

The International Prophetic Voice for the Endtimes

Midnight Call

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- Global Conspiracy
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Earth Under Temporary Possession: Part 1

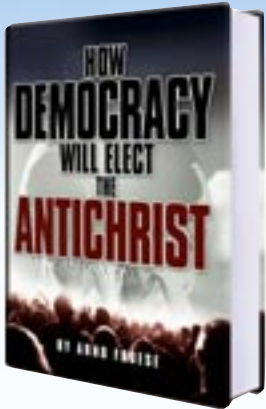
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The World in a Downward Spiral

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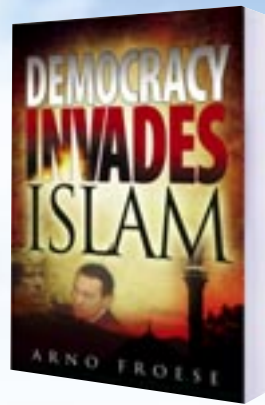


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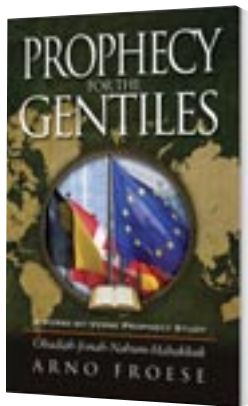
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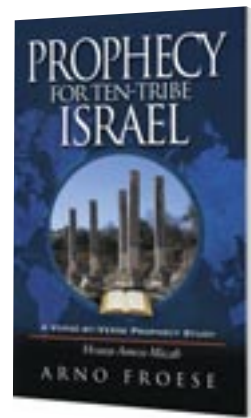
A Message for All People of All Times

We included the following four prophetic books for these reasons: Obadiah primarily speaks of judgment against Edom. There is no question about Jonah; he was sent to the Gentiles, and Nahum likewise thunders his message against Nineveh. While Habakkuk does speak of the deliverance of Judah, he also declares his message against the Chaldeans. However, the message of the prophets is applicable to all people of all times.

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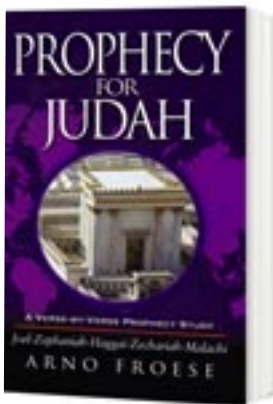
The ten-tribe Israel is distinctly different from Judah-Israel. We read, "So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day" (1 King 12:19). The three prophets, Hosea, Amos and Micah, expose Israel's sin in an unmerciful manner, which leads to God's declaration, "I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away" (Hosea 1:6b).

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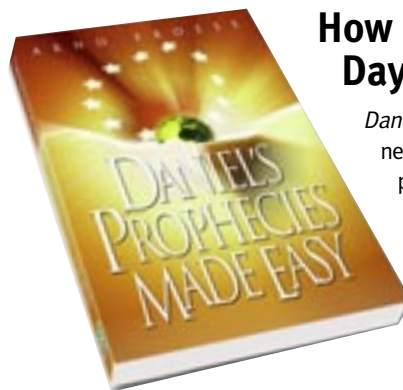
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God's Word provides the key to having a steady boat with a solid, secure anchor in the midst of this world's downward spiral. With everything that is going on and everything that is yet to come, we can remain calm in our own lives and in the face of global events. Yes, the world's in a downward spiral—but He's going to fix it.



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Continuing Maturation

By Norbert Lieth

Director of Missions, Midnight Call International

We are very happy about our 12 grandchildren. Recently, on the occasion of a birthday party, we looked at some older photos. One picture showed one of our grandchildren at the wedding of our youngest daughter; how playfully child-like he was at the age of four. Today, he has finished his professional training and studies, is engaged, and plans to marry next year. The next two granddaughters have already completed one year of vocational training, and are working on getting their driver's licenses.

With all the technical developments, all the progress our world is experiencing, one inevitably wonders about personal and spiritual development. Do we see progress in this realm as well? Paul writes: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph 1:17). And Peter says it this way: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

The 4th chapter of Ephesians deals with the development of the body of the Church. To summarize: It speaks about the perfection of the saints and the edifying of the Body of Christ (v. 12); the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God (v. 13); growing to be a mature man and grasping the fullness of Christ (v. 13); leaving behind all immaturity (v. 14); clinging to the truth and growing toward being like Him (v. 15); development of the body of Christ toward building itself up in love (v. 16); renewal of the spirit of one's temperament (v. 23); and about becoming a new man (v. 24).

As I thought about this, I had to beat upon my own breast and ask myself how I am doing in all these points. Am I growing in the knowledge of the revelations of salvation? Do I see and in faith grasp the deeper revelations which Jesus gave to His Apostles for His Church? Does that create a change

EDITOR'S NOTE

in me? Am I being transformed to have an attitude like Jesus? Or am I still in spiritual infancy, existing only on the milk of the Gospel?

While I was writing these lines, someone wrote me the following: "I am so happy and grateful to God that Jesus removed the veil from me. It is the best thing He allowed me to discover. Why did I have to reach over 50 years of age to learn this? Only now everything really makes sense. Just unbelievable ... and I NEVER want to go back to my old legalistic beliefs."

As important and right as it is that the Church is "increased" through evangelization, it is no less important and correct that it is taught. Not least, this doctrinal teaching contributes significantly to winning others to the kingdom of God. Someone once wrote: "To proclaim salvation that does not lead to a conscious grasp of the total fullness of Christ Himself, misses the goal."

With our publishing work, the monthly magazines, and our missionary work, we want to help children of God to develop spiritually. We thank all of our friends who support us in this task, who provide blessed input, and who pray for us. We hope and pray that this issue also will be of benefit to you.

We wish you all a richly blessed August. (MC)

In light of the times, *News From Israel* is

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OUR TASK

Midnight Call Ministries is a nonprofit missionary organization, dedicated to proclaiming the entire Bible as the unfulfilling 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 in 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, was seen by over 500, 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 imminent, 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.



The World in a Downward Spiral

Phillipp Ottenburg

Looking at the world can make us scared and anxious. But Bible prophecy and the visual imagery of one of David's stories, show us how the downward spiral will really end.

When I was a child, I was always afraid of pulling the plug after my bath. Nothing happens at first ... And then, almost imperceptibly, the water level begins to lower. Suddenly, a whirlpool forms over the drain, causing the water to spin. The closer to the bottom of the whirlpool, the stronger the pull. I was also afraid of the sucking noise that whirlpools make, especially when the water has mostly drained and it's at its loudest. When I was little, this sound terrified me.

The whole world has been in an even greater downward spiral since sin entered it, along with

all its consequences (Genesis 3). The relentless turning of this whirlpool is especially noticeable in this day and age, and it seems to be growing louder and faster. Biblical values and truths are simply being drained away. More things are being twisted, and everything is tangled up. Directionless people who are ignorant of the Bible, are being swept into the current. Everything seems to be falling apart. This whole house of cards, organized by man, is unstable and on the verge of collapse. If we were to make a list of everything that's going on in the world, it would be very long indeed. We can summa-

alize this state of affairs by quoting the Bible: “For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work” (2 Thess 2:7a).

And when we add in our own personal problems and difficulties, the situation may become too much for some people. But God’s Word provides the key to having a steady boat with a solid, secure anchor in the midst of this world’s downward spiral. With everything that is going on and everything that is yet to come, we can remain calm in our own lives and in the face of global events. Yes, the world’s in a downward spiral—but He’s going to fix it.

Let’s examine David’s life. Its wonderful prophetic images point to the true Shepherd King of Israel, Jesus Christ, and His incarnation, as well as His second coming and the messianic kingdom that it will usher in. His story, person, and environment form an important basis for biblical prophecy. And His story, with all of its glorious prophetic shadows and images, can also personally encourage and amaze us.

Consider the events surrounding David when he was hiding in the cave of Adullam. This was a time of flight and persecution, which prophetically points to the hidden kingship of Christ today. The hardship and flight of David and his companions, is also an illustration of the distressed people of Israel at that time and in the future. After staying in the cave of Adullam, David and his 300 men were still fleeing from Saul. His journey from one desert to another was full of fear and distress.

A Flea on the Run

David was initially staying in the desert at Ziph. Then he moved on to the wilderness of Maon,

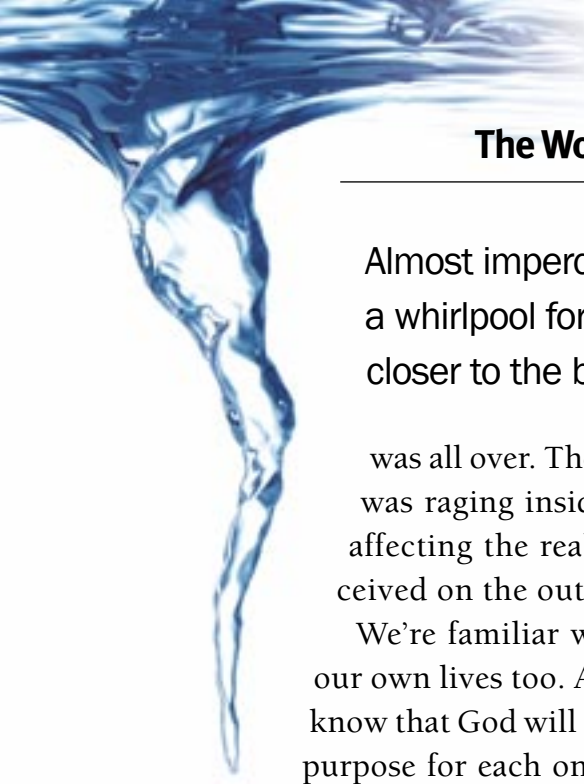
but he didn’t feel safe there either. David was experiencing a downward spiral. Next, he and his closest companions fled to the area of the Dead Sea, to the wilderness of Engedi, yet another area with many rocks and caves (1 Sam 24:1). The Dead Sea ... It doesn’t get any lower than that.

Are you also fleeing from one desert to the next? Have you hit rock bottom? Are you tired and drained? Afraid and in distress? Are you also feeling hounded inside, with no rest and no peace? Maybe you can’t switch off your churning thoughts at the end of the day, and you’re lying awake in bed wondering, “How can I go on like this?”

Saul was pursuing David with a whopping 3,000 men (1 Sam 24:2). David spoke to Saul twice: “After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea!” (v. 14; cf. 26:20).

