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Midnight Call

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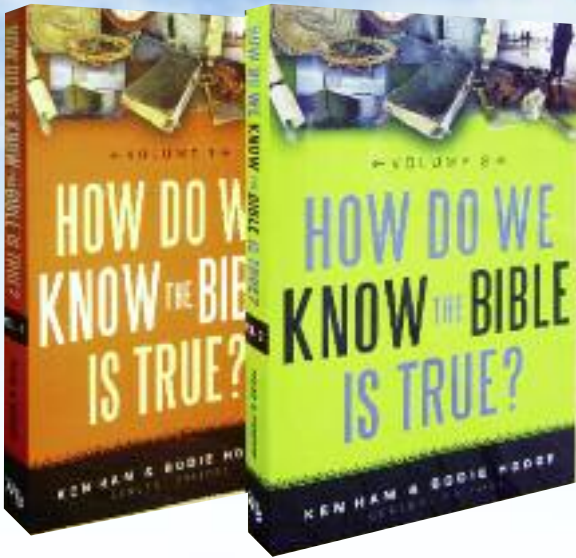
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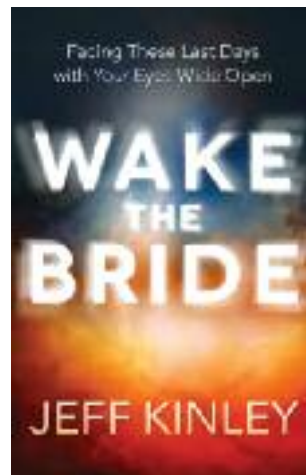
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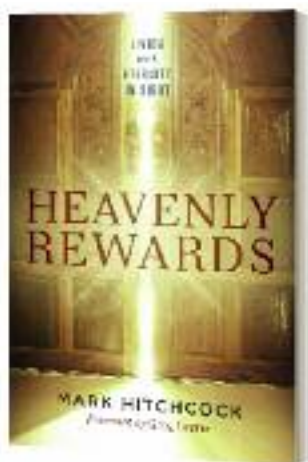


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Don't Lose Your Cool



By Norbert Lieth

Director of Missions, Midnight Call International

Dear Friends,

There were days when anger once again had me in its clutches. I struggled with any number of thoughts; annoyed with the traffic, with fellow Christians, with the whole Covid situation, and with politics. In the midst of this mindset, someone sent me (per WhatsApp) this verse from the GNB (Good News Bible): “Keep your temper under control; it is foolish to harbor a grudge” (Ecclesiastes 7:9). It hit the mark: I was moved in my conscience, and at the same time felt relieved. Why must I be angry? Anger is only a sign of weakness, and is unhealthy as well. Anger disturbs the mind and reveals lack of judgment.

Christians also get angry about the conditions of our time. They get upset, have endless discussions, and can't come to a resolution. We are in danger of “wasting” our strength, setting wrong priorities, and using spiritual gifts for the wrong purposes. In the end, we will accomplish virtually nothing. Actually, we know better; namely, that only the Gospel of Jesus brings change. The cor-

rect understanding of the Lord makes me calm. The right relationship with the Bible brings comfort, strength and confidence. To know that He holds all in His hands is therapeutic. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: “I am fainthearted, but with You there is help. I am anxious, but with You there is peace.”

On the same day, I noticed another Scripture passage: ““For God's Kingdom is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of the righteousness, peace, and joy which the Holy Spirit gives. And when you serve Christ in this way, you please God and are approved by others” (Romans 14:17-18). Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit are the exact opposite of anger. To serve Christ in this manner obviously gets us further with God and men. It sets us apart from the average human existence: I don't have to let myself be depressed when I have a firm hold of what comes from above.

We should concentrate on the essentials, not complain about the same things that the world does. Rather, we

EDITOR'S NOTE

should serve others by pointing them to Jesus: to the justice, peace, and joy that He offers. A survey has shown that people are currently seeking encouraging literature. Let us seize this opportunity. Our little book, *Why It Pays to Be a Christian*, hits the nail on the head at this time when many are losing their foothold, being disappointed both by politics and their fellow human beings. The book has been distributed in 16 languages, and shows that rest and safety are in Jesus alone.

We want to encourage people with our magazine by pointing to the One who holds everything in His hands, with whom all things are made clear. Also thank you for your support, prayers, and contributions. We remember what Paul wrote to the Church: "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may be innocent and pure as God's perfect children, who live in a world of corrupt and sinful people. You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky" (Phil 2:14-15).

God bless you all! (MC)

In light of the times, *News From Israel* is a necessary monthly magazine that will keep you updated on breaking developments throughout the Middle East. *News From Israel* uncovers hidden information the news media leaves out!



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OUR TASK

Midnight Call Ministries is a nonprofit missionary organization, dedicated to proclaiming the entire Bible as the unfailing 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 therefore with 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-tribulation 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.

JUNE 2021

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Faith, Love, Suffering, and the Lord's Return: Part 2

Norbert Lieth

The church wasn't yet revealed within the scope of the Old Testament, so the prophets could only write about the coming of the Lord with His saints. "And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (Zech 14:5b).

Enoch didn't see the church, either: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15).

In the New Testament, as the unveiling of the mystery of the church develops, it becomes clear that the church is present at this return. So now it's known, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels" (2 Thess 1:7). "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col 3:4). "To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1 Thess 3:13). "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev 19:14).

During this time, Jesus will judge the world from heaven with the angels of His might. We will then judge the universe with Him from heaven, since the church as His body is the enforcing authority of the Head. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? ...Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor 6:2-3). Therefore, we read further: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess 1:8).

This verse makes it clear that the revelation of the Lord concerns the time of Tribulation as a whole (judgment in blazing fire and the time of vengeance), not just His appearance at the end of it. These mentions are just a brief indication of what Revelation elaborates on. You need only read it once to see how much it speaks of the fiery judgment. The theme runs straight through the last book of the Bible:

"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth...The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire min-

gled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a giant mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood" (Rev 8:5, 7-8). "By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths" (Rev 9:18). "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed" (Rev 11:5). "And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe" (Rev 14:18). "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire" (Rev 16:8). "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (Rev 18:8).

Here is the arrival of what was predicted in the Old Testament about the Day of the Lord, and what didn't apply to the time of grace in the church age. Isaiah already said of the Lord's end-time appearance, "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire" (Is 66:15). "A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory" (Ps 97:3-6). "For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:29). As mentioned above, during this revelation the church is at rest and judges the world (universe), along with Christ. Those who rejected the Gospel will be judged.

"...Them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess 1:8). This also means a large part of the Jewish people. In his letter to the Romans, Paul says of them, "That I

In the New Testament, as the unveiling of the mystery of the church develops, it becomes clear that the church is present at this return.

may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea” (Rom 15:31a). “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph 5:6). “For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Col 3:6).

In light of this, I’d like to mention the following verses: “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess 2:9-12).

The judgment affects those who don’t believe in the Gospel, not those who believe in Jesus. So, it seems clear to me that the church is exempt from this. Accordingly, the church is no longer on earth, but appears with Him at His revelation in glory. The following verse also makes this apparent: “Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess 1:9).

As translated in the ESV, “They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his might.” We are reminded here of the Last Judgment: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them” (Rev 20:11). “Eternal destruction” means separation from the Lord’s face, separation from His glory, being lost. It doesn’t refer to annihilation but to ruin, which most clearly epitomizes lostness. “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish” (2 Thess 2:10a).

Being lost means separation from God. You have been lost to Him, and you have lost Him. You have absolutely no part in what He is and has—far from the glory of His might. His power is expressed in forgiveness, in the power of His love. Anyone outside of this scope has lost everything and is lost himself.

“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thess 1:10). This is the opposite of being lost: being glorified in His direct presence. When Jesus returns, the believers will share in it. They’ve been in His glory since the Rapture. When they return with Him, they will be revealed in His glory. Jesus will come and be glorified in the cloud of His saints. He will be marveled at among those who believe. For the sake of context, I’ll again compare this with two verses:

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels” (2 Thess 1:7). “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col 3:4). The primary focus is His coming and His glorification. Jesus is the object of worship, glorification, and wonder.

Paul emphasizes, “because our testimony among you was believed” (2 Thess 1:10). Faith alone is the reason to be part of it and to be present. That means: whoever believes through the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, has a part in all this glory.

“Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess 1:11-12). The origin of all things is God. The source that brings all things forth is the Lord. God brings about both will and deed; He is the author and perfecter of our faith (cf.

“The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up” (Revelation 8:7).



Phil 1:6; 2:13; Heb 12:2). Everything in us is and remains a gift that springs up from God’s grace in Jesus.

It is also God who makes us worthy of the calling, so that we’re able to reach the goal we’ve been called to. The ESV translates it this way: “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power” (2 Thess 1:11).

The CSB translates it as follows: “In view of this, we always pray for you that our God will make you worthy of his calling, and by his power fulfill your every desire to do good and your work produced by faith.”

Paul is probably trying to express that it is his prayer that the Lord would powerfully accomplish every good thing, every work, and every act of faith in them, and that nothing would be lost. The point is that God considers them worthy in this sense,

and grants them the ability to put the Apostles’ good works of faith into practice and reach perfection. Therefore, it should also be our urgent prayer that the Lord help us not become negligent, but to persevere and to show faithfulness until the end.

“That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess 1:12). Thus concludes the chapter, and should always be the ultimate goal: the glorification of the name of the Lord in our church, in our work, and of course in us personally. That was Paul’s primary concern in prayer.

This occurs due to His fulfilling “every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power.” It is accomplished by completing the work and proving ourselves faithful through all hardships, tribulations, struggles, and challenges. So far, this had been the case for the Thessalonians, and Paul prayed that it would continue. In the same

Faith, Love, Suffering, and the Lord's Return – Part 2

Whoever believes through the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, has a part in all this glory.



way, we will be a great testimony to the Lord's name if we overcome and accomplish the work with God's help, just as He did. That is how we distinguish ourselves as His followers; as those who are acting and standing for His name; as Christians following in Christ's footsteps. And is why Scripture continues, "and ye in him" (2 Thess 1:12).

According to verses 7 and 10, the church will be revealed at His coming in His glory. So we see the correlation: we glorify Him through our faithfulness, and so we are glorified in Him when He returns.

"...According to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." I've already mentioned that it is the Lord who must give us grace, the impulse, and the urging in spirit. But we should respond to it faithfully. If we were to become unfaithful over time—to neglect the work we've been instructed to do—then Jesus' name wouldn't be glorified in us. That is why we pray and remain cautious, so "the

grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" continues to work within us and isn't in vain.

Help us, O Lord, to learn
the truths thy word imparts:
to study that thy laws may be
inscribed upon our hearts.

Help us, O Lord, to live
the faith which we proclaim,
that all our thoughts and words and deeds
may glorify thy name.

Help us, O Lord, to teach
the beauty of thy ways,
that yearning souls may find the Christ,
and sing aloud His praise.

-William Watkins Reid

(MR0320/1065)



MODERN WORLD HISTORY TOLD BY THE BIBLE



Readers will no doubt feel harangued, and perhaps confused by the heated conditions of global politics of late. Yes, of course geopolitics has always existed, to a greater or lesser extent. However, it would be correct to say that internationalism has exploded over the past century and a half.

By Wilfred Hahn

To be sure, globalism has been a “growth industry.” What we mean by that is, the focus and activities involving geopolitics and international affairs have expanded enormously. Today, there exist NGOs (non-governmental organizations) beyond count that specialize in international affairs of some type or another. Of course, such pro-globalist organizations as the United Nations and others have deep roots ...some having been on the front lines of global affairs for a century or more.

Today, there are many university faculties specializing in international affairs and offering “international studies” degrees. Also reflective of these pro-global trends is the burgeoning number of publications (journals and books, etc.) on this and related topics. Mankind has arrived with a self-assured sense of humanity.

“All the world’s a stage,” to borrow a phrase from Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. All the nations are known to each other, meeting in various forums, discussing global policies. Global policy forums have surely arrived, just as the Bible prophesied.

When Balaam prophesied over Israel (when they were still traveling through the desert), he said: “From the rocky peaks I see them [Israel], from the heights I view them. I see a people who live apart

and do not consider themselves one of the nations” (Numbers 23:9). The prophet foreknew that a consortium of nations (the entire world) will be apart from and opposed to Israel.

Global Geopolitics Foreknown

Did you know that the Bible lays down a chronology of global geopolitics that extends right to the modern history of our day? What is most remarkable is that this human history is laid out in advance (displaying a foreknowing of mankind’s choices and independence). This will not be obvious to the casual Bible reader. Rather, it is one of those topics where careful study yields great treasures and gems.

We have always found Bible-based geopolitics to be a fascinating topic. Also, it always generates the most feedback. Anticipating these many questions, we therefore plan a four-part series.

