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# Midnight Call

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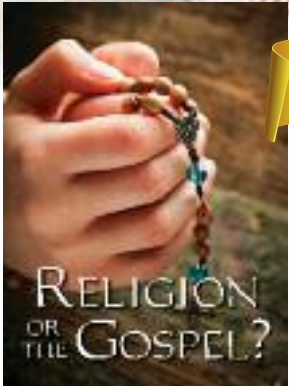
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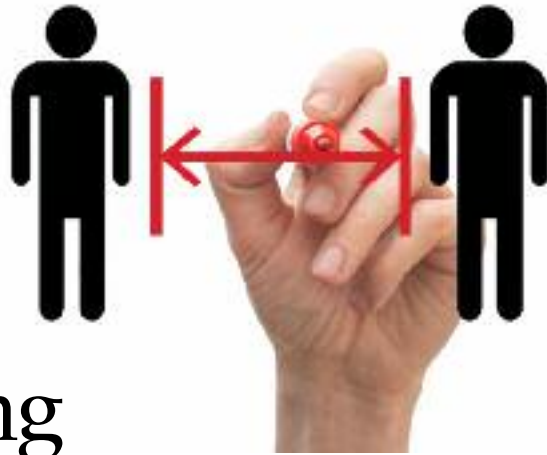
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# Social Distancing

**By Samuel Rindlisbacher**

*Pastor at Midnight Call International*

I could well imagine that the negative phrase of 2020 is “social distancing.” By mandate, we must distance ourselves physically, not shake hands, not give a hug. In worship services, it is important to keep apart and to sing hymns only with sufficient space between people. When we are shopping, we wear masks, disinfect our hands constantly, sneeze into the elbow and hide our facial expressions behind a piece of fabric. And thus, by and by we change into people without faces, without expression...almost into soulless beings. Yet we are so dependent on our fellow humans, on their reaction, response, understanding and compassion. We long for a warm hug, a loving word, sympathetic look, or firm handshake.

But wait—social distance is now required! I do not want to question the importance of these measures. Still, I cannot help but feel uneasy. What

about man’s humanity, within the framework of spirit, soul, and body?

In view of this subject, I think there is one person—namely, God Himself—who could have taken the way of distancing Himself. He who dwells in inaccessible light, pure and holy in His nature, could very well have chosen isolation. But He did the opposite; He became a man and drew close to the despised, healed the sick without fear of contagion, sat at the table with those who were outcasts. He had mercy on the weeping, comforted the forsaken, and lifted up those in misery.


Yes, God is saddened because of our “social distancing,” especially our distance from Him. It is sin that separates us from Him. And, because this is the case, God the Son voluntarily accepted a degree of separation. He left the perfect residence of heaven, His eternal kingdom in which all angels serve Him, and where He had intimate communion with His Father.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Seen in this way, He came to be “socially distanced” from His kingdom, His angels, His sphere of influence, His power.

Jesus took upon Himself our guilt and sin, carried the cross of shame, and let Himself be nailed to that cross. He “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:6-8).

On Calvary's cross, He endured the worst of all “social distancing.” His friends turned away from Him; He was spit upon and tormented by his enemies, attacked by hell, and then abandoned by His Father. This was divine “social distance,” caused by our guilt and sin. But by adopting this divine social distance, God removed the cause of *our* social distance; namely, sin. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21).

And so, we can come back to Him; not just for a handshake or a fleeting hug, a loving word or an inviting gesture. No, much more: He invites us to become His heirs, His children, forever. He has removed the “social distance” so that we can be with Him, at His feet. “And [I] will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor 6:18). 

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### OUR TASK

Midnight Call Ministries is a nonprofit missionary organization, dedicated to proclaiming the entire Bible as the unchanging and eternal written Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the unerring guide for the Christian faith.

The object of Midnight Call is to call people everywhere to Christ, to proclaim the return of Christ, to prepare Christians for His coming, and to uphold the faith and warn of false doctrines. *Midnight Call* magazine is available in twelve languages. All work done through radio, literature and missionaries is supported entirely by the gifts and free will offerings of God's people.

### STATEMENT OF FAITH

**WE BELIEVE** in the divine inspiration of the whole Bible and therein the infallibility of the Holy Scripture, which is God's Word, and in the eternal Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**WE BELIEVE** Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and shed His blood to save mankind. He died and arose bodily the third day and later ascended into heaven.

**WE BELIEVE** that the Lord Jesus Christ died in the place of each individual sinner and that all who believe in Him as their personal Savior are justified through His shed blood and have become children of God.

**WE BELIEVE** that Israel is God's chosen people, and that the restoration of the Jews to their own land is the fulfillment of the Word of God.

**WE BELIEVE** in the pre-tribulational appearance of Jesus Christ for the Rapture of His Church (all born again believers).

**WE BELIEVE** in the immortality of our souls and the resurrection of our bodies, and in the resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost.

# The Time of Heavenly Peace



**Rainer Wagner**

It is world history's seventh and final salvific age: the millennial kingdom, which Christ will establish upon His return. What does the Bible say about it, and what does it mean for us?

**T**hrough the millennia since the onset of sin, humanity has had a deep longing to return to paradise. This is even visible in various cultural myths and legends.

Both the Native American hope of the “happy hunting ground” while struggling for survival, and the Marxist utopia of the “classless society,” are an expression of this longing. At the UN’s New York headquarters, there is a sculpture depicting a sword being forged into a ploughshare. It was donated to the UN in 1948 by what was then the Soviet Union. Such a sculpture was donated in the midst of the Cold War, by one of the most aggressive and inhumane regimes to date!

Besides the propaganda effect that the USSR certainly had in mind, there is also a longing behind this depiction that things would one day be this way. Considering that Paul writes of how even wildlife longs for the time of harmony (Rom 8:19), how much more do we, as thinking people (v. 22)? What does the Bible tell us about the last period of world history?

A prerequisite for a time of peace in the world is sin’s removal—because “sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov 14:34).

We must point out that all human attempts to eliminate or negate sin have only led to dead ends. Countries and social systems that tried to do so failed miserably (and some were even more dreadfully under the spell of evil). The collapse of the communist system is clear evidence of this. Over 60 million people were killed in the attempt to establish an atheistic, communist kingdom on earth. A third of humanity was held in bondage, and their economic life was stifled.

Just as the attempt to remove sin failed on a large scale, it also failed on a small scale. People had the impression that the reality of sin no longer played a role in their lives, and strayed into hopeless arrogance. The reason for this is the power of evil. Evil prevails because the Evil One (Satan) is pulling the strings behind the world scene. A world of harmony can only exist when the Evil One is eliminated.

**Even the biblical name “devil” shows** why the Evil One must be eliminated before this world finds peace. In Greek, “devil” is written as *diabolos*, which means “slanderer.” After the battle of Armageddon, which is at the end of the Age of the Gentiles, the devil is disabled. Satan will be imprisoned for 1,000 years. He will experience some kind of detention (Rev 20:1-3). If evil’s originator can’t exert influence anymore, a world without evil can develop.

Even the most well-intentioned attempts to establish a realm of peace have failed thus far because the Evil One was present. Regarding the millennium, it is said, “...neither shall they learn [practice] war anymore” (Isa 2:4).

Evil’s schoolmaster, Satan, is eliminated, and lessons in and for evil are over. As long as evil’s teacher was there, people had to commit evil, train constantly and practice. Evil is gone in the millennium, and we’re done with “learning” evil. The school of sin is closed because its director is in prison.

In the time we’re living in, Satan is the prince of this world. However, even today he doesn’t have absolute power—it’s limited. God is still over him. Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt 28:18). Jesus also said that not one hair falls to the ground without God seeing it (Matt 10:30). The devil is like a watchdog on a chain. Within the length of the chain, he has his sphere of influence. But the head of the household determines the length of that chain. Luther said, “Even the devil is God’s devil.”

German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck once spoke of the rustle of God’s cloak as He passed across the stage of history. Formerly powerful peoples such as the Romans, the Babylonians, or the Huns have been lost to history. The small, weak, persecuted Jewish people have remained through all times. God held His hand over them.

Anyone who observes how God formed the worldwide church, from a small community of fishermen and ordinary people from the Sea of Galilee, can see God’s rule in Christ here and now. Jesus’ reign can even be observed in the personal lives of

## The Time of Heavenly Peace

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Over 60 million people were killed in the attempt to establish an atheistic, communist kingdom on earth.

individual Christians. He gives them strength to change and renew their lives (2 Cor 5:17).

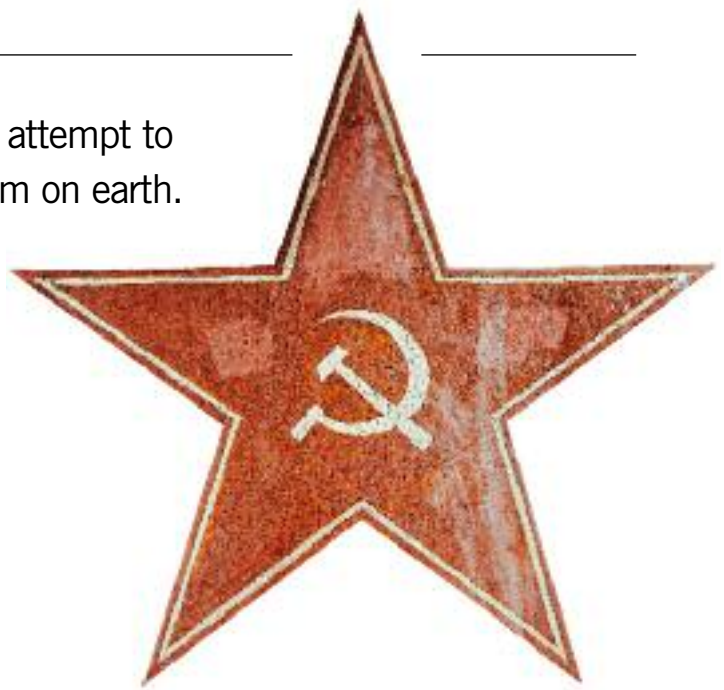
However, it is possible to deny Jesus' present-day rule. In the millennium, it will no longer be possible to outwardly ignore it. Since Satan is eliminated, nobody will be interested in him anymore. In addition, believers will rule with Jesus Christ. The Bible explains that Jesus' future rule will be carried out with people's participation. It will be established as a spiritual government. It represents those who have not worshiped the Antichrist. It's not entirely clear in the Bible whether all of Jesus' disciples will serve in this government, or only martyrs (Rev 20:4-5). But all Christians should carry out their roles in judging and government with eternity in mind (1 Cor 6:2-3).

Since all of sin's influence will be wiped from the earth, it will bloom like never before. There will be no more wars during the millennium, no armaments or armies. The weapons that remain are used for beneficial purposes (Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3).

To date, every invention has been abused for war. It began with knife and hammer, continued with black powder and dynamite, and went on to nuclear and achievements in biology (which are finding dreadful application in biological weapons). The millennial kingdom's peace extends into nature. No animal will destroy another. Isaiah foresaw:

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:6-9).

**Perhaps the greatest thing will be for people** to reach great ages again. Most likely, no one will die in



this time of rest and peace. Since Satan is eliminated, the curse of early death can be symbolic (Isa 65:20). The time of sickness is also over (Isa 35:5-6).

There will be individual property in this realm: the Bible mentions fig trees and vines. But there will be no more exploitation (Isa 65:21; Mic 4:4). Our world's great fortunes have often come about through the exploitation of others. The Bible calls exploitation sin (James 5:1, 4).

There are indications that nations and governments will exist. Although governments have often been agents of evil, and the Antichrist will be a politician, governments in and of themselves are God-willed (Rom 13:1). Governments in the millennium will no longer pursue nationalist politics. Their greatest wish will be to accomplish something for God's glory and for His people (Isa 62:2).

Anti-Jewish theologians in particular, claim that the Old Testament promises we interpret as referring to the millennium, should *not* be attributed to such a time period, and that it isn't explicitly stated. This is wrong. The promises mentioned haven't been fulfilled yet. They could hardly be fulfilled in the end-time turmoil of the last part of the 6th period of redemptive history. And, they can't be fulfilled after the millennium, because the present earth won't even exist anymore then (Rev 20:11). Accordingly, they will need to be fulfilled in the millennium, be-





Formerly powerful peoples such as the Romans, the Babylonians, or the Huns have been lost to history. The small, weak, persecuted Jewish people have remained through all times. God held His hand over them.

cause God fulfills all His promises, and doesn't regret anything He has promised (Rom 11:29). Every Old Testament promise will be fulfilled.

