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### Contents

**The Focus of Revelation: Part 1**
By Norbert Lieth

Revelation is a book of hope. Hope means blissful anticipation. The victorious Lord will certainly come back, and the kingdom of God will certainly be established.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>COVER STORY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Money: Ends and Trends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Truth and Falsehood</td>
<td>Dr. Ron J. Bigalke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>JESUS: The Great Unknown</td>
<td>Wim Malgo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>“Anyone Who Is Satisfied with His Opinion Alone Is Wrong from the Outset”</td>
<td>Norbert Lieth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Why We Should Live Holy Lives</td>
<td>Stephan Beitze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>The Tyranny of Algorithms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>Evicting 1 Million Indigenous People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>‘Science Does Not Kill God’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>People Want Higher Taxes on Rich and Better Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Churches Opening Their Doors to Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEPARTMENTS**

4 Editorial ................................................................. By Erich Maag

35 Letters to the Editor .............................................. By Arno Froese

PHILADELPHIA TRUMPET...BIBLICAL NUMBERS...DIVORCE

37 Action for Israel .................................................. By Arno Froese

38 Fellow Laborers ..................................................... By Eberhard and Rosemarie Hanisch

40 The Ebenezer Home – Haifa, Israel ........................... By Johnny Khoury
When we consider the glory of heaven, we're speaking of an area outside of our universe and the three dimensions of length, width, and height that we live in. This glory, which Paul called “the third heaven” (2 Cor 12:2), is the abode of the invisible God and His angels. Its focal point is God’s throne room. The prophet Ezekiel tried to describe this unspeakable glory in words that we can understand.

His vision transports us directly into heaven: “And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake” (Ezek 1:26-28).

This is how Ezekiel describes the throne of God in heaven. What he saw was radiant light reflected from gemstones, colorful wheels of light blended with angelic beings, and around the throne of God, the vibrant glinting brilliance of a rainbow. That is a tremendous image of the sovereignty, majesty, and glory of the Lord, in His incredible beauty and heavenly perfection.

The Apostle John was also allowed a glimpse of this divine glory (Rev 4:3). Both Ezekiel and John mention and describe the temple of God. This is the “third heaven” itself, the palace of God, for which we have received infinite precious promises: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the nam e of my God, and the nam e of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev 3:12).

This passage is referring to every believing child of God. Naturally, we won’t be made into immobile pillars in a physical temple, but we’ll enter into God’s presence, never to leave Him again, to serve Him always. This image still expresses an important truth.

What did Jesus say to His disciples? “…I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:3). Being in God’s presence means that He will wipe away all our tears. There will be no more suffering. We will have perfect peace and perfect joy. Yes, the whole community of the faithful will be perfected.
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There are as many different views on the last book of the Bible as there are grains of sand in the sea. But the first chapter makes it clear where the actual focus of Revelation lies, and what that means for our lives.
The word for Revelation used in the original Greek text means “to disclose.” We also know it as the term “apocalypse,” which means “uncovering.” The future is revealed because the whole of Revelation is prophetic. It shows us what God intends for the last days.

Christmas time at school. The teacher asks a boy, “What would you most like to get for Christmas?” The boy thinks of a framed photograph of his father. He is no longer there, and the boy misses him. Quietly, he replies, “I want my father to step out of the frame and be with us again.”

Jesus Christ has gone from us and has returned to heaven. We have Him before us in the image of the Bible. But one day He will step out of the frame of heaven and return to us. Until then, we long for Him like that boy longs for his father. The book of Revelation shows us how Jesus steps out of the frame to re-enter our world.

Revelation is a book of hope. Hope means blissful anticipation. The victorious Lord will certainly come back, and the kingdom of God will certainly be established. Thus, Revelation is about the fulfillment of the messianic kingdom announced in the Old Testament, in the Gospels, and in the first chapters of Acts.

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ […] We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned” (Rev 11:15-17). “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev 19:6b).

It’s about our Lord Jesus Christ’s claim to power. The content of Revelation makes it clear how God continues the series of Old Testament prophets, especially in reference to the book of Daniel, but also Ezekiel, Zechariah, Isaiah, and Moses. The book reveals God’s path with Israel and the end-times nations. It is the book of the restoration of Israel and of all things: the eventual fulfillment of the prophets’ statements.

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (Rev 10:7). “And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Rev 22:6-7).

Thus, Revelation makes reference to the Old Testament prophets. It impressively portrays the fidelity of God, who fulfills all promises and arrives at the goal of the messianic kingdom with Israel.

The prophet Isaiah emphasized, “But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end” (Isa 45:17). It can hardly be stated more clearly. And that statement, as well as many others like it, finds its ultimate fulfillment in the time of Revelation.

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the begin-
The Focus of Revelation: Part 1

The church is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the time of Revelation, it will be caught up into heaven (1 Thess 4:13–5:9) and will share in the events of Revelation from heaven (cf. 1 Cor 6:2-3; Rev 1:16, 20).

ning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of water of life freely” (Rev 21:5-6).

Peter, who held the “apostleship of the circumcision” (Gal 2:8), confirmed this truth when he called the people of Israel to repent. He said, “Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

The Israelites did not repent in the days of the apostles. Their restoration, therefore, doesn’t take place until the time of repentance has come; and this in turn happens as soon as Revelation begins to be fulfilled.

The book of Revelation is clearly Hebrew in character. The many visions, pictures, numbers, objects, and angels are reminiscent of the Old Testament, of Israel. And there are innumerable parallels to the prophetic statements of the Old Covenant. In particular, the first verses of Revelation show where the focus of the book lies.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John” (Rev 1:1; cf. 22:6).

The word for Revelation used in the original Greek text means “to disclose.” We also know it as the term “apocalypse,” which means “uncovering.” “The Revelation” are the first two words in this book. The future is revealed because the whole of Revelation is prophetic. It shows us what God intends for the last days.

These “words of prophecy” (Rev 1:3; cf. 22:7) are the “Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:1). God has given the revelation of all last events to His glorified Son. It is His revelation. The Father appointed Him judge and king (Acts 17:31). All judgment has been given to God the Son by God the Father (John 5:22). Revelation and all of the events described in it belong to none other than Jesus Christ. The end is in His hand.

The church is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the time of Revelation, it will be caught up into heaven (1 Thess 4:13–5:9) and will share in the events of Revelation from heaven (cf. 1 Cor 6:2-3; Rev 1:16, 20). “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col 3:4).

God the Father gave the Son the Revelation to “show his servants”; that is, the purpose of Revelation is to show the servants of God who are in the churches “things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev 1:1-4; 22:20; 22:6, 16). The church should be informed of God’s plan (Rev 22:16). But it’s also about those who live as servants of God in the time of the Apocalypse. For these, the things recorded here will be infinitely important.

Israel is called “servant” under the old covenant: “Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his
adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people” (Deut 32:43). And so Revelation says, “For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand” (Rev 19:2; cf. Lev 25:42, 55; Luke 1:54, 69; Isa 65:8-16). Above all, the prophets and those who served God among the Jewish people were given the title “servant” (Neh 1:6; Luke 2:29; Rev 10:7; 11:18; 15:3). The apostles also called themselves “servants” of the Lord (Phil 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1).

In the end-times discourses of the Lord Jesus, the term “servant” appears frequently with regard to Israel (Matt 21:34-36; 22:3-4; 24:45-50; 25:14, 19, 21; Luke 12:38). And Revelation calls the 144,000 Israelites of the twelve tribes “servants of our God” (Rev 7:3). The martyrs in heaven also receive this title (Rev 6:11). The whole book of Revelation is always addressed to the servants of God.

The formatting of Revelation 1:1 puts us back in the Old Testament books. For example, in the words of the prophet Amos, who writes, “Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7 NIV). That’s precisely what Revelation is about.

Revelation shows “things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev 1:1). That is, what should happen quickly. It’s about fast-moving events, about a compact time that, once started, will be done quickly. “I the LORD will hasten it in his time” (Isa 60:22b).

God must judge this world, and He will do it through Jesus Christ. Our Lord will punish this world in a short time and quickly, and then establish a long and lasting blessing. Contractions before childbirth come on suddenly; they are very violent and, once started, get faster and faster. But in proportion to a human life, they are short. So it is also said of the suffering that Christians are going through: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor 4:17).

It was an angel who gave the revelation to John (Rev 1:1; cf. 22:16). This angel is a personal messenger of the Lord, who assists John in the course of his visions by repeatedly giving him instructions; and whom John later attempts to worship, but the angel refuses (Rev 19:9-10; 22:8-9, 16).

This means that God the Father has entrusted the revelation to His Son. Jesus Christ passes it on to His angel. This angel shows it to John. And John records it for us. He therefore says of himself that he has testified to “the word of God [the Father], and the testimony of Jesus Christ [the Son], and of all things that he saw” (Rev 1:2).

John could have written Revelation’s introduction last, since it is in the past tense. That is, John first wrote down the visions that the angel had sent to him from the Father and Son, and then he wrote the introduction to the text and put it at the beginning.

Angels are ministering spirits for the elect; that is, the church (Heb 1:14). But especially often angels are called servants and messengers of Israel (Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19; Heb 2:2). The church today, in the age of grace, is not taught by angels, but by the Holy Spirit. In fact, the reverse is true: the church doesn’t learn from angels, but angels learn from the church, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the mani-
The Focus of Revelation: Part 1

The doctrine of the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His kingdom is a major theme of the Bible. God’s Word speaks of His second coming roughly three times more than His first.

