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# After Iraq—How Will Europe Get Its Act Together?

*The latest Gulf War highlighted the divisions and limitations of Europe. Many Europeans want a united continent rivaling America as a superpower. Is this ever likely to happen? Bible prophecy contains some surprising answers.*

by Melvin Rhodes

One year from now, in May of 2004, the European Union is set to expand from 15 member states to 25. Overnight, this will make Europe the world's biggest single market. It is already the world's greatest trading system, accounting for well over half of all the world's trade.

Yet in the latest Gulf War, Europe remained on the sidelines, impotent in the face of American power. A further loss of face was seeing one of its most significant members, the United Kingdom, standing side by side with the United States in a war many EU members opposed.

Some were supportive, though none except Britain was supportive enough to send troops. Aspiring EU member Poland sent a token force. Spain's prime minister was verbally supportive of the U.S./U.K. coalition, but the general population was so antiwar that he could not commit any forces to help the allied effort.

Certainly France was the most critical, leading an international chorus against the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, the three principal combatants invading Iraq. Almost all of Africa supported the French stance, as did most Third World nations around the world.

Although Germany and others were equally critical, France's role was high-

lighted as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, with the right to veto any decision. Paris made it clear that no military action by the United States and Britain against Iraq would ever be supported by France.

European opposition to the Anglo-American stance actually started in Germany during the German election a few months ago. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder made it clear that his government would never support American military action, nor would Germany allow itself to get involved. The then German justice minister even went so far as to compare President Bush to Adolf Hitler, a ridiculous comparison that showed the triumph of emotion over historical knowledge and understanding.

Once Germany came out against U.S. action, France followed. The EU was back to Franco-German domination of the club, as the two nations asserted their common purpose once again.

### Franco-German axis

This all goes back a long way. We could trace the origins of this axis back over 1,000 years to the time of Charlemagne, crowned by the pope in A.D. 800. More recently, the special relationship between Berlin and Paris, which both countries value more highly than any relationship which either has with

(See "EUROPE," page 3)



## Toppling the Image of Evil

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On April 9, the statue of Saddam Hussein in the center of his capital of Baghdad came tumbling down. The scene of jubilant Iraqis hanging a noose around the neck of the statue was a dramatic symbol of a repressive regime coming to an end. Twice in recent years we have watched scenes like this. More than a decade ago the statues of Lenin in the former Soviet Union and other dictators in Eastern Europe came down as forces of freedom rose against regimes of repression.

The lightning-quick advance of coalition troops through the heart of Iraq during the last few weeks has been a textbook case of military operations. It will be studied as one of the most successful advances in history. The mission was to liberate the people of Iraq, who had been held in the death grip of a brutal and ruthless dictator for more than three decades. The job now appears to have been accomplished, and to put it in perspective, there is no better place to turn than to the pages of your Bible.

Daniel provides some lessons to be learned from this scene. In chapter 5 we see the demise of another power in the same land occupied by modern Iraq. Babylon's king, Belshazzar, partied in his palace while the judgment of God approached the gates of the city. Suddenly a hand appeared and wrote on the wall. Panic gripped the crowd. What did it mean? Only one person could give the answer. Daniel, the aged and respected servant, was hurried through the streets to appear and interpret the vision.

Daniel, God's embedded representative in Babylon, went straight to the heart of the aura of denial pervading the room and the regime. He recounted the history of Nebuchadnezzar, who failed to acknowledge and honor God and allowed "his heart [to be] lifted up, and his spirit . . . hardened in pride" (Daniel 5:20). God removed him from the throne. Belshazzar, too, was guilty of the same pride. "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven . . . The God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified" (Daniel 5:22-23).

Daniel's interpretation speaks through the ages to any human government that reigns over people with harshness and brutality: "This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (verses 26-28).

History shows that the Persians did enter the city and effected a regime change that night, according to the words of Scripture. "That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom" (verses 30-31).

Ancient Babylon lies just 30 miles south of Baghdad. American and British troops raced past Babylon's ruins on their way to the capital city. Now the heart of that city has fallen. Jubilant citizens toppled the statue of Saddam Hussein and tore down and burned his pictures, but there remains the task of rebuilding the country after years of misrule. Keeping the peace and building a new society will be a major challenge for a new government. May the new leaders heed the words of Daniel and govern as humble servants, seeking only the best for the people of Iraq.

The statue of an evil pathological dictator has been toppled. Let it be a symbol of the time in the future when another statue, a representation of humanity's defiance against God, will be destroyed and replaced by the coming of the Kingdom of God to the earth (see Daniel 2:34-35).

—Darris McNeely

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“EUROPE,” (Continued from page 1)

London or Washington, owes its origin to the tragic events of three major conflicts.

France and Germany fought each other three times in one lifetime: 1870, 1914-18 and 1939-45. In none of these conflicts did the French do very well militarily. In the last two they were saved from Germany by the combined might of the British Empire and the United States (more the former in World War I, the latter in World War II). Humiliating, to say the least.

After World War II, the French were determined that this would never happen again. Ditto the Germans, who had also seemingly had enough of wars and war-like leaders. Out of this dedication to end the endless conflicts of Europe arose the European Union, founded by the Treaty of Rome in 1957 (formerly called the European Economic Community).

The idea has spread, from the six original members in 1957 to the 25 who will be members 12 months after this is printed. And there are still more applicants.

During the last decade, the focus in Europe has changed from economic union to the concept of a full union along the lines of the United States. The desire is to create a superpower to rival the United States, thereby enabling Europe to halt what is often described as “American unilateralism.”

But the reality is that the war against Baghdad only highlighted European impotence.

Daniel Hannan of the British Conservative newspaper *Daily Telegraph* headlined an article on this very theme: “Don’t Laugh: The European Army Is on the March” (April 13, 2003).

“A false and dangerous idea is taking hold in Britain, especially among Eurosceptics. It goes something like this. The Iraq war has wrecked plans for closer European integration. It has set Old Europeans against New ones, driven Britain back on the Anglo-Saxon world, reminded everyone of how much they rely on the Americans, and made the idea of a European Army seem laughable.”

Most people who think this way were anti-European in the first place, as Hannan points out.

“The trouble is that Euro-fanatics are prone to the same impulse. For them, the war is the strongest demonstration to date



*The EU flag leads the way as the European Union launches its military debut, peacekeeping in Macedonia*

of why Brussels [capital of the EU] needs a unified foreign policy. Never again, they say, should the EU be enfeebled by internal divisions. Never again should Europeans be forced to watch in frustration as the Americans give some tinpot dictator a good kicking . . . Almost everyone I have spoken to in Brussels says the same thing: we need majority voting in foreign affairs, a unified diplomatic service, a harmonized defense policy.”

