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# Europe Moves Closer to Grand Design

*Europe takes another step in the direction of its destiny. The world is moving rapidly toward a time of transition. Is your life keeping pace?*

by Darris McNeely

**M**ore than two years after voters in France and the Netherlands vetoed the proposed European constitution, leaders have signed a version of the same constitution with a different name and a few adjustments. It must still be ratified by each member nation, but it is unlikely to be put to a popular vote in most nations except Ireland and possibly Britain. Here is an excerpt from the *Financial Times*:

“EU leaders reacted by dropping the concept of a ‘constitution’ from their treaty but keeping as much of the document’s detail as possible. Most of the key changes to the European Union’s institutions—the European Council, representing national governments, the European Commission and the European Parliament—remain in place in the new Lisbon treaty.

“Like its forerunner, the treaty extends the use of qualified majority voting, notably in matters affecting justice and interior affairs. It keeps the new voting rules designed to smooth the EU decision-making process now that there are 27 member-states, up from 15 as in 2004. The Lisbon treaty is an immensely complicated document with (in its English version) 175 pages of treaty text, 86 pages of protocols, a 25-page annex and a 26-page final act containing 65 separate declarations” (Dec. 13, 2007).

Many critics see this treaty as a “stealth” step toward greater centralized control in Brussels, the headquarters of



*Portugal's Prime Minister Jose Socrates addresses delegates during the EU Treaty of Lisbon signing.*

the EU, thus creating a loss of national sovereignty.

The treaty establishes a new European Union in the form of a supranational federal state, which is separate and superior to the member states. Just as the United States is to Indiana or Germany is to Bavaria, so the EU is to the member nations. The EU would have authority to make agreements with other countries by which all member nations would be bound.

This would make the EU a full legal and corporate entity. The EU would exercise all powers of a state. People living in the EU would technically become citizens of the EU, thus holding dual citizenship but owing ultimate allegiance to the EU.

How exactly this will develop in practice (See “EUROPE,” page 3)

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Managing editor: Darris McNeely

Senior editors: Cecil E. Maranville, Melvin Rhodes, Robin Webber

Contributing editor: John Ross Schroeder

Copy editors: Becky Bennett, Doug Johnson  
Layout/design: Mike Bennett, Peter W. Eddington

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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

# Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

## Peering Into the Future

A few years ago in this space I wrote about a speech made by England's King George VI. Here is part of what I wrote then:

"Several years ago my wife and I were spending a few days at a small inn near the town of Baddeck on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. One night I was drawn through the halls and into a parlor by the sounds of Celtic music performed by a small troupe for the benefit of the lodgers. That night a warm fire, soothing music and a friendly crowd formed a shield to the cold, autumn winds outside. When the entertainment concluded, I paused to look at a group of pictures on the walls and noticed one frame containing what looked like a poem.

"It was not a poem but a portion of a broadcast made by England's King George VI at the end of 1939, just three months into World War II. Here is what the king said to the Commonwealth nations:

"I said to a man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way" ("The Hand of God").

"That night I copied those words into my personal journal and have kept them ever since. When I read them, I am reminded of the true source of strength for each of us in times of doubt and fear. Perhaps they have immediacy each year in the midst of dark winter. From the long, cold nights we peer into the future looking for warmer, brighter days.

"But no matter when we face a moment of trial and suffering, these words point us to a sure way forward. It is with our confidence and trust placed firmly in the hand of God. From Him alone comes the true light and safety. We may think we know a better way, but if God is guiding our path, then in the end the path by which He leads will prove to be the better way."

This January, I repeat these words. A turning of the calendar year always brings a pause for reflection. We closed out 2007 with a tragic assassination in Pakistan. The world's holiday period was marred by violence—reminding us we do not yet have "peace on earth."

Our articles in this issue take you once again to the tops of our "walls" and give you a view of what lies on the horizon. Europe is slowly taking steps toward a revived power structure that will astound the world. The world's only Muslim nation with nuclear weapons is desperately unstable. No one wants to see Pakistan's nuclear arsenal fall into the hands of radical elements.

The world of 2008 is starting out with many question marks. The world economy is going through dramatic changes as the dollar weakens and the euro strengthens. We may well be at a turning point in our global economy. Other regions, like Asia and the Middle East, will play increasingly larger roles in the world markets. The result could be a weakened position for America.

The way ahead may seem dark and unknown. All the more need for our paths to be lit by the knowledge of God. Use your time now to understand the world from God's viewpoint. He is giving you a warning along with an opportunity to accept the way of life of His Kingdom now.

Our free booklet *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* gives a helpful framework for your studies, and provides an encouraging message of hope showing how God's hand is directing everything toward a peaceful future. You can read it or order it at [wnponline.org](http://wnponline.org).

—Darris McNeely



Darris McNeely

“EUROPE” (Continued from page 1)

tical fact is yet to be seen. It is hard to imagine a Frenchman thinking of himself as anything other than French. The same for any other EU “citizen.” This is no small matter in Europe and will be a significant reason why the Bible describes the end-time Beast power as a mixture of iron and clay (Daniel 2:41).

### Larger states win

The new treaty gives the larger states more voting power. Germany and France are two immediate winners. If these two nations get two other nations to vote with them, they would have the power to control passage of any EU law. The new double majority voting system makes population the key criteria of influence. If Turkey were to gain admission to the EU, it would be the largest state by population. The admission of Turkey will continue to see intense opposition.

The EU will also have additional power to make laws binding on all member nations. Areas such as criminal and civil law, justice, immigration and energy policy would fall under the authority of the EU. This is a major increase of EU powers and a decrease of power to the separate national parliaments and legislatures. It means the lives of each citizen of the EU will be managed by the EU power structure. Gradually all the functional aspects of everyday life, the infrastructure that makes a town, a city or a state work, will be controlled by EU policy and those who make policy.

Under this treaty the EU, and its EU Court of Justice, will have the final power to decide issues of human and civil rights in all areas of EU law. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights would become binding upon all member states. All in all, 68 new areas of lawmaking would then come under EU authority.

Still evolving are critical areas of foreign and economic policy, which are not fully developed under this treaty. And of course the question of who speaks for the EU—who or what holds the ultimate leadership role—has yet to be determined.