Far too many Christians and churches regularly dismiss this precious promise, by not concerning themselves with Revelation at all. One might think that many believers can’t read properly, and thus understand the words of the Lord to mean, “Blessed is he who readeth not the words of this prophecy, and keepeth not those things which are written therein: for the time is not at hand…”

The doctrine of the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His kingdom is a major theme of the Bible. God’s Word speaks of His second coming roughly three times more than His first.

The apostle Paul even warns the church against encouraging an interest in angels: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Col 2:18).

To this day, there have always been people who say that angels have appeared to them and given them messages or visions. Often, they boast by asserting that it was God who sent the angel to them. But that is very dangerous, “for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14).

The one who hears the revelation is praised by God as “blessed”: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Rev 1:3). Toward the end of Revelation, the same message is repeated: “Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Rev 22:7).
Ripening Times – Part 3:
Discerning Trends of Significance

We are chronicling the world’s most “significant trends” of the present season. These might be considered among the “signs of the times” that Jesus implored us to discern (Matthew 16:3). The sudden, “significant trend” that we continue to review in this part of the series is the rise of very powerful and large multinational corporations (MNCs)... often called the Global Titans. Among a long list of factoids presented, we pointed out that some of the Titans have more employees that some countries have in population.

By Wilfred Hahn

The senior executives of these companies indeed wield much power. Among other venues, these executives yearn to participate in the annual pilgrimage to Davos, Switzerland for the World Economic Forum meeting (which is sponsored by some 1,000 companies around the globe). There they hobnob with politicians, academics, and anyone else who is a “mover and shaker” in world affairs or ultra-wealthy.

Could these powerful executives be considered the equivalent of “kings” in our era? Could they comprise the 10 kings (mentioned or figured 10X in the Bible)? The Bible allows for some alternative views, mentioning several other groups of powerful and/or wealthy elites. Do these qualify as actors in the last days?

Greatly Honored People
Consider this Bible verse, “He [...] will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price” (Daniel 11:39, NIV). This verse is excerpted from a section in Daniel that describes the actions of the final world ruler (the Antichrist). We see here that elites of some kind will receive considerable reward for their complicity in supporting the agendas of the final incarnate “spirit of the Antichrist.”

Who are the ones that receive honor from the Antichrist? The answer—those that will acknowledge him. Virtually all English Bible translations use the word “acknowledge.” It means here that certain key people who recognize him and accept his authority will receive a reward—land.

It should be noted that the original Aramaic word used for “land” in this verse can also convey the idea of property or economic domain, as well as geographic area. After all, in ancient times, land was the main foundation of wealth and economy. Today, there are other forms of significant wealth.

It only follows that this must be a small, elite group of people, who likely are already influential.
Who are the ones that receive honor from the Antichrist? The answer—those that will acknowledge him. Virtually all English Bible translations use the word “acknowledge.” It means here that certain key people who recognize him and accept his authority will receive a reward—land.

Why? They will be made rulers over many. As not everyone can be made a ruler over many, therefore these will be few.

The elites—whoever they are—are bought off for their loyalty with further reward: the additional pay-off of power or economic domain, we reason. It is the same or similar deal that Satan offered Christ when He was being tested in the wilderness, promising “authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So, if you worship me, it will all be yours” (Luke 4:6-7).

But why did the devil think it worthwhile to specifically test Christ in such a colossal way? Obviously, it would have been great gain for him were he successful. Here was motive and incentive. We may therefore take some license and deduce that there will be similar motives and incentives behind the Antichrist’s endtime reward systems.

Also, the elites selected for reward must have something to barter in return … likely their fame or endorsement. It wouldn’t be surprising then if these were highly revered people, politicians, great humanitarians, or Christian masqueraders … even so-called “angels of light.”

We are given at least a few criteria with which to identify who these elites might be at that future date. In the first instance, they must be humans (not demonic spirits). Also, they must be capable of being rulers, already likely possessing some measure of power and authority—perhaps a large multinational. And, they must be willing, greedy, worldly complicitors.

Although these final events play out during the future Tribulation period (and therefore really do not concern us personally), is it already possible today to discern the power structures that these elites might command? Although we cannot be definitive in light of conditions today, we can certainly consider some possible candidates that play a facilitating role.

Apostle John prophesies about yet another type of rich elite. These are the rich merchants that appear to play an influential role in the world at that future time. These “merchants of the earth grew rich from her [the whore’s] excessive luxuries” (Revelation 18:3). Those that “gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment” (verse 15).

These merchants clearly are wealthy people, and their economic power is on a global scale. It is true that, indeed, merchants (famed business executives of major companies) today are the most venerated people on earth. We live in a materialist culture that worships wealth and affluence.

Can we identify the elite group of people described by Daniel or Apostle John in Revelation 18? Are they one and the same? We cannot know for sure, but likely not. Though they may be different groups of elites, they certainly will be identifiable once the Tribulation Period begins.
The rise of the MNC is of great significance to Christians for more than a few reasons. As we have observed, they are at the very center of globalization and financialization. MNCs are at the forefront of the convergent drive to a worldwide materialistic belief system. In the process, they impact our personal and economic freedoms and challenge and test our Christian faith.

What about the rich of the last days, mentioned in James 5:1-6, and the rule of the 10 kings, mentioned by both Daniel and Apostle John? These two groups of individuals may very well be visible before the Tribulation begins.

What we can safely conclude is that a great economic power structure has emerged over a very short period. These power nodes await some type of elites to play their role in the service of the Antichrist.

Continue to Get Bigger, Concentrating Industry Power
And still, the Global Titans are getting even bigger. These firms gobble up other companies, merge or build new companies at a rapid pace. In recent years, these activities have boomed to frenzied levels. One hundred billion plus takeover deals have become the norm. The total number of mergers or acquisition by MNCs around the world (both cross-border or domestic) has literally exploded over the past twenty years. Clearly, an energized trend is underway.

All signs are that this global favoritism for the multinational company will continue. Some people are even willing to invest greater powers in MNCs. One global thinker advocated that global companies be given the responsibility of international security. Given their superior global information systems, MNCs are the natural choice to regulate international exports and imports and to gather intelligence. We should expect MNCs to become even more powerful worldwide in the years ahead.

Without a doubt, the Global Titans are a major enabler—if not the very epicenter—of an endtime economic and monetary order, whose aim is to conspire against God and persecute the values and beliefs of Christians. MNCs are one of the major “significant trends” on earth today, driving a worldwide convergence toward unified beliefs and values, centered upon money and wealth.

Looking ahead, one can imagine that MNCs as a group will continue to expand and envelope a greater part of the earth's human economic activity, wielding fierce financial control of world affairs.

The rise of the MNC is of great significance to Christians for more than a few reasons. As we have observed, they are at the very center of globalization and financialization. MNCs are at the forefront
of the convergent drive to a worldwide materialistic belief system. In the process, they impact our personal and economic freedoms and challenge and test our Christian faith.

Increasingly, the values and ethics promoted in the places where many of us work are being determined by these basically amoral entities. We see that MNCs as a group wield enormous power over world affairs, as they collectively dominate global economic and financial systems.

The multinational organization is certainly a very influential and relatively new form of human organization, viewed against the human historical timeline. These have strict hierarchies and highly defined “pecking” orders. Obedience is lavishly rewarded, especially among the higher executive echelons. Can Christians comfortably work in the top executive tiers of global Big Titans? In many ways, these new leviathans have created a spiritual and materialistic “straight jacket” that challenges the faith and freedom of overcoming believers.

Thoughts to Ponder
The Bible mentions both rewards and acknowledgement as playing a significant role in the end times. However, there are two different types of reward regimes—one good and the other, evil.

Those elites that acknowledge the Antichrist, get the reward of land and wealth. The Bible also specifically tells us what the reward will be for everybody else … in other words, all the rest of the masses that acknowledge and worship the Antichrist.

What is the reward of non-Christian earth-dwellers? They will not be killed (a negative reward) and will be allowed to “buy or sell.” Unfortunately, those who do acknowledge him will be eternally condemned.

On the other hand, for all the Tribulation Christians, he causes “all who refused to worship the image to be killed. He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell” (Revelation 13:15-17).

What then is the reward today for pre-Rapture Christians … and the price?

Certainly, we do not have the promise of something so mundane and temporal as the “land” promised to the elites (in other words, material wealth), position and power in the world. Said Christ, “Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:12).

The saints are the ones that the world will hate, as the world also hated Christ. Said Jesus, “[…] you will be hated by all nations because of me” (Matthew 24:9). As Apostle Paul experienced, the saints are more likely to be troubled than coddled, perplexed than self-reliant, persecuted than befriended, rejected than accepted. “For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body” (2 Corinthians 4:11).

Finally, says Christ, “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32).

Take courage, Christ is coming quickly with His reward. “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done” (Revelation 22:12). For, soon it will be time for “rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great” (Revelation 11:18).
Jim Jones was the founder of the Peoples Temple. He adopted elements of Christianity and combined them with communist and socialist ideas, in addition to an emphasis on racial equality. The Peoples Temple is best known for the 1978 events in Jonestown, Guyana, where more than 900 of Jones’ followers died in a cult murder/suicide, including 276 children. The tragedy at Jonestown would be the greatest single loss of American civilian life in an intentional act until the 9/11 attacks.