Interestingly and ominously, Hannan continues with the following observation: “My point is not that either interpretation is right or wrong. Rather, it is that the Eurozealots, unlike the sceptics, are in a position to act on their concerns. A poll . . . of the staff who work in European institutions showed that, by two to one, they wanted the British and French places on the United Nations Security Council to be replaced by a single EU seat.”

This would only further isolate the United States and Britain from the rest of the world. Britain would have no inde-

pendent voice, while the United States would lose the support of its only consistent ally on the Security Council. Europe would inevitably consistently vote against the United States as interests tend to diverge.

However, this point aside, note the following words: “*The Eurozealots, unlike the sceptics, are in a position to act on their concerns.*”

Could this be true? If it is, the implications for the United States could be serious.

### Could America be #2?

Another article in the British *Financial Times* newspaper, which is also published in the United States, would suggest that European attempts at further integration won’t succeed.

Michael Prowse wrote, “The European Union lacks the inclination and capacity to compete with the U.S. as a military power. Rather than worrying about this, it should bask in its own helplessness. It should enjoy its role as the cowboy’s moody girlfriend. Like her, it can offer advice and moral support. But in the end it must bow to his judgment because it needs the protection that only his six-shooter can provide” (*Financial Times*, April 26, 2003).

Further in his article, Prowse adds, “Before rushing to endorse these arguments, consider how Americans would feel if the EU had opened up a big military lead. Would the U.S. happily accept the subordinate position of the ‘soft’ power? Would it be content to offer foreign aid and leave a French gendarme to police the world?”

Answering his own questions, Prowse continues, “I rather think not. Americans are fully aware that, pending the creation of a genuine world government, military power is a precondition for political sovereignty.” Reminding readers that Europeans had no choice but to come under America’s defense umbrella following the devastation of World War II and the Cold War threat from the Soviet Union, Prowse accurately points out that Russia is now Europe’s friend and the Europeans are no longer fragmented. Additionally, it can also be said that Europeans are wealthy enough to fend for themselves.

Referring back to a previous article in

the same newspaper by Harvard political scientist Andrew Moravcsik, Prowse quotes Moravcsik as claiming that Europe could rival America's military power by doubling its military spending, increasing it from 2 percent of GNP to 4 percent. Moravcsik, however, feels that even this would not make Europe a coherent united fighting force.

Answering this doubt, Prowse writes: "The notion that the EU could not create a credible military force is wishful thinking on the part of Americans, as is the curious idea that Europeans are uninterested in power. Would France have both-

*It would seem from these prophecies that both the "Euro-sceptics" and the "Euro-fanatics" are correct. The push for a full European Union, in every sense of the term, will succeed, but it will not last a long time.*

ered to create its own nuclear deterrent if it cared nothing for military values? Would Britain have been so keen to fight in Iraq if it were a cuddly peacenik? Does Germany's history suggest a permanent aversion to the martial arts? . . . The argument that the EU would need to double defense spending to create a credible armed service is fallacious since there would be large economies of scale. Moreover, the creation of a unified military force would confer benefits as well as costs."

Back to Hannan in the *Daily Telegraph*: "'But it won't happen,' say British commentators. Really? Two weeks ago, almost unreported, the EU Army was deployed for the first time in Macedonia . . . It may well be that the European Army, like European taxation, European criminal jurisdiction and European monetary union, 'can't work.' But that won't stop it happening. Just watch."

### **Prophesied European Union**

Bible prophecy shows that some European nations are going to come together to form a politico-military superpower to rival the United States. Revelation 17:12 talks of "ten kings [or

leaders] who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast." The use of the term "one hour" suggests this union will not last long. It will, however, be around at Christ's return as verse 14 shows: "These will make war with the Lamb."

This new empire, described as a "beast" in the Scriptures, is a revival of the ancient "beast powers" that Daniel saw in his visions in Daniel chapters 2 and 7. In chapter 7 we read of four beasts, symbolizing the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Empires.

Daniel lived under the first two and, in revelation from God, understood the coming of the latter two. The last one was to continue to revive through the centuries, right down to our present time, when one more resurrection is prophesied to take place. In verses 7 to 9 of Daniel 7 we see that the resurrected Roman Empire will exist at the time of Christ's return. Revelation 17 shows us that 10 political entities will come together to form this union.

Just as the Roman Empire united much of Europe, so the revived Roman Empire will do the same. Although the EU as presently constituted is unlikely to form the new Roman Empire, no doubt the Treaty of Rome that committed the member states of the EU to build "an ever closer union" will directly or indirectly give birth to the new European superpower that the Bible predicts will soon be upon us.

The union, however, is likely to be short-lived. Daniel 2 prophesies that "the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it" (just as Rome, its predecessor, was a great militaristic empire). Continuing, the prophecy says that "the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile . . . They [the leaders

and peoples of this union] will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay" (Daniel 2:42-43).

Note that this union, still to be achieved, leads directly into the Kingdom of God (verse 44): "And in the days of these [10] kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."

It would seem from these prophecies that both the "Euro-sceptics" and the "Euro-fanatics" are correct. The push for a full European Union, in every sense of the term, will succeed, but it will not last a long time. It is also likely that some of the countries presently in the European Union will not participate in the military and political union. Disillusionment with the European Union in Britain, for example, is greater as a result of lack of support on Iraq.

The European Union has come a long way in recent years. The euro has rapidly become a viable alternative trading currency to the American dollar. As any world traveler will quickly notice, it is already more sought after in some countries than the greenback. New nations are set to join the European Union. Others have been told they do not yet meet the qualifications for entry, but that has not discouraged them—rather, they are determinedly changing to meet the criteria for membership in this exclusive club.

France and Germany held an unprecedented joint session of their national legislatures, joint cabinet meetings and are now talking of joint citizenship. On Iraq, they had a joint foreign policy.

Now the European Army is in Macedonia.

A further warning of what is to come shared the page with Daniel Hannan. Illustrated by a wide photograph of a German military force, the article was headlined: "Schroeder to End Conscription in Push for EU Rapid Reaction Force" (*Daily Telegraph*, April 13, 2003), an attempt to copy the more efficient American and British professional military machines.

Highlighted were the words: "The rift over Iraq has prompted Paris and Berlin to redouble their efforts." ❖

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# Visions of Judgment: The Pale Horse of Pestilence

*The world is gripped by headlines of a new and deadly virus coming out of Asia. SARS has killed hundreds and threatens the economic stability of several Asian countries. Is this the leading edge of future plagues mentioned in your Bible, or another warning of the fragility of our modern world?*

by Darris McNeely

**D**isease travels in tandem with fear. While the first can lead to the death of thousands, the second can unravel the social fabric, disrupting the precarious balance of relationships essential for stability of nations.

Today it is SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) that is killing hundreds and causing fear among thousands. Tomorrow it will be another, even greater plague that will sweep across the landscape, leaving death and destruction in its wake.

