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Midnight Call

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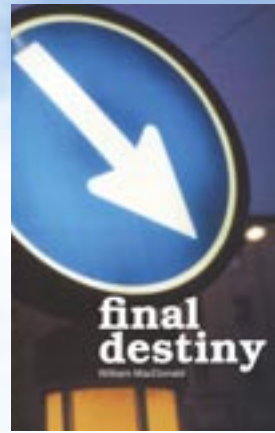
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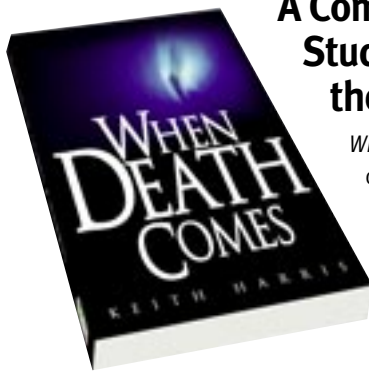
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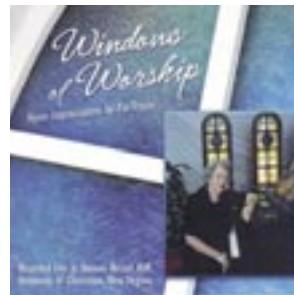
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Strange, or Quite Normal?

By Norbert Lieth

Director of Missions, Midnight Call International

AW. Tozer once wrote: “A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen, talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see, expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order to be full, admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, goes down in order to get up, is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and happiest when he feels worst. He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, gives away so he can keep, sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passeth knowledge” (*The Root of the Righteous*, p. 156).

Paul attests: “As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor 6:9-10).

The Bible tells us that the Church of Jesus is a teaching tool in the invisible world. Through it, the manifold wisdom of God is made known (Eph 3:10). For

instance, the angels marvel at what God has made of miserable lost sinners through Jesus Christ. They have received His Spirit and obediently walk the path. They separate themselves to pray, sing, and witness. They endure suffering, and in so doing, hold fast to the living faith.

The Apostle Peter writes: “Whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8). How can a Christian have such certainty? Only because Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One, is certainty itself. Only because God the Father is certain (Heb 11:6). A Christian does not believe in something fantastic, nebulous, or improbable. A Christian believes in the most certain thing there is. The invisible God from eternity confirms to him this rock-solid certainty, also known as the assurance of salvation. A Christian believes the Scripture and sees the Eternal One therein. He grasps the promises of salvation and experiences them. For him, the Bible is the road map to certainty. A Christian sees more than every unbeliever thinks he sees.

EDITOR'S NOTE

A believer in Jesus can die for his faith, because he sees the invisible future. He can endure suffering, because he sees the glory to follow. He is comforted with the eternal comfort, because he is anchored in God through Jesus Christ.

Many sure signs confirm our Lord and His resurrection, giving us assurance of our faith. He did not leave Himself unwitnessed. Those who preached about Jesus, saw Him. John wrote: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, pertaining to the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). And in the Acts of the Apostles, it says: "To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (1:3).

Because of his certainty, the "strange" follower of Christ is actually not strange at all; he simply no longer fits into this strange world of ours. Even the Athenians said to Paul: "For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean" (Acts 17:20).

In the midst of this "strange" October, I wish you joyous certainty in Christ. (MC)

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



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OUR TASK

Midnight Call Ministries is a nonprofit missionary organization, dedicated to proclaiming the entire Bible as the 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 with the infallibility of the Holy Scripture, which is God's Word, and in the eternal Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

WE BELIEVE Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and shed His blood to save mankind. He died and arose bodily the third day, 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-tribulational appearance of Jesus Christ for the Rapture of His Church (all born again believers).

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



A Look Ahead to the End

Philipp Ottenburg

What Daniel's deportation to Babylon and his glimpses of God's future plans can teach us in the here and now.

Lots of people like to read books, stories, and novels. Some like to read the back cover first to find out what the book is about, and then they go straight to the end of the book and read the last few pages. Not the most effective way to draw out the suspense.

It's different with God. He has used people in wonderful ways, showing them many things up to the end of time, and yet the Lord always keeps things very interesting. His redemptive

and world history always stay exciting. This is particularly true in the book of Daniel. Far from being just a simple book, it's definitely worth investigating, for it says:

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Dan 12:4).

We want to read it with a prayerful heart. Daniel was a man who received a glimpse of

the future from God, well before the events took place.

In the Best of Hands

Daniel was living in a turbulent era: various great powers were fighting for supremacy. He saw Babylon conquer Assyria, the sieges and captures of Judah and Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar's triumph and death, Medo-Persia conquering Babylon once again, and finally, the return of the Jews to the land (see Ezra, Nehemiah).

The book of Daniel gives us deep insight into Judah's time in Babylonian captivity, and even into Daniel's personal life. And, last but not least, it offers us a prophetic survey of the destinies of the nations during the so-called "fullness of the Gentiles." God established fullnesses (periods of time) when He was no longer speaking to His people, because there was nothing to be said ... times when Israel and Jerusalem were being judged by the nations.

The personal destinies described in the book of Daniel range from Nebuchadnezzar to the return of Jesus Christ, and testify to God's sovereignty and omnipotence. He is the Lord of world history. What we can see in this book as we look ahead to the end is that He, the living God, works everything according to the counsel of His will—both the destinies of nations and of each individual person.

One example that draws us into the book of Daniel: through Jeremiah, God designates the mighty and all-powerful Nebuchadnezzar as His servant and uses him to judge the people of Israel. "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words,

behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation" (Jer 25:8-9).

This shows us that God holds everything in His hand. The book of Daniel says that it's God who establishes and deposes kings. Isn't that a comfort? Everything has to pass across God's desk—His eye misses nothing. Israel isn't simply abandoned to people who can do whatever they want, nor has it ever been. Israel, you, and I aren't at the mercy of chance or the capriciousness of everyday life: to the contrary. And this also applies to the end of our lives. If God says our time's up, then our time's up. That completely takes the pressure off.

Since becoming the father of two wonderful children, I've become aware of a number of things. I've grown more skilled in some areas. When we need a sitter, we're very careful about who we're entrusting them to. It wouldn't be a simple matter to hand your children over to someone you had reservations about from the beginning. So, it's very important to us that our children are assigned to good teachers, for example. We want to know that they're in good hands.

Professor Eckstein wrote:

Lord, You are more true to me
than I am myself;
You love me more fully
than I ever could;
My growth and happiness

A Look Ahead to the End



“But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

rest more with you than with me,
and nobody but You is more burdened
with the things that matter to me.

But if this is true
and I can trust You, Lord,
more than I can trust myself,
then my life is better off in Your hands
than in my own.

Yes, God's hands are the best hands. You and I are in the best hands there are. We can be certain that we are in these loving hands, even in the midst of all the confusion. No invading army or national tragedy can change that. No shelling of nuclear power plants. He is the sustainer of life. When God withdraws His hands, there is nothing. Whether we feel it not, whether we even believe in God or not, the whole of Creation depends upon the Sustainer of life.

Once there was stubborn Israel, who just wouldn't walk in the ways of God. They recognized the right way, but refused: “Thus says the LORD: ‘Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.’ But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not pay attention’” (Jer 6:16-17).

And now, as Jeremiah had foretold, Jerusalem was being besieged by Nebuchadnezzar and his army. So we come to Daniel 1:1-2: “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god” (Dan 1:1-2).

In 586 BC, the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed under Nebuchadnezzar, and some of the implements were carried away. And, according to verse 2, it was the Lord's doing! He gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and some of the vessels into enemy hands.

Everything is in the best of hands: His hands. It was God Himself who handed these things over. Also, it is comforting that while this action seemed arbitrary, that was far from true. God determines our enemies' limits.

Consider the great cruelty that is shocking our world, the Ukraine war, but also conflicts in many other places on earth, as well as the coming Great Tribulation for Israel. Yet God hasn't taken His hands off the reins; He has all these agitated horses in His hand.

We can also see this in the horsemen of Revelation 6. It is Christ who opens the seals, and until He does so, the horsemen aren't able to



God holds everything in His hand. The book of Daniel says that it's God who establishes and deposes kings. Isn't that a comfort?

do anything. They can't just gallop off. Even these are in the best of hands. Christ opens the seals, and then Scripture says of the horse, "Its rider was permitted to..." For example, to take peace from the earth. Or to cause economic inflation, in the case of the black horse. No arbitrariness. "Its rider was permitted to..." From the beginning, God had determined how far Satan, his team of dark powers, and the Antichrist could go.

And what did Jesus say to Pilate? "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11a). Even when Gog and Magog attack, God says, "I will bring you out, and all your army" (Ezek 38:4).

So, it could actually be the case that a head of state would suddenly start a war overnight, similar to what we're seeing today. As God moves ahead with fulfilling Bible prophecy, nothing will be the same as it was the day before. And, let's not forget that He is just and will judge justly. The almighty God demonstrates through the book of Daniel how He sustains, arranges, and directs everything with the best possible hands, so that everything eventually ends up just as He, the just God, always intended.

It's a glorious fact that every person is different; we all have intentions, goals, and wills, as well as different aspirations and opinions, but God nonetheless achieves what He says in the Bible. Miraculous! Do we see how great our God is? He is great above the masses, and He

can do everything. Whatever is weighing on our hearts, we can count on an all-accomplishing, immeasurably great God.



God Provides Justice

Nebuchadnezzar and his army took away Jehoiakim, some of the implements, and something else: "Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans" (Dan 1:3-4).



