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Massive Drought Grips Australia

Years of drought have taken Australia to the edge of massive water redistribution that threatens vital agricultural interests. Many blame it all on global warming, but is there something deeper to consider?

by Reg Wright

The worldwide debate over the warming of earth's environment makes daily headlines. Some reports say that a small increase in the world's temperature could cause billions of people to be without water. Dire reports hint at human extinction if world governments do not take drastic measures to reduce man's pollution of the planet.

In the midst of this debate, one nation in the developed world is facing a major drought crisis.

Australia is considered to be the driest continent on earth and, as we go to press, huge areas of the country are in the grip of the worst drought in living memory. With many reservoirs at an all-time low, many towns and capital cities are under severe water restrictions. Billions of dollars are being urgently spent on water conservation methods and on seeking and developing alternate water supplies as reservoirs continue to drop to critically low levels.

In his book *Drought in Australia*, Justin Healey documents the history of drought in Australia and the widespread impact of the present drought. He writes that this latest drought has



Reuters/Tim Wimborne

Australian farmer inspects an empty reservoir on his farm near Goulburn.

hit agriculture hard, with declining productivity severely affecting the rural areas and the national economy.

Crop failures and livestock losses are common. Farmers are, in many cases, struggling to survive. Facing huge financial losses and debt to the banks, there are those in the farming community whose despair is such that suicide seems the only way out.

The headline on page 1 of *The Australian* newspaper, April 20, "Murray Running on Empty," high-
(See "DROUGHT," page 3)



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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

Don't Mess With Revelation!

The book of Revelation continues to hold a fascination for people from all walks of life. Even some who don't believe the message of the book write whole books about the fascination believers have with the prophecies and images portrayed in the last book of the Bible. And those who do believe in its message turn out more books with new theories to decode its intricate prophecies.

A few months ago in this space I reviewed a book called *A History of the End of the World*. The book chronicles the many fabulous ideas and interpretations of Revelation by armchair prophets. I showed that the world will not end as the doomsayers predict. Human life is not going to evaporate in a nuclear Armageddon. Last week I walked through my local bookstore and saw yet another new title promising the "code" to unlock the book.

I think if more people sat down with their Bibles and began reading Revelation, they would come up with more basic understanding than they would with all these "helps" provided by authors who want to make a profit from their ideas. Solomon's words are ever truer today: "Of making many books there is no end" (Ecclesiastes 12:12).

Revelation does have a message for us today, and you can understand what it is! Our world is approaching one of those crossroads of history where we are about to see massive changes in the existing power relationships that have shaped our world. America, the present world colossus, is being challenged by nations that want their time at the center of the world stage. China is moving relentlessly to counter American influence wherever it can. At the same time, China finances a huge portion of America's massive trade deficit. The dollar has weakened and could be replaced as the leading world currency, possibly by the euro. If that happens, America will see prices rise dramatically, with a reduction in its standard of living. The time of the dominance of the English-speaking peoples is coming to a close. Other nations are striving to lead the world, and Revelation has specific things to say about this.

Should you take the words of Revelation seriously? Yes. Its opening words declare it to be the genuine revelation of Jesus Christ to His Church then and today. Christ has a direct message from God's throne showing what will happen at the close of this age, the biblical "time of the end," and the dawning of the world to come.

Read His closing words: "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in the book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

If you believe in God, then Revelation is a book you want to take seriously. Even if you have a casual belief in God and the Bible, you may want to look at today's world to see there are some pretty scary things on the horizon. There is a rising tide of religious influence in world affairs. Nations are gravitating toward new geopolitical alignments. At the same time a power vacuum seems to be developing among world leaders. With more nations developing nuclear abilities, the threat of nuclear war is as great as it ever has been.

Something is happening to the world's climate. There are abrupt shifts in weather patterns leading to drought in many places. The severity of earthquakes and hurricanes in recent years serve to awaken us to the power of nature running outside its normal boundaries. And the book of Revelation has something to say about all these and other world trends. Now more than ever you need to understand Christ's message from this book of prophecy. If you have not read our free booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*, please do so. You can find it and other resources online at www.wnponline.org.

—Darris McNeely



Darris McNeely



DW Stock Picture Library

Australian farmer surveys cattle killed by the severe drought. Several towns on the Darling Downs are so critically low on water they are having water brought in by trucks at a cost of A\$10,000 a day.

“DROUGHT” (Continued from page 1) lights the country’s plight. The Murray-Darling river system supplies water to a huge section of Australia—from southern Queensland, through New South Wales and Victoria and emptying into the sea in South Australia. It is one of the nation’s largest food bowls, producing some 70 percent of the nation’s agricultural produce and worth \$6 billion Australian dollars annually.

On April 19, Prime Minister John Howard described the situation as an “unprecedentedly dangerous situation.” He said that irrigation water to the farmers in the Murray-Darling basin would be cut to zero unless “very substantial” rainfall was received in the next six to eight weeks.

As *The Australian* reported, “The nation’s food bowl will be sacrificed to provide drinking water to towns and cities” in this drought-ravaged region. One farmer described this as “the mother of all droughts.”

But *why* should the Australian farming community have to suffer like

this? Why should there be such severe drought in the first place? There is a cause for every effect. *World News and Prophecy* explores the reasons behind the issues that confront and concern us—from a biblical perspective.

Who, or what, is to blame?

Prime Minister Howard has not signed Australia to the Kyoto treaty governing carbon emissions and the global environment.

Some, highly critical of this decision, blame Australia’s current drought on global warming and warn that failure to take the measures demanded by environmentalists will result in an even larger and more widespread drought.

An April 20 editorial in London’s *The Independent* illustrates the argument.

“Moreover, this is a taste of things to come—not just for Australia, but the world. As the latest report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change makes clear, the runaway warming of the earth will bring severe drought in its wake. And the economic consequences will be disastrous.”

The debate about what is behind global warming goes on, with both sides arguing their points passionately. Scientists are divided on the question, with most claiming global warming is man-made while others assert it is part of a natural cycle of earth’s weather patterns.