The FBI recovered a 45-minute audio recording of Jim Jones (known as the “death tape”), calmly urging his adult followers to drink cyanide-laced Flavor Aid once they had given it to their children. The original thought was that the poison was squirted into some children’s mouths, and that there was no emotional outburst or panic. The tape revealed otherwise, as it recorded the horrendous shrieking and screaming of children and babies as they were forced to take the poison.
Jones was once regarded as a rational man, and Rosalynn Carter (in her campaign tour for her husband Jimmy) even referred to him as being “so inspirational.” Jim Jones is one of the most radical examples of spiritual deception; yet, sadly, there are others like him. History is replete with individuals who (in a diversity of ploys) have influenced people contrary to faith in the true God and His holy Word, the Bible, and thus have damaged and even destroyed lives.

A cult is any religious movement that has teachings and/or practices that deviate from the doctrines of historical, orthodox Christianity. Deviation means the abandoning, the distorting, or the opposing of doctrines and teachings of biblical Christianity. To be orthodox means to affirm those beliefs and teachings regarded as fundamental by the majority of Christians, since the church was formed at Pentecost in the first century.

Cults arise for various reasons. Specifically, cults originate by adding spurious and unorthodox beliefs and ideas to the Christian faith. Cults subtract certain biblical doctrines and truths, which often is expressed by denying fundamental biblical teachings. Cults develop certain isolated truths, and then distort or overemphasize them. Cults attempt to combine many religious beliefs and faiths into a unified doctrinal system, and prosper because of outright fraud.

Although they claim to be aligned with Christianity, and may even confess belief in Jesus, cults invariably do not believe that salvation is a gift of the grace of God, which comes to a sinner through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Cults may even affirm teachings that are contrary to what Jesus taught. They do not affirm and recognize the Bible as the supreme and final authority in all matters of belief, doctrine, and faith.

**Know the Truth**

Although cults assert belief in Jesus, they teach that He is not sufficient for salvation, and thus one must do other things in addition to believing in Jesus. Cults affirm that salvation is achieved through Jesus in addition to works. When the book of Galatians was written, the Judaizers were promulgating the same error: “believe in Jesus Christ, but there are also wonderful things to add to what you believe.” Judaizers preached the gospel plus observance of the Law of Moses.

In the current day, counterfeits of the gospel of God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ preach “the gospel plus” their extrabiblical ideas and beliefs; their religious organization, their regulations, their rules, and (alleged) special revelations. In response to such false teachings that add to the gospel of grace, the Bible declares, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!” (Gal 1:8).

God has committed the gospel of grace to His people, and they must guard it and share it with others (Gal 2:6-10). God does not seek “those who were of high reputation” (v. 6); rather, He looks for those who are faithful stewards (1 Cor 4:1-2). The only thing that truly matters for a steward is to be found faithful to the one whose property is managed. God is the one to whom all servants must answer, because success will be judged by Him alone (1 Cor 3:2-5).

When there is the possibility that someone else is undermining your faithful stewardship, it is frequently necessary to confront that individual, to be certain all you
The gospel message is “living water,” and whoever partakes from it finds that it is “a well of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:14; 7:38). False teachers pollute the gospel by proclaiming that salvation is achieved by any means other than by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

have accomplished is not undone. Face-to-face explanation of your intents may elicit blessing as opposed to disagreement. When your goals are rejected, you will find yourself in contention, yet it is most prudent to heed the biblical example for confrontation seen in Galatians 2. There will always be individuals spreading falsehood, yet God’s stewards must never abandon truthfulness. Confronting error is always necessary; yet do not neglect the unity of true believers (cf. Eph 2:11-22).

The gospel message is “living water,” and whoever partakes from it finds that it is “a well of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:14; 7:38). False teachers pollute the gospel by proclaiming that salvation is achieved by any means other than by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Many today seek to earn God’s favor through a set of rules or various rituals. Whenever someone tries to earn God’s favor or eternal life, they are drinking from a polluted and deadly stream. If a person wants to work for his or her salvation, they are saying the death of Jesus Christ was unnecessary. Jesus Christ died for humanity, because no person can achieve his or her own salvation.

**Recognize the Lie**

False teachers are genuinely deceptive. Jesus compared them to “ravenous wolves” that “come to you in sheep’s clothing” (Matt 7:15). Second Corinthians 11:15 says they “disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.” In a manner similar to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 7:15-20) and the Olivet Discourse (24:5, 11, 24), wherein Jesus warned against false prophets and teachers, Second Peter 2 also provides a warning regarding the hazards of spiritual deception.

Second Peter 1:19-21 referenced true prophets, while 2:1-3 warns that false teachers will inevitably manifest among the community of believers. Acts 20:29-30 predicted “savage wolves” arising among God’s people, “speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.” One must be on guard, because those teaching falsehood “secretly introduce destructive heresies” (2 Pet 2:1).

What might appear to be a difference of opinion regarding certain biblical teachings, eventually has the possibility of becoming a deviation and even denial of Christ as Lord and Savior. The concern is not with those who may differ on the interpretation of a verse or two; rather, the problem is with the person whose own interpretation is demanded as solely authoritative, or else they will divide the body of believers. Scripture warns that such heresies bring “swift destruction” upon those who teach them and to those who follow them.
False teachers are “springs without water and mists driven by a storm” (v. 17). The boastful, superficial words of these false teachers may be enticing (v. 18), especially to new believers who are just learning that Christian freedom is the ability to do what is right, as based upon God’s Word, the Bible. Ironically, they promise freedom yet are “slaves of corruption” (v. 19).

The description of the false teachers is understandable enough to help identify them, and vivid enough to spur one to avoid them. Knowing the truth of God’s Word is crucial for not being fooled by error. A person is easy prey if he or she cannot discern the methods and teachings of false teachers. Not only should one reject the false teachings, but also their sensual life (2 Pet 2:2-3). False teachers are indulgent, living to please themselves (v. 10). They also “despise authority,” which primarily refers to their rejection of the lordship of Christ and their denial of His majesty and power.

Rebels crave recognition; thus, they want to be regarded as the most important, and in their reckless attitude they defy God and others. False teachers are focused upon themselves, seeking only personal gratification and recognition. In their arrogance, “they revile angelic majesties . . . who are greater in might and power” (vv. 10-11). With an exaggerated view of themselves, false teachers are not afraid to speak against God’s angels or even God Himself. Always be wary of anyone who speaks maliciously of earthly and heavenly authorities, even of Satan himself.¹

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The remedy to false teaching is “the pure milk of the word” (1 Pet 2:2), yet those in error prefer their own lusts, whereby they entice “unstable souls.” Similar to Balaam, who ignored God’s warnings because of his love for money (Numb 22:1-34; Jude 11), false teachers forsake “the narrow gate” that leads to life for the broad road of greed, pride, and sex (2 Pet 2:14-16; cf. Matt 7:13-14). Many of those who proclaim a prosperity gospel succumb to Balaam’s error and make a travesty of the Word of God, the Bible. “They are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things” (Phil 3:18-19).

The Bible distinguishes between people who profess faith in Christ and those who truly follow Jesus as Lord and Savior (2 Pet 2:20-22). Apparently, the false teachers associated with believers, yet did not truly embrace Jesus Christ in faith; thus, they returned to “the defilements of the world.” Be certain you are heeding the Good Shepherd (John 10:27-28). Because He has revealed Himself in the Bible, make the study of God’s Word a priority and thereby apply its truths to your own life.

¹ Satan presently has access to God (Job 1:6), and his abode is in the heavenly realm (Eph 6:12). Satan is also active upon the earth (Job 1:7; 1 Pet 5:8). Revelation 12:8 prophesies a time in which “there was no longer a place for them [Satan and his demons] in heaven.” The expulsion of Satan from heaven in Revelation means that he no longer has access to God’s presence only at this particular time in the future, or he was previously banished from the presence of the Lord, yet has access to the lower heavens.
The disciples often reacted with a lack of understanding of the Lord, His purposes, and His ways. Jesus once even asked, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?” (John 14:9). We also see this lack of comprehension among Jesus’ disciples today.

Even Israel didn’t understand the Lord when He walked the earth. “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matt 16:13-17).

This was said by the same Peter who, later on that fateful and distressing night, responded with curses and swearing to the question of whether he also belonged to Jesus: “I know not this man of whom ye speak” (Mark 14:71). Peter knew the Lord, but inwardly he didn’t really know Him. Otherwise he would never have denied Him.
We too can deny His person, by our attitude toward the Lord when we show a lack of understanding about His ways. But since Jesus Christ is the beloved Son of God, He is also the revelation of the love of God Himself, because God is love. Therefore, the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His love is of utmost importance in the life of a believer, because eternity will be insufficient to grow thoroughly in this realization. Paul prayed about this, that we would “be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with the fullness of God” (Eph 3:18-19).

Yet, so few believers are filled to the whole fullness of God, because they don’t grow in the knowledge of the love of Christ. True discipleship consists of growth in the realization of His love. Discipleship is self-denial.

The more I deny myself and affirm the person of Jesus Christ, the more I realize, with growing astonishment, who, what, and how He is. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt 16:24). Our Lord tells us, “If you want to be my disciple, then give me your right to yourself.” If we carry out this surrender, then we no longer need to nurture self-conceit or worry about our circumstances, because Jesus is completely sufficient. He satisfies us more and more!

Anyone who recognizes Him more and more deeply is, in fact, willing to deny himself. The ones who don’t recognize Him don’t have self-denial in mind.