Daniel was one of these men, and was still quite young (cf. v. 6). His Hebrew name combines the concept of judgment or righteousness with the divine title El. Thus, the name Daniel means, "God has given justice." El is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And in the power of El, the living God, Daniel worked at the Babylonian royal court. In El's power, Daniel in turn administered justice in Babylonian captivity, as he carried out the applicable laws. He was a statesman. In the midst of injustice, our God was using this righteous man to carry out

A Look Ahead to the End

A question worth considering: Are we as righteous as Daniel? Yes, you are also righteous, made so in Christ. In Christ, although we hardly dare think it, you and I would be mentioned in the same breath as Job. Not because we are innately good, but because we are in Christ.

justice. But Daniel was suddenly confronted with an injustice. He was ordered to eat things that weren't permitted under God's dietary laws for Israel. Additionally, he and his friends were given names derived from other gods, since it was absurd to the Babylonians that they bore names that were glorifying another (namely, the one true God). They were meant to serve at the royal court and were trained accordingly: instructed in all the anti-godly wisdom of Babylon. This higher education was such a priority for the king that they were also allotted the best of foods, the kinds which the king himself ate. As future representatives of Babylon, these students were expected to completely submit to the king in all religious and political matters.

But Daniel wanted to keep God's commandments; it was very important to him. He wanted to be steadfast and faithful to his God: "But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs" (Dan 1:8-9).

God saw his heart and gave him grace and mercy in the eyes of the chief eunuch, and his request was granted. God granted justice to Daniel, so he wouldn't be condemned to something that was ungodly in his day. And

in the end, he and his friends looked better and were more well-nourished than everyone else.

Ezekiel 14 calls Daniel a righteous man, and lists him among the likes of Job. What about us—you and me? God has justified us through His Son Jesus Christ. Who can be against us? "Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us" (Rom 8:34).

Anyone who has access to an influential person, who can help them out of a tough spot, is in a good position. You and I also have help before the judge—we know Christ. He is interceding for us. We have the best advocate! Maybe you're suffering from injustice, either within your family, from civil authorities, or at work. Injustice can eat away at us, but we can know that Christ is interceding for us. Even when it's difficult, we can leave these burdens in the best possible hands and entrust them to the One who grants us justice. We're dealing with the God who oversees everything, and He doesn't overlook injustice.

A question worth considering: Are we as righteous as Daniel? Yes, you are also righteous, made so in Christ. In Christ, although we hardly dare think it, you and I would be mentioned in the same breath as Job. Not because we are innately good, but because we are in Christ.

In and through Christ! What does that mean? It means you and I are so closely joined to Christ that our lives are no longer defined by us. In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul shows us the glorious fact that everyone in the body of Christ is washed clean, sanctified, and declared righteous. Jesus' righteousness is yours and mine. Despite all our faults—which may seem ever-present and cause us to suffer—nothing and no one can use them to condemn us.

There is one more thing we can observe and take away from Daniel's behavior with regard to righteousness and justice. Daniel was living under a system that actively opposed God. Recall that Daniel and his friends were given the names of Babylonian gods and foods contrary to God's dietary laws for Israel. The state engaged in practices such as sorcery and dream interpretation through occult means. Daniel demonstrates how to live in a warm, honest, and loving way; as an example of the faith, where anti-Christian currents and sentiments prevail. And, what's striking is that Daniel wasn't in an uproar over it. He never caused offense. He showed respect for his superiors, the government officials. His speech and actions were full of great patience and kindness. He declared his position in love, with an impressive testimony.

He asked to live in accordance with the Bible. It's also interesting that he didn't try to impose his convictions on everyone else in Babylon. This shows that we needn't, and shouldn't, go along with the crowd in social developments. We can instead remain calm and relaxed, because we know that everything will turn out as it must. We can also see here that God procured justice for His righteous ones, even under

this ungodly system. Where there seems to be no escape, God creates options.

After God granted justice to Daniel and his friends, and they ended up looking better than the others despite eating their own food, the Lord gifted them with broad wisdom and knowledge. Daniel was given a special understanding of visions and dreams, and this is where we find our look into the end of days.

A Panorama of World History

“As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus” (Dan 1:17-21).

What does it mean that God gave Daniel understanding in all visions and dreams? Much of what Daniel saw has already been fulfilled in history. But our wonderful God also gave him a glimpse toward the end of things, as becomes clear in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the statue: “but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days...” (Dan 2:28).

A Look Ahead to the End

Daniel could see that human improvements of the world won't achieve anything of value. The kingdom of heaven will reign only when Christ is there. Daniel received all of this wisdom from God.

We can also translate, "what will be in the latter days" as, "what will happen late in the day." This end of days or lateness means the end of days after the time of Tribulation, when the Lord returns. It's striking when we look at the statue depicted in the dream: The golden head represents Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire, which had taken possession of Jerusalem. From this point in time onward, Jerusalem was in the possession of all the other kingdoms symbolized by this sculpture. The Lord says, "They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

This means that Jerusalem, which is "trampled underfoot," is associated with the times of the Gentiles, or even the fullness of the nations; and it all began with Nebuchadnezzar, the golden head. The temple was gone, the city was under foreign rule, and some of the temple implements were now among the nations. We see in the book of Daniel that God gave this world domination, this kingdom, into the hands of the nations. And when will these times be fulfilled? When Jerusalem is no longer being trampled! Since Jerusalem will also be trampled underfoot in the Great Tribulation (Rev 11:2), the time of the nations will be fulfilled when Christ returns. Luke 21:25ff. speaks of the Lord's return immediately after it mentions the time of the Gentiles.

In this look into the future, we can see how everything is still in the best of hands. This is

shown through the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and in the subsequent chapters of the book of Daniel. One empire after another will be judged for its transgressions, and at the end of it all, the Stone (Christ at His return) will smash the feet of the statue, demolishing the entire sculpture. Self-worship and rebellion against God and His Son will be destroyed. He, the living God, works all things according to the counsel of His will and achieves justice, at the end of the age of nations.

At that time, He will also plead Israel's case, securing justice for His people through Jesus Christ. With Jesus' return, the royal, priestly people of Israel will assume leadership over the earth, both politically and in the worship of God. He will embrace His people again!

Daniel saw into the end, and his book is the one that makes it the most strikingly clear that God's kingdom on earth and Israel's (and Jerusalem's) rule by the pagan world were never meant to be thought of as taking place at the same time. Only after Israel had completely relinquished its position of authority, when the implements were gone and the temple destroyed, did the age of the Gentiles (the kingdom of the Gentiles) come into effect. And so, a restoration will only take place when God restores justice to Israel through Christ and He reigns in Jerusalem.

Daniel could see that human improvements of the world won't achieve anything of value. The kingdom of heaven will reign only when

Daniel and his friends knew that their affairs were completely in God's hands. We too can know concerning everything that comes our way: My time is in His hands!



Christ is there. Daniel received all of this wisdom from God.

What is our perspective on this as a Church, as the body of Christ? Perhaps you'd like to be as wise as Daniel. And you are! For we are in Christ, who was made wisdom for us by God, Paul says. Daniel received wisdom from God, and wisdom came to us from God as Christ.

Dreams and visions are obsolete today, because the Word of God has been made fully known through Paul (Col 1:25). There is nothing more to add. In Christ, we have the wisdom to study and understand the Scriptures, and to grow in them. We don't interpret dreams but His wonderful Word. Daniel was entrusted with the mysteries of God concerning world history. And we, as the body of Christ, have an overview of both the history of God's world and redemptive history. It's not limited to Nebuchadnezzar's reign, but spans from the foundation of the world to its completion. And not just here on

earth, but in the entire cosmos. Our position is in the heavenly places. Paul could have written to the Corinthians, "Everything is yours!" Daniel's writings are also a part of our heritage. We are "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1), and we are meant to be investigating them, telling others about them, and teaching them.

When Daniel and his friends were confronted with the king's fare, they asked to eat godly food

for a trial period of 10 days. Why 10 days? One possible answer is found in Psalm 31:15, and relates to the meaning of the number 10 in Hebrew. It is the same character for the word "hand." The verse says, "My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!"

Daniel and his friends knew that their affairs were completely in God's hands. We too can know concerning everything that comes our way: My time is in His hands!

Everything is in the best of hands: the courts, Israel, Daniel himself, the nations, your life and mine and every situation, including the time of the nations until Jesus returns. He will give justice in due time and in all things. We are dealing with the almighty, powerful God, eternal, ageless, and beyond space and time. He sees everything at once. And we're able to go through life with this God as our Father.

(MR0722/1257)



FINAL ENDTIME WEALTH TRANSFERS AND CRASHES: PART 3



Many people who like to follow prophetic trends, often ask: When will global financial markets finally crash? When will financial systems end up a smouldering ash heap ... and, unlike the mythological Phoenix, never to rise again?

By Wilfred Hahn

And so, we now come to a third part of our study of endtime money trends. In prior articles, we highlighted the various asset types ... the boosting and inflation of wealth on the earth today. We concluded that mankind has come a long way in magnifying worldly riches and setting up sophisticated, global systems of money and wealth. In a previous part, we also briefly explored the rarified world of "Big Money" and the super-wealthy. The extreme stratification of wealth seen worldwide today, we concluded, is in alignment with the conditions and scale prophesied in the Bible.

In this second of our 3-part series, we take a brief excursion into the rarified world of big money and wealth. Just who is experiencing its splendor? And just what does the Bible have to

say about wealth in general and its prophetic role? As it turns out, quite a bit.

At this point in human history, we identify a massive, hyper-intensive system of commercialism ... perhaps at the very apex of perversion, materialism, humanism, and idolatry. The entire globe is subsumed and captured by a corrupt monetary system and net of financialization, with globalism and globalization being the handmaidens.

And, crucially, from within this late stage emerges a small group of ultra-rich people. Seen worldwide, wealth distribution today (taken in all its forms and guises) may be the most uneven and extreme ever in history.

A surprising reaction to the world's global commercial colossus, is seen in Christianity itself. It cannot be denied that countless individual Christians

Anyone surveying the course of the world's debt-based financial systems today, will no doubt conclude that a massive collapse of the world's financial system is inevitable at some point.

have been lured and deceived by earthly perspectives ... therefore becoming trapped.

Many churches have become quite comfortable in the cozy embrace of worldly wealth and affluence. Some even believe that the world's wealth will be given for the church's disposal, to take over the economic structures of the world and thereby force obedience to "Christianity" (loosely defined). This is an eye-opening strategy. Why? In form, it is the exact tactic that the False Prophet will enforce upon the world ... limiting "buying and selling" (Revelation 13:7). Both use financial power and techniques to bring about religious goals.

