nation-states with effectively one-world governance by a cabal of the world’s elites. This new system would direct many aspects of daily life for virtually all people on earth.

The foundations for such change are already being laid today through increasing government tyranny over people’s lives. Recent events have paved the way for such a Great Reset, with national governments exerting greater and greater control over the lives of hundreds of millions of people. Especially sobering is the fact that these dictatorial policies were put into place not in Third-World dictatorships, but in advanced liberal Western democracies.

As we pointed out, planning for the Great Reset has been well documented, and many are working to carry out those plans. More importantly, an evil political system along

such lines is prophesied in your Bible to emerge in the end time. Jesus Christ revealed to the apostle John a glimpse of what this system would look like. Revelation 13 and 17 speak of a despotic world leader described as “the Beast” being empowered by a union of 10 other leaders. This leader will, for a short time, exert

Recent events have paved the way for national governments to exert greater and greater control over the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

tremendous control and power over the world.

Covid: excuse for vast state control

The Covid-19 pandemic gave those who advocate more government power just the leverage they needed. In nation after nation and state after state, individual liberties—the bedrock of modern democratic systems—were sacrificed as governments seized unprecedented powers to control daily life in the name of combating the disease.

In the United States, the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) issued directives under which most state governments locked down hundreds of thousands of private businesses while allowing large national retailers to remain open. They dictated which businesses were considered “essential” and which

were not. Since the vast majority of small, private businesses fell into the second group, many thousands of these have gone bankrupt since March 2020.

Restaurants and entertainment venues were shuttered. Businesses were shut down, schools forced to close. And at a time when millions looked to God for strength and guidance, churches of all denominations found themselves closed down by the state. At the same time such “essential” businesses as liquor stores, tobacco and marijuana shops

were allowed to stay open!

Vaccination products were developed in record time, in an effort comparable to America's rapid industrial militarization in World War II. By early 2022, a majority of Americans had either voluntarily received these or had contracted Covid-19 and recovered, providing a large measure of "herd immunity." Despite this, national and state governments seized on Covid's continuance to require vaccination shots of these products, in spite of growing evidence of their ineffectiveness or even harmful side effects.

Major corporations, following government dictates and wanting to be seen as reflecting current "accepted" values, enforced vaccination mandates on their employees. Those who refused lost their jobs or were subjected to harassment and discrimination. Michael Rectenwald, chief academic officer at American Scholars and author of the book *Beyond Woke*, has pointed out how major progressive corporations like Google, Apple and Facebook (now Meta Corporation) led corporate efforts to enforce vaccination mandates while squelching any opposing views.

Meanwhile, large retailers such as Amazon and Walmart profited astronomically, even as small businesses deemed "non-essential" shriveled and died. Amazon's profits more than doubled in 2021 as millions, shut in and banned from visiting local businesses, had little choice but to use its online shopping business model. Amazon's first quarter 2021 revenues jumped 44 percent from the previous year, its first quarter profits skyrocketing to more than \$108 billion. Company founder and chairman Jeff Bezos soon became one of the world's three wealthiest men.

As some have noted, these huge retailers and high-tech businesses spend millions on political donations—something their much smaller competitors cannot afford. Now thousands of those smaller competi-

tors simply no longer exist.

Around the world, many governments imposed mandatory mask and vaccination mandates. Those who refuse to conform have faced restricted travel and denial of service at restaurants and stores. It seems the popular cry "my body, my choice" does not apply when government bureaucrats direct otherwise.

Trampling of personal rights

European restrictions were especially severe. Austria passed legislation requiring unvaccinated citizens to pay fines equivalent to thousands of dollars and face losing their jobs and livelihoods. Germany's Federal Ministry of Interior and Community instituted some of the world's strictest entry policies, requiring proof of negative Covid test results and severe quarantine rules. Many European nations put in place vaccine passports. Those without the passport were denied airline travel and could not stay in hotels and other lodging.

Asian and Pacific governments joined the frenzy. Australia, long considered a bastion of personal freedom, shocked the world with its policies, establishing "quarantine facilities" around the country. Initially these were intended for unvaccinated travelers, but when we consider that the unvaccinated are effectively deemed "unclean" and "non-compliant," it's easy to see how such facilities could be misused beyond that time.

New Zealand's government edicts were unexpectedly harsh. Those refusing to follow onerous orders have faced stiff fines amounting to thousands of dollars. In some sectors workers who continued to work while unvaccinated could be fined. Businesses failing to enforce vaccine passes could be fined up to \$15,000.