No doubt of interest to readers is that this timeline holds implications for America, even though this country is not identified directly by name in the Bible. We will return to this fascinating question at the conclusion of this study of Biblical geopolitics. If we correctly interpret the Scriptures and its visions on these matters, some conclusions will be revealed about America’s future.



Human lifespans began to shorten significantly for those born after the Flood. Up to the time of the Flood, the average lifespan was 930 years, according to the Bible. Then, thereafter, a “longevity” collapse ensued. This had a major consequence in the post-Flood era.



To carry out our study, however, we must do so only on the Bible’s terms. We will only be emphasizing the main Biblical timelines. Of course, it would not be harmful to corroborate the secular history books against what the Bible says. But not the other way around. As such, we will not draw upon the many secular history works ... not even such illustrious tomes as Will and Ariel Durant’s 11-volume *The Story of Civilization*. It will stay on the bookshelf, as it does not recognize the main Hebrew-centric timeline of world geopolitics, spanning some three-and-a-half millennia.

The Starting Point of God’s Story About Mankind

We must first ask: just why is there such a thing as history to begin with? If history does exist, then there must also exist a narrative. Therefore, before we venture too deep into our study, it is best to first establish a foundational narrative. Where does it all start?

Naturally, it started with Adam!

There have been a number of dispensations that God allowed through time. We will only briefly

mention some of these stages (as there is also much debate on these points).

Adam was born sinless and originally had a direct relationship with God. Then the “Great Fall” occurred. Adam and Eve were evicted from Eden. Eventually, in short order (approximately 1600 years after Adam was created), humanity became so wicked that God allowed a flood in order to “reset” His relationship with mankind.

After the great, Flood-induced “reset,” it becomes more interesting. Human lifespans began to shorten significantly for those born after the Flood. Up to the time of the Flood, the average lifespan was 930 years, according to the Bible. Then, thereafter, a “longevity” collapse ensued. This had a major consequence in the post-Flood era. All the patriarchs that would have known Noah and heard verbal history from him directly, or from others who knew him, died off over a very short period of about 200 years in length. Eleven generations died within this two-century time period.

Consider the impact upon Abraham. Over his lifespan, eight generations of his ancestors died. Imagine that over your lifespan, eight generations—great, great, great grandfathers and uncles, etc. passed away. Abraham himself only lived to an age of 175 years, that being 20% of the pre-Flood longevity average.

There were disastrous repercussions, as the godly influence of earlier generations was left behind. Mankind quickly fell back to godlessness and sin. Only little more than a century after Noah died, at the age of 950 years (which occurred 350 years after the Great Flood), Nimrod was already busy pursuing humanist endeavors: building the Tower of Babel and promoting urbanization.

Salvation comes from the Jews (John 4:22), and Christ's final kingdom on earth will be the completion of King David's throne, the royal line and Scepter of Judah. This final kingdom will rule the whole earth—not just Israel, but the entire world from Chile to China.

God needed to disperse the citizens of Babel, who were intent to make a “name for [themselves]” (Genesis 11:4). As such, the plans of Nimrod were thwarted for a time. God mixed up their languages.

As mentioned, with Noah gone as well as those who might have directly known him, there soon again was a great falling away to humanism and godlessness. Less than 500 or so years after the Great Flood, mankind was quickly returning to wickedness. What to do? God had promised never to flood the world again (a sign of this promise being the rainbow). So, what could be done?

Jehovah decided to call out a people for Himself, one that would be a light to the world and help keep the name of the Lord glorified upon earth. He called out of the world His servant Israel (Isaiah 44). He first selected Abram, a man of faith, thereby calling out a people named the Hebrews to be a light unto the world. They were to be separate.

Salvation comes from the Jews (John 4:22), and Christ's final kingdom on earth will be the completion of King David's throne, the royal line and Scepter of Judah. This final kingdom will rule the whole earth—not just Israel, but the entire world from Chile to China. The kingdom of God will be on earth for one thousand years. The last kingdom is an eternal one.

As it turned out, this people would indeed be a light at times, but also a lightening rod for Satan, who immediately began to persecute and pursue these “servants” of God. As soon as the Lord began to mobilize Abram—to move him from Ur into a new land—the main geopolitical battles began. These were inspired by demons, according to the Bible.

Satan knew that some kind of plan was underfoot, with the emergence and formation of His people (Exodus 6:7) ... the Jews. He and his demonic angels (also often called “princes”) began to influ-

ence the Gentile kingdoms and rulers, to persecute and attempt to annihilate the Hebrews. Indeed, the Bible records the names of a number of the princes that were associated with these Gentile kingdoms ... i.e., the Prince of Persia (Daniel 10:13), and also the Prince of Greece (Daniel 10:20b).

We will return to this narrative, about the human history of the Hebrews and their persecution. It comprises the history of Gentile nations interacting with the Jews and Israel. And therefore, this is the history that God preserved and left for us to consider and study. Why? Because it is an intrinsic part of God's plan to bring salvation to mankind. Therefore, the most important geopolitical history is the one detailed in the Bible. In the next parts of this series, we will identify 18 kings/rulers (7 of them by name) that have a lineage that extends right to our day, as well as the future.

Little do the world's leaders know that the time is short, though surely Satan knows this (Revelation 12:12b). With respect to foundational geopolitical history, there are only two more world rulers to emerge before the Lord sets up His eternal kingdom. The very last chapters of the Gentile age are being set up right before our eyes.

Why the Middle East?

We return to our narrative that we started with Adam. We now know why Bible history circumnavigates the Jews. Salvation comes from the Jews, as do the Scriptures.

But why do history and civilization find their roots in the Middle East? Why not North America, which is an incredibly blessed region?

Today, the earth's populations are spread around the world, most of them living outside the Middle East. None of the prosperous nations of the world (with the exception of Israel and a few oil-rich nations) are found in the Middle East.



It is from this area of the world that God selected Abraham, a man of faith, to become the patriarch of a people that were to bring His light to the world.

Then, just why should world history have started in the Middle East?

It is one thing to say that world history navigates around the timeline of the Jew, because God has pre-planned it that way. But why does the history of civilized mankind find its roots in this arid region, as we see it today, in the first place? It did not occur by happenstance.

Was it accidental? No. Our geopolitical history could not have occurred anywhere else.

Consider these fascinating aspects of human history and the significance of the Middle East. As is well known, the history of humanity began in this region. The Garden of Eden is thought to be located there. The ancient societies were in Sumer, Mesopotamia, Shinar, Ur, Chaldea, etc.—all in the Middle East.

Of course, God created the world and therefore ordered the conditions that would allow mankind to possess the entire earth, radiating from this region. It is interesting to reflect on the means that God used to predetermine this outcome; namely, of civilization first occurring in the Middle East.

Jared Diamond, an anthropologist and Pulitzer prize-winning author, in his book *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, provides some insightful perspectives on the question of how God shaped such a destiny.

Mr. Diamond shows how natural geography served to concentrate human development in the Middle East in early times and then spread outward from there. He documents that the availability of the types of plants and animals that could be easily domesticated were clustered in the Middle Eastern region. For example, of all the large mammals living upon earth that were candidates for domestication—either for food or burden—almost half are found in this Eurasian region.¹

Furthermore, 13 of the 14 domesticated animals in the entire world, weighing at least 100 pounds, were first successfully domesticated in this area. The only large animal productively tamed outside of the

Eurasian region was the llama (and the related alpaca) of South America.

Why was domestication not possible in other parts of the world? Why could horses from Asia be tamed and not zebras in Africa? Simply, God created it so. It is for these reasons and favorable circumstances that farming and commerce first thrived in the Middle East. Therefore, its founding societies stood to have the most influence upon successive human cultures around the world.

It is from this area of the world that God selected Abraham, a man of faith, to become the patriarch of a people that were to bring His light to the world. As of this point forward, human history depicted by the Bible—inspired by the very God of creation and the universe—revolves around the descendants of the Hebrews.

Thoughts to Ponder

Only seven major world kingdoms are mentioned in the Bible (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome ... both old and revived). All of them intersect with the Hebrews. All of them will find at least part of their kingdoms geographically extending into the Middle East.

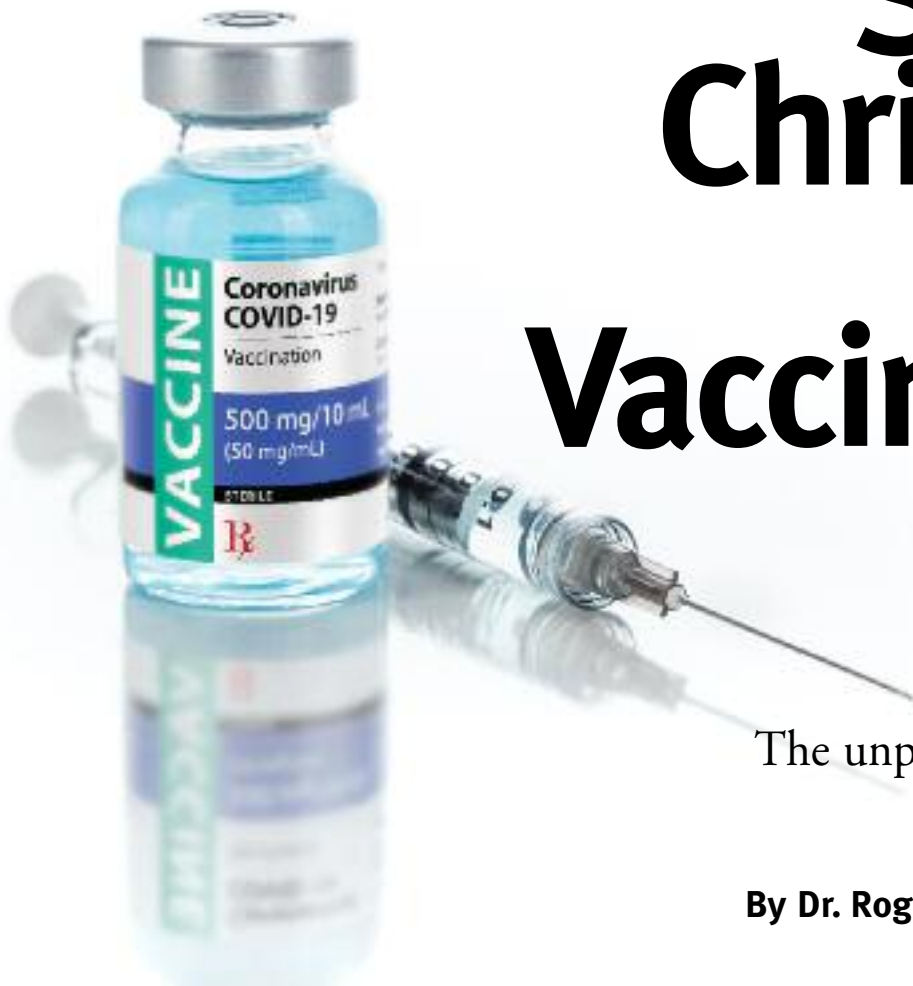
The Aztec Empire, the Mongols, the Chinese dynasties, the Great British Empire and America: all did not earn any direct or literal mention in the Bible's geopolitical history—the timeline of the oppression of the Jew. These countries were not selected by Satan to oppress the Jews.

The last kingdom prophesied to emerge is the Roman Empire. It has already existed for some time. Two more offshoots are prophesied. They will unfold very quickly. We continue the Bible's narrative of world geopolitics in the next part of this series. (MC)

ENDNOTE

- 1 Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York, 1997. P. 162, Table 9.2. The definition used to categorize large animals is 100 pounds or greater.

Should Christians Get Vaccinated?



The unpleasant side of freedom.

By Dr. Roger Liebi, Norbert Lieth, et al.

Whoever belongs to Jesus Christ is called to freedom, as described in the Bible (Gal 5:13). Freedom is an enormously great good—a treasure that every Christian gladly avails themselves of and enjoys. For many, it's a years-long process to become conscious of this freedom and to live it out according to God's will. Martin Luther once said, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."

But the current situation surrounding the controversial COVID-19 vaccine shows us that this freedom also has an unpleasant side. The decision for or

against vaccination has caused sleepless nights and heated discussions among many of us. Let's not fool ourselves; this vaccine is dividing Christianity.

Some Christians are celebrating the new vaccine as a divine healer in syringe form, whereas others see the Mark of the Beast from Revelation 13 in it, and knowing consent to Satan's plans. Between these two extremes are hundreds of thousands of Christians—the unsure, the hesitant, and the fearful. These feelings are completely understandable, since every vaccine comes with medical risks.

The current uncertainty largely comes from a lack of information being given to us.

Should Christians Get Vaccinated?

Some Christians are celebrating the new vaccine as a divine healer in syringe form, whereas others see the Mark of the Beast from Revelation 13 in it, and knowing consent to Satan's plans.



Yes, these vaccines are new, and are being distributed through a very fast process. An active agent developed from mRNA has been researched for years, but its effects (and side-effects) are very difficult to grasp. It would be presumptuous of us to talk shop about vaccine pharmacodynamics and the immunological effects. Having read a few medical articles doesn't put the layperson in a position to understand complex topics as well as the people who have been researching them for decades. Even experts present very different opinions that we're hardly able to verify.