In this series we have been examining each of the first four seals of Revelation 6. These seals, dramatically depicted by four horsemen, show the effect of false religion, war, famine and disease among the earth's population in the days leading to the return of Jesus Christ.

Each of these seals unleashes powerful forces that seek to destroy human life from the earth. The cumulative effect will lead to such conditions that if Christ did not intervene and cut short the time of trial, "no flesh would be saved" (Matthew 24:22). We come to the fourth seal, the fourth horseman, and his ride of death by disease. It is a timely subject, given the recent emergence of the deadly SARS virus from China.

## The fourth horseman

In Revelation 6:7-8 we read the following description of the fourth seal's contents. "When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come and see.' So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth to kill with sword, with hunger, with death and by the beasts of the earth."

*The Expositor's Bible Commentary* says this about the color of the horse: "'Pale' (*chloros*) denotes a yellowish green, the light green of a plant, or the paleness of a sick per-



*SARS fears have led China to install infrared thermometers to check travelers' temperatures before entering Beijing's airport (photo by Andrew Wong/Reuters)*

son in contrast to a healthy appearance."

The seals have a cumulative effect. False religion causes instability within relationships leading to war. Famine follows war, and when malnourishment occurs and social systems break down, humans are susceptible to disease. These seals depict the ferocity of problems unleashed upon the world in the Day of the Lord. By the time the fourth horseman rides, the earth will experience calamity over a fourth of its inhabitants. The death toll will be unlike any from plague and disease in human history.

To understand how bad it can be, let's go back and look at some of the great plagues of history.

*We come to the fourth seal, the fourth horseman, and his ride of death by disease. It is a timely subject, given the recent emergence of the deadly SARS virus from China.*

## The black death

Perhaps the most famous plague in history is the bubonic plague of the 14th century. Estimates are that 20 million people (one third to one half the population of Europe) died in the outbreak. In 1346 reports reached Europe of a devastating disease from China that was affecting many parts of Asia. The next year a mysterious disease appeared in Italy. Ships from the Black Sea sailed into Messina with sailors infected with black boils in their armpits and groins. It was the bubonic plague.

The disease was so lethal that people were known to go to bed well and die before waking. There were two types of

*Britannica*, article, "Plague").

The plague came to America from Asia in 1899. Today there are still many reported cases, and an average of 15 people die each year. The disease originates in rodents and is usually transmitted to humans by fleas, although animal bites can also be the means of transmission. It is still a virulent disease. As few as 10 bubonic plague cells can cause death in a human.

## Human-engineered plague

Throughout its history, plague has been used as an offensive weapon against populations. The Mongols would catapult plague-infested corpses

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, the tracking and inventory of all this work has been a great concern. It is feared that some of it could have fallen into the hands of terrorist groups and could one day be used against the United States or its allies.

After the first Gulf War in 1991, weapons inspectors confirmed that Iraq had developed biological weapons and had even equipped some warheads with the germs to use against the coalition's forces. The location of these weapons since that time is part of the unsolved mystery of that regime. Are they in the hands of al Qaeda or some other radical Islamist group, waiting to be used on the West?

## Are we prepared?

Today America and the West brace themselves for further attacks from terrorist groups. What is perhaps feared most is a biological attack with anthrax, smallpox or some other germ. Experts know that the West is woefully under-prepared for such an attack.

In June 2001, the Center for Strategic and International Studies hosted a senior-level war game examining the national security challenges of a biological attack on the American homeland.

The premise was the appearance of a case of smallpox in Oklahoma City, rapidly spreading throughout the country. Among the lessons learned from the exercise: "An attack on the United States with biological weapons could threaten vital national security interests. Massive civilian casualties, breakdown in essential institutions, violation of democratic processes, civil disorder, loss of confidence in government and reduced U.S. strategic flexibility abroad are among the ways a biological attack might compromise U.S. security."

Other estimates say that within days a million people would be dead and two to three times that many infected. No one knows what lies out there waiting to be used by a group who wishes America harm. We only know that it could happen.

## Naturally caused disease

Beyond the human-engineered biowarfare, there is another type of

*Today America and the West brace themselves for further attacks from terrorist groups. What is perhaps feared most is a biological attack with anthrax, smallpox or some other germ. Experts know that the West is woefully under-prepared for such an attack.*

the plague. The first was internal, causing swelling and internal bleeding. This was spread by contact. The second was in the lungs and spread by coughing airborne germs. There was no known prevention or remedy.

Whole towns were depopulated. The social structure completely broke down. Parents abandoned children and husbands and wives left each other to die. In many cases no one was around to bury the dead, both from fear of contagion and lack of care. One report tells of observing 5,000 bodies lying dead in a field.

In that age, the Bible was the primary means to measure any natural calamity. The only way to understand what was happening was to believe the world was coming to an end. There seemed no hope for the future.

The bubonic plague has appeared in modern times as well. The Great Plague of London in 1664-65 resulted in more than 70,000 deaths in a population estimated at 460,000. An outbreak in Canton and Hong Kong in 1894 left 80,000 to 100,000 dead, and within 20 years the disease spread from the southern Chinese ports throughout the whole world, resulting in more than 10,000,000 deaths (*Encyclopedia*

over the walls of besieged cities. Thousands would die as the disease spread rampantly through the contained population.

During World War II Japan dropped plague-infested fleas on China. American research growing out of the war experience led to a decades-long research project at Fort Detrick, Maryland, proving that biological warfare was a feasible method of waging war.

In 1969 President Richard Nixon ordered the research stopped, and in 1972 the United States signed a treaty with 70 other nations outlawing the production, stockpiling and use of biological weapons as a means of war. Despite this treaty, it is known that many developing and major states have developed biological weapons as a means of waging war.

It is known that in the former Soviet Union a sophisticated effort to manufacture biological weapons was conducted during the Cold War years. Specific research was done to genetically alter bubonic plague so as to make it resistant to many forms of modern treatment. Some of the best scientific minds worked for years to produce these strains.

pestilence waiting as well. This one lives in nature and could erupt at any time, according to scientists who study the subject.

“Eighty years ago a sudden mutation in the virus that causes influenza initiated a worldwide epidemic that in only 18 months killed an estimated 25 to 40 mil-

lion people around the world. Many consider this to be the worst natural disaster in history” (Hillary J. Johnson, “Killer Flu,” *Rolling Stone*, Jan. 22, 1998).

Some historians feel this epidemic hastened the end of World War I.

Recent work by scientists studying

infectious diseases has sounded warnings that this could occur again.

One expert, W.I.B. Beveridge, says, “There is no known reason why there should not be another catastrophic pandemic like that of 1918 or even worse. The flu always has the capability of becoming a global plague: a spark in a

## Lessons From the SARS Epidemic

For weeks scientists, researchers and health officials have found themselves in a desperate scramble to determine the origin of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic that has now infected almost 5,000 people and killed more than 300. They’ve been baffled by the sudden emergence of the disease and panicked by its rapid spread to some 30 countries.