Those who didn't pay their Covid-violation fines faced other penalties, such as arrest, having their driver's license suspended, having their property seized and being denied passports for overseas travel. Fines

not paid would be reported to credit agencies, affecting people's ability to get loans or credit cards.

Government control can get pretty Orwellian, especially with the use of modern technology. Australia, for example, used citizens' personal cell phones to track their movements—presumably to verify their compliance with government travel restrictions.

In a story from April 5, 2020, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a major Australian cell-service provider voluntarily turned over to the federal and New South Wales governments the aggregated data of millions of Australians "to monitor whether people are following social distancing restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic." When a reporter questioned this invasion of privacy, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison replied, "What I want to be clear about is the policies and measures that we will put in place for Australia will be right for Australia."

The message here and elsewhere is clear: *We, the government, know what is best for you.* There's no acknowledgment at all of the gross invasion of personal freedom and privacy.

Such technology could be used to enforce any number of government edicts by, for example, preventing a person from holding a job, traveling, making purchases or otherwise carrying out normal economic activity needed for everyday life.

This stokes fears of the rise of "the mark of the Beast" foretold in the book of Revelation: "He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads: that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:16-17). While evidently figurative of acting and deciding in submission to the evil system's dictates in opposition to God, there could well be some kind of technological enforcement



to control the populace in this way.

Canadians vent their frustrations

In Canada, where the trend toward more government control has progressed faster than in the United States, many thousands of freedom-loving Canadian citizens have said—and shown—that they have had enough.

In a dramatic February protest that garnered worldwide attention, hundreds of Canadian truckers formed the “Freedom Convoy” to protest the government’s new requirement that all cross-border truck drivers reentering Canada from the United States be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 or face a 14-day quarantine. Huge 18-wheelers from most of the provinces converged on Ottawa, the national capital, in protest against the Canadian government’s strict vaccination mandates, leading to disruption and effective shutdown in Ottawa.

In response, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invoked Canada’s never-used Emergency Powers Act, giving the government draconian powers intended only for wartime or other severe national emergencies. In clear violation of the intent of the legislation, Trudeau had protestors arrested and ordered banks to freeze financial assets of those taking part in the otherwise peaceful protests.

Outraged by the treatment of the truckers, early March saw thousands of Canadians take part in the Freedom Chain, in which tens of thousands of ordinary citizens attempted to form a chain of vehicles spanning from British Columbia to Labrador, a distance of nearly 4,000 miles. Other thousands attended local gatherings organized in different cities across the country, calling for an end to what they see as vaccine tyranny.

Participants cited a variety of personal reasons for joining the mass protest. “It’s not even about a vaccine at this point. To me, it’s simply about control, and it seems to me that they don’t want to let that control go,” one individual said. Another added: “I care about freedom for all Canadians. In British Columbia [the government] has not lifted the mandates for anyone in this province yet, and as an unvaccinated person, it’s really hard for me to find work, to feed my family, and live my life.”

U.S. Congressman John Kennedy of Louisiana poignantly summed up the frustration of the truckers and millions of other ordinary Canadians and Americans: “What we’re seeing in Canada is the tyranny of the managerial elite over the working-class majority. This is not really about the vaccine, since most of them are vaccinated already.

“What I hear them saying is ‘We’ve had two years of Covid restrictions. Our lives have been turned upside down, our livelihoods are being restricted, our kids have lost months, maybe years of their educations. You say, “Follow the science,” and we see the omicron variant waning. Most of us now have either natural or vaccinated immunity. So what is your road map for getting govern-

ment off our backs and letting us get back to normal?’”

Mainstream media—mouthpiece of the elites

The steady encroachment of stifling government rules and restrictions could not take place without a compliant and complicit mass media. A free press that used to aggressively question government mandates has largely become compliant to those mandates.

In the Western world, mass media have to a great extent become willing accomplices of despotic governments. Mainstream newspaper and electronic media staff, many of them liberally educated young workers, believe that government bureaucrats know what’s best for people and that it’s their duty to serve as spokesmen for those in control.

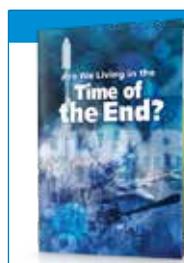
And, as previously mentioned, the social media giants also play their role. By “canceling” those who dare to defy the official line on Covid, mask and vaccine mandates, and other government edicts, Facebook, Google and Twitter not only promote the official line, but demonize and silence those who dare to express other views.

Europe—ground zero for government control

As noted above, the nations of the European Union seem to be the worldwide focal point of this movement toward greater governmental control. The EU was at the forefront of Covid restrictions, and continues to maintain some of the most stringent restrictions in spite of evidence that the disease is now largely a non-factor throughout much of the world.