Until these areas are fleshed out, along with a common military posture, you have a bureaucratic behemoth with nowhere to go and no one to lead it. That will come later, as Revelation 13



Reuters/Hugo Correia

*German Chancellor Angela Merkel and France's President Nicolas Sarkozy leave the group photo of the signing ceremony of the EU Treaty of Lisbon Dec. 13, 2007.*

shows, in the form of political and religious leaders who give voice and authority to a system destined to influence the entire world.

### Member conflict

Germany and France are currently sparring over their respective leadership roles within the EU. Since reunification, Germany has gained a level of self-confidence and is asserting what it feels is its natural leadership role on the continent. In Angela Merkel Germany has found an unexpectedly feisty leader. Meanwhile President Nicolas Sarkozy seeks to guard France's position as a leading power in Europe.

A recent Stratfor analysis put it this way: “With Germany again thinking for itself and France again looking out for French national interests in Europe rather than French superpower interests globally, there is a bit of a tug-of-war going on. Germany sees itself as Europe's natural leader by dint of population, location and economic heft. But for its part, France is no more likely to concede the ‘natural’ leadership of Germany under traditional power politics than it was to concede American leadership of the free world under Gaullism” (Stratfor Intelligence Brief, Dec. 7, 2007).

As this report went on to say, the conflict between the two countries is about “the future of Europe which ultimately boils down to who will call the shots.”

The report ended with this prediction: “The Europe of 2010 will likely have a lot more in common with the Europe of 1913 than with the Europe of 2000” (ibid.).

### Historic time of transition

That last statement should make everyone sit up and take notice. Europe in 1913 was the center of a global economy rivaled only by what has been created in the past decade and more. Borders between states were open. Trade in goods, services and currencies flowed easily between Berlin, Paris and London.

All this changed with the outbreak of World War I. Empires collapsed and the whole world order was turned upside down. In the aftermath, Europe smoldered for two decades until it again erupted into another global war. The Cold War of the post-World War II era ended with the collapse of the Berlin Wall (1989) and Soviet communism (1991).

Now we are in an even larger period of globalization, and Europe is again a major player. Where this recent treaty takes Europe is yet to be determined.

Longtime readers of *World News and Prophecy* understand we view this world from the perspective of Bible prophecy. Revelation tells us to expect a dominating world power to arise from the region of Europe. This “beast” power (Revelation 13 and 17) will command a global system of political, economic and religious

power. It will be a power unlike any ever seen before in world history.

We are in a transitional period of history. Global structures are shifting. The role of the English-speaking nations, led by Great Britain and America, is being challenged by the rising power centers of Europe and Asia. China and Russia are asserting themselves through their economic base and energy supplies.

Massive amounts of money from the Middle East are finding their way into global markets, helping to provide stability during the recent economic crisis. A recent article in the *Financial Times* detailed why we might be at “an...important turning point for financial markets and the world economy” (“Why the Credit Squeeze Is a Turning Point for the World,” Dec. 11, 2007).

While power will shift, the global economy may continue rising. We will likely see the world economy reach a peak of affluence greater than any previously seen (Revelation 18). Accompanied by a

time of relative and apparent “peace,” the world will be lulled into a sense of security.

The Bible describes it as a spiritual drunkenness, a wealth- and power-induced sense of calm that will be exposed as built on a crumbling foundation when God begins to intervene in world affairs. The Day of the Lord will wipe away this satanic system and introduce the righteous Kingdom of God (Revelation 11:15).

### What kind of person are you?

This prophesied time of trouble is but a stepping-stone to the time of Christ’s rule on earth and the restoration of His Kingdom of peace. That is what you need to keep in perspective. While we encourage you to keep one eye on world events, we also want you to focus intently on the greater prophecies of the world to come.

All of our words about Europe and a coming collapse of fortunes for the English-speaking nations is meant

to waken you to the dramatic times in which we live. While the world is going to transition into the end-time system described in the Bible as Babylon, the biggest transition is beyond. It is the transition to the Kingdom of God on this earth with Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

That is the focus of our vision and the source of our true hope. It is meant to stir us to repentance and good works now in advance of the glorious appearing of our Lord. Hear the stirring words of Peter, words that put prophecy in its proper context:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

“Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:10-13).

What manner of person should you be? The choice is yours. Keep your eyes on today’s changing world, be sobered, and let it motivate you to make the changes needed to prepare for the coming Kingdom of God. This is what Christ expects from you. ❖

## How Can You Make Sense of the News?



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

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

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

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

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

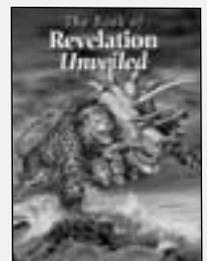
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- An online blog discussing the latest news and trends.
- Audio discussion (podcasts) of what's happening in the world around us.
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- Free booklets to help you better understand Bible prophecy.

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### Recommended Reading

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# Europe's Unbounded Schengen Joy

*Dec. 21 the Schengen Treaty was expanded to include nine of the 10 countries in Eastern Europe that joined the EU in 2004. "Borderless" Europe now encompasses 400 million people.*

by Paul Kieffer

**A**t the stroke of midnight nine Eastern European countries joined the European Union's Schengen Treaty, which allows Europeans to travel from one Schengen country to another without border formalities. The EU "Schengen zone" now extends from the border of Russia and the Ukraine all the way to the Atlantic Ocean.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel described the opening of Germany's borders with Poland and the Czech Republic as a historic occasion. She and the Polish and Czech prime ministers attended a special ceremony as the border was opened at the "three country corner" where the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland intersect.

Thousands of Europeans were up early to enjoy their new freedom to visit a neighboring EU country without lengthy delays at the border because of passport formalities.

## **Eastward march**

The Schengen zone now encompasses 24 of the EU's 27 members, representing 400 million people. The extension of the Schengen zone eastward is another milestone in the slow but sure march to European unity and a further confirmation of the unification of Europe following the end of the Cold War.

Each Schengen country has the responsibility to provide border controls for its non-Schengen external borders. In exchange for fulfilling this obligation, there are no border or immigration controls on the movement of people within the Schengen zone when they travel from one Schengen country directly to another.

Some Germans have expressed concern that opening Germany's eastern border to its EU neighbors will lead to an increase in crime. German interior minister Wolfgang Schäuble disagrees. The Schengen Treaty

allows each country's border police to undertake on-the-spot passport examinations in an 18-mile zone along the border. According to Schäuble, the allowance will more than compensate for formalities at the border crossings themselves.

