

The International Prophetic Voice for the Endtimes

# Midnight Call

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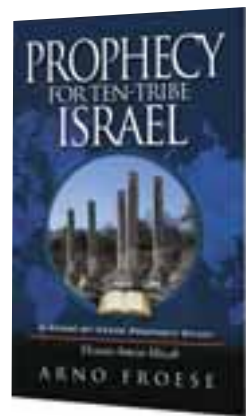
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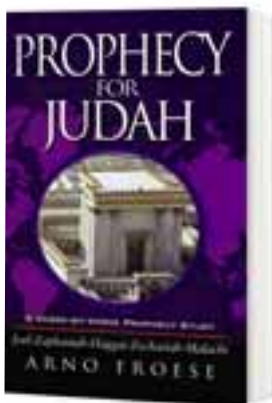
The ten-tribe Israel is distinctly different from Judah-Israel. We read, "So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day" (1 King 12:19). The three prophets, Hosea, Amos and Micah, expose Israel's sin in an unmerciful manner, which leads to God's declaration, "I will no more have mercy upon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

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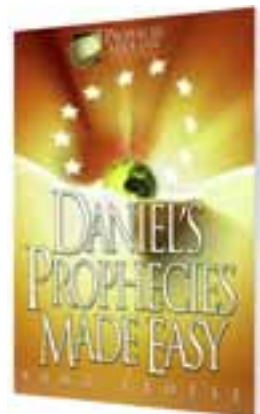
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# It Depends on Our Perspective

**By Norbert Lieth**

*Director of Missions, Midnight Call International*

**M**any people think of November as the gloomiest month of the year, both in climate and appearance as well as emotional response. November is the peak of the autumn season, and it is a dark month: dreary, bleak, and monotonous.

Really? It depends on the perspective! One of my brothers was born in November, and he particularly stands out for his humorous personality. Someone once said: "Autumn is the spring of winter. Of the seasons, autumn is the most colorful. Autumn is life that goes deeper. Autumn

is a second spring, when each leaf turns into a brilliant color."

Christians have every reason to be cheerful, even in dark times. To say it with words from the Bible: "All the days of the despondent are bad, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast" (Proverbs 15:15). Who, if not a Christian, has every reason to celebrate?


However, we don't want to just spout superficial, pretty words. We know that especially those who believe in Jesus often have to traverse valleys of suffering. In this regard, Christians are no better

“Autumn is the spring of winter. Of the seasons, autumn is the most colorful. Autumn is life that goes deeper. Autumn is a second spring, when each leaf turns into a brilliant color.”

off than other people—yet, they are better off because they have a support. They have an anchor with two points penetrating deep into the seabed, to hold their ship in place. These are the comfort and hope through God’s promise and oath: “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...” (Hebrew 6:18-19).

But this anchor is not fixed in the bottom of the sea of this world; rather, in heaven in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our support through all time.

John Newton, author of “Amazing Grace,” is quoted as saying at the end of his life: “My memory is almost gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Redeemer.”

Knowing this truth, I wish you a Happy November! 

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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.



# The Lord Showed Me...

**Fredy Peter**

Who is the Holy Spirit? Whom does He lead, and how does He do it? A biblical and practical exploration.

**E**very child of God with a sincere faith desires to be led and guided by the Lord. “Oh, Lord, show me what to do. How do I decide?” That’s as it should be: God has a plan for our life, and He wants to share

this plan with us. The Bible testifies to this in many places; for example, Psalm 32:8: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”

When the Lord reveals Himself to us, shows us something, directs us, or teaches us, it always happens through the Holy Spirit.

**B**ut some people end up stuck in a place of disappointment, because they're not experiencing the grand and extraordinary guidance they've heard about in other believers' testimonies. They may even begin to doubt their fundamental ability to recognize God's plan in their life. And then they search desperately for various solutions, so they can finally experience this special kind of personal guidance. But things don't get any better. What went wrong? This scenario frequently plays out because we have an unbiblical idea of what being led by God actually is.