What God’s Word says about drought

Perhaps the debate is obscuring a more important matter. Rather than participate in the politics of the issue, we choose to point to what God’s Word says about drought, and the connection it makes to human behavior. The Bible shows God can and does control the climate of nations according to His will. When He chooses to intervene, it is often because of sin, the transgression of His divine law.

Australia and other nations facing

catastrophic drought should be looking at their failure to live up to their spiritual “treaty” with God as a fundamental cause of drought. Prayer with repentance is a good first step toward a solution to the problem.

Australia in Bible prophecy

Though Australia is not directly mentioned by name in the Bible, it is included by virtue of the fact that the people of British descent who colonized the country are the descendants of the patriarch Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel.

Through the Bible and history, our booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* traces and identifies these English-speaking peoples of Australia as being part of the descendants of Ephraim, one of the grandsons of Jacob.

Australia is one of the nations on earth today fulfilling God’s promise of national inheritance to the seed of

Abraham, the grandfather of Jacob (Genesis 17:4; 28:14; 35:9-11). The Bible, therefore, has much to say about Australia.

Promises of blessings and curses

In Leviticus 26:3-5 God gave this promise to ancient Israel: “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. Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.”

On the contrary side, the chapter continues: “But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My

covenant, I also will do this to you... I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit” (verses 14-20).

The apostle Paul wrote that the historical things that happened to ancient Israel are there for our learning (1 Corinthians 10:11). Clearly there is a connection between obedience to God’s commandments and the blessings that accompany that obedience.

When we examine the way people live in Australia and other English-speaking countries, it is just as clear that they do not personally heed, or take into consideration, God’s way of life as instructed in the Bible.

The Bible explains that drought comes as a direct result of disobedience to God and, indeed, the disobedience of humankind in general over thousands of years has contributed to the detrimental climate changes that are currently affecting the whole earth.

If Australians would turn wholeheartedly to God and set their hearts and minds to obey Him, the drought would come to an end. The farming community would again enjoy *rain in its season, and the land would yield its produce.*

Everyone, farmer and city dweller alike, would enjoy the blessing that comes from obedience to God’s commands. ❖

How Can You Make Sense of the News?



www.wnponline.org

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

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

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

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

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

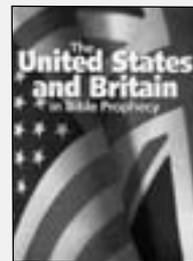
- Articles analyzing world news in the light of Bible prophecy.
- An online blog discussing the latest news and trends.
- Audio discussion (podcasts) of what's happening in the world around us.
- Links to significant news items from hundreds of news sources around the world.
- Free booklets to help you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

To understand the meaning behind the news and where the world is headed, visit us at www.wnponline.org today!



Recommended Reading

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



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

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

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Will Iran Be Stopped by Diplomacy?

America has some 180,000 military people in Iraq and Afghanistan still trying to establish democratic stability in those two troubled nations. President George W. Bush is also hampered by a Congress urging direct talks with Iran and even contemplating restraints on potential American military strikes. But will the only credible alternative option, diplomacy, really work with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the controls?

by John Ross Schroeder

Diplomacy seems to be the new order of the day. Just about everywhere in the world, traveling diplomats are on their way to meetings and conferences. American House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi recently visited Syria and met with Syrian President Bashar Assad, but not with the blessings of the White House.

In fact, according to a *USA Today* lead editorial, “She violated a long-held understanding that the United States should speak with one official voice abroad—even if the country is deeply divided on foreign policy back home” (April 9, 2007).

Will diplomacy win the day?

On her trips to the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has tried her level best to restart the peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians—but with little obvious success.

Various newspaper headlines tell us that “Saudis Increase Overtures to Israel,” “Israel Panel Hears that Damascus Wants [a] Deal,” “Talk to Iran and Syria? Yes” and “Syria Finds the World Suddenly Visiting with Carrot and Stick.”

Clearly the prevailing mood in the diplomatic world is to talk. “Very well, let’s talk,” one headline in *The Economist* says. The article itself speaks wryly of “the axis of the formerly evil.” A newspaper article advises, in “dealing with Iran, try to talk. You can use the stick later.”

But will mere talk stop Iran from generating nuclear weapons? That is the question.

The dismal track record so far

Europe’s track record when it comes to restraining Iran is dodgy at best and bordering on complete failure at worst. Fairly recently



Reuters/Khaled al-Hariri

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi leads a group of Congress members as she arrives in Syria April 4.

the big three in Europe—Germany, France and Britain—did not succeed in trying to halt Iran’s nuclear plans. Yet parts of Europe are just as vulnerable to Iranian missiles as the state of Israel is.

Still the European Union is Iran’s largest trading partner, and the EU sells sniper rifles to this rogue regime while its diplomats continue to totally rule out force in dealing with the Ahmadinejad administration.

Some say that Washington has nothing to lose in employing the diplomatic option almost exclusively, but there is such a thing as delaying too long in effectively confronting an enemy apparently bent on arming itself with atomic weapons. The danger is keenly felt in Israel, Iran’s chief target. But Israel is not the only one who should worry.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind, former foreign and defense minister of Britain, stated: “Iran is more powerful than it has ever been. Few

Will mere talk stop Iran from generating nuclear weapons?



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (center) and Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah (right) are greeted by top Saudi officials upon Ahmadinejad's arrival at Riyadh March 3.

doubt its nuclear weapons aspirations and its ability to realize them. It is already the leading power in the Gulf and with nuclear weapons could dominate the Muslim Middle East” (*International Herald Tribune*, March 7, 2007).

Iran's strategy against Israel

President Ahmadinejad is already well known for his role as a Holocaust denier. He even convened a conference to try to establish that there was no Jewish Holocaust.

Clearly this mid-20th century cataclysm is a target of the Iranian government. To Iranian rulers, Nazi death camps become jails and genocide stories mere fabrications.

Fomenting suspicion of the Holocaust as lacking historical evidence strengthens the Iranian case against Israel's right to exist. It is a vital part of President Ahmadinejad's strategy to destroy the state of Israel.