In addition, the new Schengen members in Eastern Europe are eager to demonstrate to older Schengen members in Western Europe that their police and border patrols are capable of guarding Schengen's exterior borders. Electronic cooperation among the police jurisdictions within Europe has also improved continuously in recent years, enabling closer monitoring of criminal activities.

Schäuble and other leaders believe that the extension of the Schengen zone will provide an economic benefit to border areas previously hindered in their development by border formalities. The Schengen Treaty facilitates the movement of people and goods within the Schengen zone, which is why the treaty's extension eastward is being called another milestone in freedom for EU citizens.

Russians, however, believe the Schengen border could be a problem. According to the *Pravda* newspaper, "The visa issue restricts the life of millions of people. Lithuania and Poland joining the Schengen treaty serve as examples, since it is now considerably more difficult to travel by car from Kaliningrad into the Russian heartland. The EU and its individual members will use the visa situation to put pressure on Russia." Russia is currently negotiating in Brussels on easing visa requirements for Russians desiring to visit the EU.

## **Capitalizing on trade**

On the other hand, the eastward expansion of the Schengen zone brings "borderless" Europe closer to Asian markets, a key trading area for the European Union.

*The extension of the Schengen zone eastward is another milestone in the slow but sure march to European unity and a further confirmation of the unification of Europe following the end of the Cold War.*



*Czech Republic's Prime Minister Mirek Topolaneck, European Parliament President Hans-Gert Poettering, Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Portugal's prime minister and president of the EU Council Jose Socrates and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso attend a ceremony on the German-Polish border Dec. 21 as the Schengen zone was extended.*

Slovakia's second largest city, Kosice, is already gearing up for expanded railway traffic with the east. Located not far from Slovakia's border with the Ukraine, Kosice is a western termination point for the wide-gauge Russian railway system. With funding from Brussels, Kosice wants to develop a logistics center for rail freight between the EU and the east. Using Kosice as an entry port for freight, Asian goods would have immediate access to any point within the Schengen zone.

In the other direction freight containers shipped from Germany via Kosice to China, Korea or Japan would arrive an average of 20 days earlier than via sea routes. In fact, major east-west rail lines from Western Europe to Moscow, Kiev and destinations further to the east run through Kosice.

Zuzana Bobrikova, Kosice's director of economic development, explains the city's unique position within the Schengen zone: "We are connected to the railway system for all of Asia."

The development of a high-speed Russian railway system make Kosice's ambitious plan to capitalize on the extension of the Schengen zone look realistic.

At the 2005 Hanover trade fair—the largest in the world—Germany and Russia signed a historic contract for German company Siemens to manufacture 60 ICE high-speed trains for Russia. Russia's attempts for some 30 years to build its own high-speed railway system have met repeated setbacks and failures.

Siemens' third generation ICE travels within Germany at speeds up to 170 miles an hour and will be a major step forward for Russia with its long routes. The first ICE to run in Russia will be used on the 450-mile route between St. Petersburg and Moscow.

The enlarged Schengen zone will further strengthen the European Union's position as the world's largest trading bloc. The EU's trade with non-EU countries already makes up 20 percent of world trade (trade within the EU not included). The EU's world share of trade in service industries stands at 26 percent.

EU trade with developing countries is perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the picture. According to United Nations definitions, the EU accounts for 50 percent of all trade with developing countries and 60 percent of trade with the world's

"less developed countries."

### **Babylon the great**

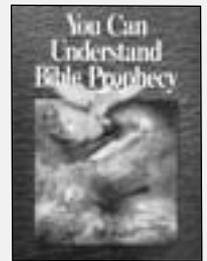
As we point out repeatedly in *World News and Prophecy* articles, the Bible predicts a final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire, which like its predecessors will be centered in Europe. The Bible calls that end-time political-religious system "Babylon the great." It will also be a great trading system, reflecting the competitive orientation of its real power behind the scenes, Satan the devil (Ezekiel 28:18).

Revelation 18 describes in detail the extent of end-time Babylon's world trade and the reaction of merchants when that system falls: "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore" (Revelation 18:11).

In view of the scope of its worldwide trade, the demise of the European Union would certainly evoke that kind of response from merchants all over the world. The extension of the Schengen zone will further entrench Europe as the king of world trade. ❖

### **Recommended Reading**

Can you really know what the future holds? Request a free copy of *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*. This booklet gives a helpful overall picture of God's prophetic plans for humankind and the good news beyond today's troubled world.



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# Bhutto Assassination Imperils Pakistan's Stability—and Global Nuclear Security

*Benazir Bhutto once called Pakistan "the most dangerous country on earth." Conditions in that chaotic country now threaten to spin out of control. How will this affect the rest of the world?*

by John Ross Schroeder

In 1947 the nation of Pakistan was born in the wake of the Indian subcontinent's independence from Britain. It was carved out of northwestern India in a bid to prevent a bloody civil war between Hindus and Muslims. Up to a quarter of India's population was Muslim.

Author Andrew Boyd summed up the troublesome situation in this embryonic new nation: "About 8 million Muslims fled from India to Pakistan and about 8 million Hindus and Sikhs fled from Pakistan to India; *half a million people were killed*" (*An Atlas of World Affairs*, 10th ed., p. 164, emphasis added throughout).

## The problem's historical roots

Periodic tensions and border skirmishes with India have characterized Pakistan's 60-year history. Control of the northern province of Kashmir has been a bone of contention throughout that whole period.

Eventually India built up a substantial armory of nuclear weapons, primarily in fear of Pakistan's intentions, and then the latter nation felt it had little choice but to counter with its own atomic arsenal. Here we have a basic root cause.

All present problems usually have a history and the stores of thermonuclear weaponry, particularly in Pakistan, are a current cause for grave concern for the whole Western world.

In 1999 Pakistan's inner tensions and domestic difficulties resulted in a military dictatorship headed by Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Then in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, Pakistan became an ally of America in the war against terrorism—a particularly important development because of its strategic border with Afghanistan.

## What America had hoped for

Musharraf's rule was seriously weak-



Reuters/Mian Khurshid

*Supporters of slain Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto gather near her portrait at the spot where she was killed.*

ened by terrorist incursions and problems with terrorists on the Afghan border. He also faced internal strife between conflicting ethnic groups, divisive political parties and military and intelligence services substantially sympathetic to the terrorists. He tried to cope by a major curtailment of national liberties, but that decision soon backfired. Recently he was forced to step down from his army post, but continues to rule in a civilian capacity.