**In the millennium, converted Israel** will be the starting point for all of humanity's knowledge of God (Isa 2:3). It could almost be said that Jerusalem becomes the navel of the world, Israel the center of the world, and the people of Israel the lightbearer of that age. Israel's missionary work will be different from ours today. While today's missionaries and messengers of Jesus must pass on God's Word under a great deal of rejection and hostility, these evangelizing Jews will be highly respected by mankind. While today's missionaries go to people and try to win them over to Jesus, people in that day will go to God's messengers on their own to hear God's Word. With the removal of Satan, what kept people from God has been taken away. Large crowds of people will come to Jerusalem to hear from God (Isa 2:3). Gentiles will work on the development and construction of Jerusalem (Isa 60:10). The nations under which the Jews had previously suffered, will apologize for the injustices inflicted on Israel (v. 14). The nation of Israel will become a healthy country again. The barren land in Judah and the Negev desert around the Dead Sea will become fertile (Ezek 47). And something will exist that never has before: a perfect world. Now it's a reality. Perhaps one or another of the promises

whose fulfillment we get a glimpse of during the millennium, will only be fully realized in the new heaven and on the new earth. But overall, the Bible suggests that our planet Earth will be a good world in the seventh age of salvation. Under the heavenly governance of Jesus and His martyrs (Rev 20:4), and the earthly guidance of Israel (Deut 28:13; Jer 3:17-18), people will see how good it can be on earth.

One might wonder why God inserts this time period between the great judgment on the heathen at Armageddon (Rev 19:2, 21) and the Last Judgment (Rev 20:11-15). It has to do with God's justification.

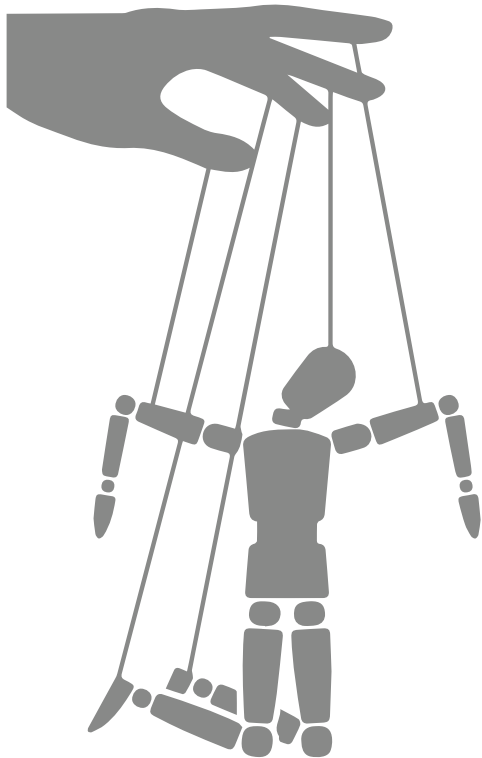
Just as the sinner is justified through Jesus' substitutionary suffering, there must also be a justification for God. Satan (Greek: "slanderer") accused God, saying that life under His rule would not ultimately be happy and fulfilled. He claimed that God deprived people of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for base and selfish reasons (Gen 3:4-5). Man listened to Satan, and the result was the drama of sin and death that has accompanied mankind since the Fall.

In the millennium, God shows how remarkably well you can live under His government. In this healing era, it is proven before the visible and invisible world that God has given the opportunity to live well and meaningfully in creation on this earth. The millennial kingdom shuts the mouths of every-

## The Time of Heavenly Peace

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Evil prevails because the Evil One (Satan) is pulling the strings behind the world scene. A world of harmony can only exist when the Evil One is eliminated.



one who believes that God's creation is imperfect. It's the sin of man, not God's creation, that makes the world bad.

**The step of conversion will be easier for people during the millennium** than for the believers of the past. The things keeping people from God today, evil and the Evil One, are eliminated. Satan is no longer preventing anyone from becoming or being a Christian. The just God won't favor anyone or disadvantage anyone with regard to eternal life.

Just as our faith must be tested through suffering and temptation (1 Pet 1:6-7), the depth and authenticity of humanity's faith in the millennium must also be tested. Because Satan doesn't change: he remains the vile seducer. After a thousand years, Satan is briefly released again (Rev 20:7). Satan hasn't changed through his captivity: he immediately

starts in on his old business in opposition to God. He seduces people anew.

As he did with Eve in paradise; as he tried with Jesus in the wilderness (Matt 4:1); and as he did with Judas, he acts again. He's just as seductive and hostile to God when he returns to the world stage after his imprisonment, as he is while separating humanity from God today, and as everyone came to know him in their own lives. He wants to start a war against God. In earlier times, Satan used various media to seduce: the serpent, tangible and intangible goods, idols, culture, money, honor, etc. He also used people like Judas, the Antichrist, and the false prophet. But now he appears in person. He makes himself a military commander against God.

And yet, humanity doesn't change: it remains fixated on the devil. Unfortunately, it will be shown that not just Satan has remained the same, but people too. It now becomes clear that humanity still has a deep propensity for evil, despite the good experiences they've had under Jesus' rule. They remained in their hearts as they had always been: evil from youth (Gen 8:21). As soon as the Evil One, Satan, is back, they find themselves in league with him again. Internal change doesn't come through external blessings; it must be taken hold of by faith.

Jesus pointed out this spiritual need: he healed a man who had been ill for 28 years. It was a huge miracle. It made the sick man content and delighted. Jesus encounters him again and tells him that experiencing healing isn't enough: the healed man must leave sin, which is inner separation from God (John 5:14). Likewise, it isn't enough to enjoy God's benefits in the millennial kingdom of peace. Only the one who remains true to God, changes from a beneficiary of God's blessings into a child of God.

Although people in the millennium have heaven on earth, many fall to Satan again the moment he appears (Rev 20:8). It's the greatest falling away in world history. That's why this apostasy is immediately followed by God's final judgment.

At the beginning of this judgment, the so-called second resurrection takes place. It is a resurrection of all people who have ever lived.

Judgment Day is the all-encompassing establishment of justice throughout the universe. All knees must bend before Christ (Phil 2:9-10). Even the final enemy will be silent. And now, justice is achieved.

Since God is omnipotent, humanity's falling again at the end of the millennium can only result in total annihilation. The judgment that now follows becomes all-encompassing. It begins with a total military crackdown on the uprising of a humanity seduced by Satan. All who have fallen away are killed (Rev 20:9). After Satan and fallen humanity's total defeat, the final judgment begins. We also call it the Last Judgment.

**It will be the largest trial ever held.** People and angels will be held accountable (Jude 6). Everyone who is not part of God's people can expect a just sentence (Rev 20:12). Only those belonging to Christ will not appear before this court (John 5:24). Jesus bore the punishment for them, and they have peace with God (Isa 53:5; Rom 5:1).

At the beginning of this judgment, the so-called second resurrection takes place. It is a resurrection of all people who have ever lived. The first resurrection took place before the millennium. In it, the believers of all times rose from the dead. The Bible says

of them, "Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!" (Rev 20:6).

In the second resurrection, all of the dead emerge. It doesn't lead them to salvation, but directly before the tribunal of the Last Judgment. Even those who had previously drowned are there (Rev 20:12-13). Nobody from the great sea of peoples can go into hiding. Although the Christians are not accused, they are somehow involved in Judgment Day (1 Cor 6:2)—possibly the equivalent of jury members or honorary judges. The angels are also judged (v. 3).

The church of God will participate in this judgment. In what way, however, we can't say. Even the heavens and earth will completely disappear. They too had been drawn into the cycle of sin. In eternity, there should be no reminders of the world of sin. That's why there must be a new creation. The old creation then no longer has any right to exist.

### **Satan's defection had taken place in the old heaven.**

It's been defiled by Satan's slander against the faithful (Job 1:6ff.). Idolatrous people in paganism worship the stars, and astrology ascribes divine powers to them. This is an insult to God. Mankind's sin has taken place on earth. The earth saw sin and was profaned by it (Gen 4:10). God Himself had cursed the soil (Gen 3:17).

The details of how heaven and earth's destruction will play out are unclear. But there is no place on the new earth for our old heaven and old earth (Rev 20:11). Their elements will melt with heat (2 Pet 3:12). This could indicate nuclear destruction.

The fact that teaching on the millennium is very controversial can't be concealed. People often object to it, and its biblical evidence is often interpreted otherwise. Many understand the prophecies of the kingdom of peace to be purely figurative, and consider the promises given in them to be something that will be fulfilled only after the Last Judgment. Ultimately, the opponents of millennial theology lack a biblically-founded rationale.



## The Time of Heavenly Peace

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Humanity could have remained sinless, since it had the proof that life with God is rewarding.



Lutheran orthodoxy contradicted millennial theology quite violently. This has a historical background: Anabaptist circles emerged during the Reformation, which taught that the millennium had to be brought about by force. One of their most famous was pastor and peasant leader Thomas Müntzer (1489-1525). In 1534, an Anabaptist dictatorship (the so-called “New Jerusalem”) was established in Münster, Germany. John of Leiden, Bernhard Krechting, and Bernhard Knipperdolling claimed that the millennium had become visible in the city. But after a short period of extreme piety, terrible excesses occurred in Münster. Polygamy was introduced, a kind of communism was practiced, and dissenters were driven out and bloodily persecuted. Even marriage was abolished. The rule of the Münster enthusiasts was ended by imperial troops, and there was terrible persecution of the non-guilty Anabaptists throughout the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, as well as in the Spanish sphere of influence.

The peasant war that was going on at the same time (a religiously-motivated conflict between the large, oppressed, rural population and the authori-

ties) ended with the death of many people. The number of German farmers killed is estimated to be as many as one million. These events discredited the teaching of the millennium. The old Lutheran dogmatists then generally rejected them in the Augsburg Confession. So, they clearly went too far.

Unfortunately, there were later successors to the quixotic Anabaptist theology: there were erroneous views about the millennium under Oliver Cromwell, under the so-called religious socialists, and in the liberation theology of our day. However, like the old Lutheran church teachers, we have to call out those who believe that the millennial kingdom is brought about by people, or even by violence. But let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. The Bible testifies clearly that Jesus will bring an age of peace to earth.

The millennium is the only era in world history where Satan will be eliminated. Humanity could have remained sinless, since it had the proof that life with God is rewarding. But not even getting used to heaven for a thousand years can replace simple and trusting faith. So, this era will end with one last judgment. (MR0620/1083)



# The 1918 Influenza Pandemic

**Dr. Ron J. Bigalke**

A hospital in Kansas during the Spanish flu epidemic in 1918.

The influenza pandemic of 1918 was the deadliest outbreak of disease in modern times. The cause of the outbreak was an H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin. The virus spread worldwide during 1918-19. Approximately one-third of the world's population (or 500 million people) was infected with the virus. A unique feature of this pandemic was the elevated mortality rate among healthy people.

## **A Resurgence of Spiritualism**

Not surprisingly, spiritualism (a form of spiritism normally associated with channelers or mediums, who contact the spirits of the deceased) experienced a sudden resurgence in France, Great Britain, the United States, and elsewhere. Many people not only wanted to know the cause of the pandemic, but also struggled with eternal concerns, such as what occurs at death and whether it is possible to communicate with deceased loved ones. Many scam artists were able to take advantage of grieving families and the merely curious.

The two most prominent advocates of spiritualism were British: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (creator of Sherlock Holmes) and Sir Oliver Joseph Lodge (a respected physicist). Having lost sons in the First World War, both men had a longstanding interest in the supernat-

ural. Doyle toured the world promoting spiritualism, yet his friend Harry Houdini (the illusionist and stunt performer, noted as a sensational escape artist) was a natural skeptic and exhausted his time exposing fraudulent mediums and recreating how such trickery worked.

Having attended more than 100 séances, Houdini remained convinced that communication between the spirits of the departed and the living was not possible. He even testified before a Congressional committee that was considering legislation to outlaw clairvoyants, fortunetellers, and mediums. He regarded Conan Doyle as "one of the greatest dupes, outside of Sir Oliver Lodge."<sup>1</sup> For those lacking the inclination or money to consult a professional medium, there was a vast surge of interest in the Ouija Board as a somewhat do-it-your-

# The 1918 Influenza Pandemic

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The Spanish, however, believed the virus came to them from France, and referred to it as the “French flu.” Scientists are still uncertain regarding its source, yet believe it is unlikely that the “Spanish flu” originated in Spain.

self séance kit. The heightened interest in spiritualism did not cease until the advent of World War II.