The image of Jesus Christ shines so gloriously through this comparison—Christ in His lowliness on earth, a picture of His hidden kingdom. A flea is barely noticeable at around 4 mm in size. It’s a parasite with no wings, but it can jump far with the aid of powerful hind legs. Doesn’t the world think of Christ as a parasite? As a foreign object they wish would disappear? It was the same with David. Saul was following an insignificant flea.

It wasn’t easy for David to bear or endure this downward spiral, fear, and constant rushing. To the contrary: It affected him to the point that he even said that Saul would cause his death. For all his reliance on God’s goodness throughout the various situations that God had ordained in his life (Ps 23:6), David thought it



The World in a Downward Spiral

Almost imperceptibly, the water level begins to lower. Suddenly, a whirlpool forms over the drain, causing the water to spin. The closer to the bottom of the whirlpool, the stronger the pull.

was all over. The whirlpool was raging inside him and affecting the reality he perceived on the outside.

We're familiar with that in our own lives too. At heart, we know that God will achieve His purpose for each one of us. He will judge the enemy and defeat him. We know that He is omnipotent, and that nothing is beyond Him. And yet David illustrates the reality that faith isn't always steady. We experience fluctuations, doubts, fears. We're good at keeping up appearances by radiating certainty, firm faith, and trust. We want to show others that we're true men and women of God. But on the inside, haven't we all been in a situation where we thought, "Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul" (1 Sam 27:1)?

The beauty of David is his sincerity toward God. He reveals his weaknesses, and yet is still a man after God's own heart. We should find that encouraging. He also receives this title because he is so honest. We don't have to pretend for God. Imagine what it would be like if your loved ones were pretending to be something they're not, to get you to spend time with them. You'd find it simply unbearable.

So, what did David continue to do, even in his times of greatest need? Once, he was even almost stoned by his own people. "And David was greatly distressed." Yet Scripture then

says, "But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God" (1 Sam 30:6, ESV).

Your world, your circumstances, or your personal affairs could be caught up in this downward spiral. You feel like a little flea, on the run, insignificant. You're helpless in the face of a superior power, as well as all of the big events taking place in the world. We may be experiencing anger and resentment against political decisions, everyday injustices, or the way that people treat each other. But we should be doing one thing: strengthening ourselves in the Lord our God.

How did David do it?

By talking with God continuously. He cried out, challenged, reminded, pleaded, thanked, and more. That's how so many wonderful Psalms came to be. Yes, David was on the run like a small insect, full of existential fear. His world seemed to be in a downward spiral, and he felt like he was at its mercy. But he strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

The Unused Spear

When David was at Engedi, two situations arose that impressively demonstrate why he is a type of the Messiah. And from a pastoral perspective, that is of utmost importance.

Twice, Saul was completely at the mercy of David and his men. But both times, David renounced the power that those situations had handed him. David said that he didn't want to touch the anointed king. He was convinced that

When we read about David, we're reading redemptive history. His story, person, and environment form an important basis for biblical prophecy.



final judgment upon the rejected belonged to God. It had already been determined that David would be king of Israel, but at that time, Saul still held the position.

In a way, this also applies to the present day. Saul was still in power as Satan, the prince of this world, is still in power. But Christ, as typified by David, stands firm as King. It is God who deposes and installs kings.

The first of the two situations is recorded in 1 Samuel 24:3-8. David and his men were in a cave when Saul came in to relieve himself. So, Saul was at the mercy of David, who was with his men at the back of the dark cave. But David only cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

In the second situation, Saul was asleep in an encampment (1 Sam 26:5-12). What makes this story interesting is that David (the stronger) infiltrated Saul (the weaker). And it

happened at night which, again, is highly appropriate from a salvation standpoint. At the Messiah's first coming to earth, Jesus (the stronger) also infiltrated the domain of the prince of this world, during the night of Israel and the world of nations. And the same will again be the case at the Lord's return.

Saul was lying in the midst of his encamped people. Abishai, son of Zeruiah, wanted to accompany David on the incursion. The two found Saul asleep, with his spear and water jug beside him. Although it was an ideal

opportunity to finish off Saul, the spear remained unused. Abishai would have been only too happy to use the spear, but David once again refrained from doing anything else to Saul.

What would we have said as one of David's closest companions? After all, they were just as affected by Saul's persecution as David was. Their wives and children were also in danger. Wouldn't we have reacted like Abishai? Would we have grabbed that spear if we could?

Now You Must!

In both situations, David's attitude was in complete opposition to that of his warriors. They were angry and didn't understand what David was doing.

What if David had killed Saul? What would it have meant? David would have immediately

The World in a Downward Spiral

David was experiencing a downward spiral. He and his closest companions fled to the area of the Dead Sea, to the wilderness of Engedi, yet another area with many rocks and caves. The Dead Sea ... It doesn't get any lower than that.

taken over the kingship; wouldn't everything have been fine? The downward spiral that he, his family, and the kingdom were stuck in would have ended. But couldn't Christ have literally and immediately assumed kingship upon *His* arrival here on earth? Instead, He spared the enemy, renounced His power, and prolonged a life of suffering and misery. That's why anger was spreading around David. So, the hiding in caves and behind rocks continued; the racing hearts continued; being driven out continued. As a result, when the men encountered Saul in the cave, they reacted: "And the men of David said to him, 'Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, "Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you"' (1 Sam 24:4).

Now you must!

But David doesn't use these "appointments" to seize power. We could say that David's followers were living in a beautiful, imminent expectation of David's future kingdom. That's an illustration of the seemingly unbearable problems faced throughout the entire world and redemptive history. "When will the day of Christ's reign finally arrive? How much longer, Lord? What's keeping you? Now you finally must! Lord, are you asleep?"

Remember the Sons of Thunder, who wanted to call down fire straight from heaven (cf. Luke 9:54)? "You must seize power now!" This distressing in-between time is characterized by God and Christ's concealment, while we ask impatiently, "When will the time be fulfilled? When will the Lord finally come?"



David was on the run like a small insect, full of existential fear. His world seemed to be in a downward spiral, and he felt like he was at its mercy. But he strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

When the time was fulfilled, God sent His Son for the first time. And when time is again fulfilled, God will send Him a second time. “Here is the day!” cried David’s men, the day of King Saul’s destruction. And yes, the day that our Lord will reign, arrange, set right, and judge is established—that day when all enemies are put under Jesus’ feet and death is finally conquered (1 Cor 15). It is definite. But . . . in God’s timing.

Our Lord Jesus is still sitting at the right hand of God the Father, seemingly hidden and inactive from a human perspective, and waiting for that day, as the Bible says (Heb 10:13). We are waiting with Him, and will reign with Him directly after the Rapture; the Head and body are united in awaiting the day of His return in glory. Many terrible things will happen on earth, but we remain hidden together with Him, the Head, as His body. And all on God’s timetable.

Times and dates are not concerns for either David’s companions or Jesus’ disciples (cf. Acts 1:7). In this way, David’s friends, warriors, and closest companions are a fitting and prophetic image of a waiting and suffering creature, and also a fitting image of the urging of Jesus’ disciples: “Now you finally must!”

We can absolutely pray, “Lord, come quickly,” but it must always be in the knowledge that it is God’s plan and His appointed time. Therefore, wait patiently along with Him, our Head. Whether it was the prophets who

researched the exact dates of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy (1 Pet 1:10-12), or David, the motto remains the same: through suffering into glory. And so it was with Christ.

The Corner of His Garment and the Cross

What was it like when Christ was here on earth? His message was that the kingdom is at hand; it was already “chomping at the bit.” But Christ renounced His powers. Was it easy for the Lord? We know that He wept with others because of His great mercy. The miracles He performed proved to be a small sample of the greatness to come. They were signs of His kingdom, a foretaste of what is to come.

And so, the corner of Saul’s garment in David’s hand was also a foretaste of victory as a whole. Since the Crucifixion, the corner of Satan’s garment has been in Christ’s hand. There was certainly an immense temptation for David to use the spear quickly—not just for the corner of Saul’s garment, but for something else entirely. Imagine what the parallel circumstance must have been like for Christ. In Hebrews 4:15 we read, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Or in Hebrews 5:8, “Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.”

What was Jesus’ temptation? Wasn’t it the same as David’s? To seize power quickly, changing everything in one fell swoop before the

The World in a Downward Spiral

When Christ returns in glory with His saints, He will stop the downward spiral. He'll calm the waters of the raging sea of peoples.

appointed time. If David had two opportunities, Christ had dozens more. He would have been spared the Cross. That is what His temptation in the desert was all about (and coincidentally, David was also in the desert): “And [the devil] said to him, ‘To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours’” (Luke 4:6-7).

Christ had been promised all of this by His Father. But the devil said, “I’ll give it to you sooner!” The Lord was challenged to prove Himself over and over. Just think of the mockers: “Come down from the cross. Help yourself. He can save others, but not Himself. He could have summoned twelve legions of angels...”

It must have been so difficult for the Lord. He could easily have demonstrated His power, but would not. It would have been a small step to go from being the Lamb to being the Lion of Judah. His own brothers also challenged Him: “So his brothers said to him, ‘Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.’ For not even his brothers believed in him. Jesus said to them, ‘My time has not yet come, but your time is always here’ ... But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private” (John 7:3-6, 10).

Christ didn’t grasp at His riches in order to be like God. He emptied Himself and became human, under the Law. The Cross—the corner of the garment—displays the supreme proof of His abdication. If Christ had yielded at any point, the Cross would never have happened. But He kept to the appointed time. Not even His great anxiety in the Garden of Gethsemane could dissuade Him. He considered His Father’s will to be the primary thing. Separated from His power, silent, dependent, limited in His agency, impotent and weak ... This is how He—the Anointed One of God—presented Himself to His bitterly disappointed disciples.

When David approached Saul in the encampment, he was accompanied by someone who was absolutely enthusiastic for the task and had immediately responded to David’s request: Abishai, son of Zeruah. Fittingly, “Abishai” means “father of will and willpower.” Zeruah, Abishai’s mother, was one of David’s sisters. Remarkably, her name means “enemy of the Lord.” When we center this story on Jesus, it reminds us of Peter, who was the first and only one of the disciples who was willing to boldly approach Jesus by walking on the water.

Abishai wanted to kill Saul. “Now you must! Not just the corner of his robe, but the power! Take up the spear!” It’s humanly understandable, but in this situation Abishai proved to be a son of Zeruah in the truest sense of the word: an enemy of God. And figuratively, an enemy of the Cross. Peter also said to the Lord

when He announced His imminent death on the Cross: “This shall never happen to you.” Here too, the reaction was understandable from a purely human perspective. In his imminent expectation of the kingdom, Peter was demanding: “Not the Cross, but power!”