America had hoped that the Western-educated (at Oxford and Harvard) Benazir Bhutto, twice prime minister and one who believed in secular liberal democracy, would be able to balance Mr. Musharraf by becoming prime minister a third time after the January elections. The idea was that Bhutto and Musharraf could learn to

*One of the West's worst nightmares is the thought that Pakistan's arsenal of nuclear weaponry might fall into the hands of terrorists or their supporters.*

work together as a team in stabilizing the country.

A primary U.S. goal behind this strategy was to keep Pakistan's nuclear weapons out of the hands of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups and their sympathizers. America has already spent many millions of dollars in trying to help Pakistan safeguard its atomic arsenal.

Benazir Bhutto's sudden, violent death has spoiled the American plan for stable democratic reforms in Pakistan. In the words of the *International Herald Tribune*, the assassination "left in ruins the delicate diplomatic effort [the Bush] administration had pursued for the past year to reconcile that country's deeply divided political factions" (Dec. 28, 2007).

### Does democracy really work in the Muslim world?

The reality of this relatively recent quest for democracy in the Islamic world, according to a feature article in *The Times*, is simply this: "Over the past decade, thousands of people...have been murdered by Islamists in Muslim countries that have held reasonably free elections (Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia). Islamism opposition to democracy is based on the claim that allowing men to legislate would be a form of shirk, that is to say associating man with God, who is the 'sole and ultimate legislator.' Man-made law cannot rival God-made Shariah.

"Referring to Islam's history, in which the murder of leaders, including three of the first four caliphs, was the surest way to come to power, the Islamists hope that by assassinating senior politicians they would kill hopes of democracy in the Muslim world" (Dec. 29, 2007).

Although outwardly secular in belief, Benazir Bhutto apparently took great risks because she shared the Islamic concept that "one's fate is written in advance" (ibid.) and that at the end of the day no action on our part can avert it.

True democracy may be very hard to achieve and sustain in

Pakistan. As the *Financial Times Magazine* stated: "Democracy is not just about elections. It is about living under law rather than the whim of power" (June 9/10, 2007). Benazir Bhutto's belief in a secular, tolerant democratic form of government was perhaps the major reason the administration in the United States had pinned its hopes on her recapture of political power and influence.

### The West's primary concern

One of the West's worst nightmares is the thought that Pakistan's



### Can Pervez Musharraf hold nuclear-armed Pakistan together after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto?

arsenal of nuclear weaponry might fall into the hands of terrorists or their supporters. Securing these weapons is no easy business. *Scotland on Sunday* stated that "the weapons are believed to be stored in bunkers at around six military bases, but Musharraf—suspicious of U.S. intentions should Pakistan seriously destabilise—has withheld exact locations" (Dec. 30, 2007).

According to the *Scotland on Sunday* team of three reporters sent to Islamabad, "In early 2005, a joint security assessment by the CIA and the US National Intelligence Council predicted that Pakistan could become 'a failed state, ripe

with civil war, bloodshed, inter-provincial rivalries and a struggle for control of its nuclear weapons and complete *Talibanisation* by 2015" (ibid.).

In some quarters Pakistan is considered the world's weakest link in the chain of nuclear security. As one reporter put it, "Political meltdown in Pakistan and Afghanistan would embolden the West's enemies."

What can America and the Western world do to secure Pakistan's nuclear arms? Experts suggest watching closely and working with the Pakistan nation, continuing to render generous technical and financial support. Recent experience shows that it can become very difficult to go much beyond these measures, especially if the country becomes more hostile to America and its way of life.

### Every nation has its choices

The Bible shows that God granted the precious gift of choice to our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden. He has extended that gift to humanity ever since. Benazir Bhutto stated: "In Pakistan there are two fault lines. One is dictatorship versus democracy. And one is moderation versus extremism." She went on to say that Pakistan must choose. God has so structured our human experience that our choices affect others: wise choices positively and unwise choices negatively. The stakes are high for the rest of the world in Pakistan's future choices.

Our Creator specifically told ancient Israel through Moses to choose life. But He left the option with His nation. "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; *therefore choose life*, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Both Pakistan and America are going through the arduous process of choosing a new national leader. The choices both countries make are likely to have major consequences for their citizenry. ❖

# America's Revolution and the Bible

*Prior to the American Revolution, the American colonists were the most enthusiastic royalists in the English-speaking world. Why that changed is a fascinating story and a fulfillment of Bible prophecy.*

by Melvin Rhodes

**I**n September 1761, the colonial Englishman Benjamin Franklin, on tour in the Low Countries, eagerly anticipated a return to his home in London to attend the coronation of George III. With his invitation secured, he reached London in time for the festivities, but a storm delayed his arrival at Westminster Abbey and he had to content himself with watching the pageant from a distance.”

So begins an article in the August 2007 edition of *History Today* magazine. “The American Monarchy” was written by Frank Prochaska, who teaches history at Yale. For students of British and American history, it is fascinating. It should also be of great interest to those who understand the biblical truth of the modern identity of the tribe of Joseph.

“Franklin’s admiration for his monarch had few limits. After a dinner at Versailles hosted by Louis XV in 1767, he reported that ‘no Frenchman shall go beyond me in thinking my own king and queen the very best in the World and most amiable.’ As a frequent guest at court, he attended George III’s birthday festivities in 1771, and the following year wrote to his son of the King’s ‘great regard’ for him.”

Pointedly, the American author writes: “As Franklin’s devotion to royalty illustrates, it was no easy matter to break with so universal a system of government as monarchy, especially for colonial subjects who thought of themselves as patriotic Englishmen and their King as a guardian of the Protestant faith and the ‘father of his people.’”

“George III was no less revered in America for being so remote. Distance made him a more difficult target and enhanced the monarch as symbol. With an ocean between them, few colonists ever set eyes upon a member of the royal family, but they demonstrated their allegiance through ritual cel-



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*Just a few years before the American Revolution, Benjamin Franklin greatly admired the British monarchy.*

“celebrations of royal birthdays, coronations and marriages.”

## Uniqueness of the American Revolution

If it was “no easy matter” for the colonists to break with the British monarchy, why then did it happen?