## The Spanish Flu

The influenza pandemic became known in the United States and Europe as the “Spanish flu” (because the first major outbreak was thought to have occurred in Spain). The nickname was the result of a pervasive misunderstanding. Spain was one among a small number of leading European countries that remained neutral during World War I. Wartime censors sought to avoid stimulating any negative morale, and thereby suppressed news of the flu in the Allied and Central Powers nations. By contrast, Spanish media had freedom to report on the flu, even with gruesome detail. Late in May 1918, news of the virus made headlines first in Madrid, and thereafter reporting increased once the Spanish King Alfonso XIII contracted the flu. Since news of the virus was suppressed in other nations, one could only read in-depth accounts from Spanish news sources, which led to the assumption that Spain was the origin of the virus. The Spanish, however, believed the virus came to them from France, and referred to it as the “French flu.” Scientists are still uncertain regarding its source, yet believe it is unlikely that the “Spanish flu” originated in Spain.

The discovery and spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has resulted in numerous comparisons to the deadly Spanish flu. Nevertheless, there is a significant difference between the influenza pandemic and COVID-19, such as the latter overwhelmingly affecting the elderly. The Spanish flu, however, severely affected the young, working-age population. Normally, those who are most vulnerable to influenza include the young and the old. The Spanish flu, however, afflicted people in their most vibrant years. In 1918, death from pneumonia and influenza among persons 25-34 years of age in the United States was more than 50% higher than what it was for those aged 65-74.

The first wave of the pandemic seemed to have all the characteristics of a seasonal flu (albeit a decidedly contagious and virulent strain), with symptoms like

high fever and malaise usually lasting only a few days. The virus spread quickly through the Army installation, and troops carried the Spanish flu with them as they deployed en masse for the war effort. The second wave of the global pandemic began in late August 1918, and the unpredictable nature and deadlier strain of the disease terrified people. Somewhere in Europe, a mutated strain of the virus emerged, so that a person could be healthy at daybreak yet dead by nightfall.

The Centers for Disease Control reported, “Mortality was high in people younger than 5 years old, 20-40 years old, and 65 years and older. The high mortality in healthy people, including those in the 20-40 year age group, was a unique feature of this pandemic. While the 1918 H1N1 virus has been synthesized and evaluated, the properties that made it so devastating are not well understood. With no vaccine to protect against influenza infection, and no antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections that can be associated with influenza infections, control efforts worldwide were limited to non-pharmaceutical interventions such as isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limitations of public gatherings, which were applied unevenly.”<sup>2</sup>

## The Current Pandemic

COVID-19 has already proven to be extremely infectious. Similarities between the Spanish flu and COVID-19 include nearly identical symptoms: body aches, coughing, diarrhea, fever, nausea, night sweats, and tiredness. The Spanish flu could be spread through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing, in the same manner as COVID-19, yet the two infections are from different virus families. Local churches were affected by the pandemic from restrictions on public gatherings; and, those preventives were as unpopular then as they are today. Measures included public health warnings, social distancing, quarantines, lots of masks, and urgings to wash hands.

What conclusion should be made regarding these facts? The answer is that the virus will continue through

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## The coronavirus is truly a reminder that Christians are “strangers and exiles on the earth” (Heb 11:13).

its cycle of existence, and eventually the world will recover. This assertion is possible because, enduring a pandemic is not unique to this generation. Moreover, the world has survived numerous plagues including the Plague of Justinian of 541-42 (killing 30-50 million people); the Black Death of 1347-51 (killing as many as 200 million people); the New World smallpox outbreak of 1520 (killing 56 million); the Third Plague of 1885 through the 1950s (killing 12-15 million); the infamous 1918-20 Spanish flu pandemic (killing 40-50 million); and the emergence of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the late 1970s (which has killed 25-35 million).

While it is common to reference plagues as proof of prophetic fulfillment in present times, the truth is, pandemics have been occurring throughout the course of human history for thousands of years. None can deny the devastation of the plagues and pandemics identified above; however, they pale in comparison to those of the Tribulation period. No current frame of reference exists for the judgments and signs of the Tribulation. The current worldwide pandemic is a general sign of disaster as ancient as the human race, and this generation will endure.

Nevertheless, some might wonder if the Mark of the Beast will arise from a coronavirus vaccine. Whenever a cataclysmic global crisis occurs—whether it be “wars and rumors of wars,” or a novel coronavirus—there is always heightened interest in the book of Revelation. Certainly, it is profitable to have one’s thoughts directed to Scripture in the midst of a pandemic. Yet too often, the prophetic Word is used in a manner that does less to edify the body of Christ and more to encourage unfounded conspiracy theories and unnecessary speculation.

Several reasons can be given as to why a coronavirus vaccine is not the Mark of the Beast. First, those who receive the Mark of the Beast demonstrate allegiance to the Antichrist. In the ancient world, a person would receive a certificate if he or she burned incense to worship Caesar. The certificate verified the worshiper’s actions and preserved him or her from death by persecution, yet

also enabled that person to buy and sell. The Mark of the Beast appears to be given in a similar manner, when a person affirms veneration of the beast (Antichrist).

Receiving the Mark of the Beast during the Tribulation period will be the deliberate rejection of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and cannot be received accidentally (Rev 13:12; 19:20; 20:4). Veneration, not vaccination is what causes one to “drink of the wine of the wrath of God” (14:10a). Receiving the coronavirus vaccine is not choosing to identify with or worshiping the beast, but is intended to save lives. In a study published by AIMS Public Health, researchers estimate that more than 450,000 lives have been saved by virus vaccines, and 200 million people have been prevented from contracting deadly diseases (e.g. adenovirus, hepatitis A, measles, mumps, polio, rabies, rubella, and varicella).<sup>3</sup>

The coronavirus is truly a reminder that Christians are “strangers and exiles on the earth” (Heb 11:13). Similar to Abraham (cf. v. 10), believers today are as vagabonds on the earth. Time on earth can never be compared to the “something better” God will provide for His people (v. 40). While it is easy to become preoccupied with the storm (as Peter did; Matt 14:30), it would be better to focus upon the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to affirm His promises: “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19). “Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess 5:16-18). (1099)

### ENDNOTES

- 1 United States Congress, *Fortune Telling: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Judiciary of the Committee on the District of Columbia, House of Representatives* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926) 23.
- 2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “1918 Pandemic (H1N1 Virus)” [article online] (20 March 2019, accessed 2 September 2020). Available from <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html>
- 3 S. Jay Olshansky and Leonard Hayflick, “The Role of the WI-38 Cell Strain in Saving Lives and Reducing Morbidity,” *AIMS Public Health* 4 (2017): 127-38.



# THE RAPTURE CHRONICLES – PART 3: WHO DWELLS IN THE MILLENNIUM?



We continue with Part III of the Rapture Chronicles. To this point, we have established two key foundational perspectives. According to Bible prophecy, there are two main streams of Christians that respond to the gospel. However, these two streams are often confused.

**By Wilfred Hahn**

**A**s we explained previously, first, there are the New Testament Christians—the Church Age believers—who ALL will be raptured, dead or alive.

Second, there are those that come to accept Christ as their eternal Savior and Messiah during the first half of the Tribulation period. This occurs post the Church Age. As we have shown, they are a large number. Since they missed the Rapture, this latter group are those that remain earthdwellers. It is these “holy people” that were certainly seen in the visions of the Prophet Daniel. We must also remember that the Church is a mystery ... and is not directly mentioned in the Old Testament.

According to the Bible, all Tribulation Christians will perish in the flesh. Both Apostle John and the Prophet Daniel (to name only the main support references that we reviewed) mention that the “holy ones” will be overcome by the Antichrist. As we

will show, this perspective leads us to the deductive conclusion that the Rapture can occur at no other time than shortly before the start of the Tribulation (or thereabouts).

The second key foundational perspective we had established in the previous Part II, was that ALL who come to recognize Christ in the Tribulation period will perish by the mid-point (three and one-half years into the Tribulation or thereabouts). We presented both direct literal evidence as well as deductive arguments. The Bible firmly indicates that ALL who “refuse to take the mark” (these being Christians; see Revelation 13:15; 20:4) will be slain. Also, following the chronology and events of the trumpet and bowl judgments, it is again plainly evident that there could be no Christians alive upon earth during this time—the latter half of the Tribulation.

This writer believes that it is a correct view that all Tribulational Christians—the Post-Church Age gospel recipients—will



In any case, Revelation 20:4 and 6 mention clearly that these resurrected ones will reign “a thousand years.” That means they will remain upon earth for the entire Millennium. These Tribulational Christians are also exempted from the Second Death, as are their Church Era brethren that were raptured earlier.

not endure past the first half of the Tribulation. However, admittedly, this view appears to be shocking to some readers. In the past, we have received much correspondence on this issue. Consequently, a frequent question that we encounter is this: If ALL Christians die, then what humans will survive the Great Tribulation and populate the world during the Millennium?

Therefore, we turn our attention to this question in this Part III. We will next identify all the different sources of people that end up populating the Millennium. We count as many as four groups or streams of people that end up in the Millennium period, according to the Bible. Some will be in physical form—others in a resurrected new-body form that will also reign with Christ.

### 1. Tribulational Christians

They are a large number of martyrs (the Bible refers to them as the Great Multitude, Revelation 7:9). But does the reader know that they will all experience the First Resurrection (Revelation 20:4-5) at the start of the Millennium? This group would also include Messianic Jews, were they to come to Christ during the first half of the Tribulation period.

The Bible says that these martyrs “[...] will reign with him [Jesus] for a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4, 6). They all died during the Tribulation period, and therefore have already experienced the First Death (the death of the physical bodies that we have today). Since the Bible says that “man is appointed to die once” (Hebrew

9:27), it would then follow that they are no longer subject to another First Death. (We must take care to note, however, that the Bible mentions a number of one-off individual exceptions to this general rule of “dying once.”)

In any case, Revelation 20:4 and 6 mention clearly that these resurrected ones will reign a “thousand years.” That means they will remain upon earth for the entire Millennium. These Tribulational Christians are also exempted from the Second Death, as are their Church Era brethren that were raptured earlier. Says the Bible, “The second death has no power over them [...]” (Revelation 20:6). At the end of the Thousand-Year Reign, they will experience the Second Resurrection.

These resurrected martyrs would account for a significant number of earth-dwellers during the Millennium period. How many? The Bible is silent on this question, according to our studies. An open question also remains as to whether the resurrected martyrs will be able to procreate during their 1000-Year Reign upon earth.

### 2 & 3. Tribulation Survivors

A second and third group to enter the Millennium period are the small remnants of Jews and Gentiles that survived the Tribulation. No one can know how many people actually perish through the Tribulation, or how many survive. Some have estimated only as little as 5% or less of the population living at the onset of the Tribulation, survive this period. We can definitely know that not many will remain alive. Says Isaiah:



Over the thousand years of the Millennial Kingdom, these remnant groups could therefore become quite large. These “earthdwellers” would have bodies that are still subject to natural death (First Death); and, as mentioned, will bear children.



“I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make people scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir” (Isaiah 13:11-12).

At the beginning of the Millennium, all the nations “bow their knees” (Isaiah 45:23) to Christ, as at this point His Second Coming has occurred. Specifically, this is also the time that the Jews “[...] will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son” (Zechariah 12:10; cf. John 19:37).

The remnant of Jews will then be forgiven. Here are two texts that affirm this: “But all the descendants of Israel will find deliverance in the LORD and will make their boast in him” (Isaiah 45:25). Also, “In those days, at that time,’ declares the LORD, ‘[...] a search will be made for Is-

rael’s guilt, but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare” (Jeremiah 50:20).

Similarly, the remnant of the Gentiles who “bow their knees” will be allowed to enter the Millennium. But not without being put to shame. “They will say of me, ‘In the LORD alone are deliverance and strength.’ All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame” (Isaiah 45:24).

How large could the population of Tribulation survivors become? They have not yet been resurrected, and still have the bodies of flesh and blood that we have today. As such, they likely would be able to have children. There is nothing in the Bible that refutes that children would be born to them in the Millennium. Also to consider, is that since “Elijah comes and will restore all things” (Matthew 17:11) during this time, this may indicate that lifespans will again lengthen to pre-Flood times.