Western moral relativism, multiculturalism and the current tendency to reconstruct history in terms of promoting planned political agendas are all factors that help Iran to confuse people by casting doubt on the historicity of the Holocaust.

Aside from terrorist suicide bomb-

ers and occasional rocket attacks from Lebanon and Gaza, conventional military efforts against Israel have fallen out of fashion. Israel's enemies, and Iran in particular, are now seriously considering the nuclear option. Atomic weapons in the hands of mullahs is a real concern. Then at last the enemies of Israel could possibly prevail. Can you imagine a number of Middle Eastern countries allied against Israel under an Iranian leadership armed with nuclear weapons?

Can we seriously contemplate any Israeli prime minister sitting on his hands some 60 years after the Holocaust, should Tehran persist in threatening Israel's annihilation and should it also become apparent that Iranian nuclear weaponry is an absolute certainty? Not likely!

Asaph's insightful prophecy

Consider the words of Asaph. He was a descendant of Levi, one of the 12 tribes of Israel. He was chosen by the chief Levites as a leading singer when the ark was brought to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:17). King David made him leader of choral worship (1 Chronicles 16:4-5). He wrote some of the psalms, undoubtedly under the guidance of David. Psalm 83 is a case in point.

Asaph implores God to recognize that the enemies of Israel “have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against your sheltered ones. They have said, ‘Come and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.’ For they have consulted together with one consent. They form a confederacy against You [Israel's God]” (Psalm 83:3-5, emphasis added).

Then Asaph goes on to mention some specific Middle Eastern nations lined up against Israel. “The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagrites, Gebal, Ammon and Amalek; Philista with the inhabitants of Tyre” (verses 6-7).

These are ancient nations, but their descendants still populate parts of the Middle East. Asaph's prophecy may very well be dual in nature, but even if it is not, the principle remains very clear. It transcends the time gap.

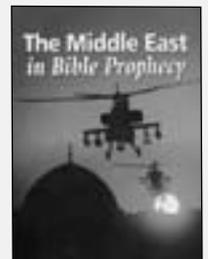
The state of Israel has very few friends in the Middle East and those few may be tempted to become enemies again in the eventuality of a serious crisis.

Keep a watchful eye on events in the Middle East. Watch diplomatic as well as military movements.

As an essential background aid to understanding both the historical and the prophetic angles, request our free booklet *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. It will also shed much light on current occurrences in that troubled part of the world. ❖

Recommended Reading

To better understand the roots of the conflict between Islam and the West, request a free copy of *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. This fully illustrated booklet takes you on an eye-opening journey through history and the Bible to grasp the roots of this conflict, and where it will lead.



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Germany's Rising Economic and Political Power

Germany, not the United States, is the world's biggest single exporting nation. The German-dominated European Union is the world's biggest single market. Additionally, the German-based euro is increasingly the international currency of choice. Few realize how significant these economic factors are.

by Melvin Rhodes

A brief news item on the main evening news in early April left me stunned. It came halfway through the 30-minute program.

The short news clip showed Ehud Olmert, Israel's prime minister, giving a press conference at which he announced a willingness to enter peace talks with the Palestinians. Absolutely nothing was said and no attention was given to the woman standing next to him. That's what left me stunned!

The lady was none other than the German chancellor and current president of the European Union, Angela Merkel.

It was as if she did not exist.

Given Germany's fairly recent history with the Jews, surely a visit by the head of the German government ranks a mention, showing at the very least that German-Israeli relations have come a long way since the Holocaust.

But, putting aside history, Chancellor Merkel is one of the most important personages on the world stage. What was she doing in Israel and was she the one who brought the prime minister to the negotiating table? America has been Israel's main source of support for five decades. Only the United States has previously had the clout to lead Israeli leaders to peace talks. Does the European Union now have the same power?

These are questions that, at the very least, should have been asked on that evening news broadcast. But they weren't. It's as if Europe doesn't count and is of no relevance to the United States or the Mideast.

But Germany, with a population about 27 percent of America's, has been the world's biggest exporting nation for four years now, accounting for 13 percent of the world's trade. With the German dominated euro slowly increasing in value against the American dollar, you would think that Germans would be having difficulty selling their goods internationally, but this is not the case. German prod-



Reuters/Noav Lerner

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert attend a joint news conference April 1.

ucts are among the best in the world and last a long time.

Germans have no difficulty selling the items they produce, even when the price internationally has risen by 30 percent due to the rising value of their currency. "There's no better proof that our products are superior than to have an indirect price increase of 30 percent without losing any sales," said Alexander von Witzleben, the chief of Jenoptik, which makes lasers and sensors.

"Von Witzleben notes that Germany now exports more to Russia and its former Soviet satellites than it does to the United States. It ships nearly as much to Britain as to America, and its total exports within Europe are five times greater than its shipments to the United States" (Mark Landler, "German Economy Booms as Exporters Extend Their Reach," *International Herald Tribune*, April 11, 2007).

Contrast the United States, where American manufacturers are finding it increasingly difficult to sell their products, even with the competitive advantage of a fall in the dollar. Japanese car manufacturers are selling record numbers of autos in the United States at a time

Little realized is that Germany is on track to achieving peacefully what it failed to do in the two world wars of the 20th century.

when American car companies should show a competitive advantage.

The euro is another reason for Germany's increasing clout. The euro is now used by 13 European nations. Worldwide, cash transactions in euros are now greater in number than those in dollars. Europe's market capitalization total is also now greater than that of the United States, for the first time since 1914, when World War I broke out and ended Europe's global supremacy.

"Europe, of course, benefits from a resurgent Germany simply because of the country's size. It accounts for a fifth of the economic activity of the European Union, and its trade within Europe is booming" (ibid.).

It should also be noted that "Germany's rise has set it apart from its European neighbors. While Italy struggles to regain its export groove and France waits for a presidential election that could reshape its political and economic landscape, Germany has doggedly molded itself into a globally competitive player" (ibid.).

EU at 50

For the first six months of this year, Germany has been presiding over the EU's rotating presidency. This gives the country and its leader much greater clout on the world stage.