We return to the worldwide economic colossus. Just what will happen to the world's pumped-up edifice of mostly paper wealth? What does the Bible foretell for the elites of this era? Who, if anybody, will be the beneficiary of the "wealth of the wicked" (Proverbs 13:22)? We will return to these topics. The Bible provides the answers and gives us specific information about future outcomes.

Worldwide Wealth Collapse

What happens to the fabricated façade of the world's wealth? A portion of it



will collapse and disappear. However, we must note that the Bible speaks of different kinds of wealth. Some of it will survive, and is mentioned to play a role in the Millennial period (as we will show). Another type will completely disappear, never to reappear again.

Anyone surveying the course of the world's debt-based financial systems today, will no doubt conclude that a massive collapse of the world's financial system is inevitable at some point. No one can know exactly when this will happen. Mankind's greed and selfish indiscipline alone assures that this will occur.

According to the Bible, we learn that a colossal destruction of the world's economic systems will take place; likely in the latter half of the 7-year



Tribulation period and the early Millennium.

Scripture clearly states that a time of wrath will come where God says He will bring down the pride of mankind. However, as part of this unfolding, there are possibly as many as six different judgments involving collapses or wealth overturns—all of them yet to occur in the future.

Isaiah sheds light on some of the different manifestations of the “day of the Lord” (referring to the Tribulation period, or possibly just the second half of this period). “The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled), for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan, for all the towering mountains and all the high hills, for every lofty tower and every fortified wall, for every trading ship and every stately vessel. The arrogance of man will be brought low, and the pride of men humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will totally disappear” (Isaiah 2:12-18).

Here we see that sovereign economies and nations (symbolized by trees, cedars, and oaks), global trading systems (figuratively as ships), and individual nation states, greater or lesser (mountains and hills), will be brought low.

A number of collapses are yet to take place inside this “day of the Lord.” Here,

in no particular order, are these separate judgments (or wealth turnovers) that all lie ahead for Israel and the world. We count at least five that are pre-Millennial, and one that takes place thereafter.

1. Wrath upon Israel/Jerusalem. Jerusalem is overcome, while the remnant escapes into the wilderness. While Israel may be a rather tranquil area of the world (in a relative sense) in the first half of the Tribulation, following a covenant with the Antichrist, anyone hoping to remain unscathed and safe from loss in the second half will be disappointed. When the Antichrist breaks the terms of his covenant with Israel (this to occur in the middle of the 7-year Tribulation period, according to a number of scholars), Jerusalem faces destruction and Israel flees.

2. Wrath upon All Mankind. This category includes judgments on individual nations, as well as globalism itself. Ultimately, this is completed at Armageddon and in a short period of time thereafter. Not only does God “consume the whole earth” (Zephaniah 3:8), but Israel also plays a role in exacting judgment upon the nations and peoples that have persecuted her (Micah 4:13; Jeremiah 30:11).

3. Wrath upon the Great Whore. Revelation 17 reveals that Mystery Babylon, the Mother of Prostitutes, will be burned

The demise of Babylon the great city appears to be separated into at least three judgments or events. We note that “death, mourning and famine” will overtake Babylon in one day (Revelation 18:8). This is mentioned only once. Yet, sudden collapses and destruction of wealth are said to occur in “one hour” three separate times.

by fire. Whatever wealth this religious entity represented, as part of the grand ecumenical movement of religion and money, she will come to naught. “They [the 10 kings] will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire” (Revelation 17:16).

4 & 5. Wrath and Judgment upon Mammon/Commercialism. It is not generally well understood that the judgments upon commercialism and the manmade pride that derives from these “Babel-like” systems, take more than one form. First, consider that there may be several stages in the collapse of Babylon the Great.

Also, Ezekiel mentions that a re-emergence of Tyre (or a type of Tyre) will occur at some point. Tyre was the center of a global trade system in the ancient world (600 to 500 BC), and can be seen to foreshadow a globalized trade system (globalization) of the last days. It was ultimately destroyed by Alexander the Great in 332 BC.

Ezekiel says that Tyre “[...] will return to her lucrative prostitution and will ply her trade with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth” (Isaiah

23:17). How this fate connects with the judgments of Babylon the Great is not entirely clear. There seem to be different judgments upon Mammon/Commercialism.

For example, in the case of Babylon the Great, its wealth is “[...] never to be found again” (Revelation 18:21), while that of revived Tyre is only never to be hoarded again, but is to “go to those who live before the LORD” (Isaiah 23:18). The Psalmist also refers to this event, “The city of Tyre will come with a gift, people of wealth will seek your favor” (Psalm 45:12). These are different results, and therefore must refer to more than one judgment.

The demise of Babylon the great city appears to be separated into at least three judgments or events. We note that “death, mourning and famine” will overtake Babylon in one day (Revelation 18:8). This is mentioned only once. Yet, sudden collapses and destruction of wealth are said to occur in “one hour” three separate times. Each of these involve three different groups of people (Revelation 18:10, 17, 19—nations, kings, and merchants). While these three depictions could very well refer to the same event, the fact



“You cannot serve both
God and Money”
(Matthew 6:24).



remains that they take place in one hour, while the overall process of destruction of Babylon the Great takes place over a day. This suggests that the downfall cannot be reconciled in one event, but rather multiple events—plausibly as many as three.

At the end of all these wealth overturns mentioned to this point, there is one more great and final wealth overturn that occurs at the start of the Millennium period and thereafter. Crucially, it is the great wealth transfer to Israel. While Israel and Jerusalem are raided and sacked in the Tribulation period, in the end, all and much more is returned to her.

A large part of the world’s riches that are not destroyed in the Tribulation period, flow to Zion. Even here there are at least two types of flows: 1. What is apparently seized as part of the “threshing” of the nations that rise against Israel. These are the “ill-gotten gains” of the nations (Micah 4:13, translated as

“illicit” profits) that go before the Lord. 2. Other flows to Israel are more a type of tribute, resulting from Israel’s dealings with the rest of the world. For example, “Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come” (Isaiah 60:5; cf. v. 11; 61:6; 66:12; Zechariah 14:14).

Thoughts to Ponder

The merging of God and Mammon—figured as religion and materialism, faith and globalization, in bed together—is the final capstone of mankind’s deception. This is reflected in the religious and commercial Babylon, shown to rise in illicit cahoots in Revelation 17 and 18. It is the final, globe-spanning religion.

Considering all of the above, one may wonder why it is not the rich Laodicean church that is particularly reprimanded by Christ. In fact, the apostate religion’s church and its many daughters—shown as Mystery Babylon the Whore in Revelation 17—are well on their way to a full union with commercial Babylon of Revelation 18 (in this writer’s opinion).

Since this is an impossibility—“You cannot serve both God and Money” (Matthew 6:24)—it is really a movement in which Mammon has successfully robed itself in the garb of religion and apparent “Christian godliness” (2 Timothy 3:5). (MC)



Qumran: God's Word Stands Forever

(Sites of the Bible Series)

DR. RON J. BIGALKE

The Judean Desert is east of Jerusalem and descends to the Dead Sea. The land is mountainous, half desert and half cultivable land. The tribe of Judah inherited this land that is west of the Dead Sea. The territory was vast and as a populous tribe, Judah was tasked with a significant responsibility, because it was situated on the border between Israel and some of its most ferocious enemies.

Considering the mountainous land and its precarious border, one should not be surprised to know that Judah's material prosperity never compared to that of the northern territories. Judah, nevertheless, had one supreme advantage: its mountain strongholds were easily protected. Any nation attempting to invade the

Judean Desert would be severely challenged by the mountainous terrain. By contrast, the fertility of the Jezreel (Gk. Esdraelon) Valley has attracted numerous conquerors and warriors from every nation under the sun who have encamped in the plain, so that it has been called the "battlefield of Palestine."

Qumran: God's Word Stands Forever

Judah's eastern border extended the complete length of the Dead Sea, "as far as the mouth of the Jordan. And the border of the north side was from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan" (Josh 15:5). The northern boundary started from where the Jordan entered the Dead Sea. There were no cities in the Judean Desert, which made it particularly attractive to those wanting seclusion. The Qumran community in particular lived a monastic life, situated northwest of the Dead Sea shore on the West Bank, from the second century BC until the first century AD. The Jewish sect is known as the Essenes and is believed to have been responsible for producing the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among the areas excavated at Khirbet Qumran (a cemetery, an extensive water system, and refectory), a room was discovered with inkwells and writing benches of plaster, which archaeologists suggested was the scriptorium where the scrolls were copied.

The Essenes were a priestly sect known for their strict asceticism. The Jewish historian Josephus explained them as "Jews by birth" with "a greater affection for one another than the other sects have [i.e. the Pharisees and Sadducees]. These Essenes rejected pleasure as an evil, but esteem continence, and the conquest over our passions, to be virtue" (*Wars of the Jews* 2.8.2). He continued: "These men are despisers of riches, and so very communicative as raises our admiration. . . . They have no certain city but many of them dwell in every city; and if any of their sect come from other places, what they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own; and they go into such as they never knew before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them. . . . And as for their piety

towards God, it is very extraordinary [ibid. 2.8.3-5]. . . ."

The Essenes were bound closely as a community. They were devout and reflective, and concerned with ceremonial purity, in addition to the preservation of Scripture. With the impending destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Essenes knew the Romans would soon be at their site. It was necessary to hide a number of the scrolls in the caves of the western hills surrounding the area prior to the desertion of Qumran. In 1947, a Bedouin shepherd discovered the ancient scrolls while allegedly chasing a stray goat. He found the majority of the manuscripts in what is known as Cave 1 (since it was discovered first). Eleven caves were identified (between the years 1947-56) that contained manuscripts wrapped in leather scrolls and hidden in clay jars. The entire Old Testament corpus is represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls except for the book of Esther. Other texts were also discovered, such as those addressing community rules and religious ideas. Copper scrolls indicated the location of treasure sites. The Essenes anticipated the coming of a Deliverer, and believed they would have a prominent role in establishing the kingdom of God on earth. They considered themselves faithful to the prophet Isaiah's admonition: "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness" (Isa 40:3).

Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest extant Hebrew manuscripts—copied by a group of scholars called the Masoretes—were dated to the 10th century AD. The copies were at least 1,300 years removed from the original writings (autographs), and questions arose with regard to how accurate the copies truly

were. Rabbis had a practice of destroying worn copies of Scripture, and are the reason why the earliest manuscripts are very late. However, the finds at Qumran proved to be absolutely fascinating because they were dated from the second century BC, and verified that available copies of the Old Testament today are the same (only translated) as those in the first century AD.

Seven scrolls were discovered in Cave 1; some were complete and some fragments. Included in this find was the earliest known complete book of Isaiah (Isaiah A). There was a commentary on Habakkuk, the Genesis Apocryphon (embellished patriarchal tales and the Apocalypse of Lamech), an incomplete text of Isaiah (Isaiah B), a community rulebook called the Manual of Discipline, the War Scroll (a manual for military organization and strategy of “the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness”), and approximately 30 thanksgiving hymns.

Credit: K. Bigalke



Cave 4 in the Background

Cave 4 is the most popular because it is the most productive in terms of finds. More than 15,000 fragments from an excess of 200 books were found in the fourth cave. This included a fragment of Samuel, which possibly is the oldest extant piece of biblical Hebrew dating from the fourth century BC. A total of 122 biblical scrolls (or fragments) were found in Cave 4. Unfortunately, the scrolls were poorly preserved because they were not stored in jars. Of those not recovered by purchase from the Bedouins (which were purchased individually, resulting in the creation of some 15,000 fragments from single pieces), archaeologists sifted the dust of the cave floor to find other fragments.

The last scrolls to be discovered were found in Cave 11. Excavations were productive with thirty scrolls found, including a well-preserved copy of some Psalms. Among these was the apocryphal Psalm 151, which was previously known only in the Septuagint (but not the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible). The cave also yielded a scroll with a portion of Leviticus, in addition to a Targum (paraphrase of Job). Among the biblical scrolls, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms seem to have been the favorites of the Qumran community.

The total number of manuscripts collected from the eleven caves is stated to be between 600 and 800. One of the more notable contributions of the Qumran literature is the dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls, somewhere between 200 BC and the middle of the first century AD. The majority of scholars will affirm 100 BC as an approximate date for the manuscripts, though some are dated earlier.

Qumran: God's Word Stands Forever

The greatest significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls is the overwhelming confirmation of the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible. The text of the Isaiah scroll, for instance, is nearly the same as the standard Hebrew Bible. The majority of the variants are details of grammar and spelling (though there are instances of some very obvious discrepancies). Even though two copies of Isaiah—the complete Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa a of St. Mark's Monastery) and the incomplete Hebrew University Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa b)—were discovered in Cave 1, they proved to be word-for-word identical to the traditional book of the prophet (in the large majority of the text). Thus, despite being 1,000 years earlier than the oldest dated extant manuscript, they demonstrated inconsequential alteration in the text.

The discovery of both versions is significant for the textual history of the Old Testament, because several versions of many books existed concurrently between the second century BC and the first century AD. Furthermore, the Masoretic text was essentially standardized prior to its official acceptance in later centuries, since both copies of Isaiah are nearly identical with the standard, presently known book. The small number of variations is such that the truth of the biblical text is unaffected. For example, Isaiah 40:12 in the Masoretic text reads, “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?” The Qumran Isaiah Scroll reads, “Who has measured the waters of the sea in his palm?” While it is true that a few variants could result in a difference of meaning, the principles of textual criticism will be applied to determine which reading is correct. However, even in such

cases, no doctrine of Scripture is ever compromised or negated. Translations of the Old Testament into English and other languages can be done with confidence, knowing that Scripture—as it is presently available—is accurate and reliable, and represents the original manuscripts (autographs).

The Dead Sea Scrolls indicate the messianic expectations both prior to and with the coming of Jesus, and provide knowledge of the Semitic background to the New Testament. The Essenes existed at the time of Jesus, yet none of the Dead Sea Scrolls refer to the Lord, nor do they mention any follower of Jesus named in the New Testament. They do reflect the New Testament concepts of good and evil, a coming judgment, and kingdom rule of the Messiah. The non-biblical scrolls reflect life at Qumran and illumine many aspects of the pre-Christian world.

The Judean Desert is demarcated by a barren wilderness. Green patches of grass and desert flowers are present for only a few weeks in the winter. The wilderness is the “dry and weary land where there is no water” (Ps 63:1b). As an illustration of this fact, Isaiah 40:8 indicates the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls in declaring, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.” External evidence can never make people believe in the God of the Bible. Yet there is every reason to believe in God's Word and to live with complete trust in Scripture, without any external evidence whatsoever. Nevertheless, the Lord God chose to give encouragement to the believing, and even provide evidence to the unbelieving that the Holy Bible truly is His accurate and reliable Word. (1344)



After addressing such works of the flesh as enmity, strife, and fits of anger, the Apostle Paul introduces the fruit of the Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22-23a).

This verse shows us this fruit’s nine different flavors. The Holy Spirit, when given room, bears a fruit with nine different characteristics.

As children of God, we need all nine varieties of this fruit, from love to self-control. “If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal 5:25). But the variety that we need most in our present day is patience. And its only source is the Holy Spirit. Reflect for a moment on the state of things in our world: the prevalence of homosexuality, legalized abortion, the breakdown of marriage and family, the fracturing of every moral tradition and standard. On

top of this, there is also widespread rejection of God’s plan of salvation in our society.

How should we as children of God react to such a situation? In light of these things, it would be normal to ask, “Why doesn’t God intervene? Why doesn’t He destroy those who are trampling His truth in one fell swoop?”

But that reaction comes from our flesh. The answer, by contrast, comes from a compassionate, merciful, Christian point of view: God wants every person to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). God has patience with us, and doesn’t want anyone to be lost (2 Pet 3:9). So, it’s necessary for followers of Jesus to practice patience daily. We need to have patience with the world in which we live, and reach out to it in love rather than in anger. For the fruit of the Spirit is ... patience.

(MR1022/1287)

The Necessity of Patience

Elia Morise

We’re living in uncertain and troubled times. That’s why we need the fruit of the Spirit even more, and one flavor in particular.




WORLD FOCUS

 USA

Demon Particles?

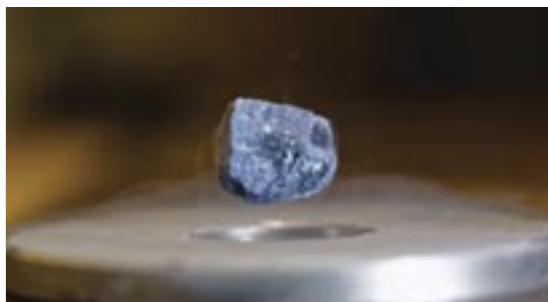
Physicists have discovered a transparent, massless, and neutral “demon” particle that could help scientists understand superconductors better, according to a new study by researchers from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

 The study, published in the journal *Nature*, focused on the search for a particle first theorized by physicist David Pines in 1956.

In solids, electrons act erratically, combining into collective units. If enough energy is input, the electrons can form plasmons—waves that act somewhat like a particle (also known as a quasiparticle)—if enough energy is input, although usually, the mass of solids is too large for plasmons (units of plasma, also theorized by Pines along with David Bohm in 1952) to form at room temperature.

Demon particles, which can also be conceptualized as waves, would be different. Since they’re massless, they can form with any energy and, therefore, at any temperature.

Pines theorized that electrons in a solid would be able to combine to form two plasmons which would then fall out of phase with each other in such a way that the peaks of one plasmon’s waves would coincide with the valleys of the



High temperature superconductor levitating above a ring magnet. (credit: Julian Litzel/Wikimedia Commons)

other plasmon’s waves. This new quasiparticle would be massless, neutral, and would not interact with light. Pines referred to this theoretical particle as a “demon.”

“At first, we had no idea what it was,” said former graduate student Ali Husain, co-author of the study. “Demons are not in the mainstream. The possibility came up early on, and we basically laughed it off. But, as we started ruling things out, we started to suspect that we had really found the demon.”

-www.jpost.com, 13 August 2023

Commentary: The word “demon” caught our attention. It does not appear in most translations of the Bible; usually, the word “devils” is used. Since there is only one devil, “demons” is probably a better translation.

The article was sub-headlined, “Massless, invisible demon quasipar-

ticles...” Obviously, there is no end in sight to these scientists the world over feverishly seeking “where it all began.” A Google search reveals about David Bohm: “Some scientists seek to clarify reality, others to mystify it. Physicist David Bohm seemed driven by

both impulses. He is renowned for promoting a sensible (according to experts like Einstein, John Bell and philosopher Tim Maudlin) interpretation of quantum mechanics. But Bohm also asserted that science can never fully explain the world.” Yes, the professor is right, “science can never fully explain the world.” Why not? Because, then they could explain God, who created all things. Proverbs 1:7 proclaims: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” If one wants to learn how things began, just read the first ten words in the Bible: “In the beginning God cre-

ated the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

8062

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



MALAYSIA
**Owners of LGBTQ Watch
 Could Face Jail**

Malaysia's government said that anyone buying or selling LGBTQ-themed Swatch watches could face prison terms of up to three years, as authorities pledged to stop the sale of Swatch products with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer elements that "may harm the morality" of the country.



A Malay couple walking past Swatch outlet at a shopping mall in Putrajaya, Malaysia
 Vincent Thian / AP

 The formal ban is just the latest crackdown by the government on rainbow-colored Swatch products. In May, Malaysia's law enforcement unit at the interior ministry raided Swatch stores at 11 shopping malls across the country, including in the capital Kuala Lumpur, confiscating timepieces bearing what it called "LGBT elements," the French news agency AFP reported.

Swatch filed a lawsuit in response to those raids in July, saying the government had damaged the company's reputation.

In a statement emailed to CBS News, the Swatch Group declined to comment on the latest ban on some of its products in Malaysia and said the company

was "still waiting for the hearing" regarding its existing lawsuit.