The latest theory about the origin of the epidemic should be of great interest to those who take the Bible seriously, particularly its instructions regarding health and diet.

The combined worldwide death toll of the last two great influenza epidemics—the 1957 Asian flu and the 1968 Hong Kong flu—together exceeded 1.5 million people. Both epidemics have been traced to China’s Guangdong province, which includes Hong Kong. SARS may yet prove to be the third devastating epidemic to arise from that region.

What is it about this area of South China that gives birth to such new and deadly viral strains?

An article on *Time* magazine’s Asian edition Web site explains that “for centuries, Guangdong province has had the world’s largest concentration of humans, pigs and fowl living in close proximity, explaining why many influenza outbreaks can be traced back to that region”

([www.time.com/time/asia/covers/501030407/other\\_bugs.html](http://www.time.com/time/asia/covers/501030407/other_bugs.html)).

This particular combination of people, pigs and poultry has proven deadly. Fowl—particularly ducks, geese and chickens—can become infected with varieties of avian (bird) flu. Normally that isn’t a problem to human beings, because the avian flu varieties can’t infect people. However, when pigs are added to the mix—and in the crowded farms of southern China all three species are practically living on top of each other—the combination can become lethal.

In such conditions, avian flu viruses are passed from poultry to pigs, and ultimately to people. The *Time* article explains: “Pigs are particularly dangerous [for the creation of new diseases that affect people], because they can be infected by human viruses and those from animals such as rodents and fowl, making them the most potent mixing vessels in which pathogens can mutate and jump from animal species to humans.”

Within pigs, viruses can mingle their genetic material and form new strains that in turn are passed back to the farmers. Having no immunity to such new viral strains, the farmers’ immune systems cannot fight off the invader and a new epidemic is off and running. And in a country of well over a

billion people, human-to-human spread of the disease is simple and quick.

A variation of this theory appeared on WorldNetDaily, suggesting that the viral exchange may take place on a somewhat different level. “In southern provinces of China, farmers raise hens, ducks, pigs and fish in one integrated system. They use the droppings and leftover food from the pigs to feed the fowl. The fowl droppings, in turn, help fertilize the fish ponds. While it sounds like a perfect system, raising three different species with no waste, the species may be exchanging viruses among themselves through the feces” ([www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=32244](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=32244)).

If the whole idea sounds disgusting, it is. And God thought so too. One of the crucial health principles He revealed to the ancient Israelites some 3,500 years ago was that bodily waste should be buried in the ground, not recycled as food (Deuteronomy 23:12-13). Bacteria in the soil would detoxify the waste, transforming it into useful fertilizer as He intended—a process mankind wouldn’t discover until many centuries later.

But there’s more to the story, too. God never intended for human beings and pigs to live in close proximity—and He certainly never intended for people to eat them. In Leviticus 11:7 and Deuteronomy 14:8 He declares swine (along with a number of other creatures) as “unclean,” designating them as unfit for human consumption. Included also are spiders, snakes, snails, frogs, rats, mice and the like—things most of us would never be tempted to put into our mouths.

God doesn’t spell out the reasons for not eating certain types of animals. However, in recent years medical doctors and nutritionists have discovered sound reasons for not ingesting the flesh of these creatures. You can find some of this research summarized in our free booklet *What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?* ([www.ucg.org/booklets/CU](http://www.ucg.org/booklets/CU)).

It appears that the SARS epidemic, if indeed it is proven to have originated in this melting pot of people, pigs and poultry—may well have been entirely preventable. The AIDS epidemic, as we have discussed previously in issues of *The Good News*, was likewise preventable and never would have arisen had everyone simply obeyed God’s laws ([www.ucg.org/gn/gn43/editor.html](http://www.ucg.org/gn/gn43/editor.html), [www.ucg.org/gn/gn31/aids.html](http://www.ucg.org/gn/gn31/aids.html)).

New diseases are appearing at the rate of more than one per year. Who knows how many of them could be prevented if only people would follow the instructions of our Creator?

—Scott Ashley

remote corner of the world could start a fire that scorches us all. Should a super flu like that of 1918 make a comeback now that the population has quadrupled and more than a million people cross international boundaries on jets each day, experts say it could kill hundreds of millions” (ibid.).

Influenza is one of the most underrated biomedical hazards in today’s world. It is possible that new super strains may already be evolving. Medical science takes eight months or more to create a vaccine once a new strain appears. They know they cannot stop a pandemic. By the time authorities understand what is happening, it would be too late to spare millions.

The recent outbreak of SARS in China was rapidly identified and its genetic makeup fully decoded in a matter of weeks. Scientists from around the world worked together using the latest technology and communication tools to make this breakthrough. By contrast, it took several years to do the same with the HIV virus when it first surfaced more than 20 years ago.

However, it could take years to develop a viable vaccine to combat SARS. In the meantime other mutant strains are waiting to jump the species barrier from animals to humans. When they do, the results could be catastrophic. A breakdown caused by war in one part of the world, coupled with an outbreak of influenza, as in World War I, would be all it would take to set in motion a disease pandemic on the scale of those in the book of Revelation.

### **The seals in context**

When we look at the four seals of Revelation 6, we have to understand them in the context of God’s age-long message to mankind. False religion, war, famine and disease are the results of man’s broken relationship with God. And when these horsemen make their rides, it will be after repeated warning and pleading from God to turn from sin and live righteously based on His eternal law of love toward God and man.

When God first set Israel in a land of promise, He gave them instruction on how to live and conduct their affairs in a way that would bring peace and harmony. God wanted them to live with

blessing and abundance, not suffering and misery. In His basic instruction, God told how to avoid the problems brought by the opening of these seals. Notice the pattern set in Leviticus 26.

“You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 26:1).

Here is the solution to false religion, the first seal. Any form of worship other than that given by God is a false idol having no value or validity. It is nothing, without meaning or sense, and leads to wrong knowledge and lack of understanding of the true God and His purpose for human life. It therefore breaks the bond between God and His creation and leads to false systems of religion. When this bond is broken, human relationships suffer, leading to conflict and war, the second of the seals.

Verse 6 says, “I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid.” This peace is a gift from God when man obeys Him from the heart and puts His laws and ways first.

“If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit” (Leviticus 26:3-4). No famine. Plenty of food from an abundant harvest is the result of obedience.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, He told them none of the diseases of the Egyptians would be in their midst (Exodus 15:26). However, if they disobeyed and broke the covenant, they could expect disease to go through their families. Notice, “But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God . . . the Lord will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from the land into which you go to possess. The Lord will smite you with consumption, with fever and inflammation . . . and the tumors, the scurvy and the itch, from which you cannot be healed. The Lord will smite you with madness and blindness and dismay of [mind and] heart” (Deuteronomy 28:15, 21-22, 27-28, Amplified Bible).