In response, Jesus said to him, “Get behind me, Satan!” meaning, “Depart from me, adversary!” (that’s what the word “Satan” means). Peter was being an adversary of God’s plan. I don’t think Jesus was really referring to the devil himself; he didn’t even want to stop the Crucifixion, but went to Judas to tempt him to betray the Lord. Peter, on the other hand, wanted to prevent it from happening. So, in this situation, he was called an adversary of God’s plans.

Let’s consider what it means to affirm renunciation of power, both for David’s friends and for Jesus’ disciples. Of course, accepting the Cross has consequences. The disciples wanted to stab, hit, and fight. Just think of Peter severing Malchus’ ear. But instant seizure of power and impatient enforcement of that power are earthly principles. What characterizes a faithful and mature believer, by contrast, is the ability to wait for the points in redemptive history that God has ordained. For if we were to anticipate them, it would mean that we don’t trust God, nor do we believe that His timing is good and ideally chosen.

And yes, that means we have to trust, letting Him do what He must and be at His mercy. In order to affirm traveling the narrow way with Christ, the Lord promised His disciples that they could co-rule in the millennial kingdom: “You are those who have stayed with me in my

trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28-30).

What does this mean for our life? First of all, we need to realize that we aren’t the Lord’s disciples; we’re His body. And, as members of the body of Christ, if He is our Head and is waiting patiently at the right hand of God for the day of His return, then we need to wait with Him and endure all things. Even after the Rapture, we’ll continue waiting with Him: waiting for the times that God has ordained.

We can be assured that one day He will judge! He will fix things, put His plans in order, and judge justly. And when we bow to this will of God, when we choose to wait with Christ, then this attitude can put many things in our lives in order now. Peace and quiet set in, and even serenity despite the maelstrom.

David did eventually become king, and a modest kingdom of peace arose under him. When Christ returns in glory with His saints, He will stop the downward spiral. He’ll calm the waters of the raging sea of peoples. This outlook can help us to be still, to live out our faith, and to grow in the Word and in the knowledge of Him.

So when this biblical prophecy is fulfilled, the world will recover from its tailspin. The same has happened before in the story of David and will metaphorically apply to us. With that, I’d like to conclude: “Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold” (1 Sam 24:22).

(MR0522/1254)



EARTH UNDER TEMPORARY POSSESSION: PART 1



Just who or what is Mammon? Its identity seems elusive. Its name is only mentioned in the Bible (KJV) on three occasions (Luke 16:9 and 11, and one of these instances is mentioned twice in the Bible: Matt 6:24 and Luke 16:13). Though only having modest mention, Mammon is one of the more important forces in the Bible.

By Wilfred Hahn

The reader will note that we capitalize this word. Why? Because it has a large metaphysical role in the world. Thus, it is spiritually inhabited.

As far as we can see, Mammon has been on quite a tear in recent years. Not only is wealth being stockpiled (in other words, hoarded) as never before, but also the flipside is occurring, as it must. Global indebtedness is also soaring to new heights. It serves up an entertaining spectacle. Wealth is again experiencing a great silly season. Investors are running after mythical values and cavorting with financial markets. How so?

Recently, a huge froth storm was observed. In one day, the market value of the shares of Nvidia (a chipmaker catering to Artificial Intelligence users) soared \$US 185 billion. But that is not all. In ensuing days, the shares of this company exceeded \$1 trillion. The rapidity of the surge can hardly be imagined.

Historically, there have been 8 other companies whose value has exceeded the trillion-dollar mark at one time or another—Apple (now valued in excess of \$3 trillion), Alphabet, Microsoft, Meta, Tesla, Amazon, Saudi Aramco, and PetroChina. There is no telling how long this mania may continue.

While focusing on the “trillion” number, consider also this report from the International Monetary Fund. This agency tabulated that over the years 2021 to December 2022, \$17 trillion worth of monetary and fiscal support was injected into world economies. This amounts to the equivalent of 18.9% of world GDP. These huge numbers are indeed of “Biblical proportions,” and seem only a jump and skip away from the final occurrences of apocalyptic fulfillment.

Reviewing the trumpet judgments mentioned in the book of Revelation, we note that eleven of these are said to gravely impact a

Just who owns the world? This is a question that will attract many different answers today. Some will argue that the earth belongs to itself. Human life is therefore no more valuable than any animal life, and may be sacrificed to save the future of earth.

“third” of the world. We would observe that the statistic of 18.9% is well on its way to becoming as large in worldly impact as a third.

Who Owns the World?

Mammon has surely influenced mankind’s fixation with owning things. Just who owns the world? This is a question that will attract many different answers today. Some will argue that the earth belongs to itself. Human life is therefore no more valuable than any animal life, and may be sacrificed to save the future of earth.

Geopolitical strategists will argue differently. Their craft of strategizing “space, borders and time” can lead to great geographic possession.

Then there are the merchants and economists. They will be inclined to see ownership more as a matter of law and title. Anything that can be owned or transacted is considered to be possessed.

Christians, however, will pursue the answers to this question in the Bible. The Scriptures do have the answer to this question. However, in consulting Scripture, we encounter some seemingly confusing perspectives.

Firstly, we read this: “To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it” (Deut 10:14). We learn here that everything is the



Lord’s. Also, the Lord says that “the whole earth is mine” (Exod 19:5b) and “the cattle on a thousand hills” are His (Ps 50:10b).

Yet, the Psalmist also says something on this subject which, at first glance, appears contradictory. He says, “The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind” (Ps 115:16). Here, it clearly says that “the earth He has given to mankind.” How can the earth be the Lord’s (i.e., Deut 10:14) but also be given to mankind? We are not scholars of Hebrew. However, a brief study of Psalm 50 suggests that the earth is being assigned to mankind more as a domain—a conservatorship for a time.

This aligns with the command found in Genesis. “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground’” (Gen



Over time, a globalized, commercially dominated world would emerge, where the concepts of possession, ownership, wealth, and consumption were to become the very essence of the meaning of life and existence.



1:28). The world is not possessed by mankind, but rather the earth is put under his dominion for a time.

The Earth Up for Grabs

At the very beginning, after God created the earth and the heavens and He saw that it was good, there were only two people on the entire earth. There were yet no landowner frictions. They were fully provided for in the Garden of Eden and were not subjected to hard labor.

But something happened after the Fall and down through the millennia. Human ownership became fully overtaken by “the lust of the eyes” (1 John 2:16).

Over time, a globalized, commercially dominated world would emerge, where the concepts of possession, ownership, wealth, and consumption were to become the very essence of the meaning of life and existence.

Ownership Then and Now

There are two key aspects of ownership as it exists today, that are instructive to review. First, most all of the valuable parts of creation are now under the legal ownership of man in one format or another. Second, ownership of all these domains is held by relatively few individuals and entities. If not owned by government or kings and queens, then by individuals ... some of these extremely rich.

Today, mankind has created conventions that convey ownership rights to literally everything that God created. International organizations may exist to help mediate on these ownership issues in almost every domain. It is amazing what can be owned today.

Human Labor

Most people think of world financial markets and underlying economic systems as representing wealth. Firstly, we would say financial markets play a greater role in the *distribution* of wealth rather than its creation. They are not its source. All wealth comes from God, either in the form of His creation or His life-giving capacity. In the human realm, wealth translates from fruits of labor.

All the wealth of the world today (as we humans would recognize it) cannot exist apart from humans and their labor. It is a simple fact that is too rarely recognized. Human labor—past, present, and future—comprises the bulk of what is wealth today. Its ownership may be

Can the world boast of the ownership that the Bible tells of here in this verse? “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

highly skewed, as it surely is in our time. The use of debt allows a very small group of people to own a disproportionately large output of human labor.

Points to Ponder

Christ questioned the disciples: “When I return, will I find any faith in the world?” While he said this in the form of a question, it should really be read as an endtime prophecy. Very little “faith” will be found upon earth when He returns. And that could be very, very soon. Then, mankind and its leadership will be shown to have staked their faith in their lusts like Sodom, “overfed and unconcerned” (Ezekiel 16:49); worshiping manmade idols of wood and stone (greater economic growth, wealth and ownership); and lastly, charting their own destiny and goodness outside of God.

The most unimaginable things in the earth’s sphere are now owned by humans. Even planets and stars can be claimed (unofficially, of course).

In all seriousness, we realize that the “lust of the eyes” at this “late, great state” in the world has been built up into a highly sophisticated ownership system, giving rise to massive and measurable wealth, riches, and splendor. Property rights and their protection are indeed important.

Seen in the aggregate, this huge, measurable pile of wealth—though much of it indeed is false

wealth—serves as a great anchor for the materialists and humanists. Progress is defined as wealth continuing to increase. More is better. Its pursuit is the essence of the meaning of life. It is the value system of Mammon.

The world may think that everything is up for grabs for personal or corporate ownership, and that this will mark the advancement of mankind in the future. But one thing can never be owned by humans. “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own” (1 Corinthians 6:19). We do not own ourselves, whether we are Christians or not.

We are not our own. This brings great comfort to those that live unto the Lord. “For in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28a).

Can the world boast of the ownership that the Bible tells of here in this verse? “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

One day, the ownership structure of the world will change completely. We will continue to review the late, great state of “the lust of the eyes” in the world today in Part 2. (MC)



The coast of the Sea of Galilee near
Ein Eyov Waterfall in Tabgha, Israel

Tabgha

(Sites of the Bible Series)

DR. RON J. BIGALKE

Tabgha is located in the Gennesar Valley on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Heb. Kinneret). For centuries, Tabgha was known by the local fishing industry for its abundance of fish.