Many believers ask themselves, “How can I be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ while still remaining in the world?” But the one who truly knows and recognizes Jesus asks, “How far can I get from the
“We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22b).

world, in order to serve Him better?” It’s a matter of perspective. Those who know Him burn for Him. They are dominated by a passion: “How can I serve my Savior better?” They follow Jesus!

No one should imagine that he can follow Jesus with reservations and restrictions. To those who were enthusiastic about Him, our Lord said soberly, “Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27). He told people to count the cost. In doing so, He used the image of one who builds: “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?” (verse 28). He also referred to the image of war: “Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?” (verse 31).

Does our Lord Jesus want to discourage us by saying this? No. That’s encouraging! It proves that Jesus Christ has something to give that is on a very different level from what entangles our thinking. It is glorious to go with Him, especially when we consider the whole cost of discipleship. Our Lord Jesus is so different from us. He is incomparable. He breaks every human scale. An unknown author once wrote under the title, “Jesus, You Are Different!” (from pp. 52-54 of Why It Pays to Be a Christian by Norbert Lieth):

You stood beside the woman caught in adultery, When all others kept their distance. You visited the publican [tax collector], When all others were indignant. You called the children to Yourself, When all others wanted to send them away. You forgave Peter, When he condemned himself. You praised the widow with her mite, When nobody else noticed her. You put the devil to flight, When all others were deceived by him. You promised the kingdom of heaven to the thief on the cross, When all others told him to go to hell. You called Paul to follow you, When all others feared him as a persecutor. You fled fame, When they all wanted to make You king. You loved the poor, When all others sought after riches. You healed the sick, When they were given up [on] by others. You were silent, When they accused You, Mocked You and flogged You. You died on the cross, When they celebrated the Passover. You took the blame upon Yourself, When they washed their hands in innocence. You rose from the dead, When they thought it was all over. Jesus, I thank You that You are!

Oh, if only we were to come more to the knowledge of the truth! The truth is a person, Jesus Christ. And the truth is so different from what we think. Because, beloved, we still expect all sorts of tribulations. “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22b). Our attitude toward tribulations is therefore crucial. We must learn from Jesus here.

Let us remember the disciples at Emmaus. They were filled with sadness and shocked at the terrible tribulation that had befallen their master. He had died. But then the risen Lord Jesus joined these sad disciples, and He explained His tribulation with the words, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:26).

We’re unable to see and grasp the connections between tribulations and glory. But Jesus saw it! He knew that He would be crucified and reconcile the world to God. He knew about His terrible suffering. But He looked beyond. Jesus, “for the joy
that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb 12:2).

Oh, Jesus is so different from us! He behaved so differently in suffering and tribulation. Just when He suffered the most, He was nearest to His victorious glory in resurrection. Whoever grasps this confesses with Paul, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress? ...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Rom 8:35, 37). We are united with Christ in our tribulations (Rom 8:17).

God leads us through the heat of affliction, so that our faith is tempered, strengthened and proven, like pure gold in the fire. For our Lord is “a strength to the needy in his distress” (Isa 25:4). Because He reveals Himself in tribulation, He is creating a holy impulse in our hearts that we would otherwise lack. “Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them” (Isa 26:16). In the furnace of tribulation, all spiritual inertia is burned away. Then we are not so different from Jesus; then we become more like Him.

It is precisely these things—tribulation, fear, seemingly unheard prayers, which are then answered—that awaken a higher joy in us. These are not things we have to fight against; through Him we are more than conquerors in all these things. Not in spite of them, but in the midst of them. Paul wrote this truth so wonderfully, so gloriously, when he says, “I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation” (2 Cor 7:4b).

Our unshakeable joy is not founded on something transient, but on the unwavering, imperishable love of God. Our life experiences, whether they be terrible or perhaps monotonous, have no power to attack the love of God in Jesus Christ. On the contrary, they cause that wonderful love to be poured out in us, and His glory to be planted in us; for the love of God is the essence of God.

Oh, if we would only grasp the mystery of our affliction today; for, according to Romans 5:2-5, afflictions open our eyes to a wonderful cycle: “[Christ] by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

Even in our tribulation, we move forward step by step, in the midst of the wretchedness and poverty of existence, “in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses” (2 Cor 6:4); also in disappointments, and when we no longer understand our Lord.

Ultimately, every believer must share in what Jesus became. He, God Himself, became man. The essence of this incarnation was His abandonment, the emptying of Himself, of His glory. And that must also be carried in our flesh and blood as reality. Christ is to take shape in us.

What is most in the balance on our long journey for the Lord is faithfulness; that is, faithful, persevering devotion in the midst of the unseen. Our spiritual life can only remain intact by looking to Jesus. Believers are destined for great things, but the way to get through tribulations is often through the valley, and that means struggle. Basically, the struggle of faith is the assertion of the victory of Jesus in the midst of tribulation. That’s why the Lord said, “In your patience possess ye your souls” (Luke 21:19).

In many ways, Jesus Christ is still the Great Unknown to us, as He is so different from us. But so that we may become like Him, He leads us through tribulation, through suffering to glory, as the apostle Paul says: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor 4:17-18).
“Anyone Who Is Satisfied with His Opinion Alone Is Wrong from the Outset.”

An interview with Norbert Lieth, author and senior board member of Midnight Call Ministries, on the meaning of biblical prophecy, various opinions, correction through the Scriptures, and proper study of the prophetic Word. Interview conducted by René Malgo.

Why is Midnight Call’s focus on the Bible’s prophetic statements?
Because the prophetic Word is an urgent message; because it is a focus of apostolic statements; because the Bible asks us to; because prophecy belongs to the biblical message of salvation, as part of the whole counsel of God; because the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus is absolutely true and must not be suppressed; because prophecy is needed more than ever; because it has become a neglected topic in churches; and, not least, because the prophetic Word is a message of hope.

Shortly before this interview, I was reading the Jewish religious scholar David Flusser: “Today, it’s necessary to deal with the biblical statements about the end times. The Jews do it; the Christians should do it all the more...” And John MacArthur wrote on the subject, “I would argue that the fact of the Second Coming is a cardinal doctrine of Christianity. It is the end and goal of God’s purpose on earth, and the divine climax will be as precise and purposeful as every other revelation of God. Those who abandon the hope of Christ’s bodily return have in effect abandoned true Christianity.”

Our ministry’s founder Wim Malgo was very concerned with this truth at an early age. Thus, the proclamation of biblical prophecy became a focus of his ministry, which the Lord blessed over the decades.

My wife and I were also converted by an evangelistic message about the return of Jesus Christ and the prophecy of Holy Scripture. I came from a Catholic home, my wife from a Lutheran one. We wondered why we’d never heard this message before. And, we thought, if it’s true that Jesus Christ is returning, then it’s imperative that all people hear about it. So,
we’re very grateful that the Lord later led us to the ministry of Midnight Call. The burden of the Bible's prophetic Word had, so to speak, been placed in the cradle of our faith life.

Didn’t Midnight Call continually have to correct its prophetic interpretations? What’s the point of continuing to address prophecy?

Yes, it’s true that we’ve had to correct ourselves on occasion. But that kind of thing is always necessary in all of Christianity. Sometimes one is too hasty, draws the wrong conclusions, and there’s the risk of speculation. But whoever thinks that they’re always doing everything right is undoubtedly wrong in that perspective. A theologian once said it this way: “Just because someone said ‘now,’ should we say ‘never?’”

There are many different interpretations of the prophetic Word. Which points are not up for debate, and where is there room for disagreement?

We can’t compromise on the statements in the Bible that are fundamental and crucial to the faith. The Bible is God’s inspired Word, from beginning to end. Jesus Christ is true God and true man, born as a son of a virgin. Salvation is by grace alone, through Jesus’ total sacrifice and completed work in His death and resurrection. There is no other salvation, no other way of salvation, but only through Him. And He will return in person. Surely, there is more that I haven’t listed.

But as for things that aren’t essential to the faith, believers will always have different opinions. For example, this concerns questions such as: when does the Rapture take place in the chronology of the end times? Will the Church of Jesus Christ have to go through the Tribulation? How do we explain the difference between Israel and the Church? Is the dispensationalist approach always right? Which interpretation of Revelation is best? And much more.

The whole thing is comparable to mountaineers climbing the same summit from different sides. They don’t have the same view from their different perspectives, but they’re concerned with the same mountain, the same foundation, the same peak. Only when they’ve reached the top do they all have the same view.

Anyone who is satisfied with his opinion alone is wrong from the outset. The Baptist preacher C. H. Spurgeon said, “Don’t go about the world with your fist doubled up for fighting, carrying a theological revolver in the leg of your trousers.”

If someone wants to study the prophecy of the Bible seriously and rationally, how should he proceed? What do you recommend?

Above all, he should stay as close as possible to God’s Word, investigate and pay attention to parallels and the context of Scripture, and examine what other passages say about the same topic. One should avoid all speculation,
and not read the daily news into the Bible and use this as a standard of interpretation. It’s also necessary to explore what has already been fulfilled in biblical prophecy, and what is awaiting fulfillment.

**Are there areas of prophecy where you yourself have undergone a change in perspective?**
Yes, there definitely are. For example, in the past, I automatically applied all prophetic statements from the Gospels to the Church. So, I associated the parable of the ten virgins with the Rapture, or I saw the Church in Jesus’ end times discourse on the Mount of Olives. But, Jesus’ disciples don’t always or automatically refer to the faithful of the Church after Pentecost. Over time and through a process, I learned to make a clearer distinction here. I’ve noticed how strong Christian traditions are, often stronger than the Bible, and I’ve tried to break away from that and to only agree with the Bible. But, I must admit that I still have a lot to learn here. We’re all influenced by our religious affiliation, our childhood home, or what we learned through theological education. We can be very grateful for that, and it’s undoubtedly useful, but there are also things that our forefathers in the faith saw differently.