When the Lord reveals Himself to us, shows us something, directs us, or teaches us, it always happens through the Holy Spirit. As Romans 8:14 says, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." This chapter mentions the Holy Spirit nearly 20 times, which is more than any other chapter in the Bible. These verses demonstrate what the Holy Spirit does in His children who are born again. Romans 8 is the ultimate chapter on the safety, assurance, and confidence of God's children.

In the first verse, all condemnation is abolished; in the last verse, 39, anything that separates us from God's love. The Holy Spirit plays an immense role in this. Verses 2 and 3 show us the Holy Spirit's work in delivering us from sin and death. Verse 4 shows us that the Holy Spirit enables us to fulfill God's Law. Verses 5-11 show us that the Holy Spirit changes our nature. Verses 12 and 13 show us that the Holy Spirit gives us power to triumph over the flesh

(meaning our selfish, headstrong, and egotistical human nature). Verses 14-16 show us that the Holy Spirit leads us, and that we are adopted by God and have access to Him through the Holy Spirit. Verses 17-30 show us the glorious future that awaits us, and the extent to which the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf. And finally, verses 31-39 are the very strongest expressions of our complete certainty and assurance in Christ. Isn't that wonderful?

Verse 14, the very heart of this chapter, reads: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." It's of utmost importance to know who the Holy Spirit is, whom the Holy Spirit is leading, and how the Holy Spirit does this leading (what the Holy Spirit reveals).

If we don't take these things into account, even the most genuine Christians are at risk of being led astray by a false spirit, a deceptive angel of light (cf. 2 Cor 11:14), or even by Satan himself.

### **Who Is the Holy Spirit?**

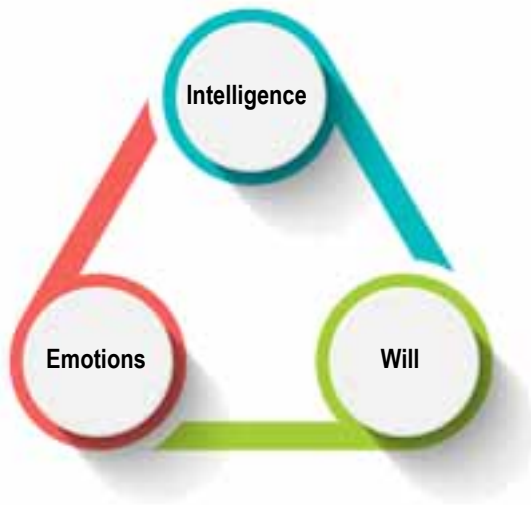
In the foundational work *Systematic Theology*, Lewis Sperry Chafer and John Walvoord emphasize the following points:

The Holy Spirit's personhood is indicated in the Scriptures, "since the Spirit is said to do that which is possible only for a person to do: He reproves the world (John 16:8); He teaches (John 14:26); the Spirit speaks (Acts 13:2); the Spirit intercedes (Romans 8:26); the Spirit leads (Romans 8:14); the Spirit appoints the service of men (Acts 13:2); the Spirit is Himself subject

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“What constitutes the essentials of a personality? Usually three things—a person must possess intelligence, emotions, and will. A thing lacks these. But the Holy Spirit is not a thing because He has intelligence, emotions, and will.” – Charles Ryrie



to appointment (John 15:26); and the Spirit ministers.”

Many people don't think of the Spirit as a person, but as the personification of God's power. But all of these Scriptures clearly show that the Spirit of God is a person.

“What constitutes the essentials of a personality? Usually three things—a person must possess intelligence, emotions, and will. A thing lacks these. But the Holy Spirit is not a thing because He has intelligence, emotions, and will” (Charles Ryrie, *Understanding Bible Doctrine*).

He interacts with others like a person: God the Father sends Him into the world (John 14:16, 26), and God the Son sends Him into the world (John 16:7). People can grieve (Eph 4:30), quench or stifle (1 Thess 5:19), blaspheme (Matt 12:31), lie to (Acts 5:3), outrage (Heb 10:29), and speak against the Spirit (Matt 12:32). Each expression that the

Bible applies to the Spirit refers to Him as a person.