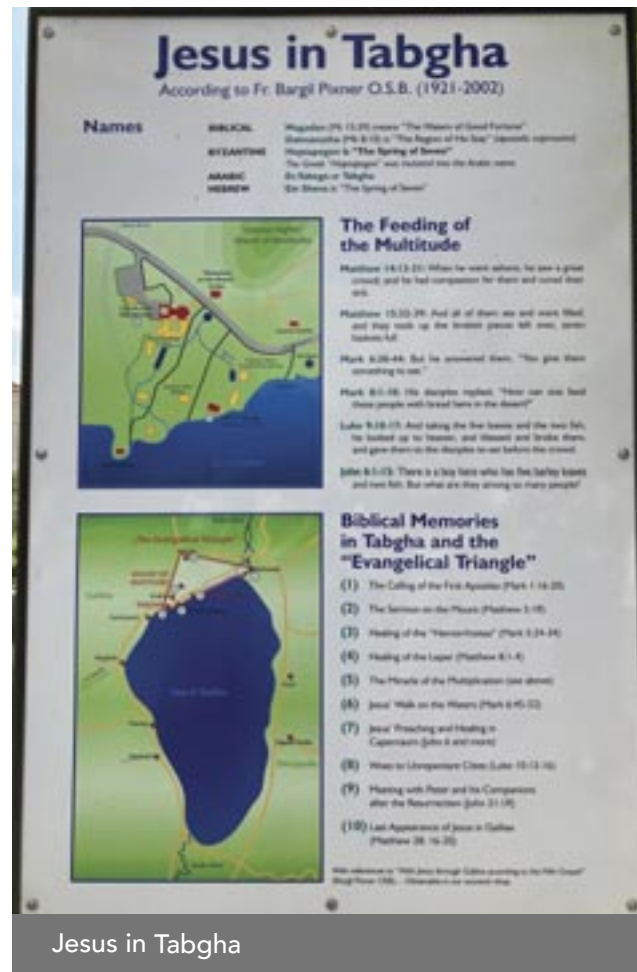
Tabgha is well documented in historical records, though the name is derived from the Greek *heptapegon*, meaning “Place of the Seven Springs,” which is also the meaning of the Hebrew name Ein Sheva. The pronunciation of the Greek as “hep-tapegon” as an early designation for the site changed gradually throughout the centuries

among various people groups who occupied the region, which eventually resulted in the modern corruption of “Seven Springs” as Tabgha.

Tabgha was (and still is) a popular fishing suburb in the first century at the foot of the Mount of Beatitudes. It is located on the shoreline east of the neighboring city of Magdala, and almost two miles west of Capernaum,

the Lord's "own city" (Matt 9:1), from which He accomplished much of His public ministry (4:13; Mark 2:1). The region was well known to the Jewish historian Josephus, who mentioned the unique abundance of the Capernaum well, even referring to some who compared it to the Nile (*Wars of the Jews* 3.10.8). "The stretch of coastline between Capernaum and the springs of Tabgha is particularly rich in fish even in the twenty-first century, thanks to the organoleptic characteristics of the spring water: warm [slightly more so than water from the Sea of Galilee], salty, and rich in minerals. The fish are drawn there especially at night (cf. Luke 5:5), when the ambient temperature drops to 10°C" (Stefano De Luca, "Capernaum," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology*, ed. Daniel M. Master, 2 vols. [New York: Oxford, 2013] 1:172).

Tabgha is believed to be the shoreline where Jesus called His first disciples: "Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother," in addition to two other brothers, James and John, who were "mending their nets" for another fishing expedition with their father Zebedee (Matt 4:18-22). Given its organoleptic characteristics, Tabgha would have not only provided the Zebedee family with supplemental protein, but also revenue from trade (particularly to



nearby cities such as Sepphoris and Tiberias). The calling of four disciples was with famous and memorable words: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (v. 19). The two pairs of brothers knew Jesus previously (Luke 5:3; John 1:35-42), but now He called them to abandon their professions and follow Him with an endless commitment. Through this, they would learn from being with the Lord, in addition to learning what He taught. God typically commissions people who are

already productive; thus, He called fishers, not idlers.

Tabgha is best known as the site of Christ's multiplication of fish and loaves to feed a multitude of 5,000, and where Jesus appeared to His disciples a third time subsequent to His resurrection, when He both restored and commissioned Peter as leader of the Apostles. The earliest report of the local traditions is from the fourth century (AD 383) by the pilgrim Lady Egeria.

The Feeding of the Multitude

In His miraculous feeding of the multitude, Jesus modeled the importance of symmetry (Mark 6:31-32). There are times when great demands arise, which must be alternated with times of solitude and rest. Recuperating from challenging labor is biblical and necessary, so one can work more effectively. Jesus gives approval to the appropriate pursuit of rest from labor which, of course, is evident in how God memorialized a

day of rest in celebration of His creative work.

Nevertheless, there are desperate people who may lack empathy and will not allow a person rest until they can receive what they want. Jesus is the true Shepherd (John 10:1-18), which is why His compassion was greater than His desire for rest, particularly as the people were "sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). Not having a shepherd meant people were wandering like sheep; they desperately needed a word from Jesus that would bring meaning to their lives. Herod and the religious leaders should have been able to guide the people, yet they were just as lost themselves. Wandering sheep who have no one to lead them need the teaching of the true Shepherd. Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:10-11).

Only after ministering to their spiritual needs did Jesus satisfy the physical needs of the crowd (Mark 6:35-44). The disciples were the ones who recognized the people needed something to eat, so Jesus commanded them to resolve the need. Jesus asked the disciples to count their resources, which were entirely inadequate, so He gave them an unmistakable lesson.

Credit: K. Bigalke



Tabgha Miracle of the Fish and Loaves

Jesus said, “You give them *something* to eat!” The command was impossible and preposterous, yet when the Twelve considered their inadequacy and allowed the power of Christ to multiply the bread loaves and fish, they were able to do exactly as He commanded. Jesus is not only able to supply all that is necessary for His people’s needs, but also, He can do more than expected (Eph 3:20-21). God’s commands are always fulfilled with divine provisions.

As soon as the crowd was fed, Jesus immediately “made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of *Him* to the other side” of the lake (v. 45). The urgency of the matter was due to the people wanting to proclaim Jesus as king (John 6:15). Jesus was not a political deliverer (or social reformer), nor did He want His disciples succumbing to such temptations. When Jesus dismissed the crowd, He departed “for the mountain to pray” (Mark 6:46).

Jesus concluded His prayers because He saw His disciples in trouble (vv. 47-48). As the second Person of the Triune God, Jesus was capable of transcending the nature that He created and sustains (v. 49; cf. Col 1:15-17). Jesus calmed His disciples with a word of comfort (Mark 6:50). The disciples had not appreciated what Jesus taught them in the previous miracle, so they were unable to realize the significance of the present miracle (vv. 51-52). Hardened hearts prevented them from under-

standing as they should have (v. 52). Jesus was not finished with His disciples. Perhaps when the boat landed and He performed multiple healings, the hearts of the disciples began to soften. Mark 6 compels modern readers to ask how best to increase faith in God, depending upon Him for all one’s needs.

The Third Appearance of the Risen Lord

As already stated, Tabgha is the traditional site for Jesus’ third appearance to His disciples subsequent to His resurrection (John 21:1-14), in addition to the Lord’s restoration and commissioning of Peter (vv. 15-17). Prior to the crucifixion, the temporal needs of the disciples were satisfied by the generosity of individuals (Luke 8:3). Considering that the Cross most likely resulted in an end to such charity, seven of the disciples (John 21:2) were uncertain how to make provision for themselves, and thus returned to their former occupation of fishing. The uncertainty of the fishing expedition is an event contrasted to the assured purpose resulting from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2).

The disciples fished all night, yet caught nothing. “But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus” (John 21:4). With a

common greeting, Jesus inquired whether they had any fish, to which they answered in the negative (v. 5). Jesus uttered what appeared to be a ridiculous assertion, yet they complied and were unable to draw the net because of the multitude of fish (v. 6). There was only one explanation for the miraculous catch: “It is the Lord” (v. 7). With similar excitement as when he ran to the see the empty tomb, Peter “threw himself into the sea” and swam as quickly as possible to the beach, with his eyes focused upon the risen Lord Jesus. When the other disciples reached land, “they saw a charcoal fire *already* laid and fish placed on it, and bread” (vv. 8-9). Jesus invited His disciples to “Come *and* have breakfast” (v. 12).

“So when they had finished breakfast,” Jesus spoke directly to Peter (v. 15). Three times, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” His threefold questioning would seem to be an allusion to the threefold denial of Peter, thus explaining his grief (v. 17). By asking the same question three times, Jesus indicated the priority of love for Himself. He desires the words of His disciples to agree with their actions. The best manner to demonstrate love for the Lord is caring for His people. Words are not enough if actions are not those constituting obvious love for God, as evidenced in love for others ... especially those who belong to the body of Christ.

With slight variation, Jesus commanded Peter each time he affirmed his love for the Lord: “Tend My lambs ... Shepherd My sheep ... Tend My sheep” (vv. 15-17). What is evident from the threefold dialogue between Jesus and Peter, is that love for the Lord involves serving others, which was also a priority of His teaching in the Upper Room (John 13—17). Peter later exhorted pastors with the same words (cf. 1 Pet 5:1-4). Jesus could have given His post-resurrection command to Peter in Galilee, where the Lord’s compassion for the multitudes was evident, particularly in how they were “sheep without a shepherd” (Matt 9:36). However, the focus of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee was instilling His compassion into His disciples, in addition to their constant dependence upon the Lord. Jesus took Peter to Tabgha because it was the location where the Lord called Peter to discipleship, and where a miraculous catch of fish resulted in the confession, “I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8). Jesus restored Peter to ministry at Tabgha only when he affirmed the quality of his love for the Lord, and thus why he should tend to and care for the Lord’s sheep. An authentic relationship with the Lord means serving others, and the motivation for such ministry is love for Jesus (cf. Matt 22:34-40). How would you answer the Lord’s question, “Do you love Me?” (1322)

A black and white photograph of a person standing in a doorway. Behind the person is a large, glowing cross that illuminates the scene. The person is silhouetted against the light from the doorway and the cross. The floor is dark and reflective, showing a faint reflection of the person.

Being Conformed to Christ

Wim Malgo (1922-1992)

An interpretation of the last book of the Bible. Part 40. Revelation 3:20-22.

Because Christ loves us, He wants nothing less than intimate communion with us: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev 3:20).

The letter to Laodicea has such a powerful conclusion! Isn’t such an offer

poignant and touching? Blessed is the one who opens the door! When the lukewarm church of Laodicea overcomes, it will receive a degree of dominion and glory that surpasses everything else: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev 3:21).