This magazine has for many years foretold that European nations will ultimately coalesce into a political, military and economic superpower under a powerful leader. Your Bible, which reveals the broad outline of history for those willing to study it with an open mind, reveals this awesome development in the books of Daniel and Revelation. This end-time government, which will include leaders of a number of nations or groups of nations, will wield great control over the lives of its citizens. A major part of this control will be over the ability to hold jobs, own property and conduct everyday business such as buying food or fuel.

We appear to be experiencing a foretaste of that in governments increasingly restricting their people with ever more stringent regulations along with growth in technological surveillance. Far worse restrictions and controls are yet to come! **BT**



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It’s vital that you understand what’s happening in today’s world and why. Bible prophecy foretells a coming time of global turmoil. To learn more, download or request our informative study guide *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* A free copy is yours for the asking!

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A Return to 1970s Stagflation?

Remember the 1970s' high unemployment, empty store shelves, lines at gas stations and skyrocketing inflation? History may be set to repeat!

by Michael Kelley

Many are old enough to remember the turbulent economics times of the mid-1970s. The U.S. economy, strong through the early 70s, bounded along with high growth and low inflation—the nirvana that all economists long for. Times were good, at least from an economic standpoint.

That began to change rapidly in the fall of 1973. That October, Arab nations attacked Israel on its most solemn holy day, Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), when Israeli armed forces would be at rest, setting off months of war. In retaliation for U.S. and European support for Israel, the Arab-controlled Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) embargoed oil sales to the United States and many European nations. Oil prices skyrocketed, nearly tripling almost overnight. Home heating oil and other oil-based products likewise greatly increased.

In 1973 and 1974 poor wheat and corn harvests caused a sharp rise in the price of those commodities. Given the twin “supply shocks” of high oil and commodity prices, Americans soon found themselves paying much more for gasoline and diesel fuel as well as food prices, the latter made even worse by rising transportation costs.

The money supply also was growing rapidly. America's central bank, the Federal Reserve, had added more than \$90 billion to the U.S. money supply between 1970 and 1975, the dollar being completely disconnected from gold in August 1971. In just one year, from December 1971 to December 1972, the nation's basic measure of the money supply increased from \$228 billion to \$249 billion. That trend accelerated in 1975. In one of its most expansionary weeks, July 31 to Aug. 6, 1975, the “Fed” grew the

money supply by \$1.9 billion.

By 1975, America faced the twin threats of an expanded money supply leading to devalued dollars along with supply shocks in food and fuel prices reducing the dollar's buying power even further. As people were forced to pay more for these necessities, they had less money to spend on other things. Consumer demand, which has long accounted for about 70 percent of the U.S. economy, dropped. This and other factors led to job layoffs, and unemployment rose.

That ran contrary to accepted economic thinking of the time. Economists coined a new term, *stagflation*, to describe the twin and contradictory phenomena of U.S. economic growth stagnating during a time of inflation.

Stagflation was then short-lived, as the U.S. economy rebounded in the second half of the 1970s in an expansion that lasted until early 1980. But stagnation returned in late 1980, somewhat as a result of the Iranian Revolution. A second oil shock lit a fire under inflation, which reached more than 14 percent by late 1980.

Back to the 70s again

Now, more than 40 years later, we may be seeing the same thing occur again. As the Covid pandemic subsides and life has in some ways returned to normal, demand for all sorts of goods and services has surged. This increased demand, fueled even more by large federal stimulus checks over the past 20 months, has rapidly pushed up prices. Those higher prices have in turn caused workers to demand more pay as prices have risen.

As employers have had to raise wages in order to fill



jobs, they have had to pass along some of these higher labor costs to consumers in the form of higher prices.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that U.S. employers added 678,000 jobs in February and 431,000 in March, surpassing economists' expectations. Additionally, the BLS revised upward its figures on new job creation in both December 2021 and January 2022. Rising employment almost always signals a growing economy.

Most economists agree on a simple point: Major increases in the money supply lead to inflation. And, as happened in the early 1970s, the Federal Reserve is again ballooning the U.S. money supply—yet now in figures previously unheard of. In an effort to prop up the economy during the pandemic, the Federal Reserve increased money in circulation by more than \$226 billion between June 2019 and June 2020, which equates to almost 22 percent of all current U.S. dollars being created in that one year alone!

The government has thrown more fuel on the inflation fire with trillions of dollars in new stimulus spending—well beyond the early stages of the Covid epidemic. Many economists have rightly questioned the need for government fiscal stimulus when the economy was already recovering, a clearly inflationary move.