One characteristic of the 144,000 seems sure. Were they to reside on earth during the Millennium, they most certainly would not procreate.

Over the thousand years of the Millennial Kingdom, these remnant groups could therefore become quite large. These “earth-dwellers” would have bodies that are still subject to natural death (First Death); and, as mentioned, will bear children. Most certainly so the Jews. The LORD says, “I will add to their numbers, and they will not be decreased” (Jeremiah 30:19).

Eventually, even though they would have bodies that are still subject to natural death (First Death), these populations may outnumber the resurrected Tribulational “great multitude.” If the beginning of this period is indeed the time that “Elijah comes and [restores] all things,” then it is very possible that the human lifespan may again lengthen to what it was in pre-Flood times. The average age of the pre-Flood Patriarchs that the Bible mentions was 960 years ... very near a millennium.

#### 4. The 144,000 Hebrews

What happens to the 144,000 (Revelation 7:4)? These had been sealed against harm during the Tribulation, and may possibly also go into the Millennium. No further information is given to us in the New Testament that expressly speaks to their future following the Tribulation period.

It may be possible that since the 144,000 “servants” are Jews (Israelites), that the Prophet Daniel may have seen them in his endtime visions. Could they be referred to as “those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3); or among those “whose name is found written in the book” (Daniel 12:1)?

Admittedly, this possibility is conjecture, and we cannot be certain of this iden-

tification. In any case, since the Bible does not tell us whether the estate and purpose of their election changes after the Tribulation period, it may not be unreasonable to assume that they enter the Millennium. Perhaps significant is that they all are shown to be on earth (on Mount Zion) with Christ in Revelation 14:1. Mount Zion definitely is situated upon earth.

Another question concerns what type of bodies these “servants” will have. If they had been sealed against harm during the Tribulation period, will their bodies also be impervious to harm and death during the following Millennial period as well? Thus, it remains unclear whether the 144,000 will enter the Millennial kingdom on earth.

One characteristic of the 144,000 seems sure. Were they to reside on earth during the Millennium, they most certainly would not procreate. The Bible says that they are all males “[...] who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins” (Revelation 14:4a).

Why would this change? If they are indeed “firstfruits” (see Revelation 14:4b), then this would confirm that they will already have bodies that do not die. Could in fact the 144,000 be comprised of resurrected Hebrews from history, pre-Christ? They are said to be “redeemed from the earth” (Revelation 14:3). Christ is also named a “firstfruits” from the dead.

As such, could it be that they are the first major group of Old Testament Jews to be translated as firstfruits (in this case, as an earlier 2nd Resurrection)? They indeed are identified as firstfruits.

In conclusion, ruminating as we may on these possibilities, there is little that can be confirmed about the destiny of the 144,000.



“Dead in Christ” saints are raptured first. Then, those who are living—a unique and small group—are raptured.

We cannot be certain if they will enter the Millennial period.

### Will the Raptured Return to Earth?

Readers no doubt may be wondering about the possibility of a fifth group. Here we are thinking of the raptured who were snatched up. The Bible says that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable [...] We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:50-53).

Given that the raptured Christians are already imperishable and immortal at this point, we conclude that this group will remain with Jesus in the heavenly realms—being found wherever He is. It would seem retrograde to consider that they would live upon physical earth with their heavenly bodies.

### Thoughts to Ponder

The above interpretations reconcile with this statement by Apostle Paul: “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power” (1 Corinthians 15:22-24; cf. Luke 14:14; John 5:28-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Daniel’s statement also aligns: “There will be a time of distress such as has not

happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered” (Daniel 12:1).

It stands to reason that there will be many inhabitants upon earth by the end of the Millennium. The fact that ALL Tribulational Christians will be slain in the Tribulation, does not invalidate that conclusion.

Finally, we again briefly state the significant positional differences between those Christians who are raptured, and those who later become Christians during the Tribulation period. While Christ is the “firstfruits” raised from the dead, He is the forerunner of all those who have “fallen asleep” during the Church Age (1 Corinthians 15:20-21). These “dead in Christ” saints are raptured first.

Then, those who are living—a unique and small group—are raptured. This latter group faces neither the First nor the Second Death (physical death nor spiritual damnation), but a translation to a new body.

What a wonderful reward to the Christians of the apostate, hostile world that exists at the time of the Rapture. These saints have prevailed and are being kept “[...] from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth” (Revelation 3:10).

The only other “firstfruits” group that is given a similar special dispensation (in part) is the 144,000 prophets. They are sealed, being already redeemed as a type of firstfruits (what we take to mean as, resurrected with eternal bodies). Therefore, wherever their location—heaven or earth—they will not perish during the Tribulation. <sup>(MC)</sup>



# Broad Impact, Profound Effect, *and Love*

An interpretation of the last book of the Bible. Part 15. Revelation 2:2—3:6.

**Wim Malgo (1922–1992)**

Love runs like a red thread through the entire Bible, because God is love. Love is the highest thing. That's why Paul sings of love in 1 Corinthians 13, and states that without it, "I am nothing" (v. 2). Love is demanded in two passages in the Old Testament: "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut 10:12). A similar passage appears in Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

When we summarize these two passages, we have a sevenfold demand that the Lord made of Israel under the Old Covenant. Because the same demand dominates the first epistle from heaven in Revelation 2 and 3, we want to outline it. In Deuteronomy 10:12: 1. Fear the Lord; 2. Walk in His ways; 3. Love Him; 4. Serve him with all your heart and soul. In Micah 6:8: 5. Keep God's Word; 6. Practice love; and 7. Be humble before your God.

It's revealing that these two Old Testament statements not only contain a sevenfold demand from God, but also repeat one of them (albeit with nuance). Deuteronomy 10:12 says, "love Him"; Micah 6:8 says, "love mercy." But this is the fulfillment of

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◀ Love runs like a red thread through the entire Bible, because God is love.

the Lord's whole requirement as He expressed it in the New Testament. When a Pharisee came to Jesus and asked, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matt 22:36), it says, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt 22:37-40).

If we don't see these connections, we can't understand the letter correctly. Generally, you can't really grasp the New Testament if you're not familiar with the Old Testament. The Lord makes His demand crystal clear in the Old Testament passages. But the actual one, the highest, is given in two forms: "love Him" and "love your neighbor." The former results in the latter.

When we're personally confronted with the question, "Do you love me?" we must examine ourselves with holy sobriety and ask: have we met this one (and therefore highest) need, or are we ultimately lacking the only prerequisite for blessed service? The church of Jesus consists of the Lord's servants. Christ Himself described what true service is: "If any man serve me, let him follow me" (John 12:26). So, this is the definition of service: following Jesus! We know that very well, since we also sing, "I have decided to follow Jesus..." But let's not emphasize, "I have," but the person, Jesus! Unwillingness to serve in God's kingdom is rooted in estrangement from the person of the Lord Jesus. There is no burning love left, no real discipleship.

It can't be said that the Ephesians were unwilling to serve. To the contrary; there has rarely been a church so zealous and ready for action, so uncompromising and biblically-founded as the church in Ephesus: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are

apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted" (Rev 2:2-3). What a ministry of service this church had! The high level of knowledge was bearing fruit. This is faithful service and tireless ministry, while refusing to compromise. In verse 6 it says, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes." The Nicolaitans were Christians who were converted and were members of the church of Jesus, but somehow made compromises and endorsed the sins of the flesh. The church in Ephesus rejected this. It firmly rejected all conformity with the world.

He knows everything we're doing! This "I know" appears seven times in the letters to the churches. When you serve and work for the Lord, sacrificing your free time for Him, He says, "I know..."

But, why isn't the Lord pleased with the Ephesians, despite listing so many positives in verses 2 and 3 of this letter? Because their service (and this often applies to ours) is quantitatively remarkable, but qualitatively poor. Why? Because it's not blessed. By "quantitative" we mean the broad impact, what the world observes, what impresses people: good sermons, beautiful singing, stirring testimony, selfless commitment. It can't be said that nothing is going on in the kingdom of God by these measures. But qualitatively...? Quality is what could also be described as having profound effect: blessed service because this service has its source in the person of Jesus, and leads to Him! The Lord wants to say this to the Ephesians: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and..." But then comes the reproach: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (v. 4).

When we serve with our first love firmly in place, we can have unlimited, profound effects: we lay the foundation that lasts, and bear fruit that has eternal value. In three words, we are

## Broad Impact, Profound Effect, and Love

When we serve with our first love firmly in place, we can have unlimited, profound effects: we lay the foundation that lasts, and bear fruit that has eternal value.

blessed. But if we are not blessed, it will melt away with time.

The Lord Jesus' ministry was of the highest quality. He was the servant of all: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28). His ministry had tremendous, deep, eternal effects. Each person who is born again is a fruit of His ministry.

What drove His ministry and caused Him to give up His life? It was His great, wonderful, indelible love! Ministry without first love for Him is ineffective: we can do a lot of good, but it will have no profound effect (at most, broad impact) if the driving force behind it isn't love for Jesus. The Lord Jesus says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Out of love for whom? First, He was driven by His burning love for His Father. The Bible is full of evidence of this wonderful reciprocal love between Father and Son. God called down from heaven three times and said of Him, "This is my beloved Son," and, "I have both glorified it [His name], and will glorify it again" (Matt 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28). That was the majesty of His ministry. Therein lay His power. His ministry wasn't sterile; it wasn't just Christian or social activity. His love was such a powerful "engine" that He could bear all things.

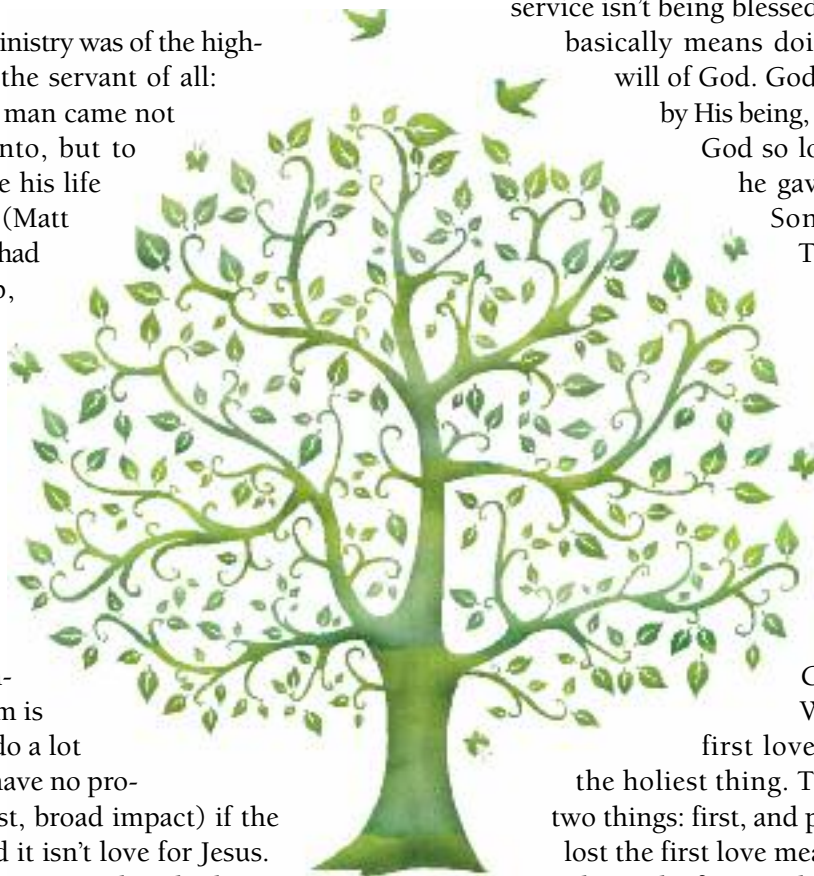
Love for Jesus must be the driving force behind our ministry. "For Christ's love compels us" (2 Cor

5:14a, NIV). If this love isn't driving us, then our service isn't being blessed. "Blessed ministry" basically means doing nothing but the will of God. God's holy will is driven by His being, and that is love! "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16).

Therefore, His willingness to give His Son was driven by His love. Everything we do outside of the Lord is idle service. Even if our actions are ever so Christian, this still applies: if I don't have love, "I am nothing" (1 Cor 13:2).