-*www.cbsnews.com*, 10 August 2023

Commentary: The official religion of Malaysia is Islam, comprising about 62% of the population, with Buddhism at 20% and Christianity 9.2%. It is of interest that the "Christian world" is actually at the forefront of protecting and even promoting the LGBTQ movement.

Another report by NBC News states that Iraq has banned the media from using the term "homosexuality"; instead, they must use "sexual deviance." The word "gender" was also banned. That article concluded: "More than 60 countries criminalize gay sex, while same-sex sexual acts are legal in more than 130 countries, according to Our World in Data."

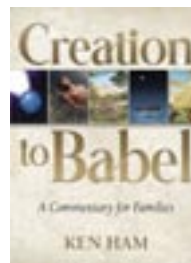
One of the undeniable end-time signs is that of Sodom. "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:29). What happened in Sodom? The Sodomites had political power. We read in Genesis 19:9: "And they said, Stand back. And they 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." Later in the New Testament, Peter adds: "And

delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his right-

eous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)" (2 Peter 2:7-8).

8061

(See *Creation to Babel*, Item #2390, \$21.99.)




SWITZERLAND
'Brain-like' Chip Promises Greener AI

Concerns have been raised about emissions associated with warehouses full of computers powering AI systems.



GETTY IMAGES

 IBM said its prototype could lead to more efficient, less battery draining AI chips for smartphones.

Its efficiency is down to components that work in a similar way to connections in human brains, it said.

Compared to traditional computers, "the human brain is able to achieve remarkable performance while consuming little power," said scientist Thanos Vasilopoulos, based at IBM's research lab in Zurich, Switzerland.

(continued next page)

'Brain-like' Chip (continued from page 25)

He told the BBC the superior energy efficiency would mean "large and more complex workloads could be executed in low power or battery-constrained environments," for example, cars, mobile phones and cameras.

"Additionally, cloud providers will be able to use these chips to reduce energy costs and their carbon footprint," he added.

Most chips are digital, meaning they store information as 0s and 1s, but the new chip uses components called memristors [memory resistors] that are analogue and can store a range of numbers.

You can think of the difference between digital and analogue as like the difference between a light switch and a dimmer switch.

The human brain is analogue, and the way memristors work is similar to the way synapses in the brain work.

Prof Ferrante Neri, from the University of Surrey, explains that memristors fall into the realm of what you might call nature-inspired computing that mimics brain function.

Professor of IT at the University of Bath, James Davenport, said IBM's findings were "potentially interesting" but warned that the chip was not an "easy to use" solution to the problem but more like "a possible first step."

-www.bbc.com, 10 August 2023

Commentary: There is no turning back; science is well on its way to building a

human-like artificial brain. While this brain-like chip is in the developing stages, it's only a matter of when and how it will be implemented. We note that "greener AI" is the driving force; mankind is convinced that the environment needs saving. Yet all these efforts will fail in the end. Here the words of Jesus are applicable: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

8060

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



SOUTH AFRICA

BRICS Countries Turn to Local Currencies

Hobbled by the impact of sanctions against founding shareholder Russia, the New Development Bank (NDB) set up by the BRICS countries needs to increase its local currency fundraising and lending, South Africa's finance minister told Reuters.



Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana said boosting local currency usage among the NDB's members will also be on the agenda, with the aim of de-risking the impact of foreign exchange fluctuations rather than de-dollarization.

Increasing local currency fundraising and raising capital from new members could help the NDB in tough times, cut-

ting its dependence on U.S. capital markets where sanctions against Russia have driven up its borrowing costs, analysts said.

Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt have joined since 2021, bringing its membership to eight. Uruguay is partway through the process of joining, while Algeria, Honduras, Zimbabwe and Saudi Arabia have expressed interest.

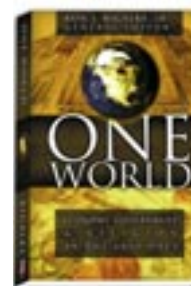
By comparison, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which is backed by China and began operating in 2016, has 106 members, including 23 European countries and 45 outside of Asia.

-www.reuters.com, 10 August 2023

Commentary: Quite naturally, China is the powerhouse when it comes to finances and economic might. The nation is on its way to replacing the USA as the largest economy in the world. Presently, it is the undisputed leader in manufacturing, with 28.7% of global output. Nevertheless, to replace the dollar is all but impossible at this time. However, it shows that new global power blocs are being formed, which we recognize as eventually leading to a one-world currency, one-world economy, and finally, a one-world government.

8059

(See *One World*, Item #2203, \$15.99.)



JAPAN

Population Drops by 800,000

Every one of Japan's 47 prefectures posted a population drop in 2022, while the total number of Japanese people fell by nearly 800,000.

The figures released by Japan's internal affairs ministry mark two new unwelcome records for a nation sailing into uncharted demographic territory, but on a course many other countries are set to follow.

Even an all-time high increase in foreign residents of more than 10%, to 2.99 million, couldn't halt a slide in the total population, which has declined for 14 years in a row to 122.42 million in 2022.

On 1 April, the new Children and Families Agency was launched, bringing all related issues, including the birthrate, under one entity. The government has also pledged to double spending on childcare and allowances to 4% of GDP, but childcare and education subsidies implemented in the past have made little impact on the birthrate.

The average fertility rate for the OECD group of wealthy nations is 1.66, well below the replacement rate of 2.1 required to maintain population numbers.

Nearby Taiwan is just below Japan with 1.24 babies per woman, while neighboring South Korea has the world's lowest rate at just 0.78.

-www.theguardian.com, 26 July 2023



The falling birth rate in Japan led the population to fall by almost 800,000 in 2022, as the number of deaths outstripped births.

Richard A Brooks/AFP/Getty Images

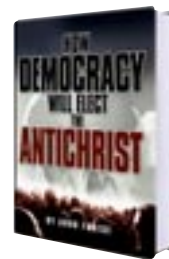
Commentary: Wikipedia writes: "Population growth is the increase in the number of people in a population or dispersed group. Actual global human population growth amounts to around 83 million annually, or 1.1% per year. The global population has grown from 1 billion in 1800 to 7.9 billion in 2020."

Figures don't lie, but quite naturally, alarmists do. Why? Because they are blind to the ramifications of their actions. Regarding the future of planet earth, Genesis 8:22 proclaims: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." This stands in opposition to all the declarations of "save the world, save our oceans, save the climate, etc."

The ultimate reason for the decline in population is the economic success of industrialized nations such as Japan. Second Timothy 3:2-5 lists the motive of life in the end times: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobe-

dient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Interestingly, 18 characteristics are listed about end-time Christianity: 3 times 6, or 666.



8052

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



INDIA

'Gravity Hole' in the Indian Ocean

There is a "gravity hole" in the Indian Ocean—a spot where Earth's gravitational pull is weaker, its mass is lower than normal, and the sea level dips by over 328 feet (100 meters).



This anomaly has puzzled geologists for a long time, but now researchers from the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru, India, have found what they believe is a credible explanation for its formation: plumes of magma coming from deep inside the planet, much like those that lead to the creation of volcanoes.

To come to this hypothesis, the team used supercomputers to simulate how the

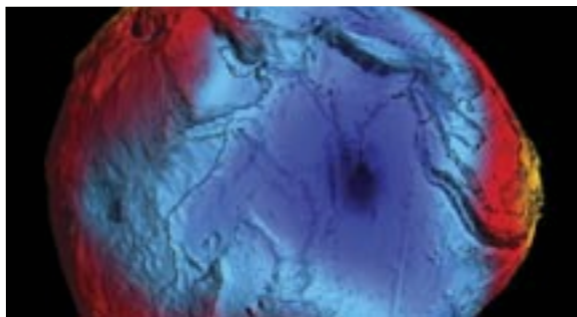
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'Gravity Hole' (continued from page 27)

area could have formed, going as far back as 140 million years.

Humans are used to thinking about Earth as a perfect sphere, but that's far from the truth.

"The Earth is basically a lumpy potato," said study coauthor Attreyee Ghosh, a



The sea level dips by over 328 feet (100 meters) in a "gravity hole" first discovered in 1948. Today, scientists hypothesize that the hole in the Indian Ocean was shaped by plumes of magma coming from deep inside the planet, according to a new study. ESA/HPF/DLR

geophysicist and associate professor at the Center for Earth Sciences of the Indian Institute of Science.

-www.cnn.com, 24 July 2023

Commentary: The article begins with a promotion: "Sign up for CNN's Wonder Theory science newsletter." The word "theory" sticks out, because these so-called "gravity holes" in the Indian Ocean are being heavily criticized by other scientists. Professor Dr. Alessandro Forte of the University of Florida in Gainesville, for example, stated: "The most outstanding problem with the modeling strategy adopted by the authors is that it completely fails to reproduce the powerful mantle dynamic

plume that erupted 65 million years ago under the present-day location of Réunion Island." Dr. Forte continues: "The authors mention that there is a moderate correlation, around 80%, between the predicted and observed geoids, but they don't provide a more precise measure of how well they match numerically (in the study). This mismatch suggests that there may be some deficiencies in the computer simulation."

"Ghosh said that not every possible factor can be accounted for in the simulations. "That's because we do not know with absolute precision what the Earth looked like in the past. The farther back in time you go, the less confidence there is in the models. We cannot take into account each and every possible scenario and we also have to accept the fact that there may be some discrepancies on how the plates moved over time," she said. "But we believe the overall reason for this [geoid] low is quite clear."

What is our understanding of this? We have to go back to the original document, the Bible: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Genesis 1:31). But sin entered, Paradise was lost, and planet earth changed drastically. Later in history, we read of the dividing of the continents: "When the Most High

divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 32:8). When relying on Holy Scripture, there is no need for "Wonder Theory science": planet earth will one day be changed back to the original—not due to any so-called scientific discovery, but because the Creator said so.



8053
(See *From Adam to Jesus*, Item #2378, \$26.99.)