Bound within the promises of blessings and cursings is the larger context for the four seals of Revelation 6. The human race is bound to its Creator in a relationship that will reach a conclusion. God will accomplish His purpose of bringing many sons to glory. Man will come face to face with God and admit that He is the one true God.

The book of Revelation shows God’s merciful intervention in human affairs to both correct and save man from destruction. God will bring justice to the earth, but there will first be a time of unparalleled tribulation.

### **The fifth horseman**

Currently the world is experiencing something resembling panic resulting from the appearance of the SARS virus. In Hong Kong all places of entertainment were temporarily shut down. Cities such as Toronto, Ontario, were put on a warning list as possible places to avoid due to the incidence of SARS cases.

The world media machine has contributed to both an awareness of the disease and a fear that is possibly out of proportion to the current danger posed by the virus. The economic impact due to decreased tourist and business travel will have a significant impact on many areas.

One can only imagine the worldwide impact to come from the ride of the pale horseman. The world has yet to see such a ride.

Which brings us to the only hope this world has to survive this devastating stampede. People commonly refer to these four seals as the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.” Doing so only focuses on the destruction they bring. There is no hope in this picture.

But John saw more than four horsemen in his vision. He saw five. Revelation 19:11-16 shows us the ride of the fifth horseman. It is the appearance of Jesus Christ, on a white horse from heaven, intervening in world affairs at its most crucial point. In our last article in this series we will focus on this “horseman of hope,” the King of Kings and Lord of Lords whose appearance will bring the everlasting Kingdom of righteousness. ❖



# A Brief History of America at War

*Nothing divides the American people like war. From its inception as a nation, the prospect, and in two or three cases the reality, of war has usually been a source of damaging division in the United States. The period prior to the recent conflict in Iraq was no different. How does this historic theme fit into America's divine destiny?*

by John Ross Schroeder

**A**s American schoolchildren, my generation was often treated to an idyllic vision of national harmony concerning the Revolutionary War and its resulting independence from Great Britain in 1776. It was only later in life, perhaps while attending university, that many of us discovered that a substantial minority of colonists were deeply divided over whether or not to go to war with England.

Even a few of the nation's chief founding fathers were very reluctant to embark on a conflict with the parent country and did not fully make up their minds for independence until late in the day. There was a strong sense of brotherhood with Britain.

## George Washington's advice

We were also taught almost from infancy to greatly respect George Washington and his



enormous contribution to American nationhood. Our national capital and one of our northwestern states are both named after him. Humanly speaking, he is truly the father of our country, our first president and the chief

architect of the victory over England in the Revolutionary War.

So great was his popularity that his contemporaries wanted to make him a king, but he wisely rejected that notion and set a precedent by choosing not to run again after two terms as president. When that precedent was eventually broken, a two-term limitation was added as an amendment to the Constitution.

Most Americans have the deepest respect for this great man—one of the seven founding fathers who shaped our national destiny. Not fully foreseeing conditions that the 20th-century world would bring, George Washington sternly warned the nation not to get involved in European wars. These words sank very deeply into the American national psyche—penetrating down through the generations.

Twice during the 20th century Britain found itself engaged in Herculean wars with Germany. The United States only entered both world wars well after they had begun. If you were to go to a large library in any American city and page through the newspapers of both eras just prior to these two wars, you would find public opinion in the country deeply divided over whether or not to enter these giant conflicts. President Franklin Roosevelt experienced great difficulty in trying to get the nation to see the enormous dangers posed by the Nazis prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

Of course, crucial events and circumstances virtually forced the United States to enter both World War I and World War II. In retrospect, there is very little doubt that without American intervention both wars would have been lost.

## The American Civil War

As bad as these two world wars were, no war

*Why remind our readers about these wars and our reaction to them? Because America, like most nations, has the habit of forgetting the source of its blessings. Yet the spiritual lessons of our national history are so important to our continued survival as a country.*



*As bad as these two world wars were, no war in the history of the nation was more divisive and damaging than the American Civil War (1861-1865). The casualties on both sides reached enormous numbers.*

in the history of the nation was more divisive and damaging than the American Civil War (1861-1865). The casualties on both sides reached enormous numbers. Most Americans know how bad it was, for example, at Gettysburg.

Families were fighting on the northern side against literal blood brothers in the South and vice versa. Particularly south of the Mason-Dixon Line, the nation has still not fully recovered from the wounds and scars



*Reaction to the Vietnam War of the late '60s and early '70s sent our college youth into the streets in many anti-war protests.*

from this, the most damaging war in American history.

Enter the Far East. The American

General “Old Vinegar Joe” Stilwell, U.S. military representative in China prior to World War II, wisely warned the country not to get involved in land wars in Asia. We were to cast aside his sage advice at our peril.

The side effects of the Korean War (1950-1953) are still with us today with South Korea and North Korea still divided and the latter nation posing a nuclear threat. Japan is actually considering rearming with thermonuclear weapons because of North Korea.

Reaction to the Vietnam War of the late '60s and early '70s sent our college youth into the streets in many antiwar protests. Remember the tragic shooting of several students at Kent State University? Many movies have examined the tragic spinoffs of this war inside and out. So unpopular was the Vietnam War that an American president was virtually prevented from running for the Oval Office again.

In more recent times, both Gulf Wars have produced much better outcomes for America than the two Asian wars. Still, at least a small minority of the citizenry supported neither Gulf conflict.

So why remind our readers about these wars and our reaction to them? Because America, like most nations, has the habit of forgetting the source of its blessings. Yet the spiritual lessons of our national history are so important to our continued survival as a country.

## Pax Americana

Notwithstanding its internal divisions, particularly during the period before any war, the United States has to be given a lot of credit for helping keep the peace in the world for the last 100 years. Historically, the nation has gone to war to rescue underdog countries from conquering nations saddled with demented dictators like Hitler and Mussolini. Saddam Hussein is the most recent example.

Many are quick to point out American mistakes—and we have made our share—but somehow lack the spiritual overview to see the divine destiny behind U.S. dominance on the world scene today. The whole story is told in our 40-page, full-color brochure *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. Without this knowledge you cannot understand what is really happening politically on earth today.

Just over 400 years ago this land from the Atlantic to the Pacific was populated with some 6 million native Americans of whom the outside world had virtually no knowledge. Now the United States of America is over 280 million strong in population and by far the only superpower in today's world—a national force that must be reckoned with whether other nations consider it friend or foe. You may ask: How and why did this happen? The intriguing brochure *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* will tell you. Please write for your free copy. ❖

## Recommended Reading

Where do such nations as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia appear in Bible prophecy? Does the Bible neglect to mention them? This thoroughly researched, eye-opening brochure, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*, will help answer these questions. It's provided free of charge.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download it from our Web site at  
[www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org)

# Making Sense of a Fragmenting World

*Terrorist alerts . . . war with Iraq . . . the "axis of evil." How can we make sense of it all?*

by Gary Petty

Capitol Hill politics, U.S. relationships with Great Britain, France and Germany, radical Islam . . . the world around us seems more and more complicated. How can we make sense of it all, especially in the age of sound bites and flickering television images that leave indelible impressions, but give little or no historical or cultural context?