When we speak of first love, we're speaking of the holiest thing. This first love means two things: first, and primary love. Having lost the first love means you're no longer doing the first works. Do the first works as you did back then: with prayer and the motivation "for Jesus' sake." You're not like you used to be with Him. How often do you see that in marriages? They start out confident and idealistic. But then the first love soon starts cooling down, even to the freezing point. The couple has run out of things to say. It's the same for clergy: they may still pray, give, and sing, but the radiance of first love that enlightened everything they did before is gone. You may speak "in tongues of angels," have powerful faith, work without growing tired, and be uncompromising and eager—but all without the very thing that makes everything come alive: the first love.

(MR0620/1086)






# WORLD FOCUS

 FRANCE

## Robots to Harvest Cauliflower

The job of harvesting cauliflowers could one day be in the mechanical hands of robots thanks to a collaboration between scientists and the French canned vegetable producer Bonduelle.

 Fieldwork Robotics, the team behind the world's first raspberry-picking robot, is designing a machine in a three-year collaboration.

An early prototype already exists, developed by Fieldwork's co-founder Dr Martin Stoelen, lecturer in robotics at the University of Plymouth and associate professor at the Western Norway University of Applied Science. It has a gripper and a cutter that can neatly slice off a cauliflower head.

Stoelen originally developed the robot system in a project funded by the European Regional Development Fund and Cornwall council. Fieldwork envisages a modular robot system that can be adapted for different fruit and vegetables (it has also been tested on tomatoes).

Provided by *The Guardian*: Alamy Stock Photo



Fieldwork raised £298,000 in January from its backers to scale up the technology, and has also been supported by a £547,250 Innovate UK grant. It is looking to raise a further £500,000 from existing and new investors.

The company has worked with Germany's Bosch to improve the software and design of the robot arms. The robot is about to get two more arms, and should be able to pick a raspberry in 2.5 seconds next year (currently 2.8 seconds) while humans take two seconds to pick a raspberry on average. However, the robot will be able to work right through the night.

-[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), 21 September 2020

**Commentary:** From the older generation, we have heard the repeated slogan, "the good old days." But, compared with today, the old days were

rather miserable. Not too long ago, a farmer had to plow his field with oxen, donkeys, or horses. He then scattered the seed by hand, and later harvested it with a scythe, dried the grain, and then—by hand—threshed it out. All that was back-breaking, physical labor, and the harvest was rather poor by today's standards.

Now there seems to be no limit to machines (robots) doing man's physical labor. For example, the John Deere Combine 9870 STS operates harvesters with enclosed, air-conditioned cabs, rotary threshers, and laser-guided, automatic steering. All that is indeed a long way from the curse Adam inherited because of sin:

"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till



thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:18-19).

7355

(See *Searching for Adam*, Item #2319, \$24.99.)

## EUROPE

## First Zero-Emission Commercial Aircraft

Three concepts for the world's first zero-emission commercial aircraft have been unveiled by Airbus.



The aircraft could enter service by 2035 (Airbus/PA)



The European plane-maker claimed the hydrogen-fueled aircraft could enter service by 2035.

Airbus chief executive Guillaume Faury said: "This is a historic moment for the commercial aviation sector as a whole and we intend to play a leading role in the most important transition this industry has ever seen.

"The concepts we unveil today offer the world a glimpse of our ambition to drive a bold vision for the future of zero-emission flight.

"I strongly believe that the use of hydrogen—both in synthetic fuels and as a primary power source for commercial aircraft—has the potential to significantly reduce aviation's climate impact."

Airbus claimed its turbofan design could carry up to 200 passengers more than 2,000 miles, while a turboprop concept would have a 50% lower capacity and range.

Mr Faury said: "These concepts will help us explore and mature the design and layout

(continued next page)



**VATICAN**

## Rethink Our Common Future, Says Pope

Pope Francis addressed the representatives of the 193-member [UN]. In a video message, the Pope appealed for a joint commitment towards a better future through multilateralism and collaboration among states.



He also noted that this 75th anniversary is a fitting occasion to express the Holy See's desire that the organization serves "as a sign of unity between States and an instrument of service to the entire human family."

Reiterating his reflections during the Extraordinary Moment of Prayer on 27 March, Pope Francis said the pandemic calls us to seize this time of trial to "choose what matters and what passes away," and "separate what

is necessary from what is not." He urged that we choose the path that leads to the consolidation of multilateralism, global responsibility, peace and inclusion of the poor.

In responding to the inequalities between the rich and the poor, Pope Francis proposes a reconsideration of the role of economic and financial institutions. He recommends an economic model that "encourages subsidiarity, supports economic development at the local level, and invests in education and infrastructure benefitting local communities." He also calls on the international community to put an end to economic injustices through greater fiscal responsibility among nations and "an effective promotion of the poorest" including offering assistance to poorer and highly-indebted nations.

Pope Francis talks of the "need to break with the present climate of distrust" marked by the erosion of multilateralism and the development of new forms of military technology which irreversibly alter the nature of warfare. In particular, he singles out nuclear deterrence which "creates an ethos of fear based on the threat of mutual annihilation" and calls for dismantling the perverse logic that links security to the possession of weaponry while generating profit for the arms industry. On this front, he calls for in-

creased support for the principal international and legal instruments on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and prohibition.

-[www.vaticannews.va/en](http://www.vaticannews.va/en), 25 September 2020

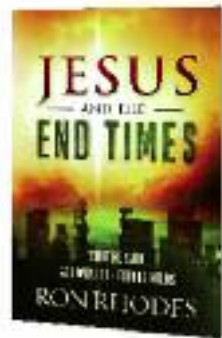
**Commentary:** As a voice for humanitarian issues, the words are well-spoken. We do not need more controversy, disagreement, or war. We don't need more distrust and the erosion of multilateralism, which the Pope says, "creates an ethos of fear based on the threat of mutual annihilation."

However, this voice is a leader of a religion. Did not Jesus command the Church, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15)? The end of the world will come, but there is a condition set to it: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the

world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

7351

(See *Jesus and the End Times*, Item #2356, SALE \$12.)



## Zero-Emission (continued from page 24)

of the world's first climate-neutral, zero-emission commercial aircraft, which we aim to put into service by 2035.

"The transition to hydrogen, as the primary power source for these concept planes, will require decisive action from the entire aviation ecosystem."

EasyJet and Airbus launched a joint research project last year to consider hybrid and electric aircraft as a way of reducing the environmental impact of aviation.

The airline's chief executive Johan Lundgren said: "It is testament to the innovation and drive of this industry that, despite the pandemic and the immense impact it has had on the industry, technological breakthroughs continue to come.

"One thing is for certain: confidence in the power of disruptive technologies such as electric and hydrogen to reinvent aviation is gaining momentum."

-[uk.finance.yahoo.com](http://uk.finance.yahoo.com), 21 September 2020

**Commentary:** There is little doubt, considering recent history, that commercial aircraft will trend to zero emissions. There is no stopping technology; at any given moment, there are literally millions of highly-qualified, educated scientists continuing to work on the multiple problems the technological world faces—and in the end, they will succeed, albeit temporarily.

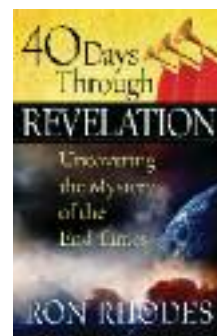
We know that the visible and invisible world was created by God: "For by him

were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17).

The last book of the Bible says: "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

7354

(See *40 Days Through Revelation*, Item #2301, \$13.99.)



**CHINA**

## Facial Recognition Promises Farmyard Revolution

There are many challenges to applying facial recognition technology to animals: Pigs don't have distinguishing features and cows often want to lick the cameras. But there is an advantage: Farmyard inhabitants tend not to complain about impingements on their civil liberties.

Having mastered facial recognition for humans to an alarmingly precise degree, even picking out wanted criminals from huge crowds, Chinese tech whizzes are turning their attention to furrier faces.

"We've been using it for sheep, pigs and cows," said Zhao Jinshi, who studied at Cornell University and founded Beijing Unitrace Tech, a company developing software for the agriculture industry.

China has led the world in developing facial recognition capabilities. There are almost 630 million facial recognition cameras in use in the country, for security purposes as well as for everyday conveniences like entering train stations and paying for goods in stores.

Chinese entrepreneurs see an opportunity to apply this know-how to agriculture as farms become bigger and more commercialized, and as the rural population ages, limiting the number of people able to do manual work.

"We can monitor how long the cow is drinking for, how much it's eating, how many times a day it visits the trough," Zhao said as the cows walked in a row from their outdoor pen toward the milking shed.

Signs of illness or unusual behavior can be detected using artificial intelligence and treated quickly by a human, rather than relying on farmers to inspect the herd for potential problems.

"This system is very powerful and it will definitely make our work easier," said He Ye,



**A live feed of cows being milked at Xiongdi cow farm. Data include ear tag number, age in months, number of days milking, and breeding status. (Gilles Sabrié/For The Washington Post)**

the manager of the farm in Hebei province. The farm has to buy the cameras, but Zhao's company has been providing the technology for free while it irons out the wrinkles.

This kind of information for each animal used to be collected from electronic tags punched through their ears or worn around their ankles. The problem was that the cows were always trying to remove them—and often succeeding.

Long before the novel coronavirus—which scientists believe began in bats, then jumped through an intermediate host, probably pangolins, to humans working in an exotic meat market—China was known for low food standards and repeated scandals, such as melamine added to baby formula.

China is now paying more attention to food hygiene. With the spread of the coronavirus, China's government has banned the trade and consumption of wildlife such as civet cats and bamboo rats.

China feeds 22 percent of the world's population with only 10 percent of the world's arable land. That creates extra incentive for China to improve food standards and production, including through the use of advanced technology.

*-www.washingtonpost.com, 24 August 2020*

**Commentary:** This new invention, or better said, the practical implementation of existing inventions, carries great promise for communist China. The country that cleverly imple-

mented a mixture of communism, socialism, and capitalism, has now become the economic giant of planet earth. Chinese media claim their economy has already surpassed the US. How accurate this is, remains to be seen. One thing is clear: China will be the number one country in the not-too-distant future.

These reports have caused Europe to be alarmed, as well as the USA. Yet most developing countries welcome China's success. According to Wikipedia, China donates \$38 billion in development aid, with the United States at \$34.6 billion, and Germany \$23.8 billion. Chinese infrastructure is virtually exploding all over the planet.

Even in Israel, the Chinese company Shanghai International Port Group, will oversee the Haifa Bay port construction for the next 25 years, a move strongly opposed by the US. Yet, despite delays, planning authorities and the Israel Ports Company still believe the construction will begin as scheduled in 2021.

Wikipedia reports that over a thousand Israeli firms are operating in China. The article states, "Chinese firms play an essential role in the \$10 billion kosher food industry, with 500 factories across China producing kosher foods for American and Israeli markets."

Money talks a strong language, and in the present capital/social/communist system, the market will always win.

7356

(See *New Babylon Rising*, Item #2359, SALE \$14.)

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**GERMANY**

# Medical Students Learn Abortion

Abortion has been available throughout Germany since the 1970s but the number of doctors carrying out the procedure is now in decline. Jessica Bateman meets students and young doctors who want to fill the gap.



The woman at the family planning clinic looked at Teresa Bauer and her friend sternly. “And what are you studying?” she asked the friend, who had just found out she was pregnant, and wanted an abortion.

Stressed-out by the discovery of her accidental pregnancy, Bauer’s friend had asked her to book the appointments needed to arrange an abortion.

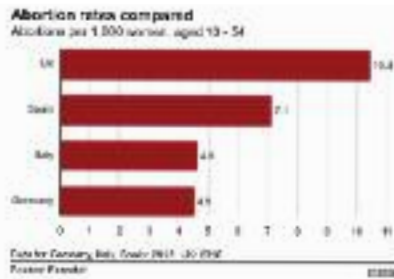
First she needed to arrange a counseling appointment, which is designed to “protect unborn life,” as German law puts it, and discourage a woman from going ahead with the procedure. Some of the clinics providing the service are run by churches—Bauer took care to avoid them, fearing that they would be judgmental.

Then she needed to hunt down a doctor who could prescribe pills for an early medical abortion. It became legal last year for doctors to publicize the fact that they provide abortions but they cannot indicate what kinds of service they provide, so Bauer had to call medical practices one by one.

“Berlin is a liberal city, so I thought it would be easier than it was,” she says.