A PBS series on the subject of the American Revolution some years ago came to the conclusion that it should never have happened. An episode of the History International Channel’s *Global View* came to a similar conclusion, with all panelists agreeing that the rupture between Great Britain and its American colonies set back the power and influence of the English-speaking world.

A&E’s presentation on Benedict Arnold noted that, on the eve of the final Battle of Yorktown, most colonists were loyal to the crown. John Adams, who would become the

*It was “no easy matter” for the colonists to break with the British monarchy, so why then did it happen?*

second president of the United States, wrote that the colonies were divided into three thirds—those loyal to the crown, those who wanted a break with the crown and those who were indifferent.

Perhaps most telling is the simple fact of the uniqueness of the American Revolution. It is the only revolution in history led by people who were, on average, wealthier than the people they rebelled against! Generally, in revolutions, the poor majority rebel against the rich minority, but this was most decidedly not the case in America over two centuries ago.

As another American historian, Gordon Wood, put it: “The social conditions that generally are supposed to lie behind all revolutions—poverty and economic deprivation—were not present in colonial America. There should no longer be any doubt about it: the white American colonists were not an oppressed people; they had no crushing imperial chains to throw off” (*The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 1991, p. 4).

### Understanding monarchy

Over 200 years after the American Revolution, most Americans have a very vague understanding of the institution of monarchy. Eighteenth-century Americans were quite different. Colonists “looked to the King for political legitimacy.” They “believed the monarchy to be the guarantor of their rights” (Prochaska).

These rights went back to the Magna Carta in 1215 when England’s barons forced King John to give them rights that form the basis of the Anglo-American legal system. Within the same century, the first parliament met. Gradually, through the centuries, the power of parliament increased at the expense of the monarchy.

“Since the early seventeenth century the English had radically transformed their monarchy: they had executed one king and deposed another, written charters and bills of rights, regularized the meetings of their parliaments, and even created a new line of hereditary succession” (Wood, p. 13).

In the 17th century England had even abolished the monarchy and the country became a republic for a

brief period. The republic, like the Roman republic centuries earlier, led to dictatorship. The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 was perceived as the necessary balance of power to guarantee freedom from the potential abuse of parliamentary power.

While he was prince of Wales, the future King George III said: “The pride, the glory of Britain, and the direct end of its constitution is political liberty” (Wood, p. 14.) This is also quoted in



*“The pride, the glory of Britain, and the direct end of its constitution is political liberty”—  
the future King George III.*

the *History Today* article, where the following words are added: “Thus have we created the noblest constitution the human mind is capable of framing, where the executive power is in the prince, the legislative in the nobility and the representatives of the people, and the judicial in the people and in some cases the nobility, to whom there lies a final appeal from all other courts of judicature, where every man’s life, liberty and possessions are secure.”

So why the break with England? The answer is quite simple. *It had to happen to fulfill prophecy.*

### Fulfillment of Bible prophecy

The biblical patriarch Jacob, renamed Israel, had 12 sons. One of these sons was Joseph, whose brothers sold him into slavery. God was

with Joseph who, after years of personal suffering, rose to become the prime minister of Egypt. Eventually, Joseph was reunited with his family. His father, Israel, laid his hands on the two sons of Joseph and blessed them, in one of the most prophetically significant chapters of the Bible.

“The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Genesis 48:16).

“Let my name be named on them” means that Joseph’s descendants now carry the name of Israel. In turn, this means that biblical prophecies about Israel in the last days generally apply to them and not the Jews in the Middle East, although the Jews may be included if the prophecy is about all 12 tribes of Israel.

Israel continued, seemingly getting the boys confused by placing his right hand on the head of the younger son, Ephraim, instead of the elder son, Manasseh. This went against established custom and precedent, but clearly Israel knew what he was doing.

“But his father refused [to switch his hands] and said, ‘I know, my son, I know. He [Manasseh, the eldest] also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations’ (Genesis 48:19).

The two brothers, Ephraim and Manasseh, were to become a great multitude of nations and a great single nation. Nowhere else in history can we see this more than in the British Empire and the United States.

Here we can begin to understand why ties between the American colonists and the monarchy had to be severed. Every British colony had its own parliament. All these parliaments shared a common loyalty and that loyalty was to the crown. American historian Brendan McConville described the king as “the empire’s living embodiment” (*The King’s Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America 1688-1776*, 2006).

This continues down to the pres-



*Jacob deliberately crossed his hands in blessing his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh.*

ent day when George III's descendant, Queen Elizabeth II, carries the title head of the Commonwealth, an organization composed of 54 former British colonies. The Empire and Commonwealth, made up of dozens of different countries, truly have been "a multitude of nations."

### A remarkable story

The American colonies were destined to somehow break with the crown in order to form the great single nation that Joseph's father, Jacob (Israel), said Manasseh would become. So the severing of ties between the American colonists and the English monarchy turned out to be the fulfillment of this important prophecy in Genesis 48. The other colonies remained under the crown. It's a remarkable story, the fulfillment of a prophecy that was written down thousands of years ago and that has not been fulfilled by any other nations.

What is also remarkable is how much the British monarchy influenced the American presidency, the story of which is told in Dr. Prochaska's article. After the Revolutionary War, the new nation was in a quandary. The leaders of the revolution had demonized the king, but they still felt the British had the best political system in the world.

"The hostility to Britain and its King during the Revolution has tended to obscure the constitutional affinities between the two nations. Americans, as Franklin's grandson Benjamin Franklin Bache put it in 1797, created a constitution before they 'had sufficiently un-monarchized their views and habits'" (Prochaska).

"The forms of government on offer to the Founding Fathers were essentially variations of monarchy, 'the rule of one.' Moreover, most colonists had looked favorably on Britain's hereditary monarchy before the Revolution. So too had leading eighteenth century European political philosophers" (ibid.).

Even after the Revolution, "the theory of mixed government of Kings, Lords and Commons had a compelling logic to many Americans who desired security, a just measure of liberty, and the avoidance of arbitrary rule." Continuing, Dr. Prochaska writes: "It is one of the great ironies of the US constitution that the Founding Fathers invested more power in the presidency than George III exercised as King" (ibid.).

He adds: "For all their revolutionary rhetoric Americans treated 'His Excellency' George Washington as a republican version of 'His Majesty' King George. Some Americans, sensitive to the symbolism of power, believed the President required a title and pored over the titles of the European princes to find one that had not been appropriated. Thomas McKean, chief justice of Pennsylvania, thought 'Most Serene Highness' desirable.