When examining the global community of the 21st century, it's apparent that two conflicting forces are in motion. One is the movement to unite the world into one global economy. The success of the interdependence of international corporations is evidenced here in the United States where labels that say "Made in China" or "Made in Japan" no longer shock us. We drive cars assembled in Mexico and wear clothing stitched in an Indonesian sweatshop.

We're used to images of poor children in Africa wearing athletic shoes with an American brand name, drinking Coca-Cola while toting a Russian-made AK-47. The power of companies to cross international boundaries is unmistakable in that immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, MTV made inroads into new television markets in Eastern Europe.

Pundits of the global economy promote the concept that the quickest way to defeat communism is to introduce its adherents to the glitter of packaged consumerism. The result is that U.S. fast food chains see communist China as a giant mass of consumers ripe for being introduced to hamburgers and fries.

Others are more critical, seeing this global economy as an agency of a glib, shallow culture, promoting immediate if-it-itches-scratch-it consumerism promoted by creating brand names recognizable in Canada, Belgium, Japan and Egypt.

In the view of those who promote the new world economy, megacorporations transcend national boundaries with an endless variety of products. Nations are seen as collections of customers. All the marketers have to do is devise the right advertising campaign for that specific market. If the consumer doesn't have a need for a particular product, advertising can create the illusion of a need. Actors in white smocks tell us what

three out of four doctors, beer drinkers or housewives prefer, and that fabric softeners really can be "new and improved" every six months.

The forces of global economy are in a head-on collision with the forces of those who want to preserve a local culture, nationalism or religion. Islamic fundamentalist men in Saudi Arabia might want to drink Pepsi and watch American-made movies, but they don't want their wives and daughters listening to Madonna or wearing the see-almost-everything fashions of Britney Spears.

As Benjamin Barber points out in *Jihad vs. McWorld*, these two forces, global economy and the human need for historical, religious and cultural identity, collide into a symbiotic paranoia. The isolationist Islamic fundamentalist in Saudi Arabia also relies on the global economy to sell the oil that allows him to buy a Mercedes made in Germany. Of course, the German in Stuttgart needs the oil from Saudi Arabia to run his Japanese Toyota which was manufactured in the United Kingdom.

## Unity and disunity

The world is both fragmenting and uniting at the same time. NATO, which has insured the unity of the Western world for decades, is in trouble. Leaders in France and Germany are frustrated with the lack of unity in the European Union and are threatening to create a new alliance of nations. The former Soviet Union has fragmented into countries based on ethnic and cultural lines.

People want to be more than consumers, more than a collection of marketing data. At the heart of the conflict are two human needs. One is the need to belong to a family, a community, to experience meaningful relationships with others who share similar values.

One powerful factor in global communication is the Internet. People can communicate across national boundaries, time zones, oceans and ideologies with the click of a mouse. But does it create a sense of community among those



*The forces of global economy are in a head-on collision with the forces of those who want to preserve a local culture, nationalism or religion.*

who relate to each other in a chat room?

Brandon Veda became another suicide statistic, but what made his death alarmingly different was that when his parents turned on his computer they found that Brandon's overdose by drugs and alcohol was watched by chat room acquaintances. Hidden behind the anonymous veil of code names, and the virtual reality of cyberspace, people watched, some even encouraged, this 21-year-old to kill himself.

No matter how much money, possessions or status a person acquires, those things can't answer the basic human need to be valued as a person. To be emotionally and spiritually healthy, a human being needs stable relationships with other people.

A second human need is that information must relate, have context, be part of a whole in order to have meaning. Palestinian teenagers are willing to die as human bombs because the only context they've known is a Muslim view of the religious and political history of the land where they were born. They wish to protect what they see as their religious beliefs and families. In the context of their microscopic world, walking into a nightclub and blowing Israeli teenagers to bits (along with themselves) makes perfect sense.

### In search of a world context

What this world needs are universal standards for how nations and individuals relate to one another—one law guaranteeing justice, fairness and mercy. Who can create and enforce universal law? The United Nations has failed in its promise of creating a world of cooperation.

What is needed is a world context, but what culture can supply a truly worldview? Will it be American, Arab, Japanese, French? Can it be developed through a religious ecumenical spirit?

Christians need to understand that the Koran categorically denies the divinity of Jesus as the Christ and claims that Islam is the only true religion. The New Testament categorically claims that to deny Jesus as the Christ is to deny true religion. We're back to the unsolvable problem of irreconcilable differences. This doesn't mean that Christians and Muslims can't live together in peace. It does mean that unless there is



Reuters/Suhail Salem

*Palestinian teenagers are willing to die as human bombs because the only context they've known is a Muslim view of the religious and political history of the land where they were born. They wish to protect what they see as their religious beliefs and families. In the context of their microscopic world, walking into a nightclub and blowing Israeli teenagers to bits (along with themselves) makes perfect sense.*

a change of the human heart, we will be forever divided.

There is a need for one world community. It is the only way we will ever achieve universal peace. But it can't be accomplished by creating one world market of consumers vying for more and newer products. Unfortunately, it won't be achieved by religious ecumenism either.

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to write about the time when Jesus Christ will return to this earth to establish His Father's Kingdom. He records in Isaiah 2:2-4:

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their

swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

The Creator will allow humanity to exhaust every avenue to create peace and harmony. When the situation becomes hopeless, and universal destruction seems imminent, Jesus Christ will return to create the peace, harmony and prosperity all desire though a singular worldview. God speed that day. ❖

### Recommended Listening

This article is adapted from a *Good News* radio program. *Good News* radio is heard on stations across the country. For an Internet listing of stations and times or to download radio programs, go to [www.ucg.org/radio](http://www.ucg.org/radio). While on-line, you can also order the booklet offered on this program: *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*.

Contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download this booklet from our Web site at [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org)

# Alarming Increase of Anti-Americanism in Latin America

*The war in faraway Iraq has fueled rising resentment against the United States much closer to home.*

by Fred Nance

Now that the war in Iraq has ended, lingering disturbances are being felt from America's own backyard. One might say that the United States and Britain won the war but are losing the world. A dangerous trend of anti-Americanism has emerged towards the neighbor to the north. According to a recent *Miami Herald* article, the daily condemnations of the war by many Latin American governments, without criticizing Iraq's UN violations, has fueled a very intense anti-Americanism in the region.

President Bush, whom many consider cold and callous, is especially the target of blame.