“Even when we went to get the pill, the doctor’s assistant kept asking, ‘Are you really sure?’ Seeing what my friend had to go through, and how she was treated, made me so angry that I decided to do something about it.”

Although Germany is widely perceived as a liberal country, its reproductive laws are surprisingly restrictive. Abortion isn’t actually legal—it’s just unpunished up to 12 weeks from



conception, providing the woman has undergone the counseling session, followed by a waiting period of three days.

For this reason abortion hasn’t been taught at medical schools, and there is a shortage of doctors performing the procedure as a result.

In some parts of Germany women have to travel long distances to reach a clinic where abortions are carried out. In 2018 more than 1,000 crossed into the Netherlands, where the process is simpler and the time limit is 22 weeks. Some doctors also commute from Belgium and the Netherlands to carry out abortions in northern German cities such as Bremen and Münster.

-[www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com), 25 September 2020

**Commentary:** Wikipedia has this to say:

- 1931 – Mexico was the first country in the world to legalize abortion in cases of rape.
- 1932 – Poland was the first country in Europe outside the Soviet Union to legalize abortion in cases of rape and threat to maternal health.

It is significant that the strongest anti-abortion laws are found in Islamic countries, particularly throughout Africa, the Middle East, and the Indonesian islands.

We reiterate: abortion is murder. Yet, the industrialized nations, often called “Christian countries,” practice this legalized medical murder with little hindrance.

Here, the following Scripture: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a

prophet unto the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). “Thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them” (Psalm 139:13-16). “Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name” (Isaiah 49:1).



“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace” (Galatians 1:15). 7352  
(See *End-Times Super Trends*, Item #2342, SALE \$12.)

## **+** SWITZERLAND Fundamental Constitutional Rights for Monkeys

A Swiss region will ask citizens to vote on a proposal to incorporate the fundamental rights of primates into their constitution, after the supreme court ruled the text was permissible.



The proposal, launched by an animal rights activist group called Sentience Politics in 2016, called for an amendment to the constitution in the northern half-canton of Basel City to include “fundamental rights to life for non-human primates.”

The animals are “highly complex beings, possessing an intrinsic, essential interest in living a life of bodily and mental integrity,” the group said.

(continued next page)

## Monkeys (continued from page 27)

“Non-human primates need to be protected by fundamental rights which guarantee that their essential interests are respected,” it said, pointing to a right to life, as well as to physical and mental integrity.

Campaigners collected the required 100,000 signatures needed to put basically any issue to a popular vote in Switzerland’s famous direct democratic system.

In Switzerland, which stages popular votes and referenda at the national, regional and local levels every few months, it can take years from the time such initiatives gather the necessary signatures until they make it onto the ballot.

*-www.thelocal.ch, 17 September 2020*

**Commentary:** This most unusual proposal to grant animals fundamental constitutional rights is typical of Switzerland—the country that prides itself as the richest, freest, and most secure on planet earth. But there are unanswered questions; for example, how to categorize animals such as chickens, cattle, pigs, etc. And, to what extent should those animals, which are raised for consumers, have fundamental constitutional rights?

What is the real reason? Plain and simple, a re-confirmation of evolution. Virtually all higher educational institutions the world over teach evolution as a scientifically reliable theory; others consider evolution as fact, yet without factual science.

What does the Bible say? “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he



A gorilla at Zurich Zoo. Photo: FABRICE COFFRINI / AFP

them” (Genesis 1:26-27). Only man consists of a trinity, spirit, soul, and body. Animals have no spirit, but they do have a soul and a body, while vegetation has only a body. Thus, vegetation was the first food for mankind.

We know that after the Fall and expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise, they had two sons. One was a shepherd, the other a tiller of the ground. It must be presumed that Abel’s sheep were also for meat, but the actual eating of animals is first recorded in Exodus 12:8: “And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.” That’s the Passover Lamb. Later in Leviticus, the distinction is made between clean and unclean animals. Thus, clearly, animals are for food and may be eaten freely. As a matter of fact, in the New Testament it says: “Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake” (1 Corinthians 10:25).

Thus, Switzerland’s proposed law to protect fundamental constitutional rights for animals stands in direct opposition to God’s designated food sources.



7347

(See *The Genesis Factor*, Item #2239, \$13.99.)



## Joins Race for Vaccine Against Coronavirus

Cuba has a lot of experience in vaccine research. The Caribbean island is currently working on one against the novel coronavirus while Russia is planning to have its own vaccine produced in Cuba.



Up until recently, Cuba had handled the pandemic quite efficiently. However, the Caribbean island has reported a rising number of people infected by the novel coronavirus.

The head of epidemiology at Cuba’s public health ministry, Francisco Duran, announced that his country was working on a vaccine. “Finding an efficient vaccine to fight COVID-19 is a top priority for our science and innovation system,” he told reporters in Havana.

“Cuba produces almost 80% of the vaccines used within the national immunization program—there’s the Finlay Institute plus a big technology and innovation sector we can fall back on,” Jose Moya, the director for Cuba of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), told DW in a statement.

Media reports suggest that Cuba is among the group of nations that would be capable of jointly producing the coronavirus vaccine developed by Russian scientists, named Sputnik V. The announcement of the vaccine made a splash worldwide but has also drawn criticism as crucial phase III clinical testing was skipped. Cuba is not expected to risk the same, known as it is for strictly adhering to WHO regulations.

“Cuba has excellent abilities to produce vaccines,” says the director of the state-owned Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), Kirill Dmitriev. “We believe that Cuba can become one of the world’s most important centers for the production of vaccines,” he told DW.

*(continued next page)*

## Race for Vaccine (continued from page 28)

Cuban epidemiologist Duran warns that despite the announcement of the Russian vaccine and the progress made so far in research on SARS-CoV-2, an efficient vaccine will not be available in huge quantities anytime soon. "Let's remain realistic," he says, and adds: "For the time being, the only effective protection against the virus is to wear a mask and observe hygiene and distancing rules."

-[www.dw.com/en](http://www.dw.com/en), 19 August 2020

**Commentary:** Cuba is one of several dozen countries feverishly working on an effective vaccine to fight Covid-19. At this point, Cuba has been extremely successful when compared with other nations in the Americas. The death rate per 100,000 in population stands at 1.08. Brazil, on the other hand, registered 68.72 coronavirus deaths per 100,000.

According to the *CIA Factbook*, 59.2% of Cubans are Christian, with 23% claiming "no religious affiliation." Life expectancy stands at 79.2 years, with an infant mortality of 4.3 per 1,000 live births. The country has one of the highest physician densities in the world, with 8.3 doctors per 1,000 in population, and 5.3 beds for the same.

Based on multiple sources and reports, 2021 will see effective vaccines being released on all five continents. Yet, as mentioned before, this is just another step toward the final completion of globalization on planet earth. We must keep the goal in mind:

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [Antichrist]" (Revelation 13:8).

7341


(See *Revelation 13: Satan's Last Victory*, Item #1067, \$11.95.)



## SOUTH KOREA

### Law Requires Masks, Quarantines, and Contact Tracing

The arresting officers came for the young man about a month after he was declared free of the coronavirus and discharged from the hospital.

 His alleged crime: He lied to contact tracers. He said he didn't have a job, when in fact, he had a side hustle teaching kids at a cram school and in private tutoring sessions. Several of his students and fellow teachers later tested positive for the virus, leading to allegations that the delay caused by his lie had the cascading effect of dozens being infected and thousands needing to be tested and quarantined.

Now, he sits in jail awaiting trial, accused of impeding epidemiological investigators. He faces up to two years in prison and has become a cautionary tale in a nation well-versed in vigilance and shame. His name has not been released as is typical for criminal cases in South Korea.

In addition to the digital surveillance, meticulous contact tracing and medical prowess that have made its coronavirus response the envy of the world, South Korea is also relying on the blunt letter of the law to fight the pandemic.

Governments around the world including Singapore, the United Kingdom and Australia have also turned to criminal prosecutions to enforce coronavirus-related restrictions. Some of the heightened policing has raised concern from human rights advocates, who caution that it's a delicate balance between necessary measures to protect the public and infringing on citizens' rights.

"Criminalizing the disease to set an example because it's a crisis situation can be problematic," said Seo Bo-kyeong, a medical anthropologist and professor at Seoul's Yonsei University. "The aim of epidemiological investi-

gations should be that people aren't fearful of the consequences."

In South Korea, those jailed include Lee Man-hee, the founder and messiah of a fringe Christian sect linked to thousands of infections in March, accused of impeding epidemiologists; a man in his 20s who lied about having been to an area with a cluster of cases in order to get a coronavirus test; a man in his 60s who repeatedly violated a mandatory 14-day quarantine after entering the country to go to a sauna.

-[www.bakersfield.com](http://www.bakersfield.com), 30 August 2020

**Commentary:** South Korea's strict laws and enforcement have definitely paid dividends. According to Johns Hopkins University and Medicine, South Korea's death rate per 100,000 stands at 0.80 (US 63.25).

Of course, Covid-19 will pass, but based on recent history, we can be assured that another pandemic will visit planet earth. Those countries that made proper preparations will be the winners; countries whose leaders publicly denounced medical science's instructions have suffered the most.

For example, at the beginning, Sweden disregarded advice and instruction given by the World Health Organization, and paid a price: 57.87 deaths per 100,000 citizens. Sweden refused to close schools, restaurants, and most businesses. Today, they are at 14th place in the world, with 583 deaths per million in population.

What is the future? Revelation 6:15-16 has this to say: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." That will be judgment directly from God.

7338

(See *The Day Approaching*, Item #2362, **SALE \$12.**)

# Action for Israel



MIDNIGHT CALL

“And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people” (Leviticus 26:12).

BY ARNO FROESE

This is God's express will for Israel. Dozens of times, we read that God desires to be among His people. In the Old Testament, we find the very words, “I will be your God” 134 times. However, here in Leviticus it's prefaced with, “If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them” (Leviticus 26:3). Then in verse 14, we read: “But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments...,” thereafter describing the horrible judgment that will come upon the people. Thus, we see this is a conditional covenant between the God of Israel and His people.

Nevertheless, there is a distinct difference between Israel and all nations on the face of the earth. What does that mean? In simple terms, my nation—by whatever name—has no promise of continuity. Nations come and nations go. Presently, according to the United Nations, there are 195 nations. The youngest nation is listed as South Sudan, which declared its independence on 9 July 2011. But, that is only a political definition. Sudan was an entity long before our time. For example, to the Greeks, all the people living south of Egypt were called “Ethiopians.” In the Hebrew Bible, the territory is called “Cush,” which was the eldest son of Ham, the son of Noah. This writer was born in Windenburg, East Prussia, a place no longer found on any map. Today, it's called Ventė, Lithuania. How come? The an-

swer is simple: Germany attacked Russia, which defeated Germany and simply divided territory in Europe. It matters not what your country is named: it's only temporary, but not so where Israel is concerned.

When reading Old Testament prophecy, it becomes quite evident that Israel does have a permanent address, where one day God will dwell. The last words of the book of Ezekiel read: “It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there” (Ezekiel 48:35). *Adam Clarke's Commentary* has this to say about the words, “The LORD is there”: “It would have been better to have retained the original words, Yehovah Shammah. This is an allusion to the Shechinah, or symbol of the Divine Presence, which was in the first, but most certainly was not in the second temple.”

About the new Jerusalem, which comes down from the new heaven to the new earth, Revelation 21:3 reports: “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

In the meantime, Israel has to concern itself with the surrounding nations.

We admire Israel's diplomatic achievement, reaching an agreement with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain. There may be

more countries, but we must point out that these things are only of a temporary nature. God's goal is still the same: He yearns for fellowship with His creation. In the first place, with His chosen nation, the seed of Abraham, to whom God promised: "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Later, this promise was repeated to Isaac: "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 26:4b). Finally, it was passed on to Jacob: "in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 28:14b).

We do well to keep the beginning and the end in mind when reading Holy Scripture. God's intentions and His plans are rock solid. He will precisely fulfill the words He spoke many millennia ago to the Patriarchs.

Something important to emphasize is each person's individuality. Moses was met by God in the burning bush. He was commanded to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, but said: "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" (Exodus 3:13). God then an-

swers Moses and says, "I AM THAT I AM," explaining in verse 15: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." We immediately note that God does not identify Himself as a collective God. For example, it does not say, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." He clearly indicates that He is the God of each individual.