Germany was one of the six original signers of the 1957 Treaty of Rome, along with France, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. Berlin hosted the anniversary celebrations in March and is using its influence to push through a revised European constitution that will create a federal European government. This will not only increase Europe's power and effectiveness, but also that of Germany, the dominant country of the 27-nation trading bloc.

Little realized is that Germany is on track to achieving peacefully what it failed to do in the two world wars of the 20th century.

"France created the European Union both to protect and assert itself in the geography of the Cold War—and in that it was wildly successful. But that geography no longer exists, and the union now not only has grown beyond Paris' grasp, but also has fallen under the influence of a power that until recent-

ly France controlled" (Peter Zeihan, "EU: A Golden Anniversary—and a Hard Reality for France," Stratfor: Geopolitical Intelligence Report, March 27, 2007). That power is Germany.

France's domination of the European Union naturally followed from Germany's defeat at the end of World War II. Having been invaded by Germany three times in 70 years, France was determined that never again would the two countries go to war. This was the inspiration for the EU, formerly the European Common Market. As long as Europe was divided, France's lead continued. But the end of the Cold War changed everything.

"The pond in which France swam enlarged, and the Soviet Union's imperial debris has since proven to be more than Paris can manage.

"Yes, Germany remained critical in French thinking regarding Europe; but unlike the heady days of the 1960s and 1970s, when Paris largely determined the German position, reunified Germany began to inject its own preferences—very quietly—into European processes... During this time, Franco-German relations remained cordial, but the European project began to take a new (German) direction" (ibid.).

Among other things, it was German meddling in the Balkans that "ultimately blossomed into the Yugoslav wars"; and "German diplomats took the lead in crafting the euro—a currency governed by the same conservative policies used in German, not French, monetary management."

Germany was the most enthusiastic about EU expansion to the east, of which Berlin, at the center of Europe, could take maximum advantage. Eastward expansion "diluted France's political control of the organization," which has expanded from 15 to 27 countries since the fall of communism (ibid.).

Germany is the number one trading partner of all the new EU member nations and most of the older ones. Germany is also the international economic powerhouse. After the United States and Japan, it is the third biggest single economy. When its dominance of the EU is factored in, it could be said to be the world's number one economy. Certainly, the euro is rapidly replacing

the American dollar as the international currency of choice, though most commodities remain priced in dollars.

This brings us back to the Middle East and Chancellor Merkel's visit to Israel. "Germany, not France, is able to hold—indeed, demand—a robust discussion with any major power of the world on any topic" (ibid.). Also, a German refusal to cooperate can be problematic for the United States and Great Britain. Germany failed to support the two coalition partners in Iraq, and Germany refused to put economic pressure on Iran during the recent seizure of the 15 British sailors.

Indeed, it is in the Middle East that European and American interests most differ. The EU's policies embrace the Palestinian cause much more than America's do. Though both have ties with Israel, America's are generally perceived as much stronger. Also, closer proximity to the Middle East and a greater dependence on Mideast oil means that European countries have a greater stake in seeing the area at peace.

Added to these factors is concern over Europe's growing Muslim population and the increasing threat from domestic terrorism. The German chancellor announced early in April plans to boost state-controlled day-care facilities in the hope of boosting the German birthrate, one of the lowest in the world.

Germany at center of European history

Not only is Germany at the geographical center of Europe, it has also been at the political center. In the last 100 years, rapid growth in German economic, industrial and trading power was quickly followed by rising German militarism, which resulted in the two world wars.

In fact, Germany recovered amazingly quickly from the devastation of the Great Depression. Early in 1933 its economy was in a collapsed state. Within six years, it had become the economic powerhouse of Europe, able to take on the military might of the British and French empires and later, the United States. It was far from a foregone conclusion that the Allies would win World War II.

Germany seems set to once again become a major force in the world.

(See "GERMANY," page 11)

The Role of a Watchman, Part Two

A watchman stood guard on the walls of ancient towns to see to the welfare of its citizens and to warn of coming trouble. Who is to do that job today in a dangerous world moving closer to the crisis of the close of the age?

by Darris McNeely

Through Isaiah the prophet, God promises the watchful eye of servants who will hold day and night vigils for the peace of Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62:6-7).

God charges this group to watch for the safety of the city and its citizens.

These special servants understand the dangers of the present world. They see the dark gathering clouds on the world’s horizon and are moved to proclaim a warning message to any in today’s world who will hear and listen.

The message would also include teaching the way to personal peace for any who listen. It will show the true teaching of God and the way to salvation. It will show how one could choose to escape the judgment God will bring upon the world.

Do you see yourself in this group of watchmen? Is there a role for you among those who watch today’s world and yearn to make it better? Actually, today’s true Christians are included in this grave responsibility. We are to share in the role of standing vigil like a watchman of old, and showing the way forward through the suffering and evil in much of our world.

Sigh and cry

We saw in the previous article that Ezekiel was set as a watchman to the house of Israel (Ezekiel 3). God took Ezekiel in vision back to Jerusalem to observe the lifestyle of those Jews who were left behind when Nebuchadnezzar captured the city and took many captive to Babylon.

It seems that the majority of the populace had not learned from the many warnings to change their wicked ways. In Jerusalem the people continued to worship false gods and strange customs completely different from what God had given their forefathers. Violence was an everyday occurrence.

While in the temple—the heart of the city and the place representative of the presence of God—Ezekiel sees six men (angels) approach from the north gate, each carrying a battle-ax. One of the angels had a writer’s inkhorn; they all came and stood beside the altar (Ezekiel 9:1-2).

“Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer’s inkhorn at his side; and the LORD said to him, ‘Go through the midst...of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who *sigh and cry* over all the abominations that are done within it’” (verses 3-4).

God was going to send these angels through the city to kill the disobedient. But those who were not caught up in sin and rebellion against God would be spared. Those who prayed from a heart sick with grief over the sorry state of society were granted a mark that pardoned or protected them from God’s judgment.

Their distinguishing feature was their active concern for the moral and ethical condition of the society. God honored that attitude.