Yes, many vaccines have saved the lives of millions in the past (from diseases such as measles, rubella, hepatitis, etc.). And yet, these vaccinations, including the COVID-19 vaccination, come with a risk of adverse events, and even the possibility of death.

Additionally, cells from human fetuses are also used for medical research; this is an ethical dilemma that we as Christians aren't currently forced to deal with. Most people ignore this on a daily basis, or truly naïvely believe that their anti-aging creams work solely from the effects of pomegranate seeds or dates. Attempting to swing our

ethical/moral club at this vaccination right now is, in our opinion, a misplaced effort.

What we are left with is a free choice for or against this vaccination.

Once again, Israel is far ahead on vaccination efforts. At this point in time, a high percentage of Israeli citizens have made the conscious choice to get vaccinated. Friends of Israel especially must be aware that the "Holy Land" is very progressive in the medical field, and is also far ahead when it comes to genetically modified foods.

To biblically assess the sensitive issue of whether Christians should be vaccinated, we'll touch upon three points:

1. Life = Big Risk!

Life is absolutely the biggest risk. From the moment of our conception, we're exposed to countless risks, which we often ignore as children. With increasing access to information in our current media age, life is becoming too risky for many.

People increasingly withdraw from life for fear of making the wrong decision, because there is the fear that a wrong decision is irreversible. As the saying goes, "If 'ifs' and 'buts' were candy and nuts, we'd all have a merry Christmas!"

The biblical Book of Proverbs describes it this way: "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!" (Prov 22:13). Meaning, it's better not to act so there can't be any negative consequences. But that way of thinking is wrong and biblically unacceptable. The Great Commission doesn't call us to withdraw, but to go out! Therefore, it's an important aspect of prayer to ask Jesus Christ for courage in making decisions.

Our minds aren't reliable; only our Lord and Savior.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones” (Prov 3:5-8).

2. Freedom = Personal Choice!

By way of example, the Bible tells us the story of Abraham and Lot in Genesis 13. Lot was given full freedom in his choice of land, and Abraham lived with the consequences of Lot's selection without complaint.

It is our personal freedom to choose for/against vaccination. As long as there is no biblical command or prohibition, we have free power to make decisions in so many things. We often don't like it, because we also don't want to take the risk.

But this is precisely where we must not ever underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit, who wants to guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

And, we must also respect and accept the decision of others, including close family, if it isn't in opposition to biblical standards.

3. Vaccines = No Mark of the Beast

We've been in an anti-Christian system for a long time. Satan, the great liar and deceiver, continues to expand it. The founding of the EU is one example of a part of this system, but it has (apparently) had little effect on the everyday lives of Europeans. These days, when a situation tangibly intrudes into our everyday lives, Christians are startled, panic, and remember the words from Revelation 13, where the Mark of the Beast is announced.

Extremist Christians (as well as publishers) who chorus that the vaccination is

a fulfillment of Revelation 13, are overlooking the fact that there are other parts of the text that aren't yet fulfilled by this COVID-19 vaccine. It would have to go hand in hand with this passage: “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Rev 13:14-15).

According to Revelation 14:9, the mark is directly connected with the beast itself—with its image and the worship of it. So, we cannot say that the vaccination is the fulfillment of the mark when the antichristian person, his image, and the invitation to worship it are not present.

Yes, we're living in an era in which events are moving more and more toward Revelation 13—14. But, according to our understanding of the prophetic Word of the Bible, the Rapture must have already taken place before the events of Revelation 13 take effect.

We must direct our attention to the Lord Jesus' wonderful promise in Revelation 3:10-11. In this passage, the church is promised that they will be saved from the time of total temptation by the Antichrist! “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

Conversely, we shouldn't take this as encouragement to make this medical decision lightly.

Should Christians Get Vaccinated?

All individual life decisions have massive effects and side effects. They need to be approached with prayer and Bible reading.

Medically, we're all obliged to inform ourselves and make a decision with a lot of prayer, taking into account our very personal considerations (previous illnesses, living conditions, age, occupation, place of residence).

Biblically, it means living out our freedom in Christ with the Lord's help. As mentioned, all of life is a risk that we as Christians have to face, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

It's entirely possible that if we decide against vaccination, we will feel the consequences of our actions more strongly than expected (air travel, vacations, work, etc.). That's the unpleasant side of freedom.

We must be able to answer before God for the decisions we make.

Perhaps the decision for or against this vaccination feels like one of the biggest of your life. At this point, we'd like to advise every reader to realize that as disciples of Jesus, we should never make frivolous decisions. All individual life decisions (e.g., job, spouse, children, church, time, finances, residence, hobbies, vacation) have massive effects and side effects. They need to be approached with prayer and Bible reading. Then, if we ever have doubts about our decision-making, we can always rely on the fact that our advisors were not our ego or current trends, but the Bible.

No, we cannot and will not give a general recommendation for or against a vaccination. However, it is our sincere wish that the decision-making process leads you to an even closer and more trusting relationship with Jesus. One thing is certain: nothing can separate God's children from His love!

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor

powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39).

Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast;
There by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! 'tis the voice of angels
Borne in a song to me,
Over the fields of glory,
Over the jasper sea.

Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe from corroding care,
Safe from the world's temptations;
Sin cannot harm me there.
Free from the blight of sorrow,
Free from my doubts and fears;
Only a few more trials,
Only a few more tears!

Jesus, my heart's dear Refuge,
Jesus has died for me;
Firm on the Rock of Ages
Ever my trust shall be.
Here let me wait with patience,
Wait till the night is o'er;
Wait till I see the morning
Break on the golden shore.

(MR0321/1146)

(This text was compiled after careful consideration by brothers with some prior medical knowledge, who have long been in the faith. Some have also been in teaching/preaching ministry, including Dr. Roger Liebi and Norbert Lieth.)



The Message of Nahum – Part 3

Dr. Ron J. Bigalke

The Spanish schooner *Amistad* sailed for Cuba in 1839, with a shipload of unwilling passengers: 53 slaves recently abducted from Africa. Led by Joseph Cinqué, the captives escaped from their chains, killed the captain and cook, but spared the life of two Spanish navigators who could sail them home. The navigators did not take the captives home, but managed to misdirect them by sailing the *Amistad* in a generally northward direction. As seen in the Academy Award-nominated movie, also called *Amistad*, after two months at sea, the U.S. Navy seized the ship off Long Island, New York and towed it to New London, Connecticut. The mutineers were imprisoned in New Haven, Connecticut while the case was investigated.

Spain attempted to pressure U.S. President Martin Van Buren into extraditing the Africans, so they could be tried for murder and piracy. However, the abolitionists were successful in having the case tried in the United States. The prosecution argued that the mutineers were subject to the laws governing conduct between slaves and their masters, but

trial testimony determined that slavery was legal in Cuba, but the importation of slaves from Africa was not.

The judge ruled that the Africans were not merchandise; rather, they were victims of kidnapping and had every right to escape their captors however possible. Two years following the original mutiny, the Supreme Court ruled that the Africans had been detained illegally and ordered them free to return to their homeland. Justice prevailed!

Nahum 3 uses passionate and vivid language to reiterate the justice of God's judgment on Nineveh. The final chapter of Nahum's prophecy poetically addresses the reasons for the divine verdict: Nineveh was a "bloody city." Sin was the reason for God's judgment! The "bloody city" was corporately responsible for atrocities and excesses. Nineveh had sold entire peoples by her harlotries and sorceries (Nah 3:4). Nahum expressed the outraged conscience of humanity. Nineveh's greatest evil was devising "against the LORD" (Nah 1:9) and plotting "evil against the LORD" (v. 11).

The Message of Nahum – Part 3

Frequently, justice is reaping what is sown. Assyria sowed to “the wind” and thus reaped “the whirlwind” (Hos 8:7). God is most certainly gracious and merciful (cf. Nah 1:3, 7). He can make certain that “Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting” (Ps 126:5).



God’s justice would be poetic: “I will throw filth on you and make you vile, and set you up as a spectacle” (3:6). What was done in private would be made public. Shamelessness would be disgraced (v. 5). The divine verdict may appear excessive, yet the hyperbole reflects the utter heinousness of Nineveh’s sins.

Frequently, justice is reaping what is sown. Assyria sowed to “the wind” and thus reaped “the whirlwind” (Hos 8:7). God is most certainly gracious and merciful (cf. Nah 1:3, 7). He can make certain that “Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting” (Ps 126:5). “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:16-17).

GOD CANNOT BE MOCKED

(Nahum 3:1-7) “Woe” is a translation of the Hebrew interjection *hoy*, which appears 52 times in 48 verses in the Old Testament. In the Hebrew concordance of the King James Version of the Bible, it is rendered as “ah” (seven times), “alas” (two times), “ho” (four times), “o” (three times), and “woe” (thirty-six times). Fifty uses of *hoy* occur in prophetic books. One usage is with regard to the marriage of Ruth (Ruth 4:1), and another denotes lamenting (1 Kgs 13:30; Isa 17:12). *Hoy* was used two times to admonish (Isa 18:1; 55:1). The majority of the usages of *hoy* (as in Nah 3:1) involve negative warnings or threatening announcements of divine judgment.

God acted in judgment against Nineveh for the Assyrians’ sin against Him and humanity. Pride was their fundamental sin against God (cf. Isa 36; Nah 1:11). Nineveh was indeed a “bloody city” (Nah 3:1), and such cruelty and oppression toward other people (vv. 1-4) was also the reason why God was angry and why He acted in judgment. Pride against God is typically manifested in cruelty toward other people. For this reason, Jesus taught that the two greatest commandments are to love God unreservedly and to love one’s neighbor as oneself (Matt 22:37-39). God acts in judgment to punish arrogance and to protect people.

The Lord of hosts (lit. Yahweh Almighty) declared yet again that He was “against” Nineveh (Nah 2:13; 3:5). Nineveh was described as a seductive harlot who enslaved the nations (3:4), and now her own “nakedness” would be exposed to those who were victims of her oppression. Nineveh would be completely disgraced, and the wretchedness of the city would be evident before the nations.

The Assyrians made the people of other nations detestable, and now the Lord would do the same to them (v. 6). The defeat of a nation was a dreadful humiliation in both ancient and modern times. Whereas everyone who saw Nineveh would balk and remark concerning her devastated condition, no one would “grieve” or mourn for her (v. 7); rather, the people would rejoice that Nineveh’s cruelties against them had come to an end (v. 19).

GOD IS VINDICATED

(Nahum 3:8-19) Nineveh was similar to the once-great city of Thebes (or No-amon), the magnificent capital of Upper (southern) Egypt, whose fall was predicted by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer 46:25; Ezek 30:14-16). The Assyrians conquered Thebes in 661 BC, and Nahum’s prophecy is dated to 650 BC. Therefore, a little more than a decade had transpired since what was thought to be an invincible city was destroyed. Nineveh would be foolish to be-

As a righteous judge, the Lord cannot let sin go unpunished; and, as a loving God, the Lord will defend His people from individuals and nations that seek their harm (which, of course involves judgment).

lieve they could not experience a similar fate (Nah 3:8).

A noteworthy contrast between Thebes and Nineveh is that the former had several allies (v. 9). Thebes ruled over “Ethiopia” (Cush), while the latter controlled Lower “Egypt” at the time of the destruction of Thebes. “Put” was south of Egypt, and “Lubim” (Libya) was to the west. Allies surrounded Thebes for many miles; yet even her security was not guaranteed, for she “became an exile” and “went into captivity” (v. 10).

Thebes had everything in her favor, yet in 661 BC, the city fell to the forces of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal. The Assyrian soldiers were merciless and slaughtered “small children . . . at the head of every street.” Lots were cast for the “honorable men” of Thebes, who were auctioned as slaves, “bound with fetters,” and marched into exile (v. 10). The wrath of God is inseparable from His love, which is why Nineveh must be destroyed for her pride and cruelty.

No hope remained for Nineveh if mighty Thebes had already fallen so dramatically. Nahum concluded that Nineveh would lose all self-control, like a “drunk,” and thus would be unable to defend themselves. Many people hid themselves from the Assyrians; yet when Nineveh fell, the people would “search for a refuge from the enemy” (v. 11). Nineveh disappeared from history!

“The disappearance of the Assyrian people will always remain an unique and striking phenomenon in ancient history. Other, similar, kingdoms and empires have indeed passed away, but the people have lived on. Recent discoveries have, it is true, shown that poverty-stricken communities perpetuated the old Assyrian names at various places, for instance on the ruined site of Ashur, for many centuries, but the essential truth remains the same. A nation which had existed two thousand years and had ruled a wide area, lost its independent character.”¹

Just as “ripe fruit” drops easily from shaken trees, so also would the fortifications of Nineveh fall (v. 12). Nineveh’s enemies would easily capture the city when the defenses became weak (v. 13), nor would they be of

any use since the attack arises from God’s judgment (vv. 14-15a). The city’s ruin would be like the “creeping” and “swarming” of a “locust” invasion (vv. 15b-16). Assyria’s “guardsmen” resembled locusts that vanish in the hot sun (v. 17).