**What practical benefits does the study of prophecy have for our daily lives?**
The study of the prophetic Word spurs us on to take the Word of God seriously, and in all other areas as well. The fulfillment leaves us in awe of God’s precision, faithfulness, and reliability. And, the outlook on what hasn’t yet occurred allows us to be confident and preserves a living hope in us. The study of biblical prophecy fills us with longing and love for our home above, and makes us look for what is above; namely, Christ at the right hand of God the Father. In the words of theologian Ron J. Bigalke, “Bible prophecy demonstrates the believer’s responsibility in the current age. One’s view of the future will determine how he/she lives in the present.”

(MR1018/965)
What God longs for is also a matter dear to the heart of the person who seeks sanctification. What God abhors is an abomination to him or her. This full identification with the will of God is best described for us in 1 Peter 1:14-16: “As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” God doesn’t allow any gray areas. He wants all of us! The reasoning is simple, but categorical: “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

The consequences of straying from the path of sanctification are never good: “He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known” (Prov 10:9). The very first Psalm describes the end of those who follow a sinful path: “The ungodly...are like the chaff which the wind driveth away” (Psalm 1:4). But the one who lives in sanctification has God’s approval.

Revelation lists many mistakes made by the church at Sardis. But despite this, there were those in the church who walked in sanctification: “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy” (Rev 3:4).

Through baptism, the born-again Christian testifies to his intention to live
in holiness: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4).

Of course, this is a daily struggle. It will never be easy. However, we can make it very easy or very difficult for ourselves, as the following example shows:

In Germany, a few guys cut two Volkswagen Beetles down the middle and welded the two tail ends, where the engines are, together so that the two back ends faced each other. Then they wrote on it in bright colors, “We’re not going anywhere.”

Let’s say that two identical engines are facing each other in first gear. Since they are equally strong but are pushing against each other, they won’t move. Neither can be turned off. How can you get them to move? Think it over before you continue reading.

The answer is simple. We have two equal but opposite forces that cancel each other out, according to the laws of physics. The only way to move the vehicle in one direction is to only fill one of the gas tanks.

The same thing happens on a spiritual level. The fight between flesh and spirit is lifelong. If you nourish the flesh with corrupt things from magazines, movies, the internet, music, friendships, and more, it’s easy to predict what will win the fight. But if you nurture your spirit with the Word of God and prayer, and cultivate church life and fellowship with spiritually minded Christians, then you can also see what will prevail. The apostle Paul said, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal 5:16). And also, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof” (Rom 13:14).

(MR0119/987)
The Tyranny of Algorithms

For the past couple of years a big story about the future of China has been the focus of both fascination and horror.

Online behavior will inevitably be a big part of what is monitored, and algorithms will be key to everything, though there remain doubts about whether something so ambitious will ever come to full fruition. One of the scheme’s basic aims is to use a vast amount of data to create individual ratings, which will decide people’s access—or lack of it—to everything from travel to jobs.

The most high-profile system is Sesame Credit—created by Ant Financial, an offshoot of the Chinese online retail giant Alibaba. Superficially, it reflects the western definition of credit, and looks like a version of the credit scores used all over the world, invented to belatedly allow Chinese consumers the pleasures of buying things on tick, and manage the transition to an economy in which huge numbers of people pay via smartphones. But its reach runs wider.

Using a secret algorithm, Sesame credit constantly scores people from 350 to 950, and its ratings are based on factors including considerations of “interpersonal relationships” and consumer habits. Bluntly put, being friends with low-rated people is bad news. Buying video games, for example, gets you marked down. Participation is voluntary but easily secured, thanks to an array of enticements. High scores unlock privileges such as being able to rent a car without a deposit, and fast-tracked European visa applications. There are also more romantic benefits: the online dating service Baihe gives people with good scores prominence on its platforms.

Exactly how all this will relate to the version of social credit eventually implemented is unclear: licenses that might have enabled the systems to be rolled out further ran out last year. There again, Ant Financial has stated that it wants to “help build a social integrity system” — and the existing public and private pilots have a similar sense of social control, and look set to feed the same social divisions. If you are moldering away towards the bottom of the hierarchies, life will clearly be unpleasant. But if you manage to be a high-flyer, the pleasures of fast-tracking and open doors will be all yours, though even the most fleeting human interaction will give off the crackle of status anxiety.

Commentary: Again, communist China seems to be leading the way: “algorithms will be key to everything.”

What does it mean? In simple terms, new ways of classifying individuals. People’s social and economic behavior will earn scores, as the article indicates, from 350 to 950. With information on such a large group of consumers, China’s economy can be made transparent to those who are in charge and be guided accordingly.

For the rest of the world, it will have to go in the same direction: total control. That, incidentally, is the key to the final collapse called Armageddon.

(See 15 Future Events That Will Shake the World, Item #2285, SALE $12.)
US Travelers to Europe Will Need Visa

U.S. citizens traveling to Europe will shortly need to apply for an ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorization System) visa waiver which is the new travel authorization for Europe that will come into effect from 2021.

Similar to other countries and regions in the world, Europe has recently decided to improve its security level to avoid any further problems with illegal immigration and terrorism. This means that from 2021, all Americans traveling to a European country in the Schengen Zone will be in need of an ETIAS.

To obtain the Europe visa waiver for Americans, U.S. citizens will need to have a valid passport, a credit or debit card, and an email account. These are the main ETIAS requirements for U.S. citizens which each applicant must have on hand when applying. Without the right travel document, applicants could have their application denied.

During the 3-year validity of the ETIAS for U.S. travelers, it is possible to enter any of the Schengen Zone European countries which apply to the travel authorization as many times as necessary. The ETIAS visa waiver for Americans is a multiple-entry travel authorization with few restrictions in order to promote tourism while maintaining a high level of international security.

This process allows European immigration and customs authorities to pre-screen all travelers and confirm their status before permitting them entry or even to board a flight, thus improving security measures throughout the Schengen Area.

The ETIAS payment is also super quick and easy to do with a credit or debit card via the secure online payment platform.

Once the travel authorization for Europe has been paid, the process is complete and the applicant will need to wait to receive the confirmation for the ETIAS visa waiver via e-mail. With an approved ETIAS visa waiver, applicants will be ready to travel to Europe!

There will also be other regulations and restrictions to bear in mind when traveling to Europe from the U.S.A. which are similar to those in place at the moment, such as the right to carry weapons, importing and exporting large quantities of tobacco, alcohol or perfume, and declaring large amounts of currency.

Finally, it is also useful to remember that all U.S. citizens are required to obtain an ETIAS visa to travel to Europe, and all minors are able to travel with their normal passport and have to apply for an ETIAS to enter the Schengen Area, as well.

From 2021, ETIAS will be a legal obligation for all U.S. citizens traveling to Europe for short-stay visits so it is essential to be prepared!

https://www.etiasvisa.com/
etias-requirements/americans

Commentary: America was one of the few countries whose citizens could travel to Europe at will, without permit or visa. Those days have apparently come to an end. Today, Europe is the open continent, with changes based on the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS). We note, however, that this is an electronic measure; there is no wall, barbed wire, or other physical restriction. The entire program is based on artificial intelligence properly utilized to filter out potentially dangerous immigrants/refugees. The results speak for itself. In spite of receiving millions of displaced persons during the last decade, the European continent still prides itself as being the safest in the world.

So, the question: why target the US in particular? Reason: the US has consistently shown a significantly higher rate of crime than most progressive European countries. However, we believe there is another reason. Behind it all, lurking in the shadows is total control—collecting information from a larger number of people globally. According to Wikipedia, the five top countries in Europe receive more than 305 million visitors per year (USA is 77 million).

Thus, information has become the key to security. Although the media at large has reported increased crime due to the influx of immigrants/refugees in Europe, facts on the ground show that crime is on the decrease.

Only dimly we begin to see how the world will and must be regulated by something built by mankind; that ultimately will be the image of the beast.

6962

(See The Coming Muslim Invasion?, Item #1071, $2.)
EU Court Rules Good Friday Law Discriminatory

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that Austrian law discriminated on grounds of religion and belief for not giving plaintiff Markus Achatzi holiday pay for working on Good Friday, a holy day for several Christian denominations marking the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Security agent Achatzi sued his company, Cresco Investigation of Vienna, in 2017 for additional pay for working on Good Friday, considered a public holiday for members of select churches. Austria’s Supreme Court asked the ECJ to rule whether the national law was discriminatory in nature.

What the ruling says:

• Granting “paid public holiday on Good Friday only to employees who are members of certain churches constitutes discrimination on grounds of religion and is prohibited under EU law.”
• “The Court concludes that the legislation at issue cannot be considered necessary for the protection of freedom of religion.”

In Austria, Good Friday is considered a public holiday for members of the “Evangelical Churches of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions, the Old Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church.”

Achatzi worked Good Friday in 2015, but did not receive a paid holiday or double pay for working because he did not belong to any of those churches. He sued his company for discriminating against him on religious grounds.

His case eventually reached the Austrian Supreme Court, which in turn asked the ECJ to rule whether the national law making Good Friday a public holiday for members of select churches was discriminatory in nature.