These people were motivated by a righteous heart and attitude. Does this describe you or me? Do we sigh and cry for the moral condition of our nation today? Do we see the world through God’s eyes and understand how far its citizens have strayed from His righteous commandments and teachings?

Is there a role for you among those who watch today’s world and yearn to make it better?

If so, then we have a duty to help others understand what is coming when God sets His hand in judgment on the nations.

A national affliction

America and Great Britain stand today at a crossroads. For more than 200 years they have dominated the world in virtually every arena. As Great Britain retreated from its empire, America was there to take its place and continue the legacy set by the English through their peak years. (For the complete story of who and why this has been, see our booklet, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.)

But America's dominant power is under siege from many sectors. Its will to stay the course in Iraq is being tested, its superb military machine strained under the pressure of the extended fighting. Though it is the primary engine for the world's economy, there are many cracks in the foundation that could cause a crash. A weakened dollar and the trade balance deficit are both troubling indicators of a major crisis ahead.

Like Israel and Judah of old, America's, and much of the English-speaking world's, present position is dependent on the grace of God. As long as He chooses to uphold the nations' fortunes, we can expect the present status to continue.

But God warns us through the message of the prophets that sins will demand a day of reckoning. People cannot continue worshipping the false gods of materialism and self, blindly stumbling along in their own righteousness, and expect their affluent standard of living to continue.

God's Word confirms there will be an accounting; the lesson of history is that any people who corrupt their moral core will eventually fade from power. God calls on America and Great Britain to wake up, acknowledge their sins against Him and repent before national calamity falls upon them.

Amos the prophet walked into the city of Samaria and boldly told the king and city leaders to repent or face captivity at the hands of the



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Do we sigh and cry for the moral condition of our nation today? Do we see the world through God's eyes and understand how far its citizens have strayed from His righteous commandments and teachings?

Assyrians. To those who were distracted by a high standard of living produced by one of the world's first periods of globalization, he said, "Stop and consider your ways." He pointed to neighboring states that had fallen and said, "You are no better than they were."

He scolded those who did not want to hear a "message of doom." To those who stocked their homes with the finest luxury goods and gourmet foods, trusting that affluence was a sign of God's blessing, he said, "Don't trust in materialism." The citizenry, at all levels, looked only to their comfort and ease and did not grieve "for the affliction of Joseph" (Amos 6:6).

Those who "grieve" and "sigh and cry" are called to a unique role. They are part of God's elect, called to the duty of proclaiming the announcement of the Kingdom of God. That message includes the good news of Christ's return in the role of King of Kings and Lord of Lords to restore all things (Acts 3:19-21). The message also contains a warning to repent

or face the judgment of God. It is a double-edged message—direct and plain-spoken, yet full of hope.

Fulfilling this role requires courage, perseverance and a love for the people addressed. One of the best examples of this was the prophet Jeremiah. Known as the patriotic prophet, Jeremiah spent more than 40 years in the role of a watchman to the nation of Judah, standing in the streets and temple precincts urging people to heed his warnings and return to the ways of God.

Notice this passage: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it'" (Jeremiah 6:16).

God's main message through all the prophets and extending into the New Testament is to return to His paths, His teachings, as the solution for the suffering and pain of human life. "Do this and live," He says.

Jeremiah and others like him stand in the role of a watchman. "Also, I set

watchmen over you, saying, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not listen.’ Therefore hear, you nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people—the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My words nor My law, but rejected it” (Jeremiah 6:17-19).

Today’s watchmen

Examining the concept of watching in the New Testament helps to complete the picture of this role. The Greek word *gregoreo*, translated as “watch,” means, to keep awake, to watch and to take heed. Through neglect or laziness we could let down and be overcome with sin or a sudden calamity could overwhelm us spiritually.

Notice in Mark 13:32-37 that Christ urges His disciples three times to “watch” during the times leading to His second coming. The emphasis is on a personal watch through prayer to know the times.

By prayer and righteous living, we stay tuned to Christ. Through this way of life one can discern the moral climate of the times and avoid being tossed around with every shifting ideology and philosophy of modern culture. Walking in God’s laws and instruction insulates us from the course of the world and its deceptions.

Revelation 16 describes a massive deception perpetrated by Satan and demons that work through the human instruments called the Beast and the False Prophet (verse 13). Their influence gathers the kings of the earth “to the battle of that great day of God Almighty...to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (verses 14, 16).

In our fascination over these otherworldly figures, we can easily skip over Christ’s charge: “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame” (verse 15).

Christ pronounces a blessing for those who, during mankind’s darkest moment, watch. That is, they are practicing righteous living. The natural

by-product of this close relationship with God is being alert to religious deception. Those who frame their life around the coming Kingdom of God will vigilantly watch and keep themselves from the wiles of the evil one, Satan the devil.

This is the end result of fulfilling the role of a watchman within the Body of Christ—to be found standing in the faith, blessed of God at the dawn of His Kingdom on this earth.

Our world is moving toward this time of worldwide cataclysm. Revelation 16 describes a future moment when the political leaders and people will be caught up in a rapid movement of events engineered through two of history’s most compelling figures, the Beast and False Prophet. The former is a political leader of compelling personality and ability, and the other a religious leader unlike any in modern times.

Together they will convince armies to move toward Jerusalem to fight Jesus Christ at His coming. It sounds like science fiction, but it isn’t. It is a literal truth, a prophecy from the Bible that you need to believe and understand.

Warning and hope

This is a time for the watchmen to mount the walls and sound a clear, unmistakable warning message of the dangers facing not just the English-speaking peoples but also the whole world. It is a time to make known the hope of the coming Kingdom of God. This message is the light that will illumine the darkest period of human history.

Isaiah’s message stands bright and clear today. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’ Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye when the LORD brings back Zion” (Isaiah 52:7).

Come, take your place on the walls, work for the Kingdom and pray for its speedy arrival. ❖

“GERMANY,” (Continued from page 8)

The Bible prophesies a coming union of nations in Europe that will be the next global superpower. This final resurrection of the Roman Empire (remember, the EU was formed by the Treaty of Rome 50 years ago) will comprise 10 European nations or groups of nations.