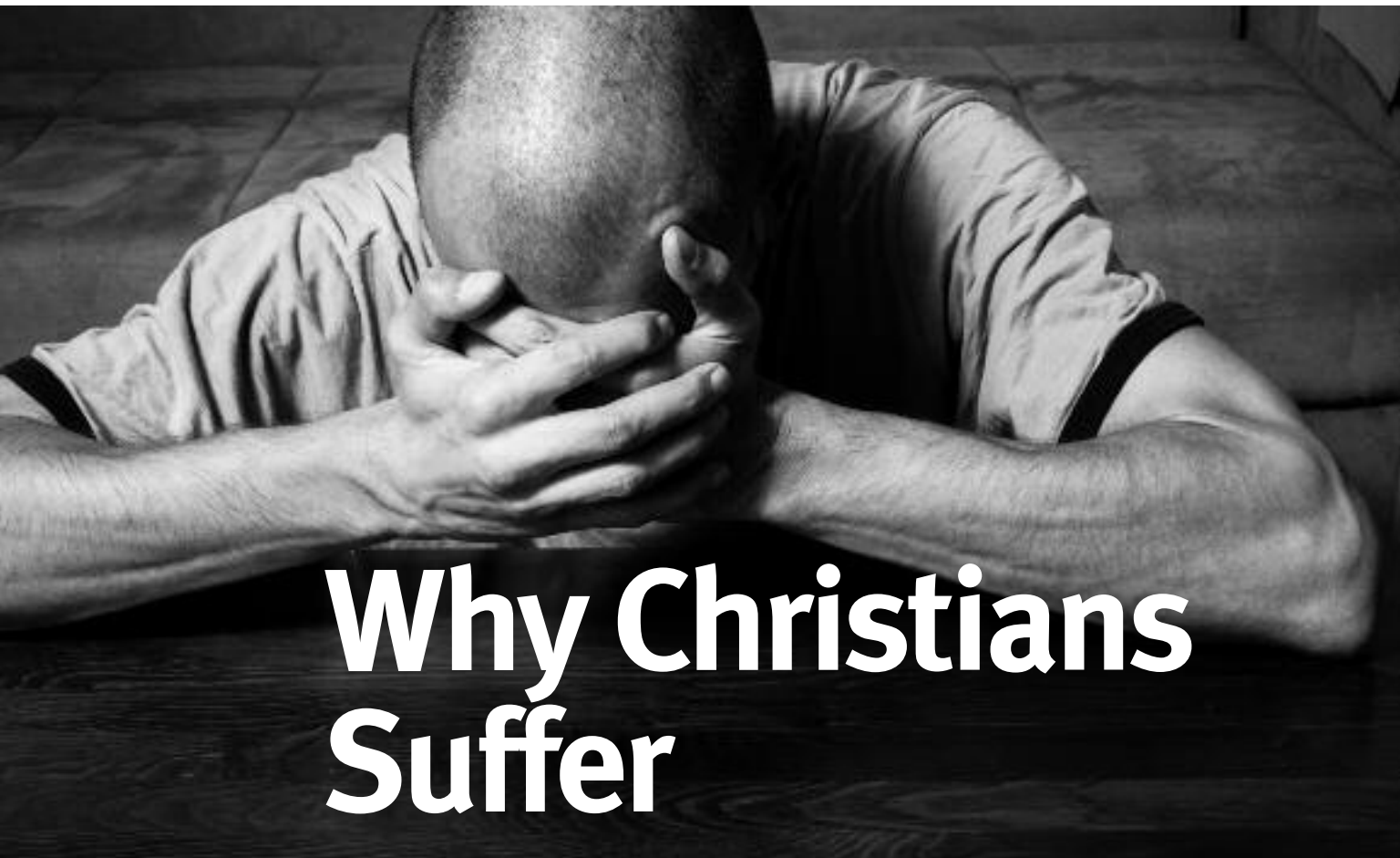
Nahum’s prophecy concludes with a final satirical poem, which describes the city’s leaders as “sleeping” (v. 18). Without leadership, the “people are scattered” and the nation suffers from an incurable wound (v. 19a). Those who suffered from Nineveh’s tyranny would rejoice over her demise (v. 19b). God will humble any people or nation who is deceived into thinking that sin will go unpunished. Doom and gloom is pronounced for those opposed to the Lord and His people, whom He loves and who receive great comfort and hope in the assurance that their God will deliver them by removing their oppressor.

The doctrines of God’s love and His wrath are not incompatible. God must punish evil, because He is holy and loving. He is merciful and willing to forgive those who turn to Him in faith and repentance, just as years earlier God spared those in Nineveh who heeded the message of Jonah. As a righteous judge, the Lord cannot let sin go unpunished; and, as a loving God, the Lord will defend His people from individuals and nations that seek their harm (which, of course involves judgment).

Nahum’s prophecy concludes with the people being “scattered on the mountains” with “no one to regather them.” This is a reminder of Jesus’ description of oppressed people in His time, who “were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt 9:36). Although the prophet Nahum did not prophesy the coming of the Messiah, he certainly does prove the need for Him. Praise the Lord for the joyous time in the future, when Messiah (Christ) will appear and rid the earth of all oppression and sin! (1150)

ENDNOTE

- 1 J. B. Bury, S. A. Cook, and F. E. Adcock, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 12 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1925) 3:130.



Why Christians Suffer

Wim Malgo (1922-1992)

An interpretation of the last book of the Bible. Part 20. Revelation 2:9-11.

The attitude of the church in Smyrna corresponds to the attitude and disposition of the Lord Jesus. As a result, they had exactly the same enemies as the Lord Jesus, had to endure exactly the same opposition He did, from exactly the same sort of people: "...the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (Rev 2:9).

These purportedly faithful Jews told the Christians in Smyrna, "We have the true religion, not you." This isn't about Jews in gen-

eral but about a specific Jewish synagogue, with a specific attitude toward a specific Christian church. So, it's fundamentally wrong to condemn Judaism universally, because this would turn the persecuted into persecutors. The Jews in this case, who say they are the real Jews (but the Lord says they aren't), are prototypes of the religious without Christ. Such false believers have always existed, and they're visible in our day as well. That's the difference between religion and following Jesus!

But whoever is born twice (bodily and then spiritually, or “born again” through faith in Christ Jesus) receives eternal life, and therefore only dies once.

The world’s persecution isn’t as bad as persecution from those who say they are right, but aren’t; who mock the children of God and say, “We are the true church,” even though it’s a “synagogue of Satan” where the Bible’s infallibility is called into question. These people gather under the banner of the Antichrist. Paul says that they have “a form of godliness, but [deny] the power thereof” (2 Tim 3:5).

Pay close attention to what 2 Timothy 3:12 says: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” There’s no other way: just the one that Jesus followed. But if you walk it, the crown of life beckons you; the Lord Jesus Himself awaits you on the other bank. He’s calling to you now, His afflicted child: “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev 2:10).

Being faithful to Jesus is being “faithful unto death.” In Revelation 1:5, Jesus is called the “faithful witness.” Faithfulness isn’t just remaining a believer until the moment of death, but also remaining a witness in word and nature: clinging steadfastly to Jesus’ victory. Many in our day are falling away from this living testimony, because they’re afraid of suffering the way Jesus did. Then one ends up trying to conform to society’s norms, rather than giving of oneself.

It’s true: suffering apart from Christ, without vicarious effect, is a hostile force; it doesn’t belong to man because God didn’t ordain it for him. That’s why Revelation 21:4 tells of glory that will have no more suffering in it. But we are only one with Jesus Christ’s nature, way, and glory through the fellowship of His suffering (both internal and external), which is sanctified and which He took upon Himself for our sake.

Now we’ve arrived at a crossroads: do we want to follow the path of self-renunciation for Jesus’ sake? In that case, there will be abundant comfort and wonderful glory. But if we follow the path of self-assertion and so-called “self-actualization,” we will die spiritually and live without consolation.

Smyrna had that consolation fully. The ears of these believers were wide open to hear the Lord speak. The fact that the promise to overcomers with respect to Smyrna is so short—“He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev 2:11b)—confirms that this is a church of overcomers, who already have the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ.

One great danger of suffering is that the soul withers away. It’s the same in other areas: poverty can very easily make you miserable; being hated makes you hateful, and being beaten down makes you cynical—unless you overcome! It’s so important that we have victory in tribulation and overcome it, because then the second death will not harm us. There are two kinds of death: bodily death and the “other,” spiritual death. Whoever is born once must die twice; whoever is born twice must die once.

The person who receives only a bodily life (from his or her mother), who is born only once, dies twice: bodily death, and then the “other” death; namely, the death that doesn’t kill. That person is separated from the living God for all eternity. But whoever is born twice (bodily and then spiritually, or “born again” through faith in Christ Jesus) receives eternal life, and therefore only dies once. So, this singular death is basically not dying at all, but going home. The “other” death can do no harm to an overcomer, because it has already been overcome through Jesus’ death.

(MR1120/1121)

USA

Facebook VR Wristband Powered by Brain Signals

Facebook has unveiled a virtual-reality (VR) wristband that will be used to control its forthcoming augmented-reality glasses.

The wristband interprets the user's hand movements via a cluster of sensors that detect motor-nerve signals.

Users will navigate by touching their index finger and thumb together to perform a "click" on the device.

Facebook says its system will be able to adapt to the individual behaviors of its users by using machine learning to predict their likes, dislikes and other interests, in real time.

"The system learns something about your location and key objects, like your running shoes or activity recognition," Facebook's Reality Labs research science manager Tanya Jonker said.

ProPrivacy digital expert Ray Walsh said consumers must make sure to stay informed about how much of their data was being shared with the company, as the technology began to expand into the mainstream.

"The opportunity to exploit people's eye movements and nerve impulses to detect whether they are interested in content offers endless potential for surveillance capitalism," he told BBC News.

"Legislators should look closely at the legality of this new data collection and subsequent usage to ensure that consumers are adequately protected."

Facebook has been working on its plans for its VR platform for years.



Facebook is expanding its VR offerings
Facebook

The company first showed its interest in the technology as early as 2014, when it bought VR start-up Oculus.

Now, nearly 10,000 of its 50,000 employees work in its Reality Labs division.

And boss Mark Zuckerberg says VR will be commonplace by 2030.

Facebook's rivals, including Apple and Google, are believed to be working on similar augmented-reality products.

-www.bbc.com, 22 March 2021

Commentary: The statement, "Legislators should look closely at the legality of this new data collection," is dubious. The problem is that legislators have no experience with these new devices and data-collecting technologies, which develop and are implemented very rapidly. Subsequently, global legal guidelines will have to be established. That will cause an even greater problem, because of the diversity of culture, tradition, economic/political convictions, and religion. But that too will be overcome in time.

Right now, there is an immense volume of data being collected when you buy something online, read the news, or research a certain subject. All is stored, and

merchandisers will make full use of it regardless of legislation. Progress will always have the upper hand. All our private activities are being stored, analyzed, and ready to be exploited by merchandisers or political opportunists.

How are we to act in view of these developments? Philippians 1:6 gives us the guideline: "Being confident of this very thing, that



he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

7490

(See *End-Times Super Trends*, Item #2342, \$15.99.)

GREECE

Tax Breaks for Workers-from-Anywhere

Greece wants to use its solid track record in combating the coronavirus as a way to help entice people to move to the country—and it's promising that half of their income will be tax-free.

"Technology means we can now choose where we live and work," Alex Patelis, chief economic adviser to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, said in comments to Bloomberg. Greece "can now offer tax incentives as well as the sun," he said.

Bringing in foreigners and reversing the country's brain drain are seen as keys to turning around the country's performance in the wake of a decade-long debt crisis that cost some 25% of economic output.

(continued next page)

Tax Breaks (continued from page 24)

Microsoft Corp. and Volkswagen AG have both announced plans to invest in Greece, but the country needs much more help if it hopes to counter a debt-plus-pandemic crisis. Moody's Investors Service upgraded the country's sovereign credit rating, citing high growth potential.

With the new incentive plan, the Greek government is also focusing on the U.K. and employees or the self-employed who may need to leave due to Brexit.

Greece currently applies a tax rate of 44% for earnings over 40,000 euros (\$47,000). The new incentives will apply for a maximum of seven years to workers who want to move their tax base to Greece, regardless of nationality and job type, though it will only apply to new positions created in Greece in 2021. The offer will also be available to Greeks living abroad if they return.

-www.bloomberg.com, 11 November 2020

Commentary: Once again, we see how borders are falling away. Language is no longer a major barrier; thus, Greece—as a member of the European Union and the Eurozone—presents itself to an open, global world.