"It has become fair game in Latin America to compare the United States with Nazi Germany and President Bush with Adolf Hitler" ("Views Aside, Anti-U.S. Frenzy Will Hurt Latin America," *Miami Herald*, April 13, 2003). Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes said in an interview with CNN that President Bush and his aides "are religious extremists too," and that "Bush has created a chaos, a confusion and a situation of international danger not seen since the days of Hitler" (ibid).

## Boycotts and changing names

Boycotts of American products and companies have been organized throughout Latin America. In Buenos Aires, Argentina, the city council is "considering a measure to rename 'United States Street' to the 'Street of the Iraqi People'" ("The Faraway War Set Latin America on Edge," *New York Times*, April 20, 2003).

The antiwar fervor was so strong in Mexico that the relationship between Presidents Bush and Vicente Fox has cooled dramatically. There was even a movement in the Mexican congress to change its official name. Since 1824 its official name has been "The United Mexican States." Now, the proposal is to change it to just "Mexico." The cry was "U.S. Out of Mexico" (*New York Times*, Jan. 26, 2003).

Why is there such an increase in animosity towards the United States at this time? Bible prophecy shows that a spirit of hate and indignation would arise against the modern-day descendants of the tribes of ancient Israel. Today, two of the major tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, are the nations known as the United Kingdom and the United States. (See our booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* for background to this astounding key to understanding prophecy.)

According to *Newsweek* magazine, a big problem for the United States was that much of the world was getting the war news from Arab stations. "Al-Jazeera is to the Iraq war what CNN was to the 1991 Gulf War—the primary source for news worldwide" ("The Other Air Battle," *Newsweek*, April 7, 2003). The Al-Jazeera slant covered statements from Iraqi officials as "facts" and those from American officials as "claims." "Even as the U.S. Military strives to avoid casualties, it finds itself depicted as a bunch of baby killers in the only air war most of the world sees—the one that appears on television."

According to *Newsweek*, Al-Jazeera's chief met with Saddam Hussein last year and began to set up a staff of eight reporters and a support staff of 20 in preparation for the anticipated coverage to come.

As a result of the Al-Jazeera spin, the war was viewed negatively for the United States even in countries that supported its campaign against Saddam Hussein.

Regular readers of *World News and Prophecy* understand that the descendants of ancient Israel are the modern-day peoples of the United States and Great Britain. A conspiracy against the people of Israel is described in Psalm 83. Perhaps the worldwide anti-American attitude can be enlightened by this prophecy. "They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted against Your sheltered ones. They have said, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that

*The daily condemnations of the war by many Latin American governments, without criticizing Iraq's UN violations, has fueled a very intense anti-Americanism in the region.*

the name of Israel may be remembered no more” (Psalm 83:3-4).

Notice the hate that would arise against the people of Israel is such that some would want to destroy them as a nation.

### **Economic letdown**

There is another factor adding fuel to the fire of anti-Americanism in the western hemisphere.

As a result of a global economic meltdown, poverty and hunger are reaching staggering new levels throughout Latin America. After a decade of experimenting with American free market reforms, Latin American nations are becoming very disillusioned with the process. Nations that once were racing to accept American-style democracy and economic values are waking up to the reality that it has not worked for many of them.

“The United States is also paying for what is seen here [in Latin America] as indifference to an economic crisis that swept this region a few years after its leaders took American advice to open their markets and embrace globalization” (*New York Times*, April 20, 2003). The attitude of blaming the United States for their current economic crisis is a result of a letdown from not being able to realize “the American dream” of prosperity.

However, the prosperity that the United States has enjoyed has been the result of national blessings promised to the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 12:2). “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.”

The national blessings promised to Abraham have been realized by the British Commonwealth and the United States. The impatience for prosperity in other countries makes for discontent, leading to anti-American feelings.

Latin America’s discontent with the United States is part of a worldwide trend that makes it worthwhile to watch the news as it relates to Bible prophecy. *World News and Prophecy* will keep its readers tuned in to future developments in this and other important areas of our world. ❖

“**KNOCK,**” (Continued from page 16)

on their inner resources for what may be their most challenging assignment outside of combat itself. And it is an assignment that is given and expected of the troops alone—not a social worker, psychologist or member of the clergy who may have more finesse in dealing with death and grief. This is one-on-one, up close and personal—no professionals or computers allowed.

In Anton’s interview with Navy Chaplain Gary Dallmann, we gain the emotional terrain that surrounds the moment once the knock on the door is heard. “To look at somebody and say ‘I have this terrible news for you’—it’s heartbreaking,” Dallmann said. The chaplain has accompanied 18 notification personnel over 22 years and recollects, “I can vividly remember every case.”

The chaplain not only is there to support the family, but to help the soldier get up on the porch, knock on the door and give the notification. Often the men have said, “Chaplain, will you do it?” It is at that moment that Dallman rallies them with “notification is your job. You can do it.” As reporter Anton so vividly pinpoints, it is at that moment of contact that they become the embodiment of the armed forces. It is the grim and respectful reality of soldiers taking care of soldiers.

### **Be understanding, but don’t overtalk**

But it’s never easy. Air Force Colonel Gene Quintanilla, who has performed seven notifications, is quoted as saying, “You still dread doing it. I’m gun-shy at this point. Every time the phone rings at home, I just cringe because of the war in Iraq.” In the article, Quintanilla shares his blueprint for successfully presenting a dignified and sincere notification. He must be prepared emotionally as the knock is made and the door opens.

He contemplates the deaths in his own family, be it grandparents or his own dad; and the holes they have created in his present and future. They must know he understands. As he and his partner drive to the home of the deceased, Quintanilla makes sure he has everyone’s names straight and has

the accurate details of death.

Chaplain Dallman was very candid about the “do’s and don’ts” of notification. One of the big “do’s” is: Do be prepared for a wide range of reaction. With that said, don’t be defensive if the next of kin blames the military. Reactions can range from stunned silence to fury. The chaplain shared how one woman who answered the door closed it and left it closed for 45 minutes because she was unable to face what she instantly knew. The door finally opened.

Dallman also recounted how it’s not uncommon for one of the uniformed individuals to be assaulted. He describes how a teenage girl pummeled him with her fists and screamed “you killed my brother” until family members could pull her away. That is why a part of the training and “going by the book” is not to say, “I know how you feel” or “you will get over it.” They are instructed not to “overtalk.” At a time such as this, pat condolences ring hollow and can seem to minimize a family’s loss.

It is at this moment, in their own way faced with the devastation of loss, that a family must give their own cry to the moment—be it the cry of silence or the roar of longing. As I read through this section I could hear the echo of David’s lament coming from 2 Samuel 18:33; “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! Oh Absalom my son, my son!” It is every parent’s plea, every parent’s nightmare and, yes, the beginning of every parent’s long night of life searching for meaning. And it’s every soldier’s duty not to “mess up” in this moment of emotional encounter.