Commentary: The court has spoken, and Austria will have to amend its laws to be applicable to all people. Besides the about 30 days compulsory paid vacation and several weeks of sick pay, workers still get 9 days in the year for government-recognized public holidays. Yet, the country is amazingly successful on the balance sheet.

In Austria and many other European countries, religion is on the decline and does not play an important part in society. Yet 73.8% of Austrians identify as Catholic, 4.9% Protestant, 4.2% Muslim, 12% as “none,” and 2% unspecified. Austria and other European nations clearly show that a well-compensated, well-rested work force is the greatest contributor to the wellness of the country.

The battle for mineral-rich forest land isn’t new in India. The ruling is the latest flash point in the competing interests of industry, wildlife conservationists and forest communities.

In the past 30 years, the government has diverted 5,400 square miles of forest land, the size of Connecticut, for industrial projects—many of which were opposed by the indigenous people. Wildlife groups contend that granting “wide-ranging” rights to people on forest land leads to fragmentation of forests at a time when the country’s forest cover is shrinking. Critics, however, say that neither accounts for the rights of the indigenous people who rely on the forest for daily needs and for their livelihood.
**Commentary: India**

India represents the world’s largest democracy, with a land mass almost the size of the USA. It has a population of 1.3 billion people: 80% Hindu, 14.1% Muslim, and about 2.3% Christian. With these numbers, the over one million indigenous figure is relatively small. It is most likely they will lose their homes in the end. According to the CIA Factbook, India’s economic growth stood at 6.7% for the year 2017.

Doubtless, India has a people problem, which some experts declare will be solved in the not-too-distant future. India is destined to become a world power.

This is a country that Christians should have on their prayer list. With only 2.3% of the population being nominally Christian, this is a gigantic mission field that should be targeted by more ministries.

Rev. John Ishmael, the executive director of Revival Literature Fellowship, is one ministry Midnight Call supports and recommends in India. You may receive his always very inspiring email newsletter by contacting him at: ishmael.john@gmail.com 6952

(See Death of a Guru, Item #2149, $13.99.)

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**Brazil**

**‘Science Does Not Kill God’**

The annual Templeton Prize, which recognizes outstanding contributions to “affirming life’s spiritual dimension,” was awarded to Brazilian Marcelo Gleiser—a theoretical physicist dedicated to demonstrating science and religion are not enemies.

A physics and astronomy professor whose specializations include cosmology, 60-year-old Gleiser was born in Rio de Janeiro, and has been in the United States since 1986.

An agnostic, he doesn’t believe in God—but refuses to write off the possibility of God’s existence completely.

“Atheism is inconsistent with the scientific method,” Gleiser told AFP from Dartmouth College, the New Hampshire university where he has taught since 1991.

“Atheism is a belief in non-belief. So you categorically deny something you have no evidence against.”

“The first thing you see in the Bible is a story of creation,” he said. Whatever your religion, “everybody wants to know how the world came to be.”

This fundamental curiosity unites science and religion, though each provides very different answers: science has a methodology, where hypotheses are eliminated.

“Science can give answers to certain questions, up to a point,” Gleiser pointed out.

“This has been known for a very long time in philosophy, it’s called the problem of the first cause: we get stuck,” the physicist, a father of five, said.

“We should have the humility to accept that there’s mystery around us.”

For Gleiser, who grew up in Rio’s Jewish community, religion is not just about believing in God: it provides a sense of identity and community.

“At least half of the world population is that way,” he said.

“It’s extremely arrogant for scientists to come down from the ivory towers and make these declarations without understanding the social importance of belief systems.”

“When you hear very famous scientists making pronouncements like ... cosmology has explained the origin of the universe and the whole, and we don’t need God anymore. That’s complete nonsense,” he added.

“Because we have not explained the origin of the universe at all.”

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**Commentary: What a profound statement:**

“Atheism is a belief in non-belief.” That means the atheist needs to continue believing that he does not believe.

In the meantime, there are volumes of books written by Christian scientists, clearly explaining that the existence of the world could only come about by an intelligent Creator. Evolution in most cases is based on coincidences without further scientific proof. Many attempt to defend their stand by throwing the time issue into their argument.

Belief is definitely key to understanding what is written in the first verse of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

(See You Can Understand the Book of Genesis, Item #2347, $16.99.)
Government Refuses to Exclude Huawei’s 5G Technology

The race to build the next generation of super-fast mobile-data networks has begun in Germany, which started auctioning off its spectrum licenses for 5G.

The Trump administration insists that Chinese firm Huawei, which makes 5G technology, could hand over data to the Chinese government. The U.S. has warned European allies, including Germany, Hungary and Poland, to ban Huawei from its 5G network or risk losing access to intelligence-sharing.

Germany already has plenty of specialists who can monitor the current version of 5G software for security bugs, says Jan Bindig, a data security expert and director of Bindig Media in Leipzig.

“But you never know what happens in the future,” he says. “Every technology is software-based. So if there’s an update, you can change the whole concept. ... So it’s about [having] a plan on how to ensure the whole network.”

Huawei strongly denies U.S. charges that it spies and is too cozy with the Chinese government. The company is working hard to win Germany’s trust. It even opened a lab in Bonn where security officials can check its products.

“The idea of this lab is that the responsible IT security authority of Germany but also other interested parties like independent auditors or our customers could go to that lab,” says Huawei Germany spokesman Patrick Berger, “and, for example, verify our source codes and see that there are no malicious things in our codes.”

But policymakers and analysts in Germany acknowledge that this debate isn’t just about network security. It’s a geopolitical confronta-

People Want Higher Taxes on Rich and Better Welfare

A strong majority of people in wealthy countries want to tax the rich more and there is broad support for building up the welfare state in most countries, a survey conducted for the OECD showed.

In all of the 21 countries surveyed, more than half of those people polled said they were in favor when asked: “Should the government tax the rich more than they currently do in order to support the poor?”

The OECD gave no definition of rich.

Support was highest in Portugal and Greece, both emerging from years of economic crisis, at nearly 80 percent compared with an average of 68 percent, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said.

The Paris-based forum’s survey of 22,000 people about perceived social and economic risks also found deep discontent with governments’ social welfare policies, which many people said were insufficient, the OECD said.

On average, only 20 percent said they could easily receive public benefits if needed while 56 percent thought it would be difficult to get benefits, the survey found.

People were on average particularly concerned about access to good quality, affordable long-term care for the elderly, housing and health services.

Not only did people say they were not getting their fair share given what they paid into the system, people in all countries except Canada, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands did not think that their governments were heeding their views.

The feeling of injustice was even higher among the highly educated and high-income households, it added.

In light of the high level of discontent, a majority of people wanted their government to do more in all countries except France and Denmark, whose
Better Welfare (continued from page 32)

FILE PHOTO: Protestors wearing yellow vests walk down the Champs Elysees during a demonstration by the "yellow vests" movement in Paris, France. REUTERS/Philippe Wojazer/File Photo

welfare systems are among the most generous in the world.

-www.reuters.com, 19 March 2019

Commentary: Welfare is often misquoted and wrongly understood. It’s not necessarily targeted to those who do not work and receive government benefits, but welfare has been an integral part of any and all governments the world over. Citizens need to be protected from over taxation and under supplied services. However, at this time, it seems highly unlikely that taxes will increase for the rich; and if so, they will quickly find loopholes to off-shore their money to avoid paying taxes. But, as this article by the OECD shows, the fight will continue. The poorer level of any society wants more, and that apparently can only be achieved if the rich pay more.

Nevertheless, from the Bible we know that, even at the very end of the end stages, we will still have the rich and the poor. Revelation 6:15 says: “And the kings of the earth, and the rich men, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.” 6972

Russian-Speaking Jews Who Shaped the Nation

Luminaries such as Josef Trumpeldor, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, Natan Sharansky, Hayim Nahman Bialik, Chaim Weizmann, Moshe Sharet and Levi Eshkol were some of the best-known pioneers who shaped modern Zionism and the State of Israel. What do all of these soldiers, linguists, poets, scientists and politicians have in common? They all represent the community that today is called “Russian-speaking Jews.”

A new website, “Seventy Russian-Speaking Jews Who Shaped Israel,” has been launched by The Jerusalem Post with Genesis Philanthropy Group’s support. The goal of the site is to educate as many people as possible about the contributions of Russian-speaking Jewry throughout history. The project highlights the monumental contributions of 70 Russian-speaking Jews who helped create modern Israel, including artists, intellectuals, political and military leaders, and many of the movers and shakers whose legacies and influence can still be felt throughout the world today.

“Genesis Philanthropy Group was launched more than 10 years ago, with the mission of strengthening the Jewish identity of Russian-speaking Jews around the world,” says Ilia Salita, president and CEO of GPG. “Russian-speaking Jews have contributed a great deal to the world and helped shape the course of world history for the better. But, without a shared sense of pride, it is hard for future generations to connect to their heritage. We strive—through this project and all of our work—to foster intellectual awareness of and an emotional connection to what has been accomplished by those who came before us, and to inspire the next generation of leaders to step into their shoes.”

Salita explains that the project’s benefits and educational value are most important for two groups: Russian-speaking Jews around the world, who for too long have not fully appreciated their history, and the Jewish community at large, which can fully honor and preserve its own history only by knowing the full story. Both groups have something unique to take away from the project, and Salita hopes they both will.

“Everyone remembers the huge Russian aliyah, and everyone talks about the Start-Up Nation and the role of the Russian-speaking Jews in helping position Israel as a global technology leader, but that’s not enough,” says Salita.