“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings [or leaders] who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast” (Revelation 17:12). The “beast” can mean this revived Roman Empire or its leader; the government will be a successor to the ancient Roman Empire pictured by a “beast” in Daniel 2 and 7.

“These [10 leaders] are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast” (Revelation 17:13).

We know that this is an end-time prophecy as the next verse, verse 14, prophesies that this combination of nations “will make war with the Lamb” (Jesus Christ) at His return.

The push by Germany for the full unification of Europe could be a stepping-stone to this union of nations. The European Union is based on democratic principles, although many of its citizens are dissatisfied with the power and the pettiness of its bureaucrats.

The Stratfor article concludes with the following two paragraphs. “There is a reason why Merkel’s first summit in her current role as EU president focused on energy security. There is a reason why Germany is the only major eurozone economy that has not called for more political oversight of the European Central Bank (ECB). There is a reason why it was a German who negotiated and wrote the Maastricht Treaty on monetary union. There is a reason why ECB policymakers look first and foremost at German economic data. And there is a reason why the ECB is located in Frankfurt.

“So, when thinking of evolutions in the European Union, consider the implications of having the word ‘euro’ replaced with ‘deutsche mark.’ For all practical purposes, that is what the euro is.”

In other words, Germany is at the head of the European Union. Looking ahead, that means Germany will be in the leading role when the European nations achieve their full union and become the global superpower the Bible shows is on the way. ❖

Future Visions: The Wonderful World Beyond Today!

Will science create a gleaming utopia of peace and happiness for all? Or does a nightmarish world await us? Futurists offer a variety of conflicting visions. But is there a way to foresee what it will really be like in the world beyond today?

by Mike Bennett

What does the future hold—for you? When you imagine what might come to pass, what are the first things that come to mind? Perhaps cutting-edge inventions and science-fiction-inspired gadgets?

Science and technology promise continuing advancements almost beyond belief. With human knowledge doubling every 10 years and computing power doubling every 18 months, it's no wonder many futurists see a world of spectacular human achievements ahead.

Michio Kaku, professor of theoretical physics at the City College of New York and cofounder of the string field theory, after interviewing more than 150 other scientists focused on three key developments that are radically changing our world.

He highlighted the computer revolution, the biomolecular revolution, which “will ultimately give us the nearly godlike ability to manipulate life almost at will,” and the quantum revolution, “which will give us control over matter itself” (*Visions: How Science Will Revolutionize the 21st Century*, 1997, pp. ix, x, 4, 9).

Ultimately, Dr. Kaku says, these advancements “will make it possible to fulfill our destiny and take our place among the stars. The harnessing of these scientific revolutions is the first step toward making the universe truly our backyard” (p. 355).

One view of technological progress forecasts that by 2025 we'll be using clean hydrogen engines for transportation, domestic robots to take care of household chores and cybernetic health enhancements to make ourselves better than we naturally would be.

By 2040 innovation and scientific advancement would lead to the virtual elimination of hunger and poverty, free quality education, longer life and a marked increase in personal wealth available to all (James Canton, *The Extreme Future*, 2006, pp. 51, 53).

Another futurist and science fiction writer takes us on a tour of the home of tomorrow: “You don't have a ‘shower stall.’ You have a standard, every-

day body-imaging system that gives you complete interior and exterior health scans every morning as it washes you. Your toothbrush scans the contents of your mouth and catalogs its microorganisms. . .

“In your kitchen, the mops have more processing power than twentieth-century national bureaucracies” (Bruce Sterling, *Tomorrow Now: Envisioning the Next Fifty Years*, 2002, pp. 8-9).

Science will not only change our environment, but futurists foresee it changing humanity itself. “We might become ageless, or geniuses, or prosthetically enhanced, or cyberneticized, or any combination of those. We might be severely transformed by an unknown technology that we can't yet imagine” (Sterling, p. 296).

Some focus on the promise of specific technologies. At the World Nano-Economic Congress in 2003, U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for Technology Phillip Bond described the potential of nanotechnology as “truly miraculous: enabling the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the deaf to hear; curing AIDS, cancer, diabetes and other afflictions; ending hunger; and even supplementing the power of our minds. . .

“Nanotechnology will deliver higher standards of living and allow us to live longer, healthier, more productive lives. Nano also holds extraordinary potential for the global environment through waste-free, energy-efficient production processes that cause no harm to the environment or human health” (*State of the World 2006*, Worldwatch Institute, 2006, p. 78).

But not all forecasts are as rosy.

Doomsday visions

Other voices draw different conclusions looking at some of the same scientific revolutions and technologies. They fear the godlike powers described above will be used for destructive purposes—as previous scientific advances have been.

In 2007 the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists'* Doomsday Clock was moved up to five minutes to midnight, signaling their view of how close human-

Will the future bring the glittering world of the optimists? Or the doomsday world of the pessimists? Is there a way to know?

ity is to catastrophic destruction. In the jubilation after the end of the Cold War and deep cuts in nuclear stockpiles, the clock had moved as far as 17 minutes to midnight in 1991.

But now “the world stands at the brink of a second nuclear age. The United States and Russia remain ready to stage a nuclear attack within minutes, North Korea conducts a nuclear test, and many in the international community worry that Iran plans to acquire the Bomb.

“Climate change also presents a dire challenge to humanity. Damage to ecosystems is already taking place; flooding, destructive storms, increased drought, and polar ice melt are causing loss of life and property” (www.thebulletin.org).

This group also foresees dangers in emerging technologies—some of the same ones seen as so promising to the futurists mentioned earlier.

“Advances in genetics and biology over the last five decades have inspired a host of new possibilities—both positive and troubling. With greater understanding of genetic material and of how physiological systems interact, biologists can fight disease better and improve overall human health. But this knowledge may also afford opportunities to program organisms to do our bidding for malign purposes by manipulating brain functions, compromising bioregulation, and even by altering our reproductive capabilities.

“Complicating matters further, more groups and more individuals possess these high-consequence technologies than in the past—and more and more people will acquire them in the future.