Being Conformed to Christ

It's been rightly stated that the seven promises to overcomers are the most complete description of what God has in store for those who love Him. And we see with crystal clarity how tremendously important it is for us to become true overcomers as children of God. Otherwise, we miss God's highest goal for us. This ultimate goal is shown in Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

This conformation refers to everything that Jesus is and did. It also refers to our goal beyond our mortal existence: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

We could describe this conformation in four T's: conforming to His transfiguration, toil, traits, and talk. We may object: "But I can't do that; I'm not nearly strong enough. That's an unreachable goal for me." But what we're capable of doesn't matter. It's what *He* is capable of! Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

This power that is working in us is a person: Jesus Christ. Hebrews 2:17 says, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

The eternal Son of God was made like us, so that we might be made like Him. Anyone who isn't becoming like Christ, is invalidating the grace that appeared in Jesus. Everything was accomplished by Him. But now, it's time to comprehend that the Lord Jesus became like us and fully identified with all that we are, even down to our corrupt nature. He was united with us so fully that despite knowing no sin, He was "made . . . to be sin for us" on the Cross of Calvary (2 Cor 5:21). So, He not only died *for* us but also *in* us, His nature having become like ours. This overwhelming fact, that He descended so deeply (into our very condition: bound, enslaved by fear of death, and eternally lost in darkness), is never fully grasped in all its redeeming impact. Yet this is what made it possible for us to be brought into an entirely new state before God. As a result, the Lord doesn't require us to overcome apart from His person, but to overcome in and through and with Him. This is what Romans 8:37 is testifying to: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Paul wants to emphasize that the Lord Jesus Christ uprooted us and united Himself to us. In 1 Corinthians 6:17 he writes, "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

That is why the Bible doesn't call us to overcome in isolation. Instead, as the exalted Lord says in Revelation 3:21, "To him that overcometh . . . even as I also overcame." We aren't being asked to make an impossible effort to achieve what we cannot

Only through Jesus' death on the Cross do we become powerful overcomers of our own corrupt nature. It is only in this way that we become people full of the Holy Spirit, who stand in complete freedom: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).



do. Rather, we can overcome our destructive character, as we say along with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:20a). Then we belong to the category of people that Revelation 12:11 speaks of: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

This is union with Jesus: not loving our life unto death. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:25). Only through Jesus' death on the Cross do we become powerful overcomers of our own corrupt nature. It is only in this way that we become people full of the Holy Spirit, who stand in complete freedom: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

The enemy is the one who robs us of our glory and prevents us from fellow-

shipping with God. He, the murderer of souls from the beginning, seeks to smother eternal life in us and devour the attributes of the legacy of God and Christ. But Jesus Christ overcame him completely, and therefore we can also greatly overcome him.

In the seven letters to the churches, we see seven (the number representing divine completion) promises to overcomers. But in His faithfulness, the Lord added one more (8 being the number which represents the name of Jesus). This eighth promise to overcomers is the culmination and summation of all the previous promises: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev 21:7). Nothing higher could possibly be said, for that is full conformation to the Son of God in glory!

(MR0223/1324)




WORLD FOCUS

EUROPE

Fastest Warming Continent

Europe has been warming twice as much as the global average since the 1980s, the report, released by Copernicus, the European Union's climate change service, and the World Meteorological Organization, states.

 In 2022, Europe was approximately 2.3 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial revolution average—global temperatures between 1850 and 1900, which are used as a baseline for the Paris climate accord.

“The record-breaking heat stress that Europeans experienced in 2022 was one of the main drivers of weather-related excess deaths in Europe,” said Copernicus Director Carlo Buontempo. “Unfortunately, this cannot be considered a one-off occurrence or an oddity of the climate.”

The pattern of extreme heat has already continued into 2023.

In 2022, glaciers in the European Alps experienced “unprecedented” mass loss in one single year, caused by very low winter snow amounts, a very warm summer and Saharan dust deposition, the researchers said.

The report also noted a “hopeful future” for renewable energy, which generated more electricity on the continent than polluting fossil gas for the first time in 2022.



Snow from the last winter season is covered with blankets on a slope beside the top station of a cablecar at Diavolezza ski area near the Alpine resort of Pontresina, Switzerland Arnd Wiegmann/Reuters, FILE

Wind and solar power generated 22.3% of European Union (EU) electricity in 2022, overtaking fossil gas at 20%, the researchers said.

-abcnews.go.com, 19 June 2023

Commentary: The fact that temperatures are rising in Europe and the rest of the world cannot be denied. What is the reason? Doubtless, industrialization and fossil-fuel energy are a contributing factor toward the increase of heat. But the accurate data available to these scientists can only be considered short-term. There is no direct, accurate documentation of temperature dating back 500 or 1,000 years ago. What we know for sure is what Scripture says: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22). 8027

(See *A Ticking Climate Bomb?* tract, Item #9119, \$3 per 100.)

FRANCE

Combating Over-tourism

Faced with surging numbers of visitors to historic landmarks and natural treasures, France wants to put a lid on the tourist crowds that flood in each year—though officials recognize it won't be easy.

 Tourism minister Olivia Gregoire unveiled a plan to regulate visitor flows at the most popular sites and lay out a strategy against “overtourism.”

She said France, the world's biggest tourist destination, particularly needed to better manage the peak-season influxes that threatened “the environment, the quality of life for locals, and the experiences for its visitors.”



The Sugiton cove near Marseille will maintain a reservation system to cap visitors (Nicolas TUCAT)

“We need a concerted tourism development strategy so that this influx spreads itself out in terms of destinations and seasons,” he told AFP.

The government acknowledges that 80 percent of annual tourism activity is

(continued next page)

Over-tourism (continued from page 26)

concentrated on just 20 percent of the country—hence the push to encourage visitors to discover less well known parts of France.

-news.yahoo.com, 19 June 2023

Commentary: Based on WiseVoter.com, France is by far the most popular country for visitors, registering 117.1 million arrivals. The next four of the top five are Mexico at 51.1 million, USA at 45 million, Italy at 38.4 million, and Spain at 36.4 million. France, with a population of about 62 million, welcomes almost twice as many visitors each year.

What was virtually unthinkable one century ago is now considered normal. According to Statista.com, only 25,000 international tourists were counted in 1950; over the decades, this reached a peak in 2019 of 1,465,460,000. 2020 saw a decrease down to 406,890,000, due to Covid-19. Doubtless, global tourism is rebounding.

The two major passenger aircraft manufacturers, Airbus and Boeing, can hardly keep up with orders from airlines around the world. eTurboNews.com writes, “Combined, Airbus and Boeing recorded 1,666 gross orders for large commercial airliners in 2021.” More people have money and time to travel than ever before in history.

In this case, France has a strange problem: over-tourism, while most

other countries in the world are on the other side of the scale, wishing for more tourists. Thus, France as a tourist destination is the envy of the rest of the world.

Where will this lead? Continued growth of globalization. There is little to no doubt that the 200+ nations of the world will eventually be more united than ever, which eventually will require a global government. 8025



(See *New Babylon Rising*, Item #2359, \$16.99.)



Billions Stolen in Wage Theft

There are numerous forms of wage theft, from employers not compensating workers for time worked, violating minimum wage and overtime laws, misclassifying employees as independent contractors, not providing legally required meal breaks, confiscating worker tips, or illegally taking deductions from worker wages.



Wage-theft violators include some of the largest employers in the US; Amazon paid \$18m in November 2022 to settle a wage-theft class-action lawsuit in Oregon, the largest in the state’s history, and paid a \$61.7m fine in 2021 over allegations of stealing tips from Amazon Flex drivers.

Construction contractors have a notorious reputation for wage-theft viola-

tions, often affecting immigrant workers, and exploiting loopholes to avoid paying wage-theft claims, such as shutting down businesses and reopening under a different business filing.

-www.theguardian.com, 15 June 2023

Commentary: It’s interesting that these massive sums of stolen money are hardly mentioned when we talk about crime. Yet the Bible is replete with condemnation of those failing to pay their workers ... in most cases, those that are “the least among us.” Specifically in regard to construction workers, Jeremiah 22:13 says: “Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work” (cf. James 5:4; Mal 3:5; 1 Cor 9:9).

Furthermore, an anecdote near the end of the article mentions a service worker being fired after pointing out the violation of minimum wage laws, as well as unresponsive authorities, reminding us of the unjust judge found in Luke 18.

We are all “employers” when we eat at restaurants, since (at least in the US) tips account for a significant portion of service workers’ pay. Let us be generous as a Christian witness, since we are the recipient of the greatest gift of all time: “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor 9:15). 8022

-By J. Froese

(See *Jesus and the End Times*, Item #2356, \$15.99.)

TUNISIA

Water Supply Rationed Amid Severe Drought

Tunisian authorities have started cutting off drinking water at night in areas of the capital and other cities, residents said, in what appears to be a bid to reduce consumption amid a severe drought.

Officials of the water distribution company contacted by Reuters declined to comment.



A view of cracked ground near the Sidi El Barrak dam with depleted levels of water, in Nafza, west of the capital Tunis, Tunisia REUTERS/Jihed Abidellaoui

Tunisia is suffering a serious drought, prompting officials to say the ministry may begin to cut off water supply at night over the summer to reduce consumption due to the scarcity of reserves in the country.

Yassin Mami, a lawmaker in the new parliament, said officials from the national water company informed him that the reason for the frequent interruption of water supply in Hammamet city, was “because the country is threatened by water scarcity.”

The Sidi Salem Dam in the north of the country, a key provider of drinking water to several regions, has declined to only 16% of its maximum capacity of 580 million cubic meters, official figures showed.

-*www.reuters.com*, 28 March 2023

Commentary: Based on a 2017 survey published by the CIA, more than 10% of Tunisia’s workforce is employed in agriculture. Developed (rich) countries employ 2% or less of their workforce in agriculture. But agriculture requires water.

Tunisia does not recognize Israel, so there are no diplomatic relations between these two nations. Yet, if there is any nation that can help overcome a water shortage, it’s Israel. As

a matter of fact, Israel has such an abundance of water that plans are in the making to pipe desalinated water into the Sea of Galilee, besides exporting water to Jordan, as it does now. While Israel claims 22,104 square kilometers, Tunisia has 163,610. Israel’s population stands at about 9 million, Tunisia’s 12 million. When comparing economic success, the difference is drastic:



Tunisia’s per capita GDP is \$4,500, and Israel’s is \$44,500.

8021

(See *Israel Matters*, Item #2328, \$17.99.)

AUSTRIA

World’s Oldest Newspaper Dies

The print edition of Austrian newspaper the *Wiener Zeitung*, which has been published since 1703, will cease to exist after a vote in parliament.

The publication has reported on everything from a young Mozart to the effective abdication of the last Habsburg emperor in its 320-year history, claiming to be the oldest surviving daily newspaper in the world.

It has been owned by the Austrian government since 1857 and serves as an official gazette, with advertisements for government job openings and other official notices appearing in the newspaper by law.

This became its main source of revenue, and allowed the newspaper to continue its journalistic mission of reporting the news.

Austria’s parliament passed a law that would no longer require it and other companies to take out advertisements in the print edition of the paper.