"Washington himself was said to have preferred the style of 'High Mightiness' used by the Stadtholder of the Netherlands. The reigning Stadtholder, William V, was among the Europeans who saw George Washington as an uncrowned monarch. As he said to Adams: 'Sir, you have given yourselves a king under the title of president.' In the Senate a titles committee suggested 'His Highness the President of the United States of America and Protector of the Rights of the Same.'"

Fortunately for Americans, both the Senate and the House of

Representatives eventually settled for the simple title of the president of the United States.

### The blessing of stability

In hindsight, what is truly remarkable is that these two institutions, the British monarchy and the American presidency, have been the solid political foundation blocks upon which their nations have been built. The United States has enjoyed political stability for over 140 years, since the end of the Civil War. Great Britain's period of stability is even longer, going back to the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89.

Those nations in the Commonwealth that have maintained their direct allegiance to the crown have shared in that long period of stability. The nations within the Commonwealth that look to the British monarch as the head of the Commonwealth but have become republics have mostly had a tumultuous ride since severing the direct tie. None has been able to establish a successful republic on the American model.

The blessings promised to the descendants of Joseph could not have been fulfilled without political stability. Economic progress is impossible when there is no solid political foundation.

It is amazing to see how God worked with both Britain and America to give them the solid historical foundation that has made them for some time the most stable governments on earth. ❖

### Recommended Reading

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

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



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# Balkan Vortex of Violence Threatens Kosovo

*Some 10 years ago Serbian troops invaded the mostly Muslim province of Kosovo. After U.S. air strikes and NATO intervention, the United Nations began administering the province. But the UN mandate recently expired and Kosovo threatens to declare full independence from Serbia. The behavior of Balkan countries continues to perplex the Western world. Will many more innocent lives be lost in their seemingly futile quest for a stable and peaceful existence? What is the only lasting solution?*

by John Ross Schroeder

**T**he Balkan countries of southeastern Europe have not had an easy history. Few regions of the world have suffered so much violence, murder, ethnic cleansing and reverse ethnic cleansing, as first one nation and then another gained the upper hand. The Balkan catalog of human suffering in the 20th century alone overwhelms the imagination.

Balkan history is long and complicated. The Ottoman Turks crossed the Dardanelles in the 1320s. Serbia, Bosnia, Albania and Macedonia were among the Balkan nations conquered by the Turks, and they became a part of the Ottoman Empire. Many chafed under 600 years of Islamic rule. However, this enormous Turkish empire began to fray at the edges in the 19th century, and “in 1912-1913 three regional wars were fought in the Balkans” (Norman Davies, *Europe: A History*, 1997, p. 874).

Indeed it was an incident in the Balkans that proved to be the catalyst for the beginning of World War I (1914-1918). Norman Davies wrote: “The Bosnian crisis indicated where Europe’s most likely flash-point lay. Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia in 1908 without a shred of legal justification, having occupied and administered the country for the previous thirty years by international mandate” (ibid.).

So when in June 1914 Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, Bosnia, it provided the spark that eventually led to the loss of many millions of human lives of many nations. Much of the flower of British manhood died in Belgian trenches. Yet World War I also virtually ended the long Ottoman reign. Historians have generally assigned 1920 as the formal year of the empire’s final dissolution.

The Balkan countries were now “free” to begin expressing their ethnic, nationalistic, cultural and religious differences by warring among

themselves in earnest. Enter Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) of Croatia.

## Tito’s reign and its aftermath

This formidable personality did what no other individual of that region had done in historical memory. In January 1946 he united virtually all of the Balkan nations and imposed a multinational federation called Yugoslavia but dominated by Serbia. In reality, this group of countries (the new Yugoslavia) constituted a communist dictatorship.

However, Marshall Tito practiced his own partially pro-Western brand of communism—not liking the Russian model of collectivized agriculture and favoring self-management of workers. He proved to be a lingering thorn in the side of the Soviet Union, and so the Soviets formally expelled him from the party in June 1948. His federation had never been part of the Warsaw Pact, and he later became prominently involved in the so-called nonaligned nations movement.

The historic nationality problems, long endemic in the Balkans, were effectively suppressed during Tito’s long and ruthless dictatorship (1946-1980). But the cohesive, residual effects of his rule lasted only for about 10 years, and those years were marked by outbreaks of nationalistic restlessness. The formal breakup of the federation followed in the 1990s. “War in Yugoslavia broke out in early June 1991 as soon as the parliaments of Slovenia and Croatia voted for independence” (Misha Glenny, *The Balkans*, 1998, p. 637).

The leaders who survived Tito simply did not possess his charismatic powers and presence among the Balkan peoples. They could not hold the federation together.

(Marshall Tito’s accomplishments are in a minor way indicative of what another far more powerful charismatic personality will bring about

*Would an independent Kosovo become another Taiwan? Would yet another vulnerable Balkan state be forever dependent on outside sources like NATO or the UN for its security? What would become of its Serbian minority?*

in uniting Central Europe—militarily, economically and politically. Ten European rulers will give their powers over to him. His reign will astonish the world. The book of Revelation in the Bible calls him “the beast.” To know much more, request or download our free booklets *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*

### Back to Kosovo

This brings us to the Kosovo of just over 10 years ago. In April of 1996 a small number of ethnic Serbs were dining in a café in Kosovo. They were suddenly slaughtered by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) composed of ethnic Albanians. Three other attacks, all attributed to the KLA, occurred that same night. Muslim Albanians compose 90 percent of the population of Kosovo, with a 10 percent minority of Serbs. This is the nub of the problem since Kosovo is still legally and formally a province of Serbia.

In the words of author Misha Glenny, “In Kosovo the death toll mounted on both the Serbian and Albanian sides. The European Union and the United States were awakened to the possibility of war in the province” (ibid., p. 655). American and NATO military action followed in defense of Kosovo, and the UN was soon in virtual charge of the province.

But where are we now in Kosovo? This province wants to become the seventh independent nation to emerge out of the former Yugoslavian federation. The United States and some key European nations support this bid for independence. America is popular in Muslim Kosovo, a rarity in the Islamic world today.

But Serbia strongly opposes independence for Kosovo. Boris Tadic, president of Serbia, firmly stated: “As long as I am President of Serbia, I will never accept the independence of Kosovo” (quoted in *Time*, Dec. 31, 2007).