“The emergence of nanotechnology—manufacturing at the molecular or atomic level—presents similar concerns, especially if coupled with chemical and biological weapons, explosives, or missiles. Such combinations could result in highly destructive missiles the size of an insect and microscopic delivery systems for dangerous pathogens” (www.thebulletin.org).

Realistically, what human advances throughout history have not been turned to selfish and destructive uses? In addition, technological advances can have unexpected side effects. “For example, the effects of manufactured nanoscale particles on human health and the environment are unknown and unpredictable, though hundreds of products containing nanoparticles

are already on the market” (*State of the World 2006*, p. 79).

Looking at recent history and today’s headlines is not reassuring. The 20th century was by far the bloodiest on record. In spite of amazing advances in agriculture and medicine, millions are malnourished and millions more are dying of contagious diseases. Well-meaning governments and the United Nations have proven ineffective in stopping genocide and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Peacekeepers are powerless to bring peace to many of the world’s hot spots.

Fraud and scandals in business affect millions of investors, as well as undermining the trust on which the world’s predominant economic system, capitalism, is built.

Consider these comments by the longtime editor-in-chief of that bastion of capitalism, *The Economist*: “Capitalism is unpopular for its greed and ruthlessness. It can be frighteningly unstable. It brings about inequalities in incomes that have the ability to cause political backlashes. It causes resentment” (Bill Emmott, *20:21 Vision: Twentieth-Century Lessons for the Twenty-First Century*, 2003, p. 321).

In a world of globalization and freer markets, the poor have gotten poorer, and the rich have gotten richer, increasing the tensions caused by inequality and injustice.

Greed, violence, selfishness and evil have always lurked in the hearts of men. Pessimists—and realists—ask, what has fundamentally changed that would make the future a better place? Human nature hasn’t changed. Only the tools of destruction have changed—becoming much more deadly!

Even acclaimed Cambridge professor Stephen Hawking believes that man’s days on earth are numbered. “I don’t think the human race will survive the next thousand years unless we spread into space. There are too many accidents that can befall life on a single planet” (Lawrence E. Joseph, *Apocalypse 2012*, 2007, p. 3).

Who is right?

Will the future bring the glittering world of the optimists? Or the doomsday world of the pessimists?

Is there a way to know? If the pessimists are right, do we even want to know?

There is a source that claims the authority, and the power, to predict and actually bring about its vision of the future. It’s not

a source from the scientific world—or the governmental, commercial or educational worlds. It’s a source that claims extraterrestrial origins. Consider this statement:

“I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done” (Isaiah 46:9-10).

Who better to predict the future than the all-powerful Creator who can control the outcomes? And the best part is, God promises real hope for a real world of peace and happiness beyond humanity’s wildest dreams.

It’s not dependent on the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde world of scientific advances. And it can’t be thwarted by the sinister side of human nature. God promises to not only save this world from itself, but to make it possible for each human being to achieve his or her incredible potential.

But, of course, our modern world conditions us to reject that possibility. Even many of those who believe in a God don’t see evidence of His working in the world today. It seems preposterous that He would intervene tomorrow.

This has led to the world the apostle Peter described: “Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’” (2 Peter 3:3-4).

It is easy to wonder, “If God is in charge and wants to turn things around, why hasn’t He done it yet?” Peter answers in verse 9: “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (New International Version).

God has a plan for every person who has ever lived, and He reveals that plan in the Holy Bible, and especially in the prophetic books like Revelation. That book, the last one in the Bible, starts by identifying the true source of understanding the future: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place” (Revelation 1:1).

What are those things that must shortly take place? How can we understand the mysterious symbols and other elements of prophecy and get a clear framework for the future? A good place to start is with an inspiring and informative free booklet, *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*. Download or request your free copy today at www.wnponline.org. ❖

“KNOWN” (Continued from page 16)

honor the memory of the unidentified fallen. Many nations decided to put a face of honor on the faceless and extol their sacrifice.

The British started the trend in 1920, when, with great pomp and ceremony, they enshrined the remains of “an unknown” in Westminster Abbey, which houses the notables of British history. Part of the inscription on the marker stone reads: “They buried him among the kings, because he had done good towards God and toward his house.”

A year later the French would follow the British lead and enshrine “an unknown” under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

America would begin its own process in 1921 by exhuming four bodies of unrecognizable remains from four different battlefield cemeteries in Europe. But only one, through a long and calculated ceremony of mutual honor, would be selected for the long journey home.

The journey proceeded from the shores of France to lying in state in the rotunda of the nation’s capital. All of official Washington D.C., from the president on down, would walk behind the lonely casket riding on a flag-draped caisson as it proceeded toward its resting place. Thousands solemnly lined the streets in respect.

Never before had a single dead soldier received such adulation from the living. At the ceremony, President Warren Harding laid upon the casket the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross. The flag on the coffin would not be given *from* but *to* the president, who acted as the next of kin. Armistice Day, Nov. 11, 1921, would be a very special day.

Ultimately, a formal and lasting shrine of honor was built above the lone soldier. The marbled sarcophagus has three figures on it with visual impressions of victory, valor and peace. There is only one inscription on the tomb: “Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God.”

Since that time, the remains have never known a lonely day as an honor guard of the Third Infantry keeps him company. Over the years, remains of



Reuters

A changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington D.C. The inscription on the tomb reads: “Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God.”

individuals from World War II and the Korean conflict have been given the same honor at this spot.

The heart behind the steps

But what do we know of the men who watch over these unknown warriors “known but to God”? Americans at one time or another have seen brief snippets on television of the soldiers moving back and forth before the tomb as the president lays a wreath of honor on Memorial Day. But snapshots only offer the color of an event and not the full spectrum of a dedicated life’s existence.

These individuals are selected from the highest caliber of candidates. They normally commit one year of their life to guard this monument. These individuals must dress themselves in front of a full-length mirror, for there can be no wrinkles, folds or lint found on their uniforms so as to respect the fallen. It normally takes the sentinels about eight hours to “prep” for their duty.