That is a mighty message for us today. Your family, your city, state, or country does not contribute any weight to your personal salvation. Thus, the question: is the Lord God your personal God? Do you know Him, and does He know you? If He is not my God and I do not belong to Him, then all of human history is insignificant.

The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has clearly expressed His intention to dwell in your heart through Jesus Christ—God manifested in the flesh. Only then am I part of the ultimate fulfillment: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." <sup>MC</sup>

# Action for Israel



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"I will bless them that  
bless thee..."  
(Genesis 12:3).

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# Missionary Work in the Age of Coronavirus

The coronavirus pandemic is more protracted and pervasive than many had initially assumed. Its effects on the various Midnight Call outposts is very different. An overview.

BY JONATHAN MALGO, DÜBENDORF

**W**e're experiencing restrictions that seem very extreme to us. However, if we look beyond our borders, we discover that it's a luxury to complain. Nevertheless, it's no longer the same as it was. We're becoming aware that we don't even know what we know, especially with regard to coronavirus. The many news-casts, reports, facts, or "fake news" are practically indistinguishable. This makes the task of passing on God's prophetic Word—and not getting lost in misleading thoughts and deliberations—all the more important. One of the enemy's tactics is to pull children of God away from the essential things. The coronavirus is, if you will, a side issue for us. The challenge is to achieve the maximum for the Lord, despite the





“The coronavirus is, if you will, a side issue for us. The challenge is to achieve the maximum for the Lord, despite the limitations.”

limitations. We're delighted that we're able to conduct church services in the Midnight Call community again—not just a livestream, but in person. And we're rejoicing over the open doors the internet has provided. Our YouTube channels have proven to be the “door to the outside.” In addition to magazines and literature, we would like to reach people by making greater use of these.

### ISRAEL

BY FREDI AND BEATE WINKLER,  
HAIFA

When we closed our Beth Shalom guesthouse in Haifa due to coronavirus in mid-March, we thought we'd be able to reopen in three months, maximum. But now it's been more than [seven] months, and there's no telling when we can open the house again and recommence our work for Israel trips. All employees are now on “compulsory leave,” but receive compensation payments from the national insurance. The only thing we can do is take care of the house and do the necessary maintenance. Most of the hotels in Israel are still closed, because it's not worth it due to the complicated requirements. For the time being, we can't foresee how everything will continue. The second wave of infection struck with force, and now people are starting to talk about a third wave in winter. So, everything depends on how things develop, but we know that we are in God's hands through all of this.

### GUATEMALA

BY ANDRÉ AND INGRID BEITZE,  
GUATEMALA CITY

There haven't been any gatherings since the state of emergency was declared in March. What was particularly serious, however, was that public transportation was no longer available. This particularly affected our tract distribution. Each municipality established its own regime, and even people who had legitimate reasons for being in transit (such as those from the health department) were fined. Of course, this created anarchy in different parts of the country. We published two tracts about the coronavirus, which were widely used despite all the restrictions. People have become scared and are seeking. We were also able to keep the bookstore open almost all the time, albeit with reduced hours. The possibilities on the internet are diverse. We offer programs on Facebook or Zoom practically every day. The interest in God's Word persists and, despite the precarious economic situation, many are desiring a Bible.

### ARGENTINA

BY STEPHAN AND CARINA BEITZE,  
BUENOS AIRES

We've been in quarantine since March 20th, one of the longest in the world. You can only travel with a special permit. If you're caught without it, you can expect legal proceedings and confiscation of your driver's license or car. Of course, we're allowed to shop for essentials in nearby stores or visit the



# Fellow Laborers



MIDNIGHT CALL

doctor. Masks are compulsory everywhere. Cameras are used to monitor for fever at bus and train stations. And the special permit, furnished with a QR code, must be shown either on paper or a mobile device. We can see both sides: on the one hand, we're not yet mourning as many deaths as in some neighboring countries. On the other hand, the economy, which was already broken, went even further to pieces. It's said that a quarter of all stores had to close. Many companies got help from the state, which now has its fingers in them. Nine out of ten families are in debt. The very poor receive help from the state in the form of money. Inflation is rising steadily. Schools and churches are closed. Students are having lessons over the internet. Those without internet access, or who are in a state school or university, have far fewer educational opportunities. Home robberies have doubled. And we hear of more and more people around us—relatives and from church—who have contracted the

virus. But so far, there's only so much we as missionaries can do.

Of course, we're almost exclusively remaining at home. We've never gone so long without traveling before. However, what was very bad in human terms has turned out to be a great blessing. We've been able to hold meetings, lectures, classes, camps, conferences, and radio interviews—either via livestream, or recorded and then sent on. Our services have tripled, and all without traveling. We also received many open doors to neighbors or families of the Sunday School children. Together with the congregation, we help with food, clothing, blankets, etc. Since we, as "clergy," have a special permit to move around, everything runs through us. Much pastoral care is also being sought. Our days are always fully booked, and into the night. We're thanking the Lord, and asking that He will give us wisdom to do everything correctly. (MR0920)



"To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" (Jude 25).

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# “Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name”

(Psalm 30:4).

“Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalm 107:31)

**By David Phillips** *Project Manager*

**H**appy Thanksgiving to our precious Ebenezer family!

We have so much to thank our Heavenly Father for, here at Ebenezer! First, we would like to say a special thanks to all of YOU for being a part of the Ebenezer family!! It has meant so much to us—especially this year, as we faced so many unknowns and daily challenges—to know we had family standing by us, praying for us, encouraging us, and supporting and helping us! From the depths of our heart, we thank the LORD for allowing you to be a part of our family and the work that God has us doing! We also wanted to thank you for all the beautiful letters and cards we have received this past year! It is always a great delight to hear what He is doing in each of your lives too. Please keep

them coming—look forward to hearing from you!

As you all know, the beginning of August saw us fundraising for our desperately needed new van. How God has brought you, our family, together to help us in time, has brought us to tears! To God be the glory, we are excited to announce that with your help [as of the printing of this magazine], we have raised \$67,150!!! This means we are only 23 percent away from reaching our targeted amount of \$87,300 (this price includes the extremely high Israeli tax and the needed equipment for the elderly)!

With your help, our prayer is that by Thanksgiving (November 26), we will reach our goal and be able to purchase the new van for the Ebenezer Home! To check our progress, please visit our



website at: [www.ebenezer.co.il](http://www.ebenezer.co.il) or find us on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/ebenezer.home.7](http://www.facebook.com/ebenezer.home.7)

We also want to announce that Family F is the winner of this amazing 36" x 16" replica of *Blowing the Shofar* [as mentioned in the April issue of *Midnight Call*], painted by Bep Phillips (my late mother who is with the Lord)!! Thank you all for being a part of this year's drawing!

For those interested in purchasing their own replica of this painting, please contact Samantha LaGoy at: [ds4eeh@gmail.com](mailto:ds4eeh@gmail.com)

"We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you" (Colossians 1:3).

May the Lord bless and keep you all, and may you take this time of giving of thanks, to think over all the many blessings HE has blessed you with this past year!



**Note:** Donations for the project by check/money order should be made out to Midnight Call, and specify Ebenezer Home in the memo line.

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**Note:** All letters will be answered by the Executive Editor, Arno Froese.

## “DON’T TEACH PROPHECY...” SABBATH AND VACCINES... DEMONS AND SWINE

### “Don’t Teach Prophecy”

Dear Mr. Froese,

I just wanted to tell you how much I have enjoyed your book *Daniel’s Prophecies Made Easy*. I have not read it straight through, but use it as a study.

I have attended church all my life. The spiritual growth has been a true blessing. The curse is seeing that pastors know very little of the Word. It is very frustrating to continue to hear milk preached instead of more meat.

I used to teach a Sunday School class. In my class was the pastor’s wife, and she didn’t like me including prophecy when applicable, because she said, “Even theologians disagree on it.” I told her, “There’s still Truth there, and we need to know it.”

-A. O’Dell, OK

**Answer:** Thank you for the details regarding the experience you had within your church. What you write is not unusual, because teaching **all** of the Word of God will often be opposed. When I began supporting Midnight Call in 1967, the pastor of my church at that time

came to my house and literally said, “Arno, when the prophetic bug bites you, the devil’s got you.” Yet, almost one-third of the Bible is of a prophetic nature. We will, therefore, continue unceasingly to proclaim the simplest message there is: only Jesus saves, and He’s coming again!

### Sabbath and Vaccines

Dear Sir,

You use Colossians 2:16-17 (KJV) to prove the Sabbath has been done away with. Others use it to prove the Sabbath is still in effect; they say it is improper to translate the Greek word *de* as “but” instead of “and,” and to add the word “is,” which is not in the Greek New Testament. One only has to look at Matthew 1:1-17 to see how improper it is to translate *de* as “but” instead of “and.” “And” is “and,” not “but.” Colossians 2:16, like verses 8, 18, and 22, is a warning against man-made traditions. We are to let God judge how to keep His traditions, not man. It is improper to use mistranslations of Scripture to prove misinterpretations of Scripture.



Can you prove me wrong?

On another note, are you opposed to mandatory vaccines? Some believe mandatory vaccines will be used as a digital “Corona Pass,” followed by the invisible digital tattoo (Mark of the Beast) that Bill Gates has developed.

-R. Peterson, MN

**Answer:** The Sabbath is not done away with, but we are not instructed to keep it. “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Romans 14:5). It’s up to each individual.

Whatever mandatory vaccine will be decided upon by the government, I certainly will stand in line to receive it. There is no relation to the Mark of the Beast; it’s just a health issue. In virtually all developed countries, there are a number of inoculations that are mandatory for children who enter kindergarten or other schooling. Most require that the child has received doses of DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough [pertussis]); also varicella for chicken pox, polio, and measles, mumps, and rubella. Those inoculations are doing a fantastic job. Remember, in the year 1900, the average life expectancy in the USA was only 43 years; today, it’s almost 80. Medicine is progressing, food is plentiful and of higher quality, and our air and water is much cleaner than a couple decades ago.

Granted, there are exceptions to the rule. Some children who receive shots actually get sick, and that goes for food poisoning, insecticides, and other things as well. But, in general, the world never had it so good. That’s precisely the tool the god of this world will use to deceive all of humanity to follow him—except those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb and believe in the Savior, Jesus Christ.

### Demons and Swine

Brother Arno,

Excellent answer to C. Watson on “Christian Nation” in the “Letters to the Editor,” September issue.

I teach many young people and old also, but don’t have the answer as to why Jesus would let demons be cast into the swine, and then them running downhill and drowning in the sea. We know the townspeople begged Him to leave the territory, because Jesus had taken away their livelihood.

People deserve answers and, frankly, I don’t know. Sometimes I wish Matthew the apostle, who was a tax collector, had left the story of the demons asking to be cast into the poor swine, out of the book of Matthew.

-E. Spencer, OH

**Answer:** Matthew 8:28-34 shows that demons desperately seek bodily manifestation. Interestingly, the demons knew Jesus. They were familiar with the prophetic Word. Verse 29b reveals: “art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” They knew they would end up in the lake of fire and brimstone, but they also knew it was not yet time.

Why did Jesus permit the demons to enter the herd of swine? First of all, the swine had no business in the Promised Land. It was an unclean animal, strictly forbidden to be eaten by the Israelites. Quite obviously, this was a rather large pig farmer. From Mark 5:13b we read: “(they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.” How did the citizens of the Gadarenes react? “...They besought him that he would depart out of their coasts” (Matthew 8:34b).

Although there is much talk these days about a “Christian nation” and “Judeo-Christian principles,” there actually is no such thing. We live in an evil world, and there is only one escape: through

faith in the already accomplished and perfected work of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross.

Thank you for your time.

-M. Parr, TX

### Bible and Traditions

I recently finished reading *Shocked by the Bible* (copyright 2008 by author Joe Kovacs).

Here are just a few things Mr. Kovacs says, which you won't hear from a preacher:

The Bible never says Jesus died on a Friday or rose on a Sunday morning.

The practice of decking a tree with silver and gold is actually condemned by God.

Jesus made personal appearances on earth in the Old Testament. Jesus said no one has gone to heaven except Himself.

No wise men at all visited baby Jesus in a Bethlehem manger.

The Bible does not say Adam and Eve ate an apple. We do know for certain that the fruit was a product of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**Answer:** Christian tradition often has little to do with the Bible. The Scripture says, "there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem" (Matthew 2:1b). Obviously, they came later, as we read, "when they were come into the house, they saw the young child" (Matthew 2:11a).