“It is not the role of the republic to run and finance a daily newspaper,” Austria’s conservative Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said in 2021 when the changes were first floated.

The new media regulations also alter the *Wiener Zeitung*’s purpose from a daily newspaper to become a “training and further education medium.”

Although the online edition and a monthly print edition will be produced go-

(continued next page)

Oldest Newspaper (continued from page 28)



The Wiener Zeitung was first published in 1703, and the print edition will cease to exist in 2023

Image: Helmut Fohringer/APA /picturedesk/picture alliance

ing forward, the newspaper's deputy editor-in-chief Thomas Seifert said the government's decision was about more than just "digital or paper."

-www.duu.com, 27 April 2023

Commentary: In the meantime, the French paper *Le Monde* stated that the final issue will be 30 June 2023. The reason for *Weiner Zeitung* to close its doors is mostly the same as other print media companies by the thousands, which have closed in the last couple of decades across the world.

This writer remembers dozens of Christian magazines that no longer exist.

The reason? There are many: paper costs, postage increases, labor costs, etc. However, we think there is another reason, and it is taking place in the invisible world. This, of course, also translates to the visible world; namely, the change from reading to seeing. In the last book of the Bible, we are encouraged: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the

time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3). What was unthinkable just a few centuries ago, has become reality: with the proliferation of personal communication devices, the emphasis is on seeing. The old saying, a picture is worth a thousand words, is being realized the world over.

Quite amazingly, A. W. Tozer in his book, *The Pursuit of God*, copyright 1948, had this to say: "Advertising is largely based upon this habit of pretense. 'Courses' are offered in this or that field of human learning frankly appealing to the victim's desire to shine at a party. Books are sold, clothes and cosmetics are peddled, by playing continually upon this desire to appear what we are not."

Watching TV today, one notices it is flooded with self-help promotions. Most of the offers are outright lies, cleverly worded to avoid litigation.

Our Testimony

We take this opportunity to express our thanks to the Lord, who has caused a great number of believers to subscribe to our magazines and purchase Biblically based reading material for the last 68 years. Midnight Call solicits your prayers, so the ministry can continue to be effective by the publication of the printed page with the Good News, the Gospel, the simple message that only Jesus saves, and He is coming again. We continue to emphasize the prophetic Word, which is in the process of fulfillment, especially in our days. 8016

(See *Alive in the Spirit*, Item #2325, \$14.99.)

SOUTH KOREA

Gay Couples See Break-through for Equality

"The more visible we are and the more we talk about our story, I think the more we can change people's opinions and help other LGBTQ people like us gather up courage," Kim Yong-min said in an interview in the three-room Seoul apartment he shares with So Sung-uk.



"I believe if more LGBTQ people show who they are, change will come faster."

The two managed to secure national health insurance coverage for So, who works with a youth HIV support group, as a dependent based on his partnership with Kim, an employee for an organization that advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer rights.

A survey by South Korean pollster Realmeter last year found that nearly seven in 10 respondents said an anti-discrimination law was necessary.

Anti-discrimination bills have been proposed but lawmakers have failed to move forward with them.

"Politicians like to hide behind social consensus," So said.

"But it is their job to make society a more equal and better place to live, not just sit back and wait for society to change."

-www.nbcnews.com, 27 February 2023

Commentary: Sodomites, as the Bible calls them, have been present throughout the ages and are found in

(continued next page)

Gay Couples (continued from page 29)

all levels of society on planet earth. Lately, increasingly more nations have opened the door to Sodomites, declaring their behavior to be normal. The exception are the Muslim nations. Wikipedia states: “The Quran narrates the story of the ‘people of Lot’ destroyed by the wrath of God because the men engaged in lustful carnal acts between themselves.” In the Bible, we read, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination” (Leviticus 18:22). The New Testament adds: “And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Romans 1:27).

Speaking about the end times, Jesus mentions Sodom: “But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:29). What happened in Sodom? Genesis 19 reports the event involving Lot and his family. When two angels visited Lot, the men of Sodom found out and forcefully made this request: “They shouted to Lot and said to him, where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may be intimate with them” (v. 5, *Tanakh*). When Lot did not comply, verse 9 reads: “And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came

in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.” Quite obviously, the Sodomites had political power, and the remnant of the men of Sodom apparently did not oppose their advances. In Lot’s case, violence followed: “came near ... moved forward to break the door” (*Tanakh*). Even after the angels interfered on behalf of Lot supernaturally, the Sodomites did not give up; they “were struck with blinding light, so that they were helpless to find the entrance” (v. 11, *Tanakh*). Here we see there is no turning back; in their blind rage, they still attempted to use force.

There is another item in Scripture with prophetic content; namely, Antichrist, who is the great imitator and wants to be god. Doubtless, he will appear as the false messiah of Israel and savior of the world, as Jesus prophesied: “if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5:43b). What is the spiritual reason for this development? Plain and simply, the imitation of the total liberty Scripture proclaims: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). True equality, but note “in Christ Jesus.” The spirit of Antichrist is busy mimicking this equality.

7957

(See *As It Was in the Days of Noah*, Item #2286, \$16.99.)



First Ever Treaty to Protect International Waters

Until now, there has never been any international law governing the high seas, so many individuals and organizations hope the U.N.’s adoption of the measure will mark a clear turning point for vast stretches of the planet where conservation efforts have long struggled in a sort of wild west of exploration, overfishing, oil exploration and deep-sea mining.



A marine biologist inspects signs of coral bleaching during a dive on Tubbataha reef off the Philippines in the Sulu Sea.

Alexis Rosenfeld/Getty



“You have delivered,” U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the member nations upon the treaty’s adoption. “And you have done so at a critical time.”

“Roughly two thirds of the Earth’s oceans lie beyond national boundaries in an area known as the ‘high seas’—yet only about 1% of that largely unexplored expanse has been protected. This year, nearly 200 nations finally agreed on the first treaty to protect the high seas,” the Conservation International organization said.

“It is often said that the ocean is too big to fail. That is simply not true,” said Monica Medina, the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Bureau of Oceans and International Envi-

(continued next page)

Protect Waters (continued from page 30)

Environmental and Scientific Affairs. “The ocean is more fragile than most people understand. It is also more essential. It provides the oxygen we breathe and food for tens of millions of people.”

Nichola Clark, who works with the Pew Charitable Trusts’ ocean governance project, told CBS News the treaty was “critical for our climate, as the world’s oceans play “an important role in regulating our climate—absorbing carbon dioxide and excess heat from the atmosphere, regulating temperatures, and driving our global weather patterns.”

-www.cbsnews.com, 19 June 2023

Commentary: While this treaty targets biodiversity of the oceans, it’s just another step in the direction of international law, by which all nations will and must be governed.

Concerning the future of the oceans, we clearly read: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Revelation 21:1). This is part of the creation of the new heaven and new earth. It is guaranteed by the Lord Himself, who alone can offer salvation: “And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (verse 6).

8032

(See 101 Answers to Questions About the Book of Revelation, Item #2295, \$15.99.)

CHINA

Stunning Lead Over USA

China has a “stunning lead” in 37 out of 44 critical and emerging technologies as Western democracies lose a global competition for research output, a security think tank said after tracking defense, space, energy and biotechnology.

 The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) said its study showed that, in some fields, all of the world’s top 10 research institutions are based in China.

“Western democracies are losing the global technological competition, including the race for scientific and research breakthroughs,” the report said, urging greater research investment by governments.

“Over the past five years, China generated 48.49% of the world’s high-impact research papers into advanced aircraft engines, including hypersonics, and it hosts seven of the world’s top 10 research institutions,” it said.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences, a government research body, ranked first or second in most of the 44 technologies tracked, which spanned defense, space, robotics, energy, the environment, biotechnology, artificial intelligence (AI), advanced materials and quantum technology.

China was bolstering its research with knowledge gained overseas, and the data showed one-fifth of the top Chinese researchers were trained in a Five Eyes

country [Britain, United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand].

-www.jpost.com, 2 March 2023

Commentary: While the West, under the leadership of the US, is significantly ahead when it comes to science and technology—be it space, robotics, energy, environment, biotechnology, or quantum tech—it seems only a matter of time before communist China will not only catch up but supersede.

Many of us may recall the 1970s and 80s, when Japanese cars first came on the market in the US and were considered inferior. Today, almost the opposite is true; Japanese cars are superior and have surpassed the once dominance of US vehicle manufacturing.

What is the message? Simply equality. The West will no longer keep its dominance, but will have to share it with the world. This will finally produce a peaceful, prosperous, and secure planet earth—albeit temporary. 7959

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



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“Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid” (Isaiah 29:14).

BY ARNO FROESE

When reading chapter 29, we realize this is judgment upon Jerusalem. But at the same time, Israel’s restoration is guaranteed, as expressed in the profound words in the last verse: “They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine” (v. 24).

When speaking about Israel, one must always keep in mind that they are distinctly different from all the nations on the face of the earth. It does not matter what country you reside in or to which nation you belong; there is no future. Daniel, while in a foreign country, makes this crystal clear: “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 for ever”

(Daniel 2:44). That is the precise future of planet earth: total destruction, total annihilation, yet His kingdom “shall stand forever.”

The prophet Jeremiah pronounces horrible judgment when speaking of the time of the Great Tribulation: “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7). Very plainly, Jacob’s trouble will end when “he shall be saved out of it.”

We must also consider that part of the above prophecy was fulfilled about two millennia ago. The apostle Paul proclaims: “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent” (1 Corinthians 1:19).

At this present time, Israel is still in darkness. While they have received a new spirit, they have not yet obtained “His Spirit.” The prophet

Ezekiel speaks of modern Israel when he writes: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26). “A new heart” and “a new spirit” means Israelis are not the same as Jews in the Diaspora; they are a vibrant people, on the way to superseding all nations of the world.

We must note the next verse: “And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (v. 27). That is yet to come; it is Israel’s future.

Artificial Intelligence

An article on sgrlaw.com proclaims, “Israel: Small Country, Innovative Giant”:

Israel has become a global technological and entrepreneurial powerhouse. The recent Bloomberg Innovation Index, an annual ranking of countries that measures performance in research and development, technology education, patents and other marks of technological prowess, listed Israel at #5 in the world. South Korea, Germany and Finland (which are also

home to companies represented by SGR) ranked first, third and fourth, respectively.

To explain artificial intelligence, builtin.com writes:

Artificial intelligence allows machines to model, or even improve upon, the capabilities of the human mind. And from the development of self-driving cars to the proliferation of generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Google’s Bard, AI is increasingly becoming part of everyday life—and an area companies across every industry are investing in.