These are the men and women who pace 21 steps in giving full honor to their fallen comrades, much as a 21-gun salute is offered a head of state. Then, these guards turn and face the monument for 21 seconds, again giving full honor to the living memory of the deceased, before they walk their walk again. They stand guard 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Creed of the Sentinels says this:

“My dedication to this sacred duty is total and wholehearted. In the responsibility bestowed on me never will I falter. And with dignity and perseverance my standard will remain perfection. Through the years of diligence and praise and the discomfort of the elements, I will walk my tour in humble reverence to the best of my ability. It is he who commands the respect I protect, his bravery that made us so proud. Surrounded by well meaning crowds by day, alone in the thoughtful peace of night, this soldier will in

honored glory rest under my eternal vigilance.”

The ultimate Keeper of souls

As Christians, we have the honor to serve the One who is identified on the Tomb of the Unknowns. I’m not speaking of the fallen soldier, but the One who knows the soldier—God, the ultimate Keeper of all souls, who is truly eternally vigilant! We have the privilege of knowing through God’s promises and the prophecies of the Bible that He is going to offer hope to the hopeless and identity to those who thought they were lost or forgotten and buried with the dust of time.

God’s message to us in Ezekiel 37 speaks in context to the house of Israel, but I believe its implications are much wider to the entire house of humanity.

Notice verses 3 to 6: “And He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ So I answered, ‘O Lord GOD, You know.’ Again He said to me, ‘Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, “O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: ‘Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinew on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you: and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.’””

Just imagine the multiple tombs to the unknown throughout the world, whose remains have this rendezvous with God’s promises.

Just imagine as God resurrects those initially born in His image and likeness and miraculously and lovingly recovers their unidentifiable faces with flesh, sinew and muscles that can muster an identifiable smile as they express the sheer exhilaration of God’s merciful touch. Just imagine when all the unknowns get to meet the only One who knew them!

Until that time

Until that time, as followers of Jesus Christ, God has commissioned us to walk a walk of honor and respect toward all the unknowns of all the ages and to Him, who alone knows each of them and each of us—yes, you! It is a way of life that demands even more

dedication than the incredibly focused personnel who honor our war dead.

Like them, we respect the dead by how we, the living, live. We respect our God by the daily steps we take in following the walk Jesus Christ set before us. We pause and even hesitate as we step forward into life’s challenges, because our 21 steps honor more than an earthly king or fallen hero, but the very King of the universe.

As Christians, we, too, have a creed that molds our everyday existence. It is short, simple and to the point—“I shall love the Lord My God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind. And, I shall love my neighbor as myself” (adapted from Matthew 22:37-39).

I think we can all appreciate the reality of potential storms in our lives that will threaten to shut down our spiritual calling as much as the storm that affected the U.S. capital in 2003 and, yes, for a moment tested the creed of the honor guard at Arlington Cemetery.

Perhaps even at this reading, there are some personal storm winds blowing your way that send the message, “You’ve done enough for God, now take some time off for yourself. Everyone else will understand, because everyone else is doing it.”

Well, take a deep breath and simply ask, “What do I stand for and who do I live for? Is my world ‘event-driven’ or ‘existence-based’?” Perhaps the echoes of encouragement of “This is the way, walk in it” (Isaiah 30:21) are best personified by the loving determination of the sentinels at the Tomb of the Unknowns, who, when faced with the fury of a hurricane, simply responded, not with words, but a slow, steady, methodical walk back and forth before the object of their honor.

Oh yes, “talk is cheap” and creeds are but platitudes except when you see the talker “walk the walk” in the face of turbulence! And whether or not someone sees your own personal determination in the face of adversity, don’t worry—because the footsteps of our heart are sometimes “known but to God,” and that’s enough. ❖



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by Robin Webber

Known But to God

Washington D.C. was under siege! No, it wasn't the British invading again. Thankfully, the War of 1812 was long over. What was setting its sights on the U.S. capital in 2003 was the impending massive force of Hurricane Isabel.

As is normal in such abnormal circumstances, it was this metropolis's turn to methodically "batten down the hatches" and ride out the storm. Freeways were jammed as people streamed out of the city for safer ground. Congress adjourned for two days in preparation for nature's onslaught. But while traffic jams and congressional closures were taking up most of the nightly news airtime, the networks also reported on the unalterable ritual of guarding the Tomb of the Unknowns.

The networks reported that the soldiers on duty at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery across the river in Virginia had been granted permission to suspend their assignment for their own welfare. If the storm became too severe or life-threatening, they had contingency plans to retreat to nearby secure locations, but even from there they would still be able to view and offer security to the honored remains within the whitened monument.

But it never happened. Steve Vogel, *Washington Post* reporter, caught the spirit of the tomb's sentinels when he quoted Sergeant First Class Fredrick Geary, officer in charge, saying, "Other than something earth shattering, we had no intention of doing anything other than our duty" ("Tomb Guards Stand Sentinel," Oct. 2, 2003).

Soaked to the bone in the pelting rain, they would continue their renowned back-and-forth march of 21 steps.

During that dark and dreary night, 20 trees would come down in the near vicinity of their duty. But they never faltered. They would not abandon their duty to honor the unidentified remains of their fallen comrades within the tomb. It reminded all that their lone walk before a marble sarcophagus was not merely a job, but a calling and honor not to be easily cast aside or abandoned for momentary convenience.

As I write four years later, a soldier is stepping back and forth, this very moment, as has been done since Sept. 24, 1930. And their step has not altered.

Just what can be known?

But what is the story behind this story of valor in the face of a storm? This story is about more than the remains of the fallen encased in honor. It is the story of the living who honorably march before them. This episode in 2003 chronicles more than an event. It also displays a dedicated existence.

World War I was an incredible time of devastation upon the plains of Europe. The technology of warfare had far surpassed the antiquated methodology of military deployments. The result was horrendous carnage wrought on the vigorous youth of an entire generation. When the guns went quiet and the smoke had cleared, there were far too many corpses on far too many battlefields and many could not be identified.

Putting a face on the faceless

After the war, nation after nation built monuments to

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