Serbia has a powerful backer in Russian President Vladimir Putin. He has clearly said in advance that he will vote against recognition of Kosovo in the United Nations Security Council. Besides sharing Slavic blood and ethnic ties with Serbia, Putin is trying to rebuild Russian clout and influence in the world. He is also leery of setting any precedents

that might be interpreted as encouraging breakaway groups in Russian regions like Chechnya.

Would an independent Kosovo become another Taiwan? Would yet another vulnerable Balkan state be forever dependent on outside sources like NATO or the UN for its security? What would become of its Serbian minority?

Of course, Kosovo is far from the only problem in the Balkan mix. Bosnian Serbs would also like to form an independent country or possibly join forces with Serbia. Regional stability remains very far removed from reality and satisfaction among the citizenry is in very short supply. The abject suffering among the Balkan population is and has been immense. Some of these regional problems appear almost insurmountable.

### What is the solution?

The apostle Paul sums up the New Testament solution to the kinds of difficulties that are endemic to the Balkans. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:27-28, emphasis added throughout). Many of these national and cultural differences fade in relative importance when we repent, become baptized and receive God’s Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38). We begin to see things in a far different light.

According to the Bible, to become truly converted is to lay aside the deeds of the darker side of our human nature. Murdering members of other ethnic groups is not an option for Christians. It is an evil work of the flesh in the biblical sense and a stark violation of the Ten Commandments.

Later Paul repeats the point to the church at Colosse. “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him [God] who created him, *where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all*” (Colossians 3:8-11).

We know that the Balkan population at large is highly unlikely to adopt this biblical solution en masse. But individuals there clearly could. For further help we offer our free booklets *The Road to Eternal Life* and *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.

The long-term solution is the second coming of Jesus Christ and the beginning of the rule of the Kingdom of God on this earth. Christ’s millennial reign will solve all of these world problems. Our free booklet *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, lays out the overall plan and purpose of God for humankind. You may request a copy in print or download it on our Web site. ❖

## Nation Rising Against Nation

Observers are struck by the obvious interconnectedness of the various Balkan nations. Troublesome events in one country often affect neighboring nations negatively. The Balkan mix is continuously potentially explosive.

In spite of 16,000 NATO soldiers stationed in Kosovo, the Slovenian foreign minister described the situation there as “a risk—it is very serious.” Slovenia assumed the six-month rotating presidency of the European Union on Jan. 1. He saw Kosovo as potentially the biggest challenge to the Slovenian presidency. The *Financial Times* headlined its article, “Slovenia Fears Kosovo Partition.”

The general history of the Balkans is punctuated with either nations fighting one another or ethnic groups within nations warring with each other. The conflicts there bring to mind the Olivet Prophecy recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

It was first spoken and later recorded in writing to inform us about what would happen in the time of the end. In it Jesus Christ warned that “nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Matthew 24:7). You may want to request our free booklet *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*

“BELLE” (Continued from page 16)

est inquirers, and humble before heaven... He showed no proper deference for wealth or social position; when confronted with neat dialectical traps, He displayed a paradoxical humor that affronted serious-minded people, and He retorted by asking disagreeable questions that could not be answered by rule of thumb...

“But He had a daily beauty in His life that made us ugly, and officialdom felt that the established order of things would be more secure without Him. So they did away with God in the name of peace and quietness.”

### Beware the Beast

While religious leaders of His own community framed Him for capital punishment, it was another force that executed the “Beauty” of God’s plan on an ugly piece of wood. This governmental system was none other than the empire known in its day for its splendor and glory, and even today we still speak of the “glory that was Rome.”

But God does not associate glory with Rome. He has His own comments. Clear back in the sixth century B.C., when Rome was just an emerging town on the Tiber River, God vividly described her future prominence in world affairs in Daniel 2:40: “And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.”

What a fitting portrayal of the armies of Rome on the move! Indeed



Artist’s conception of the Beast of Revelation 13.

a terrifying prophetic description of the fourth element of the image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Daniel 2). Nebuchadnezzar, who personified that image with his Babylonian-Chaldean kingdom as the head of gold, is described as one who would possess “the heart of a beast” (Daniel 4:16).

Rome would be a continuation of that system with a bestial nature opposed to all that is holy and all that is beautiful in God’s sight. In A.D. 31, that “beast” killed the ultimate beauty of God’s creation. Isaiah’s prophecy would come true as all men, both Jew and gentile, would hide their faces from that which is beautiful—God in human flesh.

But biblical prophecy tells more than simply the coming of God in

the flesh to this earth. It describes a very real second coming that is yet to occur. And, incredible as it may seem, your Bible indicates that the majority of humanity will once again fall prey to siding with the Beast and thinking he and his system are beautiful. As a whole, humanity is going to take up arms and literally fight the arrival of the ultimate beauty of all that is in heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, as He brings His Father’s realm to this earth.

Jesus was not simply rejected once when He came in ordinary form, but is going to be initially rejected again as He comes in extraordinary form, even as the cosmic elements announce His arrival.

### Even the elect almost deceived!

Yes, truth can be stranger than fiction. Notice how humanity at the end of this age will marvel over the Beast, as John describes in Revelation 13:4. People will gasp in wonderment, “Who is like the beast?”

This future system that the Bible calls Babylon (taking us right back to the image found in Daniel 2) is figuratively draped in glittering attire of purple and scarlet, gold and precious stones and pearls. This system is going to catch everyone’s eye and almost everyone’s heart. The Bible says that if those days were not shortened, the

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wondrous outward trappings of such a system could “deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:22-24).

This bestial system supported by the majority of humanity is foretold to “make war with the Lamb” (Revelation 17:14)! That is just an amazing, take-your-breath-away thought. How could this be? Mankind fighting Jesus Christ? The same One who came to die for humanity? Don’t believe me. Believe the Scriptures. Revelation 19:19 gives us tomorrow’s news in advance as it declares: “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him [Christ] who sat on the horse and against His army.”

### A just end for one so bestial

Unlike the French tale of our childhood, the Beast of the Bible is not transformed. Its ending is not happy, but it is just. While appearing beautiful and glittering to almost all, it is the same system that down through the ages and into the future is “drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Revelation 17:6) and traffics in the “bodies and souls of men” (Revelation 18:13).