There is no doubt now that inflation is running wild. Rising food and fuel costs will likely force millions of Americans, most of whom have little savings cushion, to cut spending in other areas. Spending on nonessentials like dining out, travel and major purchases could slow dramatically, again slowing economic growth to a crawl as in the 1970s.

The Fed has signaled it will be aggressive in getting inflation under control. Most economic forecasters now predict multiple rate hikes this year. But as interest rates rise, financing costs for homes, cars and business expansion will rise, further dampening economic growth.

The Ukraine war effect

Late February saw the attack by Vladimir Putin on Ukraine. This war, the first large land conflict in Europe since World War II, will also affect the U.S. economy in ways many are now just beginning to realize.

To penalize Russia for its aggression and weaken its ability to continue the war, the United States and Europe quickly slapped on a host of economic sanctions, including measures against Russian banks and Russian billionaires who largely control the Russian economy. Russia depends on oil exports for much of its national income, and in early March America took the further step of cutting off imports of Russian oil. Though the United States imports only 4 percent of its needs from Russia, this embargo has only worsened America's oil shortage, a shortage created in large part by the current administration's hostility toward U.S. oil production.

With increased U.S. oil production ruled out for political reasons, the administration reached out to Iran and Venezuela, both U.S. enemies, to urge them to export more oil. Both refused, a further sign of weakening American influence throughout the world. Now the administration is tapping into U.S. strategic oil reserves, using up emergency supplies critical for the nation's future for short-term political gain. Even so, Americans may be looking at gas prices of \$5-7 per gallon nationwide when peak summer travel season arrives.

The Russian invasion will also impact food prices. These were already on the rise due to supply shortages and inflation—in spite of U.S. administration attempts to shift blame for rising prices to the current war. But of course the war makes things worse—as does the West's response. Russia and Ukraine together account for nearly a third of world wheat exports. With Ukrainian exports curtailed due to the invasion, and Russian exports cut off due to economic sanctions, food prices will shoot up even more. Prices of some food items could easily double.

On top of that, even before the invasion, U.S. and Canadian wheat and corn crop yields were lower as a result of widespread drought. Ukraine and Russia are also major exporters of fertilizer. Again, due to the war Ukraine is in no position to manufacture and export fertilizers, and Russian exports have halted due to sanctions. This scarcity is leading American, Canadian and European farmers to ration what fertilizers they can get, leading some to switch from planting corn and wheat to less fertilizer-intensive crops—and in some cases, to planting nothing at all.

As a result, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in mid-March forecast sharply rising energy and food prices. In a statement the IMF warned that “the ongoing war and associated sanctions will also have a severe impact on the global economy.”

From here to . . . recession?

Seeing the gathering storm of massive inflation coupled with a slowing of the U.S. and world economies, prominent voices from around the world now see the specter of the dreaded “R” word—*recession*. In early March, French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire alerted an energy conference to the possibility that economic fallout from the Ukraine war might lead to 1970s-style stagflation. In April more economists forecast recession later in 2022.

After a strong 2021, economists everywhere have slashed their forecasts for 2022 growth. Goldman Sachs, the world-famous New York bank and brokerage, has cut its 2022 growth forecast for the United States from 2.75 percent to 1.75 percent. They now see a 20 to 35 percent chance of a U.S. recession by the end of 2022.

The Atlanta Federal Reserve forecasts a major slowing of U.S. first quarter growth in GDP (Gross Domestic

How Can You Prepare?

With the uncertainty of the U.S. and global economic situation, and other dangerous times ahead for the world, it would be wise to be prepared in at least a basic way for emergency situations.

A good starting point is to have basic necessities such as food and water stored. This is a biblical principle, as Proverbs 27:12 tells us: “A prudent person foresees the danger ahead and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences” (New Living Translation). So having at least a week’s supply of food and water available in our homes, if not considerably more, is a good idea even when no immediate threat is apparent. The U.S. government’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) lists practical advice and contents for a family emergency supplies kit at ready.gov/kit.

However, with our physical preparations, we must remember that the Bible emphasizes looking to God for our physical needs as we seek His Kingdom. We have Christ’s own promise that if we pursue His Kingdom and way of life first, then God will provide our physical needs (Matthew 6:33).

Christ also warns us to be vigilant concerning our *spiritual* state. In His last major prophecy before His crucifixion, recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, He describes and summarizes the conditions and events that will lead to His second coming.

After describing the calamities of the world to which He would return, Jesus said to His disciples, “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (Mark 13:32, New American Standard Bible).