Megachurches Are Thriving

Churches have closed as the proportion of Americans who call themselves Christian has fallen from 76% in 2010 to 64% in 2020. But most of America's 1,750 megachurches—all Protestant and mostly evangelical churches with at least 2,000 worshippers—are thriving. Between 2015 and 2020 their congregations grew by a third on average, turning younger and more multi-racial, according to the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, a think-tank in Connecticut.



Concentration among churches accelerated as costs rose in the 1970s, notes Mark Chaves of Duke University. Smaller ones lost members. Though evangelicals aim to convert non-believers, about three-quarters of those who join megachurches were already practicing.

(continued next page)

Megachurches (continued from page 28)

With more money and more hands, megachurches can innovate. Though they account for just 0.5% of all churches and 7% of churchgoers, their influence is felt in the music played elsewhere and the popularity of their TED-talk-style sermons, says Scott Thumma of the Hartford Institute. Nearly all the top contemporary worship songs between 2010 and 2020 came from just four megachurches.

-www.economist.com, 24 August 2023

Commentary: The Bible says, “What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice” (Philippians 1:18). When browsing the internet, much of the discussion surrounding these megachurches is negative; some of it true, some of it questionable, and some even false. Thus, the question: Is the Gospel being preached? In most cases, the answer is decidedly yes!

We must realize the situation in which the apostle Paul wrote verse 18. The previous three verses read: “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel” (Philippians 1:15-17). Thus, controversy

within the Church at large is nothing new; it’s nearly two millennia old.

Music simply for entertainment value, however, is a different story. Rarely is a hymn like “It Is Well with My Soul” sung by the entire congregation. Here the abbreviated story of the author: Horatio Spafford and his wife Anna had five children; their young son died of pneumonia. In the same year, much of their business was lost in the Great Fire of Chicago.

On 21 November 1873, Spafford sent his wife with four children on a ship to England. The ship collided with another ship and, within about 12 minutes, sank. A sailor rowing a small boat to where the ship went down spotted a floating piece of wreckage. It was Anna, still alive. Nine days later, they landed in Cardiff, Wales. She wired a message: “Saved alone. What shall I do?” After the tragedy, another daughter was born, and Spafford wrote:

When peace, like a river,
attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot,

Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Sacred music—particularly hymns—has been copied by the world and often popularized. Today, it seems it’s the opposite: the world’s music is welcomed in many churches. 8071

(See *How to Walk with God*, Item #1003, \$3.)



AP Photo
Andrew Medichini

VATICAN

Pope Says Faith Being Replaced with Ideology

Pope Francis has blasted the “backwardness” of some conservatives in the U.S. Catholic Church, saying they have replaced faith with ideology and that a correct understanding of Catholic doctrine allows for change over time.



Many conservatives have blasted Francis’ emphasis instead on social justice issues such as the environment and the poor, while also branding as heretical his opening to letting divorced and civilly remarried Catholics receive the sacraments.

“I want to remind these people that backwardness is useless, and they must understand that there’s a correct evolution in the understanding of questions of faith and morals,” that allows for doctrine to progress and consolidate over time.

-abcnews.go.com, 28 August 2023

NO COMMENTARY

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Biblical Answers to Why Jesus Hasn't Yet Returned

– Part 1

Rudy Bork

The faithful have been waiting so long for their Lord to appear. But the Bible provides a very solid reason why the Lord hasn't yet arrived. Part 1.

The Apostle Paul assures us, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God [...] For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what

we do not see, we wait for it with patience” (Rom 8:18-19, 24-25).

When will hope finally become reality? When the Lord Jesus appears! Why is it taking so long? What else needs to happen before our Lord appears in power and firmly intervenes? The righteous haven't been waiting just since the Ascension; Abraham was already in line! “For he was

“Patient” is the keyword. The Lord is holding back with His patient, merciful, gracious consideration. Love is what is stopping our Lord, so that no one must be left behind.

looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (Heb 11:10).

Since the Fall, all Creation has been awaiting what is ultimate and eternal. Some of the crucial stages have already passed into history, and the next event is imminent. How much longer? To the best of my knowledge, the Bible provides only one clear answer: “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Pet 3:9). Additionally, “But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation...” (vv. 13-15). “Patient” is the keyword. The Lord is holding back with His patient, merciful, gracious consideration. Love is what is stopping our Lord, so that no one must be left behind.

In light of our Lord’s pending return, we should never speak of delay. Someone can only be late if a fixed appointment is made. This isn’t the case with the Rapture and the Second Coming, because a specific point in time was

never revealed! The Lord will fulfill all His promises in time. Let’s return to 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

This clear statement contains three aspects:

1. God’s Patience: An Opportunity for All to Repent

The world must come to the Cross.

Most of us have experienced something like this: You’re sitting in a plane awaiting takeoff. Your luggage is stowed, and you’re buckled in. But the plane isn’t moving. Some of the passengers haven’t arrived, and the crew decided to wait. It’s disagreeable for everyone on board, but a tremendous help for the ones who are running late. It’s a matter of perspective. Are you sitting inside, or are you still outside? Imagine that the Lord Jesus had already come several years ago. Where would you be today? Psalm 86:15 says, “But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.”

God doesn’t rush His tasks. If the Lord Jesus came today, how many would be left without salvation?

Biblical Answers to Why Jesus Hasn't Yet Returned – Part 1

The Christian community is a Coast Guard rescue vessel. We're rescuers and paramedics, not tourists!



Spouses, children, grandchildren, relatives, friends, colleagues and more, because they haven't yet come to the Cross. Let's not forget that! "Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?" (Ezek 18:23). God desires for all people to voluntarily submit to the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus isn't stalling; He's extending the time of grace! The Age of Grace must be fulfilled and completed before the Age of Power and Glory can begin. God's love, grace, and mercy demand something from us: not just patience, but also commitment! Everyone who is redeemed and saved is invited and challenged, because our mandate between the Ascension and the Second Coming is clear: "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age'" (Matt 28:18-20).

This leads to the next aspect.

2. God's Patience: An Opportunity for Believers to Repent

The Church needs to come to a decision.

It's not a matter of repentance for salvation. I'm talking about repentance for sanctification and service, a return to basics: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness" (2 Pet 3:10-11).

Our eschatology influences our actions! Peter doesn't stop at encouraging godly living: "waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!" (2 Pet 3:12). The Holy Spirit indicates through Peter that we can actually hasten the Lord's return. The CSB says it this way: "as you wait for the day of God and hasten its coming..."

Our eschatology doesn't just affect our actions; our actions also influence our eschatology. The Lord Jesus has paused His return so that many more

people can repent of their sins. Diligent evangelism and missions can hasten His return. Christ's return is less a fixed date or time. Rather, it is an event; namely, when the last person to be saved is added to the Church. The Lord Jesus hasn't yet come because there's still a great deal to do before then. We shouldn't sit by and wait for the time to pass, but use it well and sensibly! "Waiting for and hastening" means expectant action. We should be living lives of excellence. We should be standing out both individually and collectively, setting an example. The Church of God's elect is meant to represent God's wisdom, power, and greatness. We're counting on and living with our Lord Jesus' power. His power in us becomes a power to attract others. We can see what the Lord is already doing in people who haven't yet been perfected. We're permitted to be bearers of hope in a fearful and hopeless world. Our trust in God allows us to show that God's promises are reliable and that Jesus is alive. Church is an anticipation—a foretaste—of the future. The children of God show what it's like when the Lord Jesus reigns and is in charge. The Lord is creating His future governing body. There's still time to make very good investments!

Are you living as God's child, in your God-given purpose? If not, then it's

high time, and there's still time to correct that. We're able to be a rescue team. Yet, unfortunately, many Christians are relaxing in deck chairs of grace, having a great time. But the Church isn't a cruise ship. The Christian community is a Coast Guard rescue vessel. We're rescuers and paramedics, not tourists! It's not quitting time yet! The bell (trumpet) to end our shift hasn't yet rung. There's still an opportunity to save souls and be fishers of men.

3. God's Patience: An Opportunity for Israel to Repent

God's chosen people must come to their senses.

Isaiah 30:18 says, "Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him." It's shocking to see what God's people are relying on these days—a framework of clever politics, a flourishing economy, a stable society, and religious history. God's people are looking everywhere but at the Messiah. They don't want to bow to Him. But it's an absolute prerequisite:

"See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'" (Matt 23:38-39).

(MR1122/1302)



“But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 7:8).

BY ARNO FROESE

The distinct difference between the Jews and the Gentiles is based on God’s choice, and this choice is unconditional. It is the result of God’s love, which He transferred in an oath to the fathers of Israel. That is the primary reason for the Jew being different from all other people on the face of the earth.

What is the purpose? To demonstrate God’s sovereign power of election to make Israel a nation above all others on earth. We read in verse 6b: “the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” These and many other statements in Holy Scripture uncover the error of comparing today’s Israel, for example, with other nations. It doesn’t work. Israel was, is, and always will be different from all other nations of the world.

Since 1948, many Jews have gone back to the land of Israel, with one source stating they originate from over 80 countries. What they have built during these 75 years is nothing short of miraculous.

Take the world’s population—approximately 8 billion—of which 16 million are Jews, representing less than 0.2%. Yet, when checking intellectual achievements, a good barometer is the Nobel Prize, which began in 1901. From the 930 Nobel Prizes awarded for extraordinary achievements, 208 recipients were Jews; that represents 22.4% of all Nobel Prizes awarded.

Energy

An article published by *Israel21c*, authored by Abigail Klein Leichman, reports:

The energy sector is one of the world’s fastest-growing tech verticals, given the global challenges and growing need to reduce total emissions.

Israel’s place in that sector is growing fast, totaling more than 230 companies developing technologies in energy production, distribution, storage and cybersecurity; hydrogen solutions; waste-to-energy; and carbon capture.

The EnergyTech Landscape Map—just released by nonprofit organization Start-Up Nation Central, Ignite the Spark Israeli energy commu-

Thus, we see the dual factors leading to Israel's dominance: 1) They are God's chosen, based on His love for His people, which is irreversible. 2) When it comes to intellectual might, this small nation of less than 10 million people, leaves a much greater footprint on planet earth than any other nation.

nity, and the Israeli Export Institute—includes 130 of those companies, up from 100 in 2022.