He is called “another helper” (or “Comforter”), implying He is a person like Christ: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever” (John 14:16). He is called a spirit in the same way that God is spoken of as a spirit: “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

But the Holy Spirit is more than just a person: He is God, eternally united with God the Father and God the Son. Benedict Peters once put it this way: “The Father can never exist and act without the Son and the Spirit. The Son can never exist and act without the Father and the Spirit. The Spirit can never exist and act without the Father and the Son.”

He is called God and is of one essence with Christ. This is clear from Acts 5:3: “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?” And it says at the end of verse 4, “You have not lied to man but to God.” Paul emphasizes in Romans 8:26, “The Spirit himself intercedes for us,” but then in verse 34, “Christ Jesus [...] indeed is interceding for us.” The Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of Christ” in verse 9.

He possesses the essential qualities of God. He is omniscient: “Who has measured the



“The Father can never exist and act without the Son and the Spirit. The Son can never exist and act without the Father and the Spirit. The Spirit can never exist and act without the Father and the Son.” – Benedict Peters

Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?” (Isa 40:13-14). He is omnipresent: “even the Spirit of truth [...] for he dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). He is almighty: “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4). He is eternal: “how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Heb 9:14).

The Holy Spirit carries out the works of God: “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21).

Scripture presents the Holy Spirit as a person who is the object of faith: “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” (Matt 28:19). And we are not only to believe in Him, but also to obey Him: “And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them’” (Acts 10:19-20).

Yet, the Holy Spirit is not the object of our prayers. Although the Holy Spirit is God,

nowhere does the Bible tell us to pray to Him. His ministry is to lead to Jesus and to glorify God; it’s never about Him.

In Ephesians 3:14-17ff., we see an example of how we should pray and how the divine Trinity operates. In this passage, Paul states: “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...”

The answer to the question, “Who is the Holy Spirit?” can be summarized as follows: He is a person. He is God. He never acts of His own accord, but always in relationship to the Father and the Son, and He glorifies the Father and the Son. We are to believe in Him, but not pray to Him.

### **Whom Does the Holy Spirit Guide?**

Romans 8:14 is clear on this matter: “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” In the context of Romans 8, this verse is meant to grant certainty in confidence. And verse 14 gives one of the most succinct answers in the whole Bible to the question of who is really a child of God.

Our new life is revealed as we are led by the Holy Spirit. Anyone who is “led by the Spirit of God” is a son (or daughter) of God. Everyone, without exception. The Greek grammar

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Is proper behavior proof that someone is a child of God? What about going to church ... reading the Bible ... obeying your conscience? These things can all be indications, but not always. Only those who are “led by the Spirit of God” are “sons of God.”



of the original, used in the present tense, emphasizes sustained, incessant guidance. So, it's not a matter of a one-time, special experience sometime in the past, but about constant current guidance—a life shaped by the Holy Spirit. With this statement, the Apostle Paul is also clearly emphasizing that not all people are children of God. Is proper behavior proof that someone is a child of God? What about going to church ... reading the Bible ... obeying your conscience? These things can all be indications, but not always. Only those who are “led by the Spirit of God” are “sons of God.”

Every human being is one of God's creatures because God created us. We are created in God's likeness. We can think, love, and speak like God can. But we are not divine, because we only have biological life and not a spiritual one. We do not possess the same essence, nature, or life as God. Additionally, many of the divine traits in us are corrupted by our innate, inherited, sinful nature. The natural man is not a child of God; he is an enemy of God. Proverbs 15 emphasizes, “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD” (v. 8); and, “The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD” (v. 9). Also notice what Paul says in Romans 3:10-12: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have

become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

Everything that God does in such a life is common grace, in that the Holy Spirit is convicting people of their sinfulness and drawing them to Jesus. As humans, we're capable of creation—for example, a robot. But what we create isn't human, but at best human-like. Only what is begotten from us is human. The begotten thereby becomes a child of a human being, and bears the nature of a human being. And so it is with God: Only what is begotten of God is divine and has divine attributes such as eternity and sinlessness. In order to live after physical death—eternally and sinlessly in heaven, in fellowship with God—His life is just the thing that needs to be within us. And that only happens when we are born of God. Jesus explains this very tangibly in John 3:3: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