The many years of antisemitism during Communist rule, Salita says, ironically helped the Russian Jews preserve their identity, “because if the world around you doesn’t let you forget that you are Jewish, then there is perhaps no stronger and more immutable force driving your Jewish identity.”

-www.jpost.com, 17 March 2019

Commentary: Some 2,600 years ago, the prophet Jeremiah had this say about the country to the north of Israel (Russia): “Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, but that’s not enough,” says Salita. The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers” (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

(See Northern Storm Rising, #2294, SALE $12.)

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Churches Opening Their Doors to Business

Declining attendance at America’s churches—a persistent trend in recent decades—has forced some to take a novel approach to keeping their doors open: renting out otherwise empty space during the usually quiet mid-week, CBS News’ Omar Villafranca reports.

Larry Duggins heads up the Missional Wisdom Foundation, a group that helps congregations become a place for commerce. “Churches close when they can’t get beyond that, unless they have some extraordinary other way to get people to come attend,” he said.

Senior pastor Mitchell Boone admits White Rock Methodist needed a miracle to stay open.

“We were spending way too much money to keep the doors open and the lights on and the staff paid and Sunday morning going, and so it was clearly a move out of desperation,” Boone said. “We were close to death.”

Leila James, who has been a member of the church for 44 years, said other church members weren’t fully sold on the idea of renting out space. But James, the daughter of a preacher, ultimately embraced it.

“I attended the yoga class and I remember one day we got the giggles because we were just enjoying it so much and we thought, ‘Well, this is the way church should be. We should be able to have other aspects of our lives here,’” she said.

- www.cbsnews.com, 16 March 2019

Commentary: Rwanda is a landlocked African country with a population of a little over 12 million. Their official national language is French. Fifty percent of the population is Protestant, while 2% are Muslims. The GDP per capita was listed at $2,100 in 2017. That means the country is one of the poorest in the world, yet the irony: they are first in the world when it comes to gathering DNA of each person countrywide. Will it work? Only time will tell. But the future lies in globalism, based on data collection of all people on planet earth.

We must view this from a Biblical, prophetic aspect. When the Bible says: “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him,” data of all people is required. Based on various other reports from international sources, this is in the works and will one day be implemented. The spirit of Antichrist is already at work, doing fantastic and marvelous things, so that it says in Revelation 13:3b: “…and all the world wondered after the beast.”

- www.independent.co.uk, 20 March 2019

Commentary: Traditional denominational churches have lost members in recent decades throughout this nation, but also government and violate international human rights laws.

Plans for the database were announced by Rwanda’s Minister for Justice and Attorney General, Johnston Busingye.

Speaking in the country’s capital, Kigali, he said the project would help to fight crimes like rape and murder.

He said: “We think we have the technical basis now to launch into the development of a DNA database. That said, it is first of all a legal process.

“We will examine global best practice on the issue, propose appropriate law and implement accordingly.”

World’s First Countrywide DNA Database

Rwanda has proposed the world’s first countrywide DNA database, a project that will involve collecting samples from all of the country’s 12 million citizens in an effort to crack down on crime.

The scheme has prompted concerns from human rights campaigners who believe the database could be misused by the government.

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- www.independent.co.uk, 20 March 2019
Philadelphia Trumpet

Dear Mr. Froese,

Thanks for working hard to produce Midnight Call magazine. I really enjoy it.

Question: I have started getting the Philadelphia Trumpet magazine, which Herbert W. Armstrong started way back when. It seems they do their homework on international news. But I wonder what you think?

-W. Lynn, NC

Answer: The Philadelphia Trumpet is published by the Philadelphia Church of God. The fact that you have doubts about it is sufficient to categorize it as being questionable.

On the website, under “Biblical Response,” it says that they do not believe in the Trinity. Subsequently, the Holy Spirit is not a person, and Jesus is not God.

Furthermore, Herbert W. Armstrong taught British Israelism, which assumes that some of the lost tribes of Israel became British and later Americans. On page 254 in James Walker’s book, Today’s Religions and Spirituality, he writes that the leader, “…Flurry claims that the Old Testament prophesied that Herbert W. Armstrong would be God’s chosen prophet, that the WCG would turn apostate, and Flurry is God’s successor for Armstrong.” That should suffice to take it with a pinch of salt.

Biblical Numbers

Dear Editor,

There are two questions that I would like to ask:

1. Exodus 15:27 – Is there a meaning to the 12 wells and 10 palm trees? Why would God be so specific?

2. John 21:11 – The meaning of the number 153. I believe God put every word and number in the Bible for a reason.

-J. Aydelott, TX

Answer: The word “twelve” is most often mentioned in Revelation—22 times. This number, according to Ed Vallowe’s book Biblical Mathematics, shows completion of an administration or government perfection—which was represented by the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel. In Revelation, the twelve tribes of Israel are listed in chapter 7. In chapter 12, it’s the revelation of Israel as the bringer of the Messiah, with a crown of twelve stars. And in chapter 21, the heavenly Jerusalem is described. Finally, in the eternal heavens, there is a tree bearing twelve manner of fruits to sustain the nations.

Years ago, I read that the 153 fish in John 21:11 corresponds to the 153 nations that were named during those days.

Divorce

Dear Mr. Froese,

Will you please show where it states in the Bible, whether or not divorce is encouraged, depending on the situation?

-J. Fragale, NY

Answer: Jesus quotes the Old Testament: “…For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:5-6). Luke 16:18: “Whosoever putteth away
his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.” See also 1 Corinthians 7.

There is no encouragement in Scripture for divorce.

**The Holocaust**

Dear Mr. Froese,

I am writing to ask your opinion on a fact you mention many times in your books and articles. It really isn’t a pressing point, but I read almost all your books that I can get my hands on. I am interested in your thoughts, and that of your peers, because of their background in Europe.

In your writings, you have said many times that the Nazis killed 6 million Jews. Can you shed light on this data? Here’s why. As I grew up in the 50s, I had a childhood fascination with Germany and the war, since my father was in England. I was taught in school, and also by my parents that the Nazis killed about 3 million Jews and about 3 million “other” people. The “other” was explained to me as anyone with a disability, mental condition, or other trait that the Nazis deemed unfit for the “master race.” It seemed cumbersome to have to differentiate the numbers this way, but the distinction was always mentioned and printed. Somewhere around the 70s, I began to notice that in print and news reports, they would just say 6 million Jews. I thought they were abbreviating, if you will, but now it seems to be the norm. Like I said, it really doesn’t matter in the big picture, but do you know the actual fact of history?

-W. Best, ID

**Answer:** Checking the list of Nobel Prize winners, it becomes immediately obvious that a lopsided proportion of Jewish people are represented. There is little to no doubt that the Jews have been the elite of the world on the intellectual level. One thing intellectuals do is read and write. No event in human history has been more abundantly documented than the Holocaust in Europe, perpetrated by Germany.

In Israel, the documentation center is Yad Vashem. Names and places of those murdered are listed. In the introduction on their website, it reads: “The Holocaust was the murder by Nazi Germany of six million Jews.” Under “Documentation,” it states: “The 125 million pages of documentary evidence, films, and 420,000 photographs, as well as more than 100,000 survivor testimonies stand as indisputable proof of the genocide and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Nazis and their collaborators.”

Reliable statistics from 1933 place the number of Jews in Europe at 9.5 million. After 1945, the Jewish population in Europe stood at only 3.8 million. Families, villages, and townships that were totally erased, have no records whatsoever; thus, cannot be enumerated with those murdered. So, how many Jews have actually been killed? Yad Vashem says six million. Could there be a difference of a couple hundred thousand? I would assume so, due to the annihilation of entire townships, synagogues, schools, etc.

I suggest that you do your own research under Yad Vashem, or better yet, buy a ticket, fly to Jerusalem, and visit Yad Vashem.

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**Questions That Need Answers**

One of the unique books published by Midnight Call Ministries is *Letters to the Editor*. This book features original letters with a variety of questions selected during many decades and prayerfully answered from the pages of Holy Scripture.

- Creation/Evolution
- Sin
- Israel
- Authority of Scripture
- Spiritual Fundamentals
- Prayer and Salvation
- End of Life
- Endtime Prophecy
- Past and Future Prophecies
- Globalism or Patriotism?
- Church Issues
- Signs, Wonders and the Antichrist
- Catholicism
- Rapture Timing

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** ITEM #1045 • 438 Pages • Hardcover

$22.99 **SUPER CLEARANCE $10** Author: Arno Froese
Interestingly, it does not say “get ready to fight,” “move out to meet the enemy,” or “get your weapons ready.” That would be the most logical action, but not so for the people of Israel. They had to go in a certain direction based on their hearing of the sound of the trumpet. When they gathered under the sound of the trumpet, something else happened, which is most important: “…our God shall fight for us.” That is how Israel took possession of the Promised Land in olden days, when they came out of the land of Egypt. Reliance upon God was the prerequisite for victory. Under the sound of the trumpet, there is security.

What is this trumpet? It’s the Word of God. When John was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, we read in Revelation 1:10: “I…heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.” In the next verse, we learn the identification of the trumpet: “Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” In the last chapter of our Bible, we again read: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Revelation 22:13).

Iron Dome Trumpet
This is not the voice of God, nor the trump of God, but a manmade product. It has been known for some time that Israel leads the world in innovation.

The website Israel21c.org reveals how a military defense product can be helpful when detecting natural disasters.