The next verse clearly shows that we should continue to keep a watchful eye on world trends and conditions as well as our own spiritual state, for we will not know the exact time of His return: “Take heed, *keep on the alert*; for you do not know when the appointed time will come” (verse 33, NASB, emphasis added throughout).

Christ then compared Himself and His second coming to a man who traveled to a distant country, left his servants in charge of his property and asked the doorkeeper “to stay on the alert” till he returned. Then He gives His warning to His disciples a second time: “Therefore, *be on the alert*—for you do not know what day or hour the master of the house will return . . . and what I say to you I say to all, *Watch!*”

Product) to as little as 0.1 percent, down from 6.9 percent for the final quarter of 2021. Economist Mark Zandi of Moody’s Analytics said: “Inventories are roughly back to where they should be, and now you’ve got growing headwinds from fiscal and monetary policy. So growth starting the year will be very soft.” Looking farther ahead, the Conference Board sees growth for 2023 at an anemic 2.3 percent, saying it cut its previous forecasts due to effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The factors for stagnation are clearly in play. The economy could cool while prices for nearly everything will almost

certainly continue to rise. It could be 1975 all over again.

No one is immune to world conditions

For most of its nearly 250-year history, America has felt secure in its physical separation from Europe and Asia. Protected by two large oceans and blessed with natural resources, a strong workforce and free-market economic system, it produced nearly everything its people needed, with much left over to export abroad.

While most do not realize or accept it, this abundant national prosperity was prophesied in your Bible. The first part of Deuteronomy 28 details blessings God Himself would bestow in fulfillment of promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12 (see our free study guide *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* for a detailed explanation of this amazing truth).

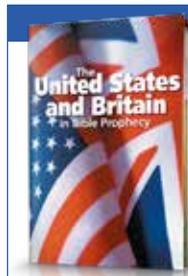
But America’s separation from the world has ended. The world is now highly interconnected. Supply chains now stretch around the globe. As a result, the United States is vulnerable to events in faraway places, events that can destabilize its national economy.

The events of the 1970s brought this stark reality to the forefront. Now America is seeing this again. It could—and will—lose the prosperity it has enjoyed for the past 150 years. Those blessings are being removed. Read the second half of Deuteronomy 28 for a glimpse into what will happen as a result of America’s national rejection of God’s law.

Students of prophecy know the Bible foretells a time of global turmoil that Jesus Christ referred to as “great tribulation” in Matthew 24. Christ told His disciples this time of war, famine, economic collapse and upheaval will increase in severity leading up to the time of His return.

He also revealed to the apostle John more details of this time of trouble in Revelation 13 and 17, which speak of a new global system that will massively deceive the entire world. This system will enslave most of mankind into accepting its “mark,” without which a person will be completely shut out of normal economic activity such as buying and selling.

If history teaches us anything, it’s that desperate times can lead to desperate measures—including the rise and fall of national powers and a reordering of the world’s political systems. Continue reading *Beyond Today* to better understand the seriousness of the times in which we live and what you need to be doing! **BT**



LEARN MORE

Our world seems to be transforming at lightning speed. What is taking place and why? You need to understand the vital keys to Bible prophecy revealed in our free study guide *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. Download or request your free copy today!
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70 Years of Elizabeth II, The Servant Queen

In the Queen's Platinum Jubilee year, we reflect on a beloved figure exemplifying dignity and devotion yet sadly not preserving her realms from moral plummet and decline.

by Melvin Rhodes

I grew up with Elizabeth II, turning one year old a few days before the Queen ascended the throne. When I was seven in 1958, she visited my hometown of Grimsby. I have no idea why she was there. Presumably some of the people in the massive, wall-to-wall crowd did. A man, a stranger, offered to put me on his shoulders so I could get a better view. It was a really warm day, and I remember the Red Cross having to pull a woman out of the crowd who had fainted in the heat.

At my school we used to march into a big hall for an assembly every morning for a daily scriptural reading and a hymn. As we turned to actually enter the hall, there was a beautiful portrait of the Queen—Pietro Annigoni's masterpiece, still one of my favorite paintings.

We always marched to classical music. Often it was "royal" music, having been specially written for royal occasions. Handel was one of

the composers, a German who had settled in England in 1712, taking British citizenship 15 years later.

We didn't grow up blindly loyal to the Queen—my father being very much against royalty—but she was always there, the symbol of the nation. I remember later hearing while on a visit to San Francisco in 1977 that hers was the most distributed vignette in history. After all, she was on all our coins and bank notes and on every postage stamp. Other nations also have the Queen's image on coins and bank notes.