"With our global outreach to multinational companies and investors, we are advancing the Israeli energy sector and its technologies as an important and viable solution to the world energy challenge and a solutions hub for reducing global carbon emissions," said Start-Up Nation Central's Head of the Climate Tech Sector Yael Weisz Zilberman.

Ignite the Spark CEO Shon Dana added, "The remarkable growth of the energy tech ecosystem demonstrates its dual nature: not only does it tackle the toughest sectors to decarbonize, but it also embraces a rapidly expanding business landscape."

-www.israel21c.org, 12 June 2023

Thus, we see the dual factors leading to Israel's dominance: 1) They are God's chosen, based on His love for His people, which is irreversible. 2) When it comes to intellectual might, this small nation of less than 10 million people, leaves a much greater footprint on planet earth than any other nation.

In the meantime, the Diaspora is seeing a reduction in Jewish marriages, dissolving the identity at an alarming rate.

In Israel, for instance, only 5% of Jews are married to non-Jews, while the figure jumps to 42% in Jewish communities outside Israel. The country with the highest level of intermarriage is Poland, where 76% of Jews are married to non-Jewish partners.

-www.jpost.com, 3 August 2023

In plain words, the Jew who desires to keep his Jewishness will find a significantly higher chance of doing so when returning to the land of his fathers, the land of Israel.

The Good News

Israel Today has identified 273 functioning churches (fellowships) in Israel. In some cases, space for meetings has become a major issue.


There are 280 confirmed fellowships in the country. Of the 273 fellowship the authors managed to reach, there were 15,323 people who worshiped there, including 8,125 adults over the age of 18 who believe in Jesus.

-www.jpost.com, 19 February 2022

The Church Jesus authorized with the words, "I will build my church," is being established



in a very practical way in the land where it all began, Israel. In the meantime, hundreds of thousands—if not millions—are being added to the Church around the world, and that despite sometimes severe persecution of

Christians in various countries. The Church is being built, the Church will be completed, and the Church—the light of the world—will be taken out of this world in the Rapture, we pray in the not-too-distant future. 

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Celebrating Sukkot: The Four Species in the Believer's Life



By David Phillips (*Ebenezer's CEO*)

Greetings from our residents and the team at the Ebenezer Home.

I would like to continue where I left off in the last article with the Blowing of the Shofar (Feast of Trumpets) announcing the Jubilee.

Ten days after the day of Blowing the Shofar, we celebrate Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement); and five days after that, we celebrate Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) at the Home. God gave us an appointed time to celebrate the feasts in the Torah. To read about the different commands related to the feasts, read Leviticus 23:33-43. But for now, I would like to focus on verse 40:

“And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.”

As believers in Yeshua, we can give the four species a special meaning, very similar to the traditional meaning. This presents a beautiful picture of the four types of people.

- The Etrog (“fruit of splendid trees”) has a good taste and fragrance. It represents a person with love, faith, and good deeds.

- The Lulav (the middle leaf of the date palm) is edible, but has no smell. This represents the person with love and faith, but without good deeds.

- The Hadas (“boughs of leafy trees”—the myrtle) has a good fragrance, but is not edible. It represents a person who has good deeds, but lacks love and faith.

- The Aravah (willow) has neither taste nor smell. It represents a person without good deeds, love or faith.

First John 3:18 came to mind, “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” So many have been kind to us, praying for us in faith, and helping us with the special gift of giving (deeds of love). Thank you for your love and deeds. It makes us very humble before our Father in heaven, knowing we are being taken care of!

Let me encourage you with Hebrews 10:24, to step forward in this special bond before the soon return of our King and Savior, Messiah Yeshua:

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.”



Letters to the Editor

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.

TORNADOES... SIN UNTO DEATH... FEARMONGERING...

Tornadoes

Mr. Froese,

There have been many tornadoes happening in the US. This started slowly and has become more frequent over time (like the beginning of birth pangs, 1 Thess 5:3).

History has not shown this happening at any other time to the extent it is now, has it? Jeremiah 30:23 speaks of a “tempest,” which Webster describes as “an extensive violent wind, especially when accompanied by rain, hail, or snow.”

In verse 24b, it says, “In the latter days you will understand this.” But does anyone understand this?

Other verses speak of destroying winds and whirlwinds. Jeremiah 23:19-20 says, “...a whirling tempest; It will swirl down on the head of the wicked ... the LORD will not turn back until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His

heart; In the last days you will clearly understand it.”

What are the purposes of His heart? In my view, Psalm 110:1 explains it beautifully: “The LORD says to my Lord: Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

God is doing a good job of clearing the way for Jesus Christ to reign without opposition. Praise God, He is coming soon!

-C. Lemay, WA

Answer: The National Severe Storms Laboratory answers: “[Our] findings include a decrease in the traditional ‘Tornado Alley’ of the Great Plains and an increase in the Southeast’s ‘Dixie Alley.’”

When carefully reading Matthew 24 and Luke 21, we notice that the Lord does **not** say that there shall be an **increase** of war, famine, pestilence, and earthquakes. We must learn to distinguish between the signs



for certain times and signs that belong in the future; for example, the Great Tribulation. The latter ones are “unto destruction,” because the people will not repent but rather curse God.

Sin unto Death

Dear Arno Froese,

Thank you for *Midnight Call* magazine. I read it cover to cover as soon as I receive it, and have learned much.

I would very much appreciate if you could explain the verses in 1 John 5:16-17.

What is the sin that leads to death? I have loved ones that are not saved and are living in sin. I always pray for their salvation. Is it Biblical to pray for someone’s salvation? Does God choose us for eternal life, or do we choose?

One more question: Do you think it is ok to pray to the Holy Spirit?

-M. Firanek, IL

Answer: “Sin unto death” is addressed to believers. For an answer, read 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. Paul was faced with that issue, and answers in 1 Corinthians 5:5, “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” The person committing such abomination is subject to physical death before his appointed time. This is strictly for believers, because only in him

dwells the Spirit of God, and his body is the temple of God (see also 1 Corinthians 6:19).

We do not pray to the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit prays through us. Jesus said, “He [the Holy Spirit] shall glorify me” (John 16:14a).

Fearmongering

I keep getting this newsletter; it’s like a warning of what’s to come. I’m sure others are aware of it too: the New World Order, what’s going on, etc.

Doesn’t God have a hand in this to stop such foolishness? Even though I’m on God’s side, I still want to know if this [death of the dollar, hyperinflation, etc.] is going to happen to us.

-N. Yeck, FL

Answer: The pamphlet is based on sensationalism and fearmongering. Whenever you hear or see prophecies being made such as a \$25 loaf of bread, \$37 gallon of gas, you know it’s fake. How? The pamphlet is copyright 2023. Just wait three more months for the answer. At the end, the author offers remedies good only for his pocket.

Our suggestion: open the Bible, read it, and thank God for His truth. He will enlighten and reveal continually; there is no need to fear. When the disciples asked about the end times, Jesus said: “Take heed that no man deceive you” (Matthew 24:4b). Luke 21:9 adds: “be not terrified.” (MC)



BURDENS FROM THE PAST



By Peter Malgo

The access road to the neighboring Hotel Sonnentäl partly leads through our premises and was newly constructed. Construction machinery had just been removed and the surfacing work completed when it happened ... The owner and managing director of the company involved in the construction received an emergency call.

A massive ground depression had occurred in the recently completed area in front of the hotel. He needed to come at once!

Indeed, the ground immediately next to the border of our Maranatha House was sunken across an expanse of 10 x 3 meters (33 x 10 ft). A whole truck would have fit into the hole. The collapsed area held parking spaces for hotel guests. Fortunately, at the time of the ground collapse, no people were present and no cars were parked in the area.

The cause of the damage was a hidden cesspool that no one had known about, and which had not been drawn on any of the construction plans. It was covered with roughly a 2-meter (6.5 ft) layer of earth, and the bottom of the pit was about 4.5 meters (15 ft) below the ground. This cesspool had ceased being used a very long time ago. The fact that it was not emptied and the contents not properly disposed of back then, was a serious ecological offense which now brought about this disaster.

What happened here serves as an illustration of how many Christians deal with their past. How many drag around “burdens from the past”! Uncleansed sins, missteps that have never been brought to light and forgiveness, but rather were concealed as much as possible. Deep pits filled with misdeeds are kept hidden. As with the





Let us examine ourselves: are there not secret sins that may be far in the past? Is there perhaps a “cesspool” still in our heart?

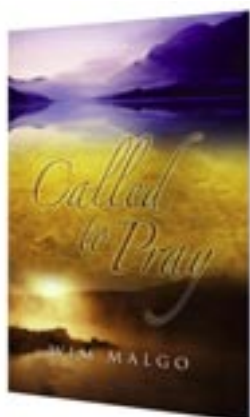
cesspool, decades may go by without the matter coming to light, without the hidden sin being revealed. But, suddenly, the ground collapses: the sin’s filth is revealed, and the smell unbearable. One day this will happen when we stand before God: “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl 12:14). Daniel also recognized this: “He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him” (Dan 2:22). And Paul writes to the Corinthians: “who . . . will bring to light the hidden things of darkness” (1 Cor 4:5). In his letter to Timothy, he states: “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after” (1 Tim 5:24).

Let us examine ourselves: are there not secret sins that may be far in the past? Is there perhaps a “cesspool” still

in our heart? Are there dark vaults that no light can reach?

It was very time-consuming to renovate the now collapsed cesspool, to put it out of operation correctly. First, it had to be pumped out. Then, to fill the resulting hole, 70 cubic meters (2472 cu ft) of clean dirt had to be brought in.