Jesus was crucified the day before the Sabbath (Friday). He died before the sun went down. In Mark 16:9, the Bible says, "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week..." That's Sunday.

Christmas trees are tradition, with no relation to the Bible.

The Bible does not identify the fruit of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." That, however, does not change anything; they took of the forbidden fruit.

Writing things to build the Church, admonish the believers, warn the backsliders, encourage the downcast, and reveal global affairs from Biblical perspectives—that's our calling. (MC)

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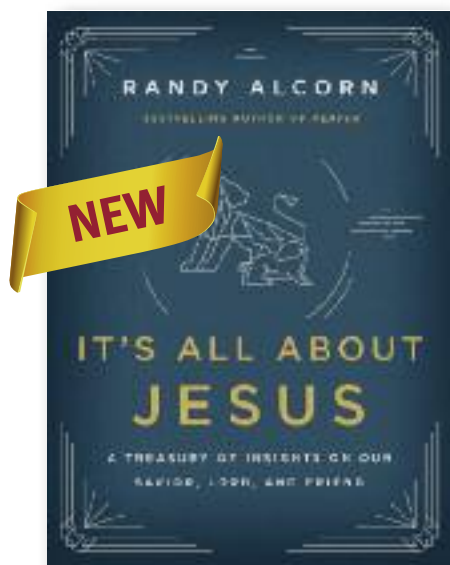
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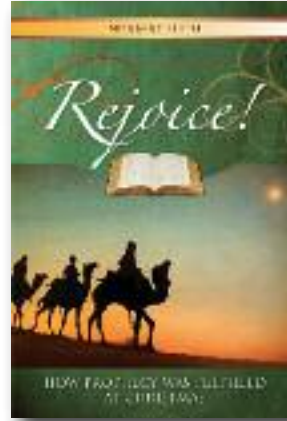
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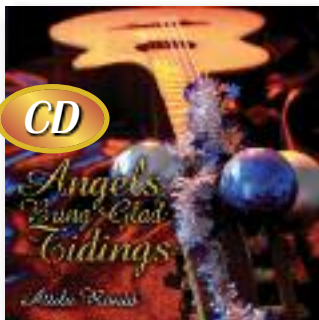
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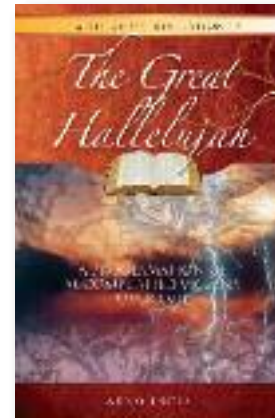
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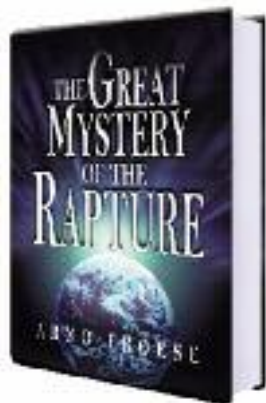
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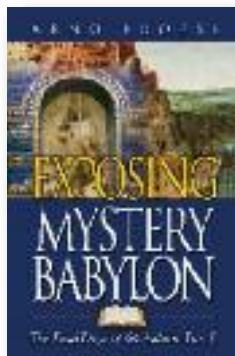
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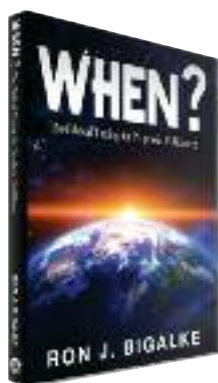
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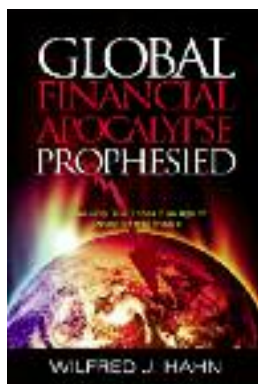


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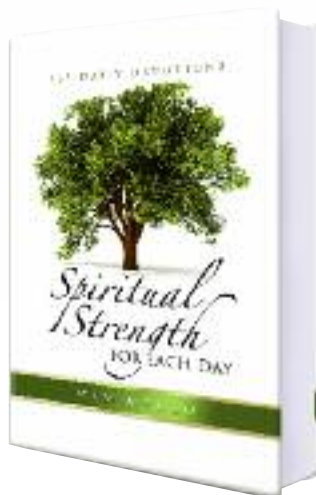
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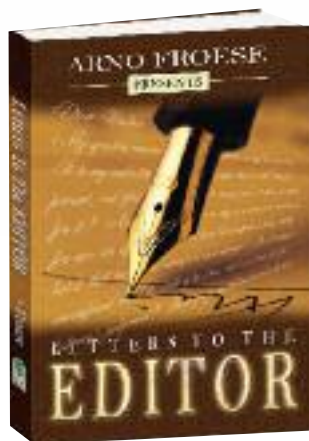


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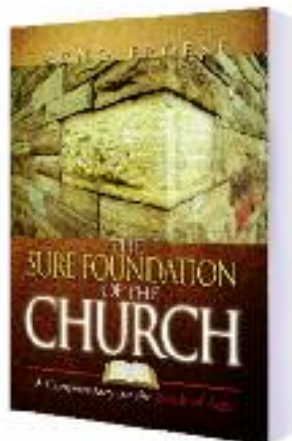
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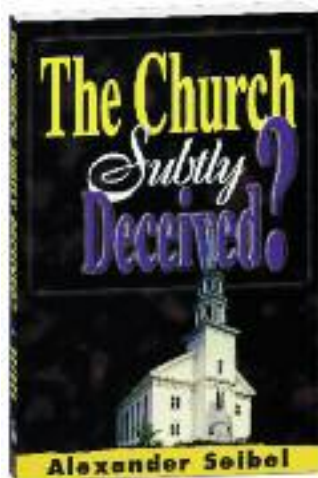


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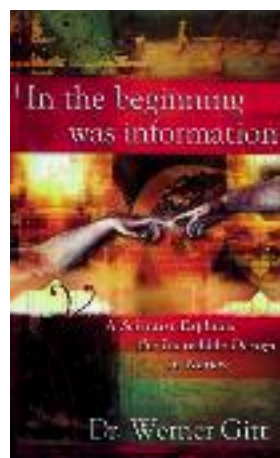
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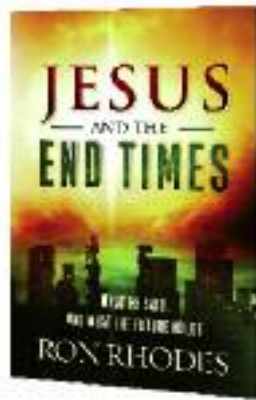
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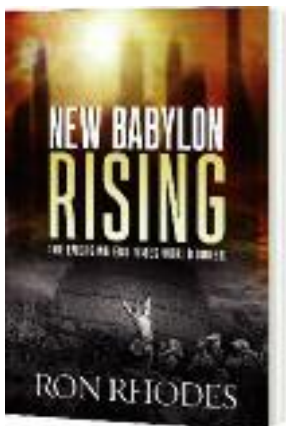


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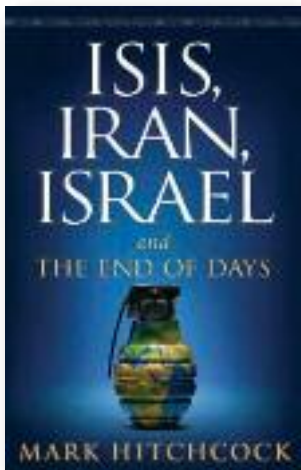
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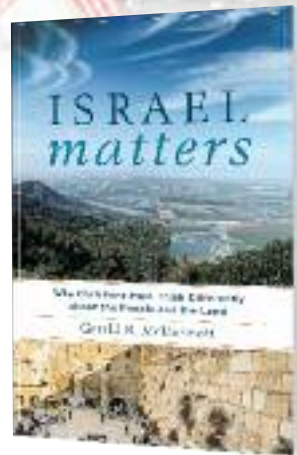
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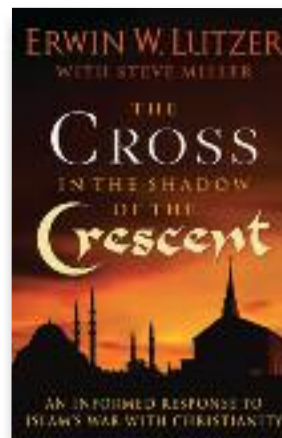
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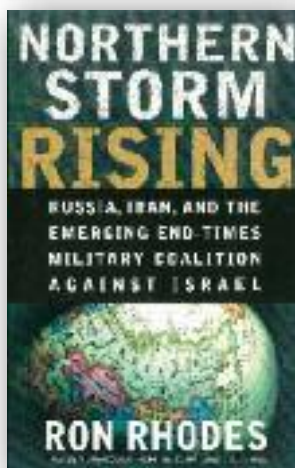
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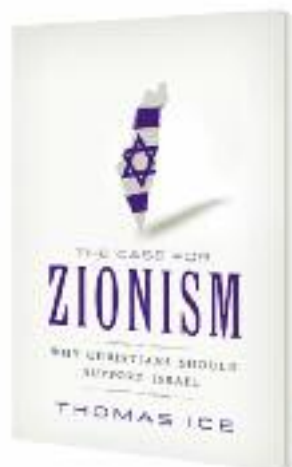


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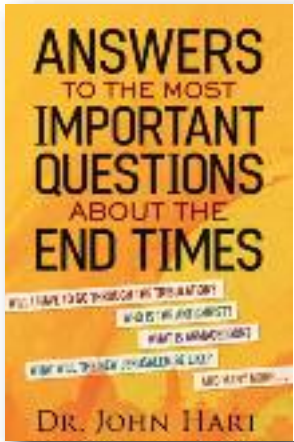
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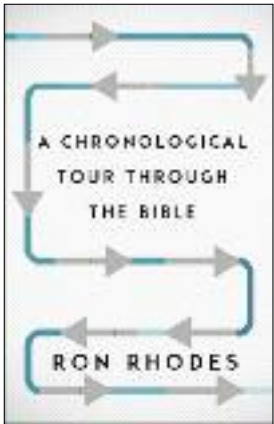
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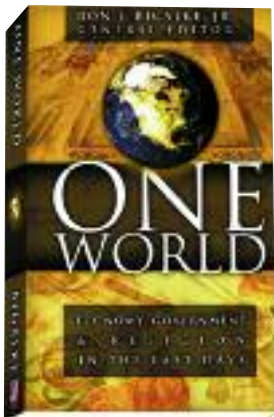
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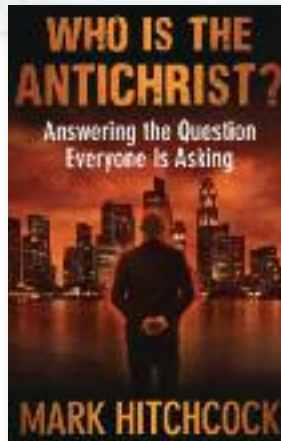
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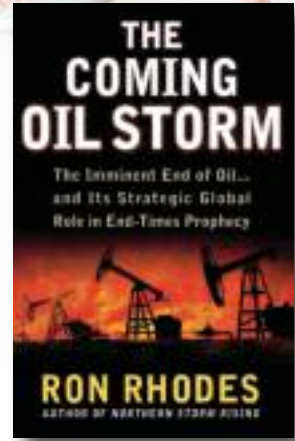
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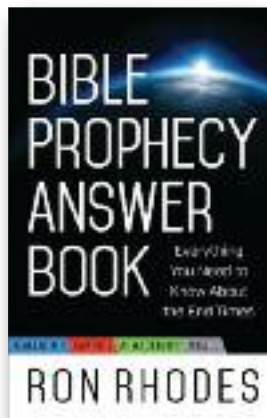
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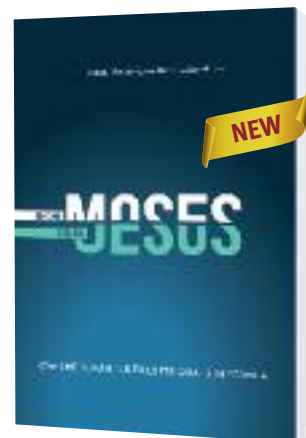
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