In the Bible, Greece is identified as the third of the four Gentile superpowers: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Greece was the originator of democracy, which was further developed by the Romans. Today, it is considered the most effective political philosophy for the entire world.

During Daniel's second night vision, he reports the activity of Greece in chapter 8, verse 21: "And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." The goat with the great horn defeated Medo-Persia.

Although ancient Greece spread far and wide, today it's limited to a geographic area

with a population of little over 10 million. Yet Greece's prominence remains, just as Babylon, Medo-Persia and Rome. However, in the end, they all will be broken. Daniel 2:44 proclaims: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."



all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

7489

(See *Daniel's 70 Weeks of Years*, Item #1073, \$3.50.)

ISRAEL

Robot 'Hears' Through Dead Locust's Ear

In an unprecedented biological and technological development, researchers from Tel Aviv University (TAU) have successfully connected the ear of a dead locust to a robot that receives electrical signals from it, and responds accordingly.



"We chose the sense of hearing, because it can be easily compared to existing technologies, in contrast to the sense of smell, for example, where the challenge is much greater," says Dr. Ben M. Maoz of TAU's Iby and Aladar Fleischman Faculty of Engineering and the Sagol School of Neuroscience, who supervised the study together with Prof. Yossi Yovel and Prof. Amir Ayali, experts from Sagol and the School of Zoology.

"In general, biological systems have a huge advantage over technological systems—both in terms of sensitivity and in terms of energy consumption," he said. "This initiative opens the door to sensory integrations between ro-



The ear of a locust is seen inside a special sensory chip.

(photo credit: TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY)

bots and insects—and may make much more cumbersome and expensive developments in the field of robotics redundant."

-www.jpost.com, 2 March 2021

Commentary: One has to admire Israel's inventiveness. There seems to be no end in sight.

However, we recognize the tendency; in this case, marrying man's creation—a robot—with God's creation, the ear of a dead locust. This is in line with the development that will lead to the marrying between the image of the beast and man's intellect.

Interestingly, the eighth judgment or plague that came upon Egypt was the invasion of locusts. Exodus 10:13 reports: "And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts." Judgment came from the east, and liberation came from the west: "And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt" (Exodus 10:19).

7463


(See *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus*, Item #2363, \$12.99.)



 **CANADA**

Best Country to Live in

After several years at No. 2 and one at No. 3 since the inception of the Best Countries report, Canada finally climbed to the No. 1 spot in the sixth edition of U.S. News & World Report’s annual rankings.

 The North American country ranked first in both the Quality of Life and Social Purpose subrankings, meaning that it is seen as a stable and safe society in which individuals can develop and prosper, and is open, fair and equitable. Most of the countries that ranked highest for 2021 come from Western Europe. But Australia, New Zealand and Japan—which is ranked No. 2 overall—also appeared in the top 10.

The report—formed in partnership with BAV Group, a unit of global marketing communications company VMLY&R, and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania—is based on a survey that asked more than 17,000 people from four regions to assess perceptions of 78 countries on 76 different metrics. Three new countries—Cambodia, El



Toronto is the most populous city in Canada, a high-tech industrial society with a high quality of living.
(GEORGE ROSE/GETTY IMAGES)

Savador and Uzbekistan—are included in this year’s report.

How the U.S. sees itself is far different from how the rest of the world sees it. Only 52.5% of those surveyed agreed that the country is a “good role model in a functioning democracy.” More than 66% of Americans, on the other hand, agreed with that statement.

-www.usnews.com, 13 April 2021

Commentary: While these rankings may be debated, criticized, and objected to, what seems significant is that Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are virtually always among the top 10 when it comes to quality

of society, with most of the rest going to Europe.

From Biblical perspectives, we see these developments in view of closer cooperation on the one hand, and equality on the other.

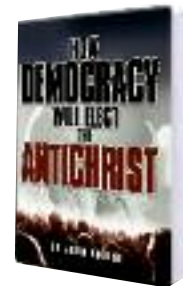
The article also shows statistics of those responding who view the US as a good example of democracy:

New Zealand	19%
Canada	32%
Germany	36%
Australia	37%
France	38%

The United States considers itself a good example of democracy, at 66.5%. This again confirms the Biblical statement that everybody loves themselves: whether an individual, family, state, or country. Ephesians 5:29

reads: “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.” 7497


(See *How Democracy Will Elect the Antichrist*, Item #1064, \$17.95.)



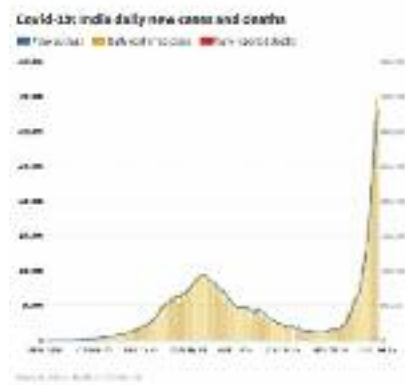
 **INDIA**

Covid-19 Cases Soar

India overtook Brazil as the second worst-infected country behind the United States after data showed that Covid-19 cases continued to surge.

 Since the beginning of April, India has reported more than 1.37 million cases, bringing the country’s total number of infections since last January to over 13.5 million; cases began rising since February after reaching a peak in September.

India’s health ministry says that more than 100 million doses of vaccines have been ad-



ministered since the government began an ambitious inoculation program in January. Since April 1, anyone over 45 years old is eligible for their shots.

For its part, the Serum Institute of India—the world’s largest vaccine manufacturer which is producing AstraZeneca’s Covid-19 shot in the country—has said its production capacity is “very stressed.”

Reuters reported that India placed a temporary hold on all major exports of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 shot made by the Serum Institute to meet domestic demand.

-www.cnn.com, 12 April 2021

Commentary: The first paragraph is based on raw volume, not per capita, which is most accurate.

According to Statista.com, on 19 April 2021, Czechia leads the list with 2,664

(continued next page)

Covid-19 (continued from page 26)

coronavirus deaths per million population, followed by Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Moldova, Belgium, Slovakia, Slovenia, Italy, United Kingdom, Brazil, Peru, and then the USA in 14th place, with 1,720 coronavirus deaths per million. Israel is in 51st place, with 699 coronavirus deaths per million, and India in 86th place, with only 130 coronavirus deaths per million (from 154 entries total).

The coronavirus has behaved surprisingly different than previous epidemics. Thus, it was expected that countries with a lower standard of living would be most seriously affected. That, however, has not proven to be true. Belgium, for example, had topped the list for coronavirus deaths, until being surpassed by the aforementioned countries. Sweden and Switzerland, two super-rich, developed countries, have experienced larger Covid-19 deaths than, for example, poorer nations such as Egypt, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, or Liberia, which has only 17 coronavirus deaths per million population. The countries with the lowest death rate are Timor-Leste, 1.1; Thailand, 1.4; Burundi, 0.52; Vietnam, 0.36; and Tanzania, 0.36.

Previously established health regulations and pandemic preparedness, did not apply this time with the novel coronavirus.

Here we are reminded of that which is yet to come. Revelation 6 reports of the six seals of judgment. Verse 15 reads: "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." The rich and the poor alike, the free and the bondman are equal. That seems to be true with the coronavirus.

7491

(See *Aftershocks*, Item #2375, \$14.99.)

WORLD

Which Countries Binge Netflix Most?

A new study by Comparitech has analyzed the viewing history of nearly 25,000 Netflix users across 46 countries—and the results may come as a surprise.



The Netflix logo is seen on their office in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, US. (photo credit: REUTERS/LUCY NICHOLSON/FILE PHOTO)



Central and South American countries dominated the list in all categories, with users in Peru, Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Colombia scoring highest with 101-115 thousand minutes (70-80 days) on average spent watching Netflix since signing up to the streaming service. The report appears to cover the period since lockdowns began a year ago.

Next on the list are subscribers in Canada, Brazil, US, Switzerland, UK, Netherlands, Ireland, New Zealand, France and Sweden, in that order, who spend from 66 down to 51 days watching Netflix TV series and movies.

Last on the list, with the least days spent on Netflix, are countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including Hungary, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Slovakia.

And where does the average Israeli stand in comparison?

Israel falls somewhere in between, coming in 32nd on the list, with 41 days on average.

Alternative streaming services give observant Jewish households in Israel the option to censure or skip content that is considered immodest. Last year, the Tov TV service, dubbed the "kosher Netflix," was introduced and pitched primarily to observant Jews who follow the religious laws of modesty.

Netflix subscriptions and overall time streaming around the world surged during the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdowns that it entailed. During the first three months of 2020, according to *Forbes*, 15.77 million new subscribers joined Netflix, with another 10.09 million joining between April and June.

-*www.jpost.com*, 31 March 2021

Commentary: Internet-based technology is a two-edged sword. One can easily study the most diverse subjects, and receive quick and reliable answers to complex questions.

But the other side shows man's dependence on these services, clearly exhibited by Peru, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Colombia, where people spend 70-80 days watching content that in most cases is frivolous, if not outright unbiblical.

It is of interest that Israel has taken steps with their "kosher Netflix" to preserve modesty. Yet in the end, the whole world will be enveloped by its own creation, leading to the fulfillment of Psalm 2: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against

the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." 7488

(See *Spiritual Warfare in the End Times*, Item #2370, \$15.99.)



 **USA**

Grim View of Global Future

U.S. intelligence officials are painting a dark picture of the world's future, writing in a report that the coronavirus pandemic has deepened economic inequality, strained government resources and fanned nationalist sentiments.



Those assessments are included in a Global Trends report by the government's National Intelligence Council. The reports, produced every four years, are designed to help policymakers and citizens anticipate the economic, environmental, technological and demographic forces likely to shape the world through the next 20 years.

This year's report focuses heavily on the impact of the pandemic, calling it the "most significant, singular global disruption since World War II, with health, economic, political, and security implications that will ripple for years to come."

"COVID-19 has shaken long-held assumptions about resilience and adaptation and created new uncertainties about the economy, governance, geopolitics, and technology," the report says.

The document finds cause for concern in virtually all aspects of life.

It warns, for instance, that the effects of climate change are likely to worsen the problem of food and water insecurity in poor countries and hasten global migration. Though health, education and household prosperity have made historic improvements in recent decades, that progress will be hard to sustain because of "headwinds" not only from the effects of the pandemic but also aging populations and "potentially slower economic growth."

-apnews.com, 8 April 2021

Commentary: Indeed, the coronavirus pandemic was the "most significant, singular global disruption since World War II." Various nations reeled under the pressure of how to best imple-

ment safety measures while salvaging their economies. Those that were the strictest fared the best, such as New Zealand and Taiwan, while those with a more *laissez faire* approach are still grappling with high death tolls—most notably Brazil and India.

What the pandemic proves is that despite man's best efforts to provide a comfortable life for himself, there is always something he cannot foresee. God won't allow humanity's pride to go unchecked, and there is no such thing as utopia on earth. The article is correct in painting "a dark picture of the world's future," as it says in 1 John 2:17a: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof..." But the verse continues, "...but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (By K. Farmer)

7482

(See When? Item #2340, SALE \$24.95.)



ISRAEL

3.2 Billion Shekels Worth of Food Wasted

The 2019 report, released for the first time with Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection, is intended to serve as the foundation for public discourse on the problem of food waste, and as a tool for developing national policy to change how food waste and rescue are handled in Israel.



This report, written and edited by BDO, is based on 2019 data, prior to the COVID-19 crisis. It includes a detailed model for estimating the environmental impact of food waste which is NIS 3.2 billion (\$945 million).

Estimates in the report reveal that in Israel, in 2019, 2.5 million tons (5.5 billion pounds) of food, valued at NIS 20.3 billion (US \$6 billion), was wasted, meaning that approximately 35% of domestic food production was lost. Of this amount, approximately 1.2 million tons (2.65 million pounds), worth NIS 7.1 billion (US \$2.1 billion), was rescuable.

The findings indicate that food rescue is beneficial from economic, social, and environmental perspectives. Every shekel invested in food rescue produces food with a direct value of US \$3.6. When taking the environmental impact of food rescue into account, the economic value of each shekel invested in food rescue creates US \$4.2 in value for the national economy.

-www.leket.org

Commentary: "Give us this day our daily bread" is apparently no longer an issue. It shows modern man's success at producing food in abundance.

From Matthew 14, we know that food was a valuable commodity. When Jesus fed 5,000 men, "besides women and children," we read in verse 20: "And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full."

Today, food is available in such abundance that little is being done by governments to avoid food waste. But Israel does not stand alone. Investopedia lists five countries that produce the most waste:

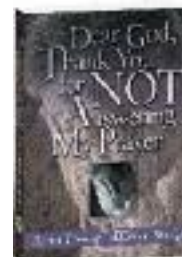
1. Canada
2. Bulgaria
3. United States
4. Estonia
5. Finland

What does it mean? Simply put, human ingenuity is now capable of producing an overabundance of food globally. In Israel, the Leket organization rescues food otherwise wasted, for distribution to those in need.