The Jerusalem Post reports on AI brainwave decoders:

Scientists have developed a system that can read a person’s mind and reproduce the brain activity in a stream of text, relying in part on a transformer model similar to the ones that power Open AI’s ChatGPT and Google’s Bard.

This is an important step on the way to developing brain–computer interfaces that can decode continuous language through non-invasive recordings of thoughts.

“For a noninvasive method, this is a real leap forward compared to what’s been done before, which is typically



single words or short sentences," said Alex Huth. "We're getting the model to decode continuous language for extended periods of time with complicated ideas."

-*www.jpost.com*, 2 May 2023

The late, great scientist Stephen Hawking was quoted as saying: "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race." The Center for AI Safety adds, "Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks, such as pandemics and nuclear war."

When doing research on AI, one does not find much history because it is all new. While the early, theological development may go back to

the First World War, we know that for the general public, it was only in the 1970s that a mini-computer was readily available to many. But it was extremely primitive when compared to today.

We take note of the fact that Israel was born in May 1948.

These and other developments seem to point in the direction of a new dispensation, something humanity has not experienced during its 6,000+ year history.

Bible believers know the future; the apostle Peter reveals the end of planet earth, but gives us this glorious promise: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). (MC)

Mail to: Midnight Call Ministries, PO Box 84309, Lexington, SC 29073

MC0823



"I will bless them that
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Fleeing the Nazis: The Testimony of Raissa Atlas

By David Phillips (*Ebenezer's CEO*)

(Rachel) was born in 1928 in Ukraine. When she was 13 years old, the war started. She had younger twin sisters. As the Nazis approached, her father was called to serve in the Red Army, and she, her mom and the twins got on a train to flee to Kurdistan.

Already in route, they were attacked from the air. The train had to stop and the people had to hide. There was no food and water, so it was very difficult.

After a dangerous journey, they finally made it to Kurdistan. But the twins caught an illness and didn't make it. They were buried far from home, and Rachel was the only girl left. This was very difficult for the family.

After a year or two, the Red Army regained the invaded grounds, and so their family could return home to Ukraine. Sadly, when they got back, they found they no longer had a home; it had been blown up and entirely destroyed.

As they had no place to live, they went to an uncle of Rachel's who lived in another place. It was here that their family began getting adjusted to their

new life. That is the place her father returned to after the war. The entire time they were traveling from one place to the next, there were bombings, and they had to flee and hide often. One time they had to lie on the ground and Rachel, as a young girl, lifted her head. The plane was so low that she saw the pilot and his smiling face. This smiling face haunts her to this day, and she has never forgotten it.

During the time her father stayed with the fighting units, they found out he spoke Yiddish, and so they took him and used him as a translator for the Nazi soldiers they had captured. We believe God used this work to protect his life.

Rachel later became a pediatrician, married, and had two sons. She explained: "One day there was a tiny premature baby born (showing the lis-



teners using her hands that he was about 12 in. long). One doctor didn't have hope that they could save this little boy, and so wasn't even going to try." But Rachel pushed him out of the way, determined to save this tiny baby's life! After working long and hard, she managed to insert the life-saving IVs, which ultimately saved his life. With a smile she shares that years later, when this little premature boy grew up, he came back to thank her for not giving up and saving his life.

Before it became more difficult for Rachel to communicate, all fondly knew her for her love to pray with and for the volunteers and staff. When she saw you, the first question she asked was if you had children, and if not, were you married. If you replied "no," she would exclaim, "Why not?!" Instantly, she would grab both of your hands and pray that God would bless you with a good, strong, and godly husband/wife, and that He would bless you with chil-

dren. She would always pray for a certain number of children, like two to four. If you asked her to pray that you would have more children, she would insist that she knew best because SHE was the doctor, not you! This always brought a smile to all who had this experience with her. There was no arguing with this doctor!

This wouldn't happen just once, but she would pray with you each day. Yes, all knew Rachel for her prayers, and they meant so much to each one. To this day, past volunteers and staff share that this was the most precious memory they have of Rachel. Many now share with a smile how God answered her prayers for them.

With heartfelt thankfulness, we are grateful for your faithful love, prayers, and support! They mean so much to us and help us carry on and continue to care for Rachel, as well as other elderly brothers and sisters in Yeshua. Thank you!



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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Address letters for publication to: Letters to the Editor, Midnight Call, PO Box 84309, Lexington, SC 29073. Include full name, address, and daytime phone number or email. Without name and address, letters will be discarded unread. All material is subject to editing. Midnight Call assumes all publishing rights on letters sent to the Editor.

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

GLOBAL CONSPIRACY... WORLD GOVERNMENT... TRANSLATIONS

Global Conspiracy

To Midnight Call,

I have been receiving your magazine for over 10 years now, and enjoy it very much. I need your thoughts about the enclosed reports, wondering if any of this is true. I have been receiving lots of emails from different companies with the same news: regarding our economy and our banks failing, and later there being a recession.

This material is probably a lot of hype to make money on scaring people, the signs of the times!

-V. Srofe, OR

Answer: The material you enclosed originates from those who constantly emphasize conspiracy theories. Actually, I can't say it better than you did: "This material is probably a lot of

hype to make money on scaring people." That is precisely correct.

World Government

[Writer enclosed letter from a Christian political action group.]

Dear Brother Arno,

I have been reading all the resources and magazines you have been kindly mailing to us. Everything points to "one-world government." Books and magazines explain it is bound to happen as part of God's end-time plans/events, with some encouragement as well not to be afraid, thinking things are falling apart around us, but rather things are "falling in place" toward the end times.

I am just torn between: Should we sign a petition against the so-called



one-world government? Or is praying for that NOT to happen something God will not answer, and therefore I shouldn't pray that nor sign something that God would consider to be "kicking against the goads"; i.e., going against His will, based on prophecies as revealed in the Bible.

-M. Plueger, CA

Answer: Please do not take this as an offense, but the material you have enclosed is not worth my time to read. Why? Because it is mainly political, which is not our task. Our Lord Jesus did not get involved in government, nor did the apostles or the members of the early Church. We have clear instruction in the Bible; for example, Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:2, 1 Peter 2:13, Hebrews 13:17. Whether it's democracy, communism, socialism, dictatorship, monarchy, or whatever, we are obedient to the prevailing government. We are light and salt to humanity. That is why the Great Tribulation has not begun; we must first be removed.

Translations

Dear Sir,

The last days will be mainly characterized by spiritual deception (Matthew 24:4-5). I went to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago for four years, majoring in Bible Theology. I was taught that the KJV, NASB, and NKJV are all good translations. However, I have come to believe on my own that they are not. The KJV

is from the Textus Receptus manuscript, which Martin Luther used and is far superior. B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort were occultists who used the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts to form a Greek text (1881), which is used by modern translators. I recommend researching who B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort were and reading the book *New Age Bible Versions* by G. A. Riplinger.

-S. Chown, NY

Answer: The oldest available manuscript of the New Testament is the Codex Sinaiticus and dates back to the 4th century. None of the original handwritten texts have ever been found, but thousands of copies of various manuscripts have been discovered.

GotQuestions.org states: "Even though those variations do cause some confusion about the biblical text, most of the manuscript readings are in agreement. Out of about 500 pages in the Greek New Testament, the manuscript variations represent only about half of a page."

In summary, the government translation (KJV) used the Greek text, which was written later than the aforementioned.

I would not rely on Gail Riplinger's label of B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort as occultists. Different translations in many languages, using various "original" texts, all have the same message: Man is sinful but, praise God, He has prepared a way through the atonement completed by Jesus Christ our Lord. (MC)



URUGUAY

Encouragement and a New Antenna

BY JAN AND ISABELLE EISSES, MONTEVIDEO

On the blessings of our online ministry, and God's deadlines.



Llamada de Medianoche (Midnight Call) staff, Uruguay

Together with staff from the other mission sites in South America, we're preparing for our next *Llamada de Medianoche* (Midnight Call) online conference. Stephan Beitze and Eduardo Cartea will be speaking on 2 Thessalonians 2. The subject will be "The Final Apostasy" or "The Mystery of Lawlessness." Our goal is the same one the Apostle stated in the last verses of the passage: "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself [...] comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word" (vv. 16-17).

Encouraging Reactions to Our Work

The reactions to our online Bible school are encouraging. "This year I wanted to get to know the Bible better," writes one participant. "Now I've watched the first class on hermeneutics, and I've already downloaded the material. I want to take the class on the Pentateuch at the same time, as the first lesson is already online. That way I'll make faster progress. I'm very grateful for your work to bless believers. Regards, Moises Hernandez."

We also received this sweet report from a girl in Colombia, in response



Installation of the new *Radio El Libertador* antenna

to our children’s Bible course: “My name is Camila, I’m 6 years old, and I live in Bogotá. Picture this: My top front tooth is loose, and I’ve lost three of my bottom teeth, but two more have come in in their place. [...] I have a little brother named Mateo. He’s a sweet little boy who is three years old. I like your program very much. I want to get more material from you for my brother and me.”

One mother writes: “Thank you for the certificate and the little books that came. Thank you for your work and for blessing our son Joachin.”

Encouragement from Switzerland

It became clear last year that *Radio El Libertador’s* antenna was on its last legs. At first, we thought that this might be the end of our Christian radio broadcasts. But God laid it on our hearts that He, and not a rusted-through antenna, sets the deadlines. Midnight Call Switzerland provided the encouragement and financial support we needed to have a new antenna built. The specialized construction company we chose turned out to be reputable, working well and promptly. The foundations were poured in November and the new antenna was erected in January! (MR0523)



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

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CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP



By Peter Malgo

The prophet Haggai sums up our present situation: “he ... earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes” (Hag 1:6b). The global financial crisis of 2008 shook up all of humanity.

Statements made by leading figures in politics and economy showed a complete helplessness: “I am speechless. How can this be explained?” Even the most experienced traders of the international stock exchange, were at a loss for words when facing the gigantic destruction of capital: “I can’t stand watching news about the market anymore. It is just heartbreaking. And there is no end in sight.” Meanwhile, ever more companies were collapsing into failure. Insurance companies went bankrupt. America’s automobile industry was looking into the abyss. After years of decline and billions in losses, corporations were in a race to the bottom, so to speak.

Even in April 2008, the financial ministers of Western countries tried to reassure their citizens: “It isn’t all that bad.” Yet not long afterwards,

such statements grew silent. Instead, the calls for a new global financial order grew louder. There was even talk of a global authority, which ultimately would mean a world government.