It can also be very costly for our lives and our hearts to remove such a “burden of past sin.” For it is important that we do a thorough job. We may have to go to a person we have wronged and ask forgiveness. Maybe we have to give up cherished but sinful habits. And not least, we need to go to our Lord God and pray: “cleanse thou me from [until now] secret faults” (Ps 19:12b). With God there is much forgiveness! He who asks for it will experience how the Lord fills up “the big dark hole” with His overwhelming grace. (MC)



Be a Prayer Warrior

Why is prayer important? How do we effectively pray not only for ourselves and our families, but for the rest of the things that concern us? Thankfully, in this book, Dr. Malgo has given us clear Biblical direction. Taking examples directly from the Scripture, he shows us the victory achieved through prayer and the failure from a lack of it.

We believe that the message of this book will encourage you and give you clear instruction on improving this vital part of your Christian faith.

CALLED TO PRAY ITEM #1032 • 144 pgs. Paperback

~~\$11.90~~ **Clearance \$4** Author: Dr. Wim Malgo



GUATEMALA

Astonishing Demand for Bibles Among Students

BY ANDRE AND INGRID BEITZE, GUATEMALA CITY

How the Lord provides encouragement for our ministry in Guatemala.

This year, after three years of coronavirus and online lessons, the government made in-person lessons for children mandatory again. Many parents and students welcomed the decision to finally return to “normal.”

We’re amazed by the great demand for children’s Bibles from the schools, and even for complete Bibles for children in higher grades. We’re very grateful to the Lord for it. Although classes began during the first weeks of January, Bibles were still being purchased in bookstores almost daily for a few weeks after that. What a blessing that children are being exposed to the Word of God from an early age.

Ingrid and I were personally able to offer Bibles and Midnight Call materials to the parents for two days at one school. While doing so, we learned that many of them come from a Catholic background. Nevertheless, they prefer to enroll

their children in a Protestant school, even when a Catholic one is just around the corner. We were also able to give some of them an evangelistic tract to take. We pray that the hearts of these parents will be reached with the Gospel through their children.

Encouragements

We’re continually hearing encouraging testimonies of God’s Word at work. Recently, a man in the bookstore told us, “The Lord has brought me back to His ways. Now I need a study Bible so I can better understand God’s Word.”

The Lord makes His Word alive and causes it to bear fruit. He’s the One who keeps helping us with our work in the bookstore, designing the books, magazines, and tracts, and proclaiming His Word.

(MR0723)



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

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MC1023

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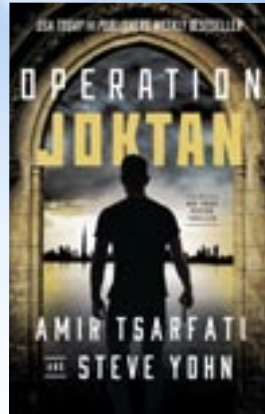
Web: midnightcall.com/fl

Midnight Call's **October Resource Guide**



Nuclear Deception

Inspired by real events, authors Amir Tsarfati and Steve Yohn reteam for this suspenseful follow-up to the bestselling *Operation Joktan*. Filled with danger, romance, and international intrigue, this Nir Tavor thriller reveals breathtaking true insights into the lives and duties of Mossad agents—and delivers a story that will have you on the edge of your seat.



“It was the perfect day – until the gunfire.”

In this thrilling first book in the series, authors Amir Tsarfati and Steve Yohn draw on true events as well as tactical insights Amir learned from his time in the Israeli Defense Forces. For believers in God's life-changing promises, *Operation Joktan* is a suspense-filled page-turner that illuminates the blessing Israel is to the world.

BY WAY OF DECEPTION ITEM #2402
384 pgs. • Fiction

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Authors: Amir Tsarfati and Steve Yohn

OPERATION JOKTAN ITEM #2389

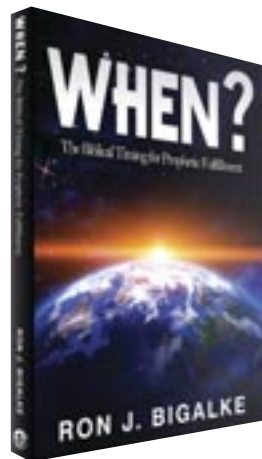
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Authors: Amir Tsarfati and Steve Yohn

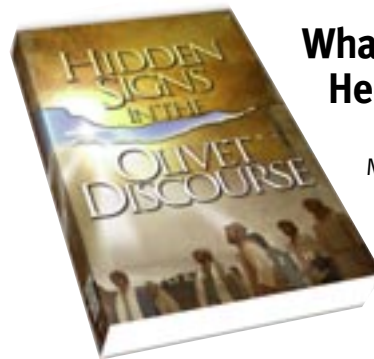
Know the Timing of Biblical Prophecy

Respected author Dr. Ron J. Bigalke addresses these fundamental issues from the perspective of premillennialism. He assesses the views of prophetic timing in relation to amillennialism, postmillennialism and premillennialism, with an extended emphasis upon the Biblical texts that describe Christ's return to the Earth. This volume will prove to be an invaluable reference in understanding the schedule of prophetic events—and why such doctrines are relevant to each of our lives.



WHEN? ITEM #2340 • 338 pgs. • Paperback

~~\$34.95~~ **Clearance \$10** Author: Ron J. Bigalke



What Happens When He Returns

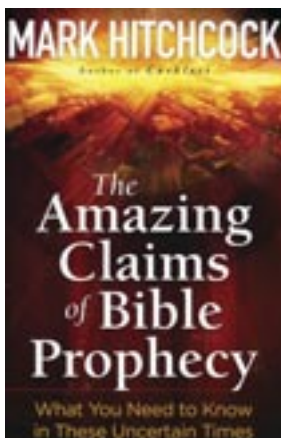
Many vital questions concerning the timing of endtime events are dissected and addressed in the examination of these prophetic chapters.

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Travel Israel — past and present — to learn about its people and its God.

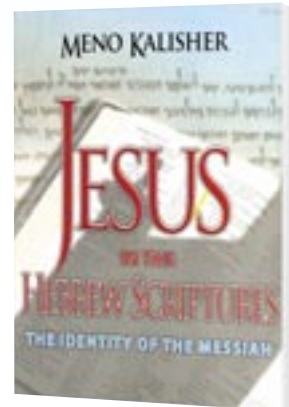
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Author: Meno Kalisher

Were Jacob's prophetic utterances true?



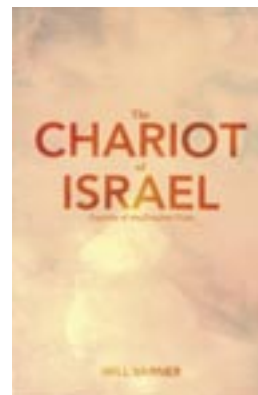
Have they been fulfilled? If so, how and when? Are some of Jacob's prophecies still awaiting final fulfillment? These questions are answered in this study of biblical history and the prophecies associated with each of the 12 tribes. Other fascinating subjects—such as the lost tribes of Israel and the role of the tribes in the end-times—are explored.

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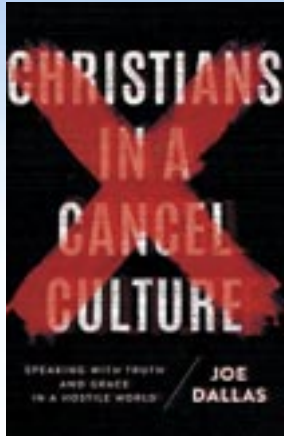
This study of Elijah's life will captivate you as it walks you through a pivotal period in Israel's history. When he was caught up to heaven, his disciple Elisha cried out, "the chariot of Israel, and its horsemen." Elisha was referring not to the chariot but to the prophet. It was Elijah's intimate relationship with God that gave the prophet his title, and his amazing confrontation with the prophets of Baal endures as one of Scripture's most vivid accounts of how God demonstrated His awesome power before the unbelieving.

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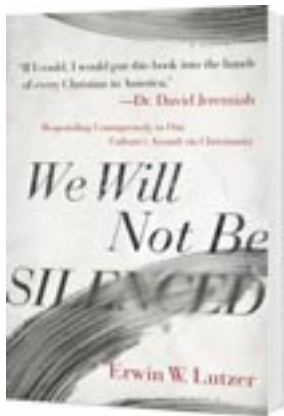
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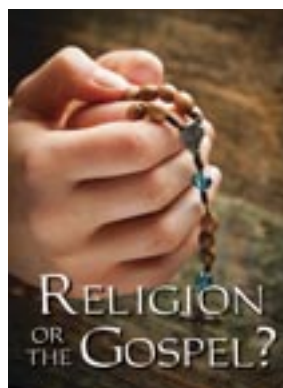


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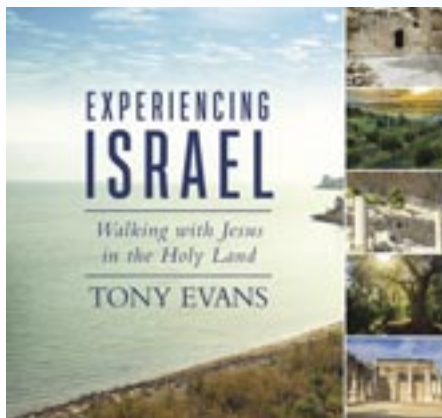
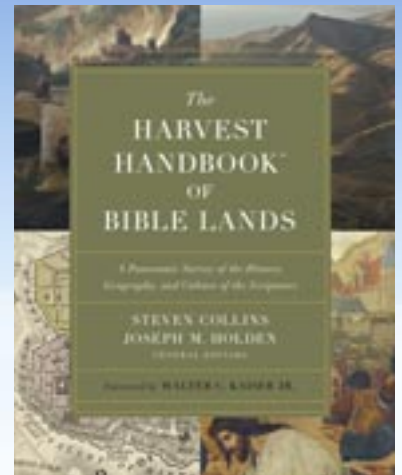
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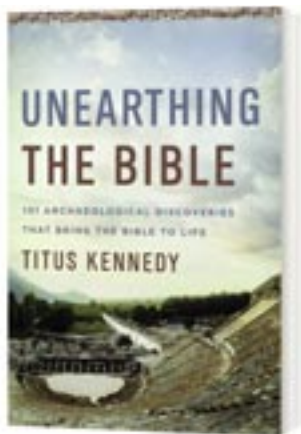
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