Nevertheless, the tendency is clearer as time goes by: mankind has become more and more independent from God the Creator. To be thankful for food is almost a thing of the past.

7496

(See *Dear God, Thank You for Not Answering My Prayer*, Item #1047, \$12.99.)



 CHINA

Now We Are Equal

It quickly became obvious in Anchorage, Alaska, that Chinese President Xi Jinping's diplomatic envoys hadn't come carrying olive branches. Instead they brought a new world view.



Mr. Xi's top foreign-policy aide Yang Jiechi also delivered a surprise: a 16-minute lecture about America's racial problems and democratic failings. The objective, say Chinese officials, was to make clear that Beijing sees itself as an equal of the U.S. He also warned Washington against challenging China over a mission Beijing views as sacred—the eventual reunification with Taiwan.

"China can already look at the world on an equal level," Xi told the annual legislative sessions in Beijing in early March, a remark widely interpreted in Chinese media as a declaration that China no longer looks up to the U.S.

The U.S. routinely describes China as a strategic rival, but Beijing has rarely if ever used such terms, emphasizing terms like "win-win" and cooperation.

China's Foreign Ministry says of Mr. Yang's Anchorage warning: "The Chinese side pointed out that the Taiwan issue is related to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and China's core interests." It adds that "There is no room for compromise."

Beijing, as Chinese officials put it, sought to "duo hui hua yu quan," or take back the narrative. China's diplomats and state-media outlets aggressively denounced Western meddling in its domestic affairs and heralded China's rise.

With cameras rolling in Anchorage, Mr. Blinken briefly criticized China's actions in Hong Kong and Xinjiang and threats against Taiwan. Mr. Yang, a member of the Communist Party's ruling Politburo, gave his blistering 16-minute rejoinder, which the Chinese officials say was meant to show China's new world view.



'China can already look at the world on an equal level,' Mr. Xi said in March; above on a visit to Fujian province this year.
PHOTO: WANG YE/XINHUA/ZUMA PRESS

In Anchorage, the U.S. reaffirmed its adherence to the "One China" policy, under which Washington agrees not to recognize Taiwan as an independent nation, but also reiterated pledges to help Taiwan economically and militarily.

America's chaotic pandemic response, followed by a summer of racial upheaval and the Jan. 6 Capitol storming, solidified his faith in the Chinese system's superiority, Chinese officials say. In internal meetings, they say, he compares American democracy to "a sheet of loose sand" and declares that the one-party system allows him to get things done.

Mr. Wang, the foreign minister, met his Russian peer in late March, prompting the nationalist Chinese newspaper *Global Times* to headline, "China, Russia to break US hold on 'world order.'" Then he traveled to the Middle East and signed a wide-ranging economic and security agreement with Iran.

-www.usj.com, 12 April 2021

Commentary: What was unthinkable just a few decades ago, has now become reality. According to the article, communist China has reached a level to challenge the US's New World Order dominion.

Another report by Bargain Project.org lists China as the

largest contributor of foreign aid. It states: "A surprise to many, the winner on the 'aid list' is China, rather than the United States. Between 2000 and 2014, China offered \$350 billion worth of aid to 140 countries and territories, sponsoring more than 4,000 projects, the largest foreign aid program in the world."

The key word is "equality." This has been stressed only lately, but more insistently each time. Will China dominate? That's the often-asked question. Not necessarily, but it will become a dominant force in the global world.

When it comes to debt, the US owes China \$1.07 trillion. Japan, however, leads as the largest holder of US debt by a country, at \$1.3 trillion.

What does this mean Biblically speaking? Again, one word: equality. This leads us to America's Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal." That was definitely not applicable to the original inhabitants of this land, the Indians, nor could people of color claim this right. It was only reserved for the elite, the rich, the landowners.

Equality must be achieved because the god of this world, the prince of darkness who mimics the Church of Jesus Christ, is establishing a peaceful, global society with "liberty and justice for all"—albeit temporary.

7492
(See Revelation 13: Satan's Last Victory, Item #1067, \$11.95.)

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“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth out of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim”
(Joel 3:18).

BY ARNO FROESE

About the name “Shittim,” *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* notes: “The barren valley of the Jordan above the Dead Sea, and was chosen by the prophet Joel (3:18) to denote a very dry valley...In the prophecy the springs which water this valley, and proceed from the house of Jehovah, the physical as well as spiritual blessings, which will come to [Israel] and its inhabitants in the Kingdom Age, are portrayed.” When reading chapter 3 of the prophet Joel, we realize that the whole world is involved. It is the Lord’s day of judgment against those who have opposed God’s elect. Verse 2a states: “I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat.” Why is He doing such? Read on: “and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel.” Very clearly, a distinction is made: all the nations of the world, and “my heritage Israel.” Then comes the reason for the judgment: “whom they [nations] have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.”

Let us be up front and strongly emphasize the words “all nations.” Is this applicable for our days? Absolutely. It does not matter which nation or who is governing it—they are all, without exception, ruled by the prince of darkness, the god of this world. When we

begin to realize this fact, we should immediately understand that we, as believers, belong to a different group, because we are organically connected to Israel. We may be patriots and love our country, but that does not change the fact that wherever we are, whatever nationality we may have, for believers, we only have a temporary address here on earth. Thus, our calling is to identify ourselves as heavenly citizens. We are the light of the world. Philippians 2:15 instructs us: “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” The more we let our light shine, walking in His light, the more those who are still in darkness will see our light. Ephesians 2:19 reveals our real citizenship; we “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

When we again look at the introductory Scripture, we notice that this is a prophecy about the millennium; the fountain of water “shall come forth out of the house of the LORD.”

Water is not only a problem for Israel, but also particularly for the entire Middle East. While the Bible makes clear prophetic utter-

ances regarding the future—which will be fulfilled in due time—we know that in the meantime Israel, whose population is growing year by year, needs more water.

An article in the *Jerusalem Post* was headlined, “Israeli AI Company Develops Tech to Manage Water Infrastructure.” Here an excerpt:

Evolution Networks, an Israeli AI technological group, has established a venture that will develop, promote, manage and commercialize technologies for energy efficiency in national water infrastructure for the first time in Israel.

The venture, Evolution Water, has been chosen by Mekorot, the Israeli national water corporation, to increase energy efficiency in its systems. The company expects to increase efficiency and reduce electricity costs by 10–18% gradually.

Evolution Networks also runs projects in the electricity, mobile and datacenter industries and has additional ventures in development.

Evolution Water’s system can study activity templates of national water corporations in every country and execute optimization based on that data, including switching off systems according to consumption, decreasing loads at data centers, directing activity during emergencies and more.

The global demand for water is expected to increase by tens of percentage points by 2030 in comparison with the present ability for an optimal supply. According to the CEO of Evolution Water, Amir Yaar, decision-makers are beginning to understand that finding solutions for increasing supply and improving productivity is important to deal with this issue.

-*www.jpost.com*, 15 February 2021

Israel’s technology will contribute greatly toward the supply of more water for more nations on planet earth. Howbeit, that is not the final solution. Scripture gives the answer. The real future, the eternal future, is not dependent on man’s technological know-how, but on God and the Lamb: “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1). In the preceding chapter, we note that there will be “no more sea...no temple...no need of the sun, neither of the moon...no night.” Everything in God’s new creation will be dependent upon God the Creator.

We close with the second to last verse of the book of Revelation: “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” ^{MC}

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 BOLIVIA

A Surprising Enlargement of Our Border

God often leads in a different way than we expect. Regarding a new development in our missionary work in Bolivia.



BY JONATHAN MALGO

We hold regular times of prayer, both among employees in our office here in Dübendorf, Switzerland, and in the field as mission leaders. One concern comes up again and again. As Jabez put it, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border...” (1 Chron 4:10).

Every new area of work, every branch, every mission field is one such enlargement of our border. One example is Elia Morise’s work in the Arabic language. Today, I’m able to report on another border expansion.

Our missionaries Mathias and Doro Rindlisbacher arrived in Bolivia in 2015. The goal was for them to strengthen our team in Riberalta. During

their training in Santa Cruz from 2015-2020, doors opened into the world of the Mennonites in Bolivia in unexpected ways.

Mathias writes: “Due to our study-related stay in Santa Cruz, we increasingly came into contact with German-speaking Mennonites. They live in the *Departamento* (province) Santa Cruz, and are divided into Old Colony Mennonites and modern Mennonites. The Old Colony Mennonites live very legalistically and reject modernity. They dress traditionally and use a team of horses for transportation. Although this people group is very closed, God opened and is opening doors for us to minister to them. I’ve already been able to visit some Old



Mathias and Doro Rindlisbacher with Timoteo

“I’ve already been able to visit some Old Colony Mennonites and talk to them about their origins (Switzerland, Germany, and Holland), as well as about essential truths from God’s Word.”

– Mathias Rindlisbacher


Colony Mennonites and talk to them about their origins (Switzerland, Germany, and Holland), as well as about essential truths from God’s Word. They like to listen to the stories of their ancestors, and also aren’t opposed to having truths from God’s Word explained to them.”

We want to make use of these new opportunities and move forward. God is answering prayers for expanded boundaries. Often, we have different ideas. For example, it’s long been on our hearts to reach the Scandinavian nations with the biblical-prophetic message, but no door has opened there to this day. Yet the Lord unexpectedly shows a new field of activity in an entirely different place, for the purpose of spreading His message.


Our team in Riberalta is rejoicing in these new opportunities, but at the same time there is a lack of employees there. Joshua and Katharina Fürst had to

return home for family reasons (children’s schooling, etc.). This means a greater workload for Obed and Rebecca Hanisch, who left the country again late last year, to visit home and for the birth of their daughter Maria. Eberhard and Rosmarie Hanisch, the leaders of our work in Riberalta, are of retirement age and would like to pass the baton. Our two faithful sisters, Tonnie de Jong and Brigitte Wolff, are also of retirement age already. With Mathias and Doro we’re experiencing a turnaround, but they’re not going to Riberalta.

I held a video conference the other day with our employees in Riberalta. Eberhard said that the mission field offers so many opportunities, but there is a lack of young people. We’re very grateful to Emilie Bergen, who is strengthening our ranks there. But the call continues: “Come over to Riberalta and help us!” (loosely based on Acts 16:9). (MR0321)



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



Standing in the Gap

By **David Phillips** *Project Manager*

“A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)



“**T**hen the King shall say to those on His right hand, Come, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me. Then the righteous shall answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed You? Or thirsty, and gave You drink? When did we see You a stranger, and took You in? Or naked, and clothed You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and came to You? And the King shall answer and say to them,

Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you have done it to Me” (Matthew 25:34-40).

Over the years, Ebenezer has had a very low emergency budget fund for the residents. Most of those who had maintained it have gone on to be with the Lord. A generation went by with no one to keep it up. Seeing this great need and with a prayer in my heart, I decided to do something about it.

The Resident Emergency Fund is a budget for emergency cases, especially for our residents who come from a special, lower socio-economic living standard; those who don't have the funds to purchase the “extras” they need. These needs are items like a



pair of new multi-focal reading glasses, dentures, hearing aids, special equipment for the legally blind and blind, and so on.

To begin with, Leslie, a resident of Ebenezer, needed a new pair of multi-focal reading glasses. My family and I have been discussing these subjects lately around our dinner table. Recently, one of my daughters serving in the IDF right now, came home over a weekend and told me how she had shared her faith and about the Ebenezer Home among the fellow soldiers in her company, who excitedly expressed their in-

terest in the care of the elderly. After consulting the commanders who are in charge of the company, they jumped in and began brainstorming how to help start a fundraiser for Leslie's glasses.

Look what they did! Not having much time because of their tight schedule, they allowed me to share this picture they took. It was so heart-touching; young soldiers who not only stand up to protect our borders and country daily, but also this time they stood up in the eye of public media for a single, elderly lady at the Ebenezer Home; raising the money she needs for her new pair of glasses! Will you join them? Please spread the word.

A pair of glasses for her specific need costs \$1200. All extra funds raised beyond purchasing Leslie's glasses will go toward keeping the Residents' Emergency Fund replenished for future needs; we will dedicate this month's donations for this purpose.

Let's remember to keep our soldiers in prayer. May the Holy One of Israel protect and keep them, give them courage and wisdom, and may HIS love be poured into their hearts.



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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MC0621

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

WHO POPULATES THE MILLENNIUM?... REVELATION FOR JEWS ONLY?... LOSING SALVATION

Who Populates the Millennium?

Dear Mr. Froese,

In the article titled “The Rapture Chronicles – Part 2” in *Midnight Call*, if my thinking is right (please correct me if I’m wrong), Hahn says all tribulation Christians will be killed in the first half of the tribulation.

Now I do agree with a pretrib rapture. Here is where I get confused. If “ALL” tribulation Christians are killed—whether in the first half or second half—who is left to populate the earth during the 1,000-year millennium?

One thing I do believe is, as ingenious as man is, he can figure out how to survive off the grid.