In 1964 Britain elected a Labor (socialist) government. I remember two years later, when many thought socialism was the way to go, a cartoon in one of our newspapers showing the Queen and her husband, Prince Philip, standing on the balcony at Buckingham Palace with a thin crowd in the Mall, the roadway leading up to palace. Philip turned to his wife and said: "Never mind,

dear. You're still top of the pops in Australia." At that time, 56 years ago, the monarchy was more popular in Australia than it was at home in England.

Today, at 96, the Queen herself has a consistent popularity rating of over 70 percent, higher than any politician on either side of the Atlantic. Even at the lowest point, following the death of Princess Diana in 1997, there was no widespread thought of turning Britain into a republic with a figurehead president replacing the monarch.

Throughout my life, she has always been there. When we lived in Rhodesia all the coins had Elizabeth II on them. When we moved to Ghana the meeting hall we used for church services had a plaque on the wall saying it was opened by the Queen in 1961.

What has made her so popular?

Princess Elizabeth's promise

I think it goes back in large measure

to the promise she made on her 21st birthday:

“I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.”

Those words were spoken by then Princess Elizabeth. She and her family were touring South Africa and Southern Rhodesia at the time to thank the peoples there for their support during World War II. Her father, George VI, was then monarch, the king of both countries.

“The high point of the journey for Elizabeth was her twenty-first birthday on April 21st. South Africa celebrated her coming of age as a national holiday with military reviews, a ball in her honor, fireworks and a necklace of 21 diamonds presented by [Prime Minister Jan] Smuts” (Sally Bedell Smith, *Elizabeth the Queen*, 2012, p. 37)

“Her remarks, which were broadcast from Government House in



Cape Town ‘to all the peoples of the British Commonwealth and Empire, lasted six minutes’ (ibid.).

The words were a personal vow, dedicating her life to the quarter of the world’s people that lived within the empire and Commonwealth.

Less than five years later her father died, and Princess Elizabeth became Queen while on an official visit to Kenya, at the start of a Commonwealth tour that had to be postponed until 1954. It was February 6, 1952.

“While carpenters at Sandringham were building a coffin of oak from the estate, cinemas and theatres were closed, BBC programs were canceled, except for news bulletins and solemn music, public functions and sports fixtures were postponed and flags flown at half-mast. For the three days of official mourning, men were urged to wear black armbands and black ties. In the 1950s, the death of the monarch was seen as a huge jolt to the political and social structure.

“George VI had reigned at an exceptional time in British history. By remaining in London throughout the Blitz, he had come to be the living symbol of the country’s determination to defeat Nazism. For this, he and his family, who might easily have decamped to a haven in Canada, earned universal respect. Hearing of his death there were those who feared that the heart had gone out of the nation. The young Queen was well aware of this. Schooled to put duty before all else, she was determined that there should be no letting up in the standards set by her father and his father, George V, before him.

“At her first Privy Council she made her Accession Declaration, resolving to follow her father’s example of service and devotion. And in a broadcast to the nation, she looked forward to

of Our Queen,” *The Telegraph*, Feb. 5, 2022).

So commenced what was often called “the Second Elizabethan Age.” It began with great promise—New Zealander Sir Edmund Hilary became the first man to conquer Mt. Everest, the news reaching London in time for the newspapers on Coronation Day.

What followed has been 70 years of dutiful service to Britain and the Commonwealth. For this reason Elizabeth has earned the epithet “The Servant Queen.”

A changed world under Elizabeth’s reign

But it has not been a second Elizabethan age. Whereas the first Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) laid the foundation of the British Empire, the reign of the second Queen Elizabeth was marked by the dismantling of that same empire.

“The great imperial family” she spoke of in 1947 has gone, replaced by a Commonwealth of Nations, the members of which are independent and often quite critical of Britain. Most have priorities quite different from those of Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth. If the Second World War took place again, it’s doubtful the Commonwealth countries would come to Britain’s aid. In 1939 they all did, with India contributing 2.5 million men, the biggest volunteer army in history.

Few Britons see clearly how steep has been the country’s decline.

The coronation of Elizabeth II began what was often called “the Second Elizabethan Age.” It began with great hope and promise.

her coronation for which she was preparing ‘with prayer and meditation.’ She appealed to her audience to ‘Pray for me on the day. Pray that God may give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making’” (Barry Turner, “The Making

Elizabeth herself must realize it. Soon after her marriage in 1947 she was a navy wife, stationed on the island of Malta, which was then a major British naval base. In 1979 the British voluntarily withdrew. Both economic power and the



military have seen a stark decline during her reign.