Typhoons, floods, droughts, earthquakes, hurricanes, wildfires—the frequency and intensity of natural disasters across the globe are worsening, and these deadly events could continue plaguing the planet as a result of climate change.

Hoping to minimize disruption of essential services in disaster zones, government and utility officials are seeking better solutions for preparation and management of catastrophic weather events.

One new solution is a sophisticated product from mPrest Systems, the private Israeli company that famously developed the command-and-control software inside Israel’s Iron Dome missile-defense system.

Natan Barak, founder and CEO of mPrest, explains that the Major Event Management Application (MEMA) automatically forecasts the extent, location and progress of damage via a network of sensors and systems that jointly gather and analyze current weather and other relevant data using advanced algorithms.

Let’s imagine, for example, that an earthquake is anticipated in a city like San Francisco.

First of all, MEMA would enable local utilities to develop simulation tools for a disaster plan by leveraging historical data from previous disasters.

Then, based on data from hundreds of thousands of sensors, the application would pinpoint high-risk areas where resources should concentrate in order to mitigate potential damage.

Once the quake hits, MEMA would automatically notify the utility, in real-time, of incidents and continuously gather data from its sensors and systems—including satellite and drone imagery—to provide information on rising temperatures, rising wind levels, unusual ground motion, and more.

“Based on the earthquake’s epicenter, ground movement and more, the application can help identify power and utility infrastructure—lines, transformers, breakers, etc.—as well as critical facilities—schools, hospitals, etc.—that are in the event’s path,” Barak tells ISRAEL21c.

In Israel, when projectiles are detected from Gaza in the south or Lebanon in the north, the modern “trumpets”—the sirens—release their penetrating, nerve-shattering sound, to tell Israelis to quickly find a secure place. And they do. What a nation! It is incomparable to any other throughout human history. We, in our generation, have the privilege to watch the development in Israel and, from that perspective, the rest of the world.

Christians, born again of the Spirit of God, are eternal beings. We reside temporarily in the flesh here on earth, but that will change in one moment: “…in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52). ☺
Ten Girls Have Accepted Jesus

Despite many challenges, children at a boarding school are finding Jesus as their Savior time and again. A group leader reports on the children’s concerns and needs, as well as a number of conversions.

**BY EBERHARD AND ROSEMARIE HANISCH**

**RIBERALTA, BOLIVIA**

In addition to the daily operations of the school, working with the boarding school children often brings much joy. However, more and more difficult situations are occurring, such as abuse, broken families, and cases in which the mothers and fathers don’t even know how to handle their little ones. A mother recently refused to have her daughter, who was ill with a bladder infection, treated by the doctor. The youth welfare office had to be called in. But a group leader recently gave us the good news: “Among the girls alone, ten have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior in recent months.”

Obed bought a lot of new material for the children’s lessons, and now organizes the daily Bible instruction. Bible lessons with the fifth and sixth year girls are often quite lively. They’re completely engaged and feel free to chime in with personal experiences related to the topic. Every now and then, the fall of man comes up in the Bible and children’s lessons. One of the

“If I were Adam, I would have cut down that tree in paradise so that no one could have eaten its fruit.” - boarding school student
girls said, “If I were Adam, I would have cut down that tree in paradise so that no one could have eaten its fruit.” A leader said, “Each one brings her own history and bundle of worries with her. One is worried because her mom wants to marry a new man; another is in love and needs advice; the next one is being teased at school. One is sad because her rabbit died; one misses her big sister, who has run away from home.”

Let’s pray for these children to receive Jesus into their hearts, and that their lives will be headed in a positive direction for the future.

A Surprise Evening Visit: One Man’s Search for God

BY ERICH AND JUTTA SCHÄFER
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Before our furlough last fall, we had to make preparations and restock the tracts at the mission station in Buenos Aires. So, Erich was often occupied in the printing house until late in the evening. Some questionable figures often knocked on the door, so Erich didn’t open it for security reasons. This time, after constant knocking, he finally opened the door. Outside stood a man who introduced himself as Dario Mendes. He is a retired pilot. He’d “accidentally” come across a broadcast by Llamada de Medianoche (Midnight Call) on the radio, and it had spoken to him a great deal. As he was passing, he saw our Midnight Call-logo car. He immediately remembered the radio message, and stuck a note with his contact information under the windshield wiper. This man urgently wanted to know how he could find God. At this unusual hour, Erich was able to tell him the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and give him a Good Seed calendar with God’s Word for each day. A few days later, Dario came across Erich one morning and called out to him, “I’m not an atheist anymore!” We pray for Dario Mendes, that the seed of the Word of God is absorbed into his heart; that he won’t just know the way to God, but will really give his life to the Lord Jesus and become a child of God.

(MR0119)
Words that always warm my heart are when I hear residents, who are temporarily hospitalized, say they want to return “Home” to Ebenezer. Indeed, one of our goals as an old-age home is for the residents to actually feel at home. Our aspiration is not only that the residents will feel at home, but also the workers and volunteers. However, one of the challenges of family life is that you do not choose your brothers and sisters. At Ebenezer, this challenge takes on a special significance, as living in community continues 24/7. In addition, the residents, employees and volunteers come from different backgrounds, languages and cultures (not to mention habits and traditions). This reality increases the potential for friction and misunderstanding. Our vision statement clearly states: “Ebenezer aspires to function as a Christian home, where the Word of God is declared regularly, in a Christian atmosphere of love and tolerance”—this remains valid for all residents and staff.

As manager of the Home, I am often required to intervene in interpersonal disputes between people in the Home. In such cases, I recall Solomon, who wisely asked God for wisdom, as written in 1 Kings 3:9: “So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” One needs patience, the ability to listen, and discernment. The struggle for unity and love is not only a challenge to the individual, but also a corporate one. Therefore, one of the most important tools to fulfill our vision is corporate prayer. Apart from the daily morning devotions with the residents, the staff and volunteers start every shift with prayer, asking for the grace of God. Because our challenge is daily, our prayer is daily. We believe that in the end, the love we have in Christ will win!

Volunteers from All Over
By Christie Livingstone, Ebenezer Home Secretary
From the beginning, part of the vision for Ebenezer Home was to have volunteers serve side by side with the staff. Originally, all the volunteers came from NCMI (Norwegian Christian Mission for Israel), and several other supporting ministries. They were people who loved Israel and the residents, and wanted to give their time and labor, wherever they were needed. Their knowledge of various languages was invaluable in the Home’s setting, with residents coming from so many backgrounds. However, the most important language in the Home has always been LOVE. As the work continued, and as our volunteers finished their service with the Home and went back to their countries to tell the story, people from many countries started applying. Volunteers from all over the world, including New Zealand, India, Vietnam and Mexico have come to work alongside us, giving love and support to our residents. And the residents love to have them around! To me personally, it is very encouraging to see that many young women choose to spend their time, after school or before continuing their education, to work with the elderly, giving sacrificial care. I am also amazed every time someone drops in, saying something like: “I volunteered here 20/25/30 years ago, and just wanted to show the Home to my friends/family, as we are visiting Israel again.” It is wonderful to hear again and again that Ebenezer Home has not only been blessed by so many, but also has become a blessing to so many. We are grateful to God for each volunteer. Without them, the Home would not be what it is.
Mail to: Midnight Call Ministries, PO Box 84309, Lexington, SC 29073

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When I walked out of the theater...

after watching Heaven Is For Real, I felt uncomfortable, for the almost subliminal message was that, eventually, all people go to Heaven. Since the movie did not show the Biblical road to heaven, it leaves a message that all people will go there.

Since the danger to people's souls is so great and is ETERNAL, Frazier speaks boldly and compassionately as he gives the full Biblical teaching about what Hell is and why it is so terrible. Most of Frazier's warnings come directly from the lips of Jesus, since He taught more about Hell than any other subject, and more than any other inspired Bible teacher.

Gary Frazier also weaves into this subject the most common misconceptions people have about Hell: For example:

1) I will party with my friends in Hell for eternity.
2) Eventually all people go to Heaven.
3) A loving God will never send anyone to Hell.
4) I am a good person and all good persons go to Heaven.
5) Frazier carefully explains the ETERNITY of Hell, a concept most unsaved just do not seem to comprehend.
6) Hell is so real and so terrible, Frazier urges people to make the decision NOW to repent and ask forgiveness of sin through the blood sacrifice of Jesus, before God closes the Age of Grace. Frazier ends with the Plan of Salvation, so this video becomes a valuable Soul-Winning Tool.

According to the results of recent surveys,

Americans overwhelmingly believe that HEAVEN exists, though a much smaller number believe that HELL exists, with only one-tenth of one percent believing they will go there when they die. Gary Frazier helps readers:

• Discern what beliefs are based on fact or fiction
• Discover the truth in the midst of so much deception
• Understand the depth of Scripture that speaks of HELL more than HEAVEN.

Hell is for Real is a clear search for truth, and truth matters for the simple reason that we all have a divine appointment with death. What if those who do not believe in HELL die one day and find they made a tragic and eternal mistake? Where do we turn for real answers? Should we look to movies, television, and stories of personal experiences, psychics, or religion?

HELL IS FOR REAL ITEM #2291
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Skip Heitzig, author of You Can Understand the Book of Revelation, is pastor-teacher of Calvary Church, ministering to more than 15,000 people weekly. He holds a DD and PhD from Trinity Southwest University and has a popular multimedia teaching ministry that includes print, audio, and online resources. Skip and his wife, Lenya, reside in New Mexico and have one son and two grandchildren.