I love to read the books you make available. Thank you for your help on this.

-S. McDonald, PA

Answer: Who is left to populate the Millennium is a question often asked, and there are diverse opinions.

The Mark of the Beast is received in a twofold manner: one, the name of the beast, and the other, the number of his name (see Revelation 14:9-11; 15:2; 16:2; 20:4). The key seems to be worship, which

includes Antichrist’s name. Those in the other group who take the number, apparently do not have the same fate as those who take the name. Revelation 15:2 reads, “victory...over the number of his name,” describing those who have “gotten the victory over the beast.” Otherwise, I am as puzzled as you are, because if all are killed, none are left for the Millennium. Of course, there is still Israel and the 144,000 sealed ones.

Revelation for Jews Only?

I heard a prominent pastor say that the book of Revelation does not concern the Church; it’s written only for the Jews. This does not seem right to my understanding. I wish to know your thoughts on this matter.

-R. Stoll, NJ

Answer: To whom is Revelation addressed? “What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia” (Revelation 1:11). The geographical target is Asia, not Jerusalem. In the last chapter we read, “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches” (Revelation 22:16a).



Doubtless, much of Revelation concerns the Jews, yet it is crystal clear that the whole world is addressed. We read the word "world" 7 times and "earth" 81 times. Jerusalem is only mentioned 3 times, and in each case it's the heavenly Jerusalem.

Losing Salvation

My question is, can a true believer lose salvation?

We are in the process of finding a solid, Bible-believing church that does not compromise the WORD OF GOD. We do Zoom church right now. I also listen to some ministries online, but am very careful to try to discern what I listen to.

I recently heard a pastor explain how a believer cannot lose salvation. I took many notes. Then another minister presented a very long argument opposing this doctrine with many Scriptures. We have sat under some very doctrinally unsound teaching, but I never heard this, being primarily Baptist. Long ago we were taught that if a believer continues in sin, God will take him/her home. I try very hard to stay away from worldly things, and I know we cannot rely on feelings. This shook me, and I want to know the truth.

Have you addressed this in any previous magazines? Can you clarify this? Every night I ask forgiveness for sins I am not aware of. New England is a very dark place and desperately needs REVIVAL. We are under deep attack by Satan almost every day; I am constantly on the offensive. Please help.

-C. Dean, NH

Answer: The question, "Can a true believer lose salvation?" is mainly due to the fact that there is confusion regarding the trinity of man: spirit, soul, and body. When a person becomes a believer, his body is not renewed, and the soul only affected. But the spirit is the work of God. "Whosoever is born of God

doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). Peter confirms: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23).

For a believer, the issue is not salvation, but reward. First Corinthians 3:15 reads: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." A person who willfully continues to live in sin will "suffer loss," meaning no reward. But this has no relationship to salvation. Our battle is simply subduing our flesh under the authority of the Spirit: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17).

Ark of the Covenant

As a new subscriber, I read "Simon's Note" and agree that I have nothing to lose by supporting your ministry. I am enclosing an extra donation to spread the Gospel.

My question relates to God's Ark: some assert it is sealed in one of Solomon's tunnels under the Temple Mount. Have you any information about this? Thank you in advance.

-J. Haun, VA

Answer: To your question about God's Ark, there is zero archaeological evidence. The Ark of God no longer exists. In the Triumphal Arch in Rome, a depiction carved in stone is visible: Romans carrying the Ark away.

About the future, Jeremiah 3:16 has this to say: "And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more." Many have claimed to know the whereabouts of the Ark, but in the end have come up empty. (MC)



Covid Anxiety, Climate Panic, and Apocalypse Phobia: Part 1

By Johannes Pflaum

People's growing perplexity in the face of current crises was prophesied by Christ Himself. It is intensifying as His second coming approaches. An investigation.

In view of His second coming, the Lord Jesus announced: "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world.

For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:25-27).

We're not concerned with whether these words will be fulfilled before or after the Rapture. It's



Just consider how much mental real estate and resources the climate crisis occupied prior to the coronavirus pandemic. When it comes to our environment and climate, there are plenty of forecasts and articles about a bleak future, and the (supposedly) very short timeframe that remains to reverse the trend.

much more important that we recognize the broader principles of recent times. These basic features of widespread fear and helplessness are crystallizing and becoming more and more noticeable the closer the end comes. Two scenarios are possible: on the one hand, this fear can be produced by people, either consciously or unconsciously. On the other hand, it can also reflect our powerlessness.

Our Lord speaks in Matthew 24:8 of the beginning of labor, in reference to events that precede and herald His coming. In this context there is talk of wars, rumors of war, unrest and uprisings, famines, epidemics, and earthquakes. But first, verse 5 mentions seduction. As far as I know, these labor pains begin before the Great Tribulation, peaking during that time.

In the midst of these mentioned events, our Lord says, “See that you are not alarmed” (Matt 24:6). Alarm is closely related to fear and anxiety. It is a global feature of recent times. For a woman giving birth, labor is also associated with fear.

In Luke 21, the Lord Jesus uses the term “fear” or “anxiety” (*sunoché*) to describe people’s attitude toward life. He speaks of “perplexity” or “helplessness” (*aporia*). Many translate this as “despair.” Yes, people will faint from fear (v. 26, *apopsuchō*). It refers to a ter-



rible, existential fear of what’s to come.

Today, these things—reinforced by the coronavirus—range from small to large. On the small scale, new articles are constantly appearing about which things are unhealthy or harmful, or which signs of heart attack or cancer should be heeded. No one’s arguing against sober precautions.

But some news providers highlight such things nearly every day. A great deal of emphasis is placed on nutrition and health,

despite the fact that the West has food controls that are stricter than ever, as well as excellent medicine and scientific research compared to prior decades. Nevertheless, this fear arises constantly in our personal lives. If you were to take every tip into account, your day would be completely filled between self-diagnoses and creating a complex, healthy shopping list.

And on the larger scale, just consider how much mental real estate and resources the climate crisis occupied prior to the coronavirus pandemic. When it comes to our environment and climate, there are plenty of forecasts and articles about a bleak future, and the (supposedly) very short timeframe that remains to reverse the trend. In the meantime, the climate issue is resurfacing despite coronavirus. There is also the fear of natural disasters and wars, fear of terrorist attacks on a previously unthought-of scale.

Covid Anxiety, Climate Panic, and Apocalypse Phobia: Part 1

The speed at which Covid-19 spread was only possible in a globalized world with considerable flight connections.

Or consider the waves of fear that have swelled over the past twenty years, related to: BSE/Mad Cow Disease, SARS, Ebola, bird flu, swine flu, and now coronavirus. It isn't my intention to downplay or belittle these concerns, but rather to show how fear and despair are rampant. Everything is interrelated. The coronavirus pandemic immediately led to panic reactions on the stock exchanges, and since then the global financial and economic system has been groaning tremendously. New gains can't hide this.

Because of the Bible, we know that very different things are in store for this earth. We're observing the fear and despair that are being stirred up, and the hysteria and panic that go along with it. In fact, you could read the following with the coronavirus pandemic in mind: "In a strategy paper published by the German Ministry of the Interior, 'a worst case scenario' should be staged in order to 'achieve the desired shock effect,' without actually 'communicating the actual case mortality figures.'" Regardless of how dangerous the virus is, we can see how scare tactics are even consciously being taken into account as a "means to an end." Do we even think about Mad Cow Disease anymore? I can still remember how the topic and its associated dangers were constantly in the media. But suddenly, there was silence on the issue, because another problem and a completely different real threat was on our doorstep: 9/11 and its aftermath, as well as the associated global terrorist threat. Will the coronavirus also take a back seat to newer events and the fears that accompany them? Or remember the tsunami that hit a highly developed, industrial nation in March 2011. Protective measures on the affected coasts of Japan proved ineffective, and fear of a far-reaching nuclear disaster kept mankind in suspense.

A few days after that tsunami, my wife and I were taking the train home from a business trip. Since we had to leave early in the morning, each of us were reading our Bibles. Suddenly, we were approached by another passenger who'd seen us reading. He asked whether Fukushima could be



the Apocalypse from Revelation. A good conversation followed about faith and what will come in the end, even if the tsunami wasn't what Revelation was referring to.

Global digital media is not only increasing the flood of information, but also the fear and helplessness that this flood of information produces. The speed at which Covid-19 spread was only possible in a globalized world with considerable flight connections.

The closer and more violent the contractions become, the more fear, helplessness, horror, and anxiety will spread...until the events of Luke 21 hit mankind, and the cosmic forces are shaken.

As Bible-believing Christians, we can also get scared. Even the Lord Jesus Himself was frightened in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Apostle Paul writes of how he was "afflicted" by both external struggles and internal fears (2 Cor 7:5); this from the same man who calls us not be anxious for anything (Phil 4:6). Our Lord confirmed to His disciples that they will face hardship and pressure in this world (John 16:33). But in all our fears, we can seek refuge in our Lord again and again, as the Psalmist says:

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling" (Ps 46:1-3).

The knowledge founded in God gives deep peace: we're not helplessly at the mercy of our circumstances, but in the hands of the One who directs everything and has everything under control at all times.

By contrast, the fear and the terror, the helplessness and the anxiety which Luke 21 speaks of, are a sign of humanity's godlessness. It isn't a matter of lack of religion, but of distance and alienation from the living God. Of course, even a Bible-believing Christian can be grasped or shaken by the fear of certain developments. Disasters and pandemics can hit us just as hard as anyone else. Yet the knowledge founded in God gives deep peace: we're not helplessly at the mercy of our circumstances, but in the hands of the One who directs everything and has everything under control at all times. Through Christ, God is inseparable from His children, and will ultimately bring everything to its goal.

The fear that our Lord is speaking of in the Gospel of Luke is the fear that a godless man experiences. He thinks he has everything under control, until he notices that it's all slipping from his grasp. He's at the mercy of developments and events that he can no longer control. It's understandable when some people become scared and anxious. But let's not overlook the fact a hands-on and active God is excluded from any discussions of the climate and coronavirus. Man thinks he can solve any problem. But, regardless of whether today's measures to protect against climate change or coronavirus are correct, everything will slip away from him in the end. This fear is also the impetus behind mindless and panic-driven actions.

A common slang phrase is, "It scared the living hell out of me." That certainly sums up a human race and society that has pushed the living God more and more to the margins. When disasters occur, nobody sees God's actions anymore, or bows before Him. Gerhard Maier writes in his commentary:

"Jesus clearly sees the 'peoples' of the end times as a unit. Even collectively, they are unable to remedy the situation. On the contrary: 'They are in a state of perplexity with the roar and waves of the sea.' In the original text, there is actually a single noun for 'in a state of perplexity': *aporia*, which has

been adopted into English as well. *Aporia* as a sign of the second coming! Internationally unsolvable (or, hopeless) conundrums are already emerging: waste disposal, environmental pollution, growth in large cities, depletion of raw materials, limitation of water and air."

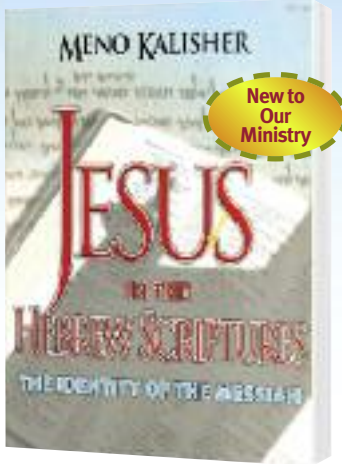
Gerhard Maier wrote that more than 30 years ago. And we know that these problems haven't decreased, but have grown larger since then. This also applies in the political arena. The collapse of communism in the Eastern Bloc didn't mean the "end of history," as American political scientist Fukuyama claimed. He said that the great ideological, economic, and political contradictions would be a thing of the past, and that humanity would experience a new era. Shortly afterward, he had to correct himself. Roughly 30 years later, everything looks very different. Consider the new tensions between world powers; war and chaos in the Middle East, North Africa, and other areas; as well as the rise of radical Islam and the associated terrorism. Also, the utterly excessive debt of industrialized nations is becoming an even bigger problem—and it's rapidly worsening again due to the coronavirus and its associated measures.

It is this fear, despair, and hopelessness that ultimately drives people into the arms of the Antichrist, the apparent problem-solver. Therefore, as Bible-believing Christians, we must be careful not to let ourselves become infected: either by panic, or the false promises of salvation that are connected to it. As the Apostle Paul says:

"But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing" (1 Thess 5:8-11).