The triumphant Christ, the pinnacle of beauty throughout the universe, is going to clearly grab and remove the tantalizing disguise of this system in clear view of all humanity. He will show that such outward beauty has been “weighed in the balances and found wanting.” This Beast, along with the False Prophet, is thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (Revelation 19:20). All of their false beauty will be incinerated.

But these are only the human instruments of the greatest beast of all. God describes Satan, the adversary, as a serpent and a dragon. Revelation 13:4 tells us that as men follow the bestial government of this earth, they are actually “worship[ing] the dragon which gave authority to the beast.” This is the same dragon that the apostle Paul says has the ability to transform himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Just imagine something so horribly ugly pretending to be “the beauty”

when the true beauty of God, Jesus Christ, was rejected by humanity! But thanks be to God who is not going to allow injustice to stand. This ultimate beast, perpetually riled with a heart filled with spiritual insanity, is going to be cast into a bottomless pit, and shut up, and a seal set upon him (Revelation 20:3).

Thus, the Beast, whether temporal or spiritual, will no longer cast its long shadow of ugliness on man’s history. It will no longer be “Beauty and the Beast” in spiritual confrontation for the hearts of man. Only one personality, Jesus Christ, will take center stage on this very earth and will bring into being the most beautiful time in all of the human experience—the Millennium—1,000 years of the Kingdom of God on earth!

### Beauty came into our beast

Until then, let’s remember that now is our time to be discerning. The reality of life is that not all things are as they appear to be, whether it is the title of a back-page column or emerging personalities on the prophetic world stage. We must dig deeper and not simply live life at a glance.

Why is this? It has been said, “Beauty is skin deep, but ugliness runs all the way to the bone.” That is the heart of the matter before each serious student of the Scriptures. It is a heart in our matter, our lives, that realizes that God’s beauty through Jesus Christ came into our beast, that is our untamed heart. He offered us a world of transformation from the prison of our sins to a spiritual kingdom with limitless horizons.

Perhaps it is in the words of Dorothy Sayers that we may find a guiding light as we strive to move forward in a life of transformation in step with the biblical admonition of “this is the way, walk in it” (Isaiah 30:21). Speaking of Jesus, she reminds us that “He had a daily beauty in His life that made us ugly.” But because He did, we are ugly no longer. And because He did, the world has a beautiful future ahead—without a beast. ❖



Robin Webber

## How to Contact Us

AFRICA and ASIA (except as listed below): United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

BENELUX countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg): P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands

BRITISH ISLES: P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts. WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020 8386 8467 Fax: 020 8386 1999

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada. Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 876-0569 E-mail: [info@ucg.ca](mailto:info@ucg.ca)

CARIBBEAN: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

EAST AFRICA (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda): United Church of God—East Africa, P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200 Kenya. E-mail: [kenya@ucg.org](mailto:kenya@ucg.org)

FIJI: United Church of God, P.O. Box 11081, Laucala Beach Estate, Suva

FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

GERMANY: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228 - 9454636 Fax: 0228 - 9454637 E-mail: [info@gutenachrichten.org](mailto:info@gutenachrichten.org)

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy. Phone/Fax: (+39) 035-4523573 E-mail: [info@labuonanotizia.org](mailto:info@labuonanotizia.org)

MALAWI: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi. E-mail: [malawi@ucg.org](mailto:malawi@ucg.org)

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes. E-mail: [mauritiuss@ucg.org](mailto:mauritiuss@ucg.org)

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Auckland, 1015, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

NIGERIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 2265, Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone: 01-8113644 E-mail: [nigeria@ucg.org](mailto:nigeria@ucg.org)

PHILIPPINES: United Church of God, P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines. Phone: (+63) 82 224-4444 Cell/Text: (+63) 918-904-4444

SCANDINAVIA: Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 3535, 111 74, Stockholm, Sweden E-mail: [sverige@ucg.org](mailto:sverige@ucg.org)

SOUTH AFRICA (and Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland only): United Church of God, Southern Africa, P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205. Phone/Fax: 043 748-1694

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

TONGA: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 2617, Nuku’alofa, Tonga

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by Robin Webber

## *La Belle et la Bête*

**A**t this moment you may be reading this column because the title caught your attention and you don't know what to make of it!

No, let me assure you, you haven't opened up a French translation of our magazine, but you have opened yourself up to a valuable lesson regarding biblical prophecy. The lesson is this: Not all things are as they appear and, to understand certain vital lessons, you must never be satisfied to simply scratch the surface. Why? So you may gain a full understanding. Truth be told, one day your life could depend on it!

So let's dig a little deeper as I translate the title for you. It is “Beauty and the Beast” of fairy tale fame. Many of us are familiar with this tale of a beautiful young lady's growing respect and admiration for a beastly figure of a man. At the end of the tale, love triumphs and the beastly character is transformed to his original state as a handsome young prince.

But it was only the young lady who saw beyond the hideous exterior and gruff mannerisms of the beast to understand his inner beauty. Everyone else had rejected him except her. The moral of the story is to never judge a book by its cover and to appreciate love's power for renewal and transformation.

### **Truth can be stranger than fiction**

But beyond childhood bedtime reading, did you realize that the Bible has a lot to say about One who is truly beautiful versus another who is a “beast”? Both personalities come into contact with one another in prophetic Scripture.

But this truth is stranger than fiction. Why? In the Bible, the roles are much different from the fairy-tale scenario. It is the hero of the biblical narrative who is thought to be ugly and worthy of repudiation, whereas it is the Beast who is thought to be “the beauty” and gains almost everyone's admiration and allegiance.

The messianic writings found in Isaiah 53:2-3 introduce a figure who “shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we would desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”

God is pretty plain here. The Messiah was no “looker.” In fact, people even looked the other way.

### **The wonder and dilemma of inner beauty**

And yet what made Him so beautiful was not how He appeared, but what He looked like inwardly and thus what He does for you and me to this very day.

The narration continues in verses 4 and 5 describing how “He has borne our griefs...carried our sorrows... [was] bruised for our iniquities, chastised for our peace...and by His stripes we are healed.” Of course we are speaking of none other than Jesus Christ as “the beauty” of God's story commonly called the gospel.

A fitting description of how humanity reacted to the Messiah's inner beauty is offered by Dorothy Sayers: “He was tender to the unfortunate, patient with hon-

*(See “BELLE,” page 14)*