### **Every case is different**

Every case is different, and some of the recipients of life’s worst news are incredibly generous in returning emotional support to the men in uniform sitting in their living rooms. Remember Major Hooker, who at the beginning of this article said, “I can’t mess this up”? He had to drive five hours through a snowstorm from Albany, New York, to South Burlington, Vermont, to notify Mindy Evin that her son, Corporal Mark A.



*"To look at somebody and say 'I have this terrible news for you'—it's heartbreaking."*

Evnin, had been shot to death in a fire-fight in Iraq. Once he got there, he found out she wasn't home, so he notified a neighbor to give him a call on his cell phone when she got home.

The call came and he and his uniformed companion went over to the house. She was watching TV and relaxing with a frozen dinner when the knock came. She opened the door. As reporter Anton so vividly projects in word pictures: "Hooker stood straight and stiff. But his hands trembled." He quotes Evnin as saying, "Just tell me, is he dead, is he wounded or is he captured?" It was then that Hooker asked if he could come in and sit down. He then delivered the speech that he so desperately did not want to "mess up."

The deceased soldier's mother can only remember two words from the speech—the two words, "he died." She went on to say of Major Hooker that "he's a very lovely man. He teared up when he told me." She then recounted telling him, "I'm sure this must be horrible for you." She remembered his saying it was the first time he had done this. Perhaps that is why the words of General Robert E. Lee should be remembered by every generation that

has forgotten the horrors of war. His words, solemnly spoken after he witnessed the death of so many young men at the battle of Chancellorsville, simply but eloquently say it all: "It is well that war is so horrible, lest we should grow fond of it."

### **Tell it like it is**

The staff of *World News and Prophecy* has a vital responsibility to tell it like it is. Therefore, we do point out the current human condition of war, strife, greed, pestilence and envy. But it is not designed to simply broadcast doom and gloom to a world that is already edgy, but to declare victory is at hand by proclaiming the most overwhelming news ever offered—the very real return of Jesus Christ with a Kingdom of solutions for what ails this earth.

A part of that reality is described in Isaiah 2:4 when it describes a world in which "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." Yes, no more war. Yes, no more casualties. Yes, no more young men pacing back and forth wondering how they are not going to "mess up" in sharing such critical news with family members. Yes, no more long walks up to the porch with someone peering at you from behind the drapes, dreading what's coming. Yes, no more knocks on the door.

Why is this possible? It was nearly 2,000 years ago that another notification was given. Another young man had been cut off in the midst of life. Another young man with a mother had been taken from the land of the living. In fact, she was there when he died.

### **Reversing pattern of life and death**

But that's not the notification I'm talking about. Three days after He died, women who had come to honor His grave site were met with a startling notification by angelic messengers concerning the One who had been in the tomb. Imagine a reversal of the notification process! Instead of notifying near and dear ones about the living dying, a complete switch was in store. One who was dead is now living!

The account speaks clearly in Matthew 28:5-8. "But the angel

answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.' So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word."

God's angels sent "the troops to tell the troops." No religious professional or theological guru could better explain what had occurred. Just ordinary people like you and me to proclaim extraordinary happenings. Sometimes, if not oftentimes, it's just best hearing it from one of your own.

Imagine the rush to Jerusalem and the pounding on the doors of those who had followed Christ to His death, now given the good news that they could follow Him again, in life, forever. Yes, imagine anxious knocks on the doors of Jerusalem that reverberated the reality that because God had reversed the pattern of life and death through Christ's resurrection, humanity is no longer headed for disaster, but redemption and a future laden with design and opportunity.

### **No matter how heavy the stone**

Yes, imagine a knock on the door that would assure them that even in great tragedy—no matter what happens—no matter how heavy the stone that lay across a heart because of the loss of a loved one—it too can be rolled away. And that same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is still available to us, the living, today. It can enable us to have the courage to take the walks and knock on the doors of those whose lives have been shattered with tragedy, and then stand by them in their hour of need.

Perhaps Major Hooker exemplifies best the millennial refrain found in Isaiah 30:21 of "this is the way, walk you in it" when he simply states, "I can't mess this up." Just like Major Hooker, we've got to know it, rehearse it, believe it, feel it and feel for others, because life is going to come knocking at our door, starting now. ❖



# This is the Way

ISAIAH 30:21

by Robin Webber

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## A Knock at the Door

Coming to grips with the reality of death is a staggering part of life. Some do it better than others; some don't do well at all; and some keep running from the thought until they die. Woody Allen, the American comedian, once said, "I don't mind dying. I just don't want to be around when it happens." Cute thought, but I don't hear anyone out there laughing too hard.

Other than contemplating our own mortality, perhaps the most painful of life's moments is hearing the news that a loved one has died.

With all the massive onslaught of media coverage regarding the war in Iraq that has come my way over the last couple of months, one article grabbed my attention and wouldn't let go. In a war of "shock and awe," push-button computer wizardry and everyone embedded in "real time," this particular article brought home the reality that the world of computer disks and hard drives cannot, or for that matter should not, communicate everything related to a conflict. The personal flesh-and-blood touch still has a place, even when it's a difficult place to be.

Perhaps there is no more traumatic event for relatives of a soldier than to see a car pull up in front of their house and see two individuals in dress uniform get out of the vehicle and slowly walk up the sidewalk towards their home. Life stops, and your mind races.

Perhaps there is no longer walk for the two uniformed individuals than that from the car to the door in front of them. They mount the front steps, rest on the porch to collect themselves, and then knock on the front door. The door opens and lives change forever.

Mike Anton, a *Los Angeles Times* staff writer, caught the essence of this moment in a fascinating depiction of the personal responsibility some soldiers carry of conveying to family members that a fellow warrior has died. It is a completion of camaraderie that is played out in the living rooms of parents, wives and children of fallen soldiers. Anton offers a moving analysis of the hearts and minds of soldiers and relatives alike in his article, "Notifying Officers Dread 'The Call,'" which appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 2003.

### "I Can't Mess this Up"

Anton begins his article with Marine Major Daniel Hooker as he got the call "to make the call." The article describes how he went into his room and took out his dress uniform with the sensation he was donning religious vestments. He just knew, "I can't mess this up." He tore out a page from the manual he had been given for such occasions and began reciting the prescribed lines: "The commandant of the Marine Corps has entrusted me . . ." The article poignantly describes how he couldn't get through it alone and asked the chaplain in for encouragement and help to practice his lines.

Anton goes on to share some of the basic guidelines that were crafted through many years of shared experience. Wear a dress uniform. Drive a government car. Do not go alone. Do not use the word "dead."

The reporter duly notes that, like everything in the armed services, everything is done according to the book. But beyond the book, in the end these soldiers must draw

(See "KNOCK," page 14)