(MR0221/1135)

Midnight Call's June Resource Guide

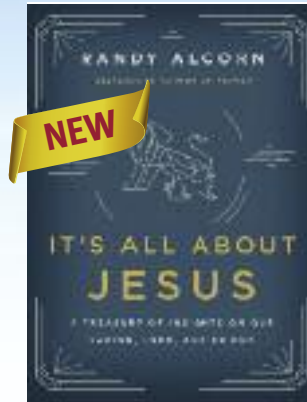


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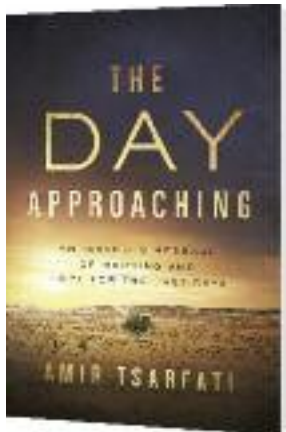
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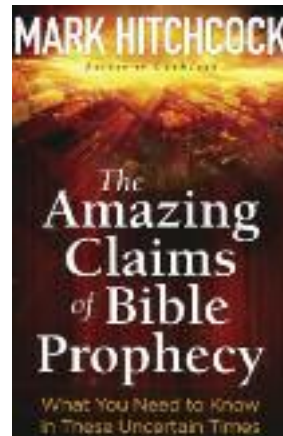


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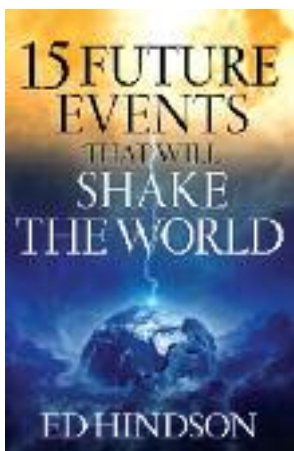


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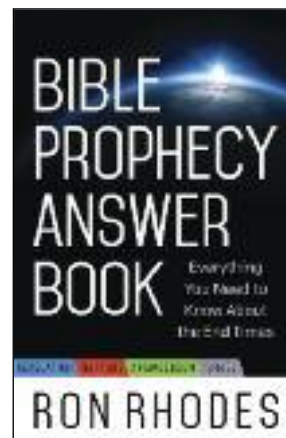


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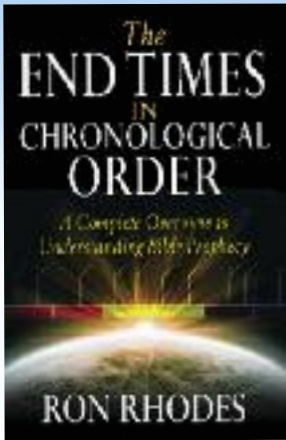


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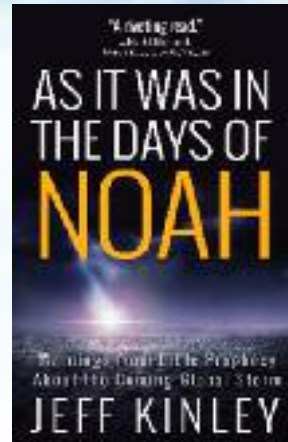
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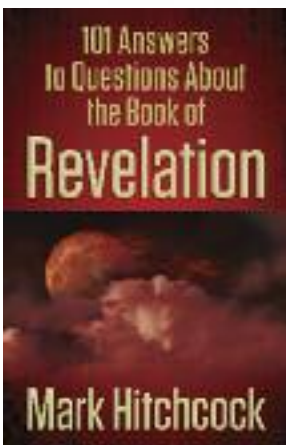
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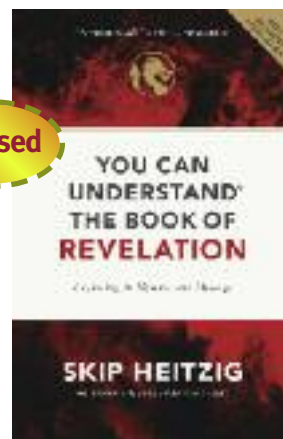
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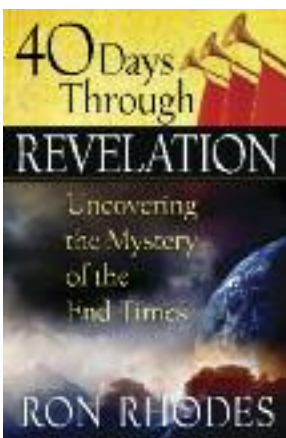
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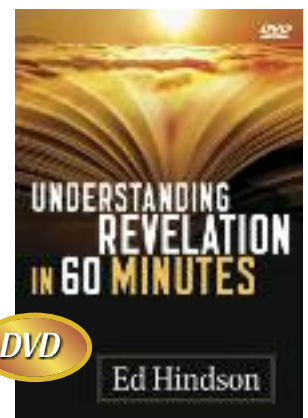
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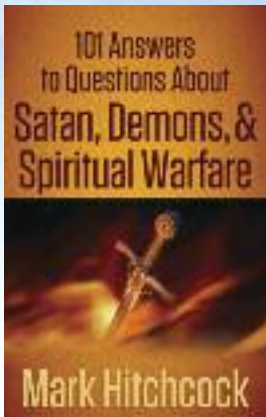
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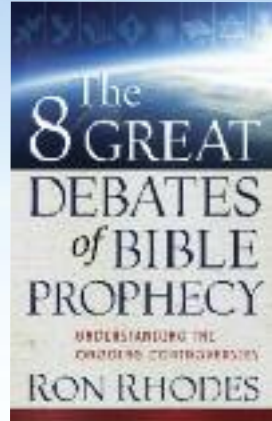
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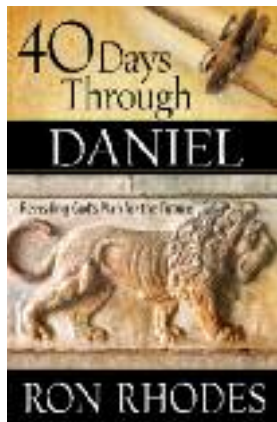
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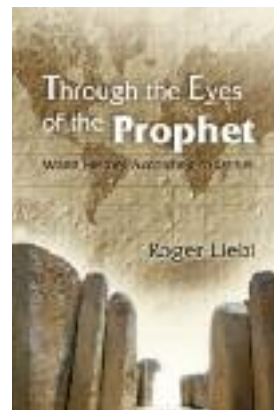
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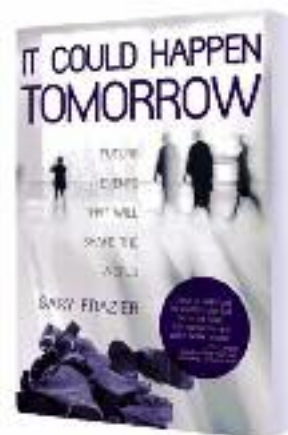
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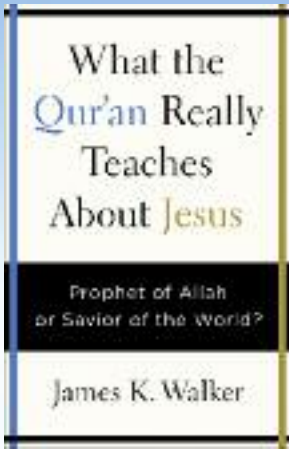
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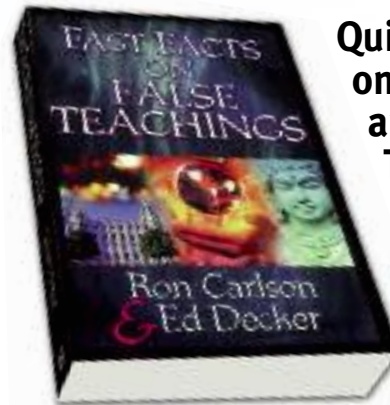
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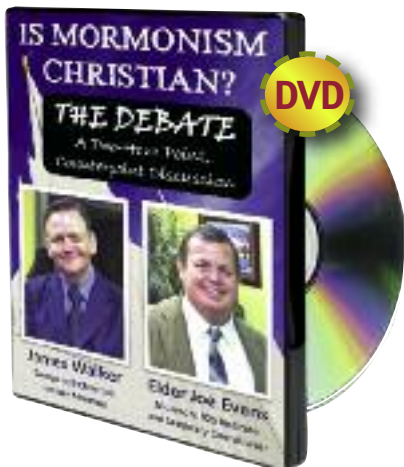
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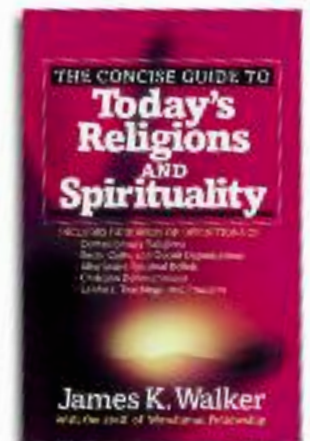
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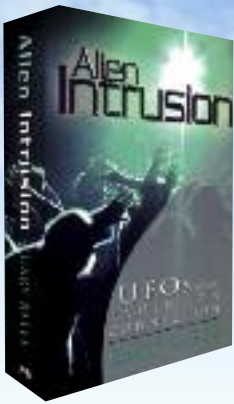
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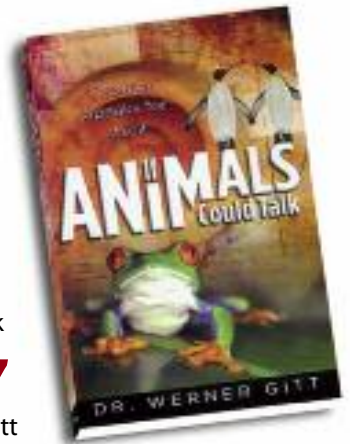
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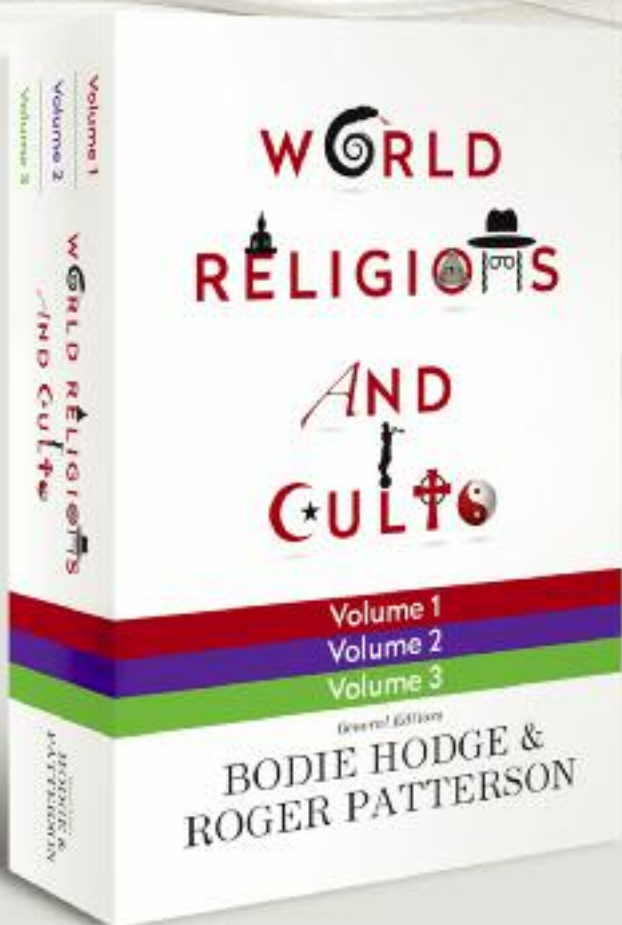
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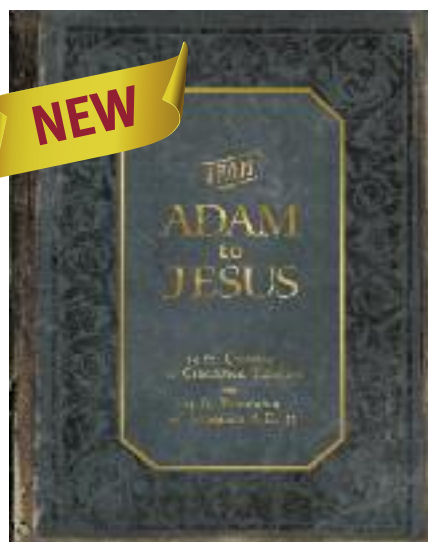
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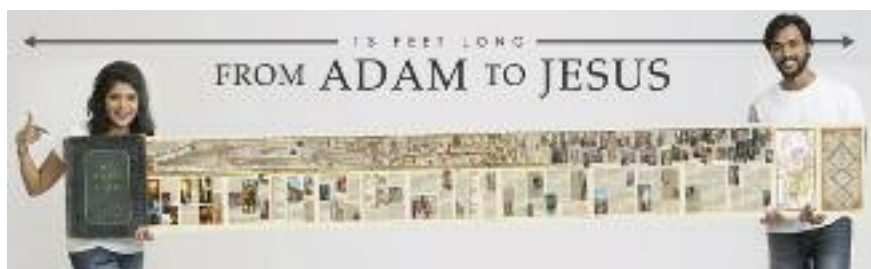
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