Parallel to these events and developments, statistics showed that many Gospel ministries lacked financial resources. Donations were massively reduced: no more money for the mission! The book of Haggai discusses this very theme. Every Gospel ministry—ours included—has to ask the question again and again: “Are we using the financial resources entrusted to us in the right way?” The individual believer also cannot escape this question: “Do I manage my money correctly in God’s eyes?” We may ask, “How come I don’t have enough money?” God Himself takes up this question: “Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye



The great question we have to face is this: Are we dealing appropriately with the goods entrusted to us? Do we set the right priorities?

brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why?” (Hag 1:9a).

How up to date the Bible is! The few words, “Ye looked for much,” describe people who have invested their money and are waiting for it to increase, for interest rates to rise, for a return to be created, for shares to rise in value—and then comes the crash: “...and, lo, it came to little ... Why?” The Lord Himself gives the answer: “...Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit” (Hag 1:9-10). The problem for the modern, end-time Christian is that he sets the wrong priorities. We are very generous when it serves our own purpose. But when we are asked to do something for the Lord, we begin to calculate the figures. The divine equation, however, starts where our calculation ends. The Bible even goes so far as to call a person a thief, who withholds anything from the Lord as he begins to calculate the cost.

A very dramatic example is the report about Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5: “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?” (v. 3). Ananias hadn’t actually stolen any-

thing ... It was his money. He could even have kept the proceeds from the sale of the land completely to himself. But then Ananias would no longer have fit into the Christian community of the time. The preceding verses at the end of chapter 4, clearly state that the members of the Church at that time shared all their goods—no one suffered any lack. But now Ananias began to calculate and devise a financial plan for himself. He was looking for a way to keep some of the money without anyone knowing. He wanted this to remain secret. And thus, he became a thief. Before God, all is revealed.

The great question we have to face is this: Are we dealing appropriately with the goods entrusted to us? Do we set the right priorities? Let us be aware that we only have a relatively short time to manage our money well. And we cannot take any of it with us. When we enter eternity, everything will be left behind. Therefore, it is of great importance to invest all our resources in eternal values, while we can still do so. Throughout our life, we are only stewards of our money. That is why we read in 1 Corinthians 4:2: “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” [Ⓜ]

Midnight Call's **August Resource Guide**



How Did Huge Dinosaurs Fit on the Ark? Are Dinosaurs and Dragons the Same Thing?

Dinosaurs, Dragons, and the Bible will prepare your heart and your home to believe every word of the historical account of creation found in Genesis. Filled with biblical, scientific, and historical facts, the answers found within this faith-building book will help you stand on the authority of God's Word to demolish the evolutionary myths which cause people to doubt God. Sharing your faith will be much easier after reading this apologetic resource on the fascinating topic of dinosaurs and dragons.

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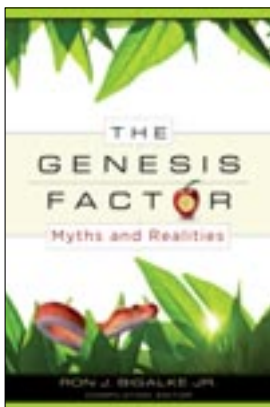
The scoffers of Peter's day were very much like modern-day skeptics in that they deliberately overlook the facts of biblical history. The cost of their unbelief is catastrophic even within the Christian church. Author Simon Turpin, the executive director of Answers in Genesis in the U.K., prepares us to confidently counter the philosophical bias of scoffers.

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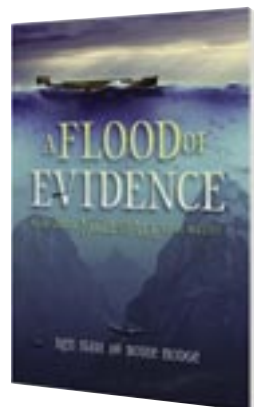
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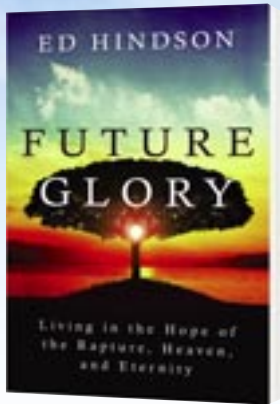
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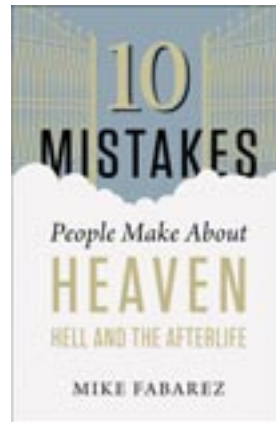
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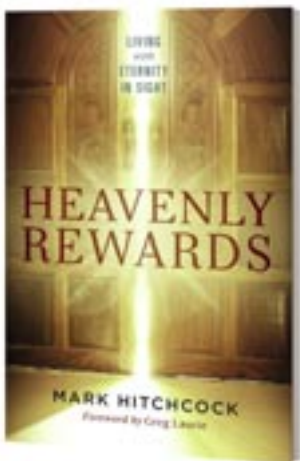
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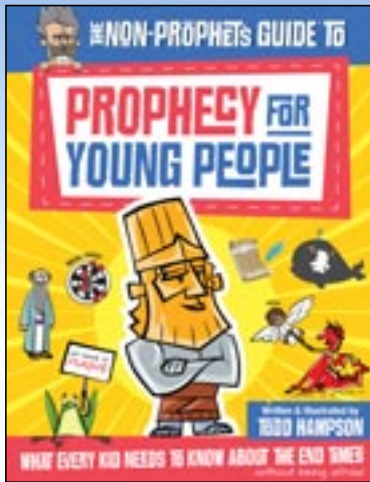
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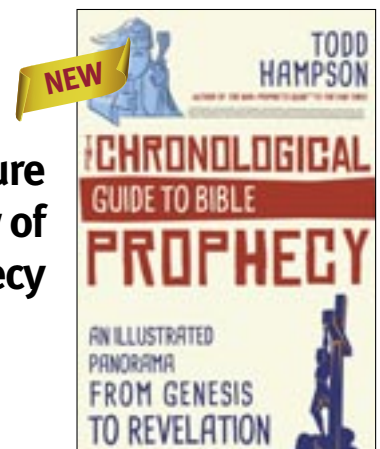
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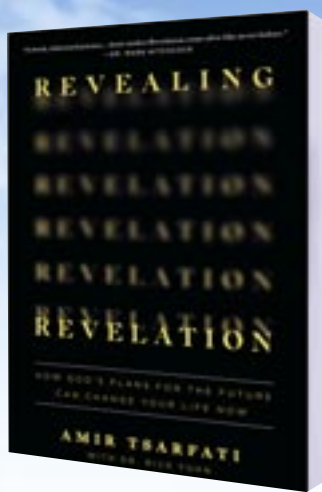
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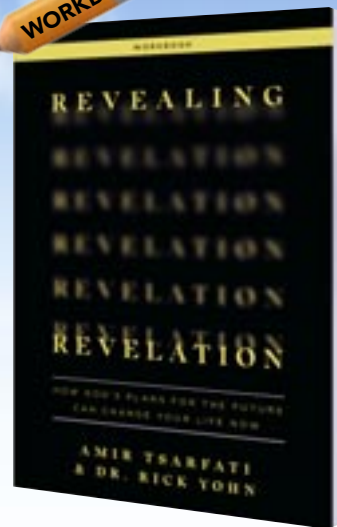
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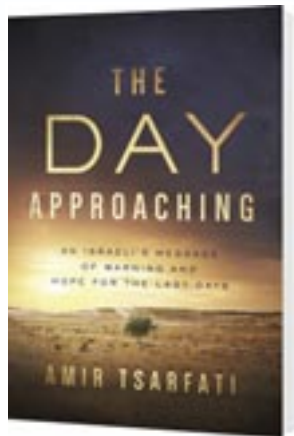
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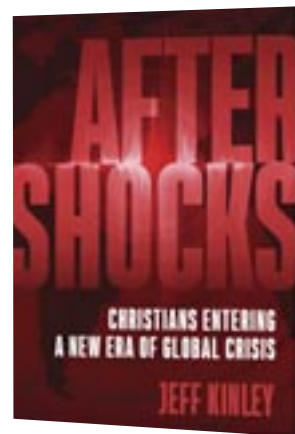
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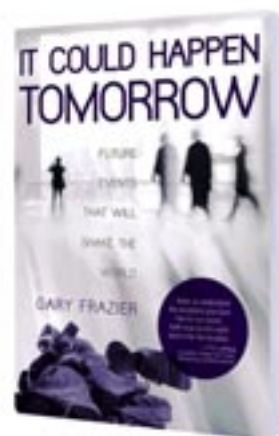
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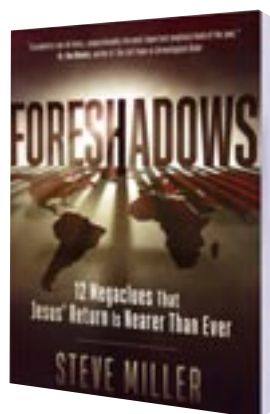
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OBITUARY



CHERYL LYNN JEFFCOAT

1951 – 2023

Cheryl Lynn Jeffcoat went home to be with the Lord on 25 June 2023. Who was Cheryl Jeffcoat? A pastor's wife, mother, and doting grandmother. Besides this, a secretary, phone customer service assistant, and typist for Midnight Call Ministries for over 30 years.

Now she experiences what is written in Philippians 1:6: "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."

Lynn, as we called her, inherited several special gifts. Her ability to do the work entrusted to her quickly and accurately was superb. Her fingers flew over the keyboard as she transcribed many messages for our books and magazines. At one time, she even typed manuscripts in the Spanish language in a speedy and accurate fashion.

Often, readers who had called the office would ask, "Who is that sweet lady with the Southern accent?"

Those who came to our prophecy conferences in Myrtle Beach were able to finally meet her, as she and her sister-in-law Kathy Roland manned the registration table.

Midnight Call remembers her as faithful, prompt, and proficient in the completion of projects. Her work is still evident in hundreds of thousands of copies of books and magazines we've published. "Copy Typist: Lynn Jeffcoat" appeared in the masthead of at least two decades' worth of *Midnight Call* and *News From Israel* magazines.

Besides her service to Midnight Call, she was a helpmate to her husband, Pastor Donald Jeffcoat, at their church. She is survived by her husband Donald and daughter Cindy.

Revelation 14:13 fittingly describes Lynn's work: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

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