In the year of her marriage, Britain had more than 1.25 million men under arms. Now, after successive cuts, there are fewer than 200,000 military personnel.

It can be said that Queen Elizabeth II has helped keep Britain stable during this long decline. That's one way of looking at it. Looked at another way, however, Britain is not as secure as she was.

The monarchy gives Britain a great deal of influence. Not only is Queen Elizabeth II Britain's head of state, she is also, for historical reasons, head of state in Canada, Australia and New Zealand (in Australia she is known as the Sovereign).

She retains the same office in a number of smaller countries, in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Retaining the monarch has given these nations a stability they otherwise might have lost. There are now 15 Commonwealth Realms.

Additionally, there are 54 member countries of the Commonwealth. Though most of these are now republics, the Queen is the head of the Commonwealth, and member nations voted at their last meeting to recognize Prince Charles as head of the Commonwealth when the time comes.

The Queen tries hard to keep member nations on the straight and narrow, using her influence to help everyone stay on the democratic path. An article in *Newsweek* 20 years ago, on the 50th anniversary of her reign, said nobody had done more to spread democracy than Elizabeth II.

In her 70 years on the throne, she has had 179 prime ministers, counting those of the United Kingdom and the 15 Commonwealth Realms.

Former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney observed: "The Queen knows that when she enters the room she is the most compelling head of state in the room. She

is number one even though her country is not number one" (quoted by Smith, p. 491).

A biblical vow ultimately proven empty

It's not just the empire that Britain has lost in the last 70 years. The nation's morals are today totally contrary to what they were at the time of the coronation in June 1953.

During the coronation ceremony, the Archbishop of Canterbury asks the following:

"Will you to the utmost of your

Under the second Elizabeth the Bible has been almost totally rejected by the nation. Each week more people attend a mosque than a church.

power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel?

"Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law?

"Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England?"

The British monarch is the titular head of the Church of England. She was asked here if she would maintain the laws of God and the doctrines of the Church, as she understood them. But here there has been a total reversal, not just in Britain but in the other Commonwealth nations of British descent—Australia, Canada and New Zealand. These nations have pioneered social change in the last 60 years, whether it be abortion, divorce, same-sex marriage or other LGBTQ promotion.

The Queen, as head of state, has had to sign off on all these changes.

After seven decades on the throne you would think the Queen's political views would be known. But that is not the case. She has been an exemplary constitutional monarch.



But this has meant her silence on the critical issues mentioned—and on the multicultural transformation that has totally changed Britain. Her annual Christmas broadcast has often highlighted developments in this area. To a certain extent, she bears responsibility in some of the anti-biblical legislation that has been embraced by the politicians, if not by the people.

After promising to fulfill what was asked of her in the coronation, she was then presented with the Bible along with these words: "Our gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the rule for the whole life and government of Christian princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords."

The moderator then continued in accordance with the ceremony: "Here is Wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God."

Now that Britain has entered a post-biblical age, it's likely the above will not be included when Prince Charles inherits the throne. The striking aspect of the coronation service is the preeminence given to the Bible as the rule of law.

This is a major difference between the first Elizabethan Age and the second. Under Elizabeth I the country had only recently broken with Rome. It was an enthusiastic Protestant country determined to preserve its religion against the power and might of the Roman church. Under the second Elizabeth the Bible has been almost totally rejected by the nation. Each week more people attend a mosque than a church. As for the Queen herself, she still attends church regularly, even when she is on holiday.

A commemorative book published in 2016 for her 90th birthday was titled *The Servant Queen and the King She Serves*. It declared: “The Queen works hard because she is committed to service. And that comes from her commitment to follow the ways of Christ” (p. 23). Stressing that she looks to the Bible as her inspiration, the book quoted from it: “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant” (Philippians 2:7, quoted on p. 26).

I’m not aware of any other country that has changed as much as Britain in the last 70 years. When the Queen passes from this life, the country may fall apart. The United Kingdom is made up of four countries (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). All four look to Elizabeth II as their leader. Already, Scotland has a big independence movement. Northern Ireland’s relationship with London is insecure since Brexit.

The United Kingdom will have come full circle. At the time of the first Elizabeth, there was just England and Wales. With the empire now gone, if anything should happen to the United Kingdom there may be nothing left *except* England and Wales—and both only a shadow of their former selves.

Such massive shifts in geopolitical power and in Western nations’ declining morality were foretold as a hallmark of the time of global turmoil leading up to the establishment of a coming Kingdom that will never end—that of the ultimate King and Messiah, Jesus Christ! **BT**

LEARN MORE



Surprisingly, the British nation and monarchy can be traced back to promises God made in the Bible concerning their rise and fall. Be sure to request or download our free study guide ***The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy***, and also read our online publication ***The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future***.

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Appreciation and thanks for study guides and *Beyond Today*

Peace and love to you from distant Russia! In these days of criminal war, your gospel word is very important! I am very grateful to you for your preaching and for your prayers. With gratitude, I received from you a package with six precious publications that carry the good news from the Holy Bible about the coming Kingdom of God.

Reader in Russia

I have read your study guide *Why Were You Born?* It is the most amazing book I have ever read. The reasons you write about are so incredible that one finds it hard to believe! But when we read what is plainly written in Scripture it becomes the most fascinating potential for mankind. And what is also astonishing is why so many don't see what you see!

Reader in the United Kingdom

I received your study guide *You Can Have Living Faith*. Since I am struggling with life experiences, it really served as a source of comfort for me.

Reader in New York

Thanks for sending regularly *Beyond Today*, which is very informative and provides spiritual guidance.

Subscriber in Pakistan

Reader responses to recent *Beyond Today* articles

Regarding your issue on "What If Sodom Has Been Found?"—it is rather stunning to have such a discovery be made and yet have much of the media dismiss it immediately as nothing significant. It has been said to be just a chance encounter with a meteorite, from which a myth sprang up about Sodom and Gomorrah. The majority of people in this world are sleepwalking, spiritually speaking. Hopefully some people will look at all the evidence and wake up to the destruction we are heading into.

From the Internet

What an outstanding issue that last one was. I love the in-depth archaeological proof you've shown to prove the biblical history of the Old Testament and the life of Jesus. Great job on that. I've always loved reading your magazine. I don't always agree with some of your traditions, but you do preach a sound biblical teaching. We need to focus on knowing

Jesus so we can be like Him. And you do that. Your articles are full of good biblical teaching. Thank you for putting out such an informative magazine. God's blessings to you all.

Subscriber in Michigan

I wanted to offer my sincerest thank you for this excellent piece, "Seven Scientific Proofs of God." As a certified biology teacher, researcher and statistician, I have sometimes been troubled by the little bit of knowledge accrued in my past education, I think mostly from my unperfected love and faith, try as I might. Your article was so well-written and convincing, I was moved to tears when I finished. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

From the Internet

Reader question about hell

I just wanted to discuss your belief that eternal torment in hell is not the punishment of the wicked. I'm concerned that pushing this idea of hell not being an eternal punishment is harmful to new believers and also nonbelievers. There are so many verses that insist on the punishment being eternal. This was honestly the hardest part of Christianity for me to come to terms with, but it is the truth.

I encourage you to seek truth at all costs. I'm afraid that this sort of teaching is what 2 Timothy 4:3 refers to as "tickling the ears"—this idea that the punishment isn't that bad. This promotes complacency and takes away from the magnitude of what Jesus did for us. Please consider asking God to lead you to the truth. I'm happy to discuss this at length if you're interested!

From the Internet

Thank you for your letter. Our teaching is based on a careful study of all the relevant scriptures and history. Throughout the Bible those who die are described as being "asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:14), who "know nothing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5), and who await a resurrection to judgment (Daniel 12:2; John 11:24). After that resurrection—which takes place at a future time after the return of Jesus Christ—that judgment will reward some with eternal life (2 Timothy 2:10-13). But that judgment will also bring punishment for the incorrigibly wicked, who actively choose to disavow God and refuse His offer of salvation (Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8).

And yes, that punishment will be eternal; it will be irreversible (Matthew 25:46). But it will not be eternal torment, as many assume. Instead it will be a merciful eternal death (the "second death" in verses just cited).

The apostle Paul succinctly explains the biblical truth of the final judgment of human beings: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Notice that the wages of sin are not an eternal life of torment in hellfire, but "death"—the cessation of life. Immortality is a gift for only those who submit to God and choose to live His way.

*In short, God is merciful, even to those who hate Him—whom He will destroy completely, never to live again. This is truly a terrifying—and eternal—final judgment of death. All this is covered in much greater detail in our free study guide *Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?* Those interested can download or request it for free at ucg.org/booklets.*

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I really enjoy Beyond Today magazine. It gives a good understanding of the Bible and highlights information not given in mainstream Christian faiths. I highly recommend this magazine to all.

—K.T., Facebook fan



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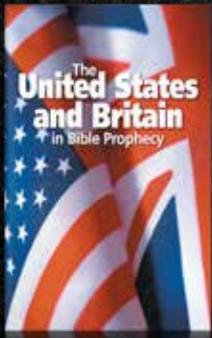
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