The Holy Spirit brings about this rebirth in people who admit their own lost state, hopelessness, and inability to face God, while trusting in Jesus' forgiveness of sins which He achieved on the Cross. This is the only way we become sons and daughters of God. Note that we are not becoming exactly like Jesus Christ, the Son of God, since He was begotten of the Father before time began. We only become chil-

dren of God through adoption and regeneration—through the only begotten Son of God’s death on the Cross. This is a miracle: that everyone who is converted to God is given a new heart, mind, and family identity. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17).

The Holy Spirit causes all of this to happen instantaneously. And in doing so, the Holy Spirit works the following seven enduring blessings (which are His ministry to us):

First, receiving the Spirit (Gal 3:2), a gift of the Lord from grace, not through works. Second, being born again by the Spirit (John 3:3-5), an act of God which enables us to live forever. Third, the indwelling of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), which is God’s constant presence, help, and work in us. Fourth, the sealing with the Spirit (2 Cor 1:22), which is His protection and preservation. Fifth, the guarantee of the Spirit (2 Cor 1:22), which is the assurance that God will preserve our inheritance. Sixth, the anointing of the Spirit (2 Cor 1:21), which is our qualification for ministry. Seventh, the baptism through the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13), which unites all believers in the body of Jesus into the Church.

All of these are an incredible gift of grace from the Lord—We didn’t do anything to merit them! Conversion and regeneration are the Holy Spirit’s great work, but His ministry doesn’t end there. We are equipped with spiritual gifts for all kinds of service, and the Holy Spirit is simultaneously unfolding the ninefold spiritual fruit in our hearts: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22-23).

Being filled with the Spirit is another of the Holy Spirit’s special works, but it isn’t unique like those previously mentioned. It needs to be renewed again and again, and is dependent on our personal faith and obedience. That’s why Paul explicitly commands in Ephesians 5:18b, “be filled with the Spirit.”

### **How Does the Holy Spirit Lead Us? What Does He Show Us?**

All of the confusion we’re experiencing today concerning the Holy Spirit (and the resulting uncertainty), is based in part on a misunderstanding of His ministry. He ministers to us as a Spirit of sonship (adoption). Paul speaks of this in Romans 8:15: “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”

In those days, adoption was seen very differently; it was a privilege to have been chosen. When someone was adopted in Roman culture, they lost all rights and duties to their old family, and in return received all the rights and privileges of a child belonging to the new family. This is precisely what happens when God adopts us at our rebirth. J. I. Packer once wrote the following:

“Just as adoption itself is the key thought for unlocking, and the focal thought for unifying, the New Testament view of the Christian life, so a recognition that the Spirit comes to us as the Spirit of adoption is the key thought for unlocking, and the focal thought for integrat-

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Conversion and regeneration are the Holy Spirit's great work, but His ministry doesn't end there.



the family likeness (conforming to Christ), furthering the family welfare (loving the brethren) and maintaining the family honor (seeking God's glory). This is his work of sanctification [...]

“So it is not as we strain after feelings and experiences but as we seek God himself, looking to him as our Father, prizing his fellowship, and finding in our-

ing, all that the New Testament tells us about his ministry to Christians.

“From the standpoint provided by this focal thought, we see that his work has three aspects. In the first place, he makes and keeps us conscious—sometimes vividly conscious, always conscious to some extent, even when the perverse part of us prompts us to deny this consciousness—that we are God's children by free grace through Jesus Christ. This is his work of giving faith, assurance, and joy.

“In the second place, he moves us to look to God as a father, showing toward him the respectful boldness and unlimited trust that is natural to children secure in an adored father's love. This is his work of making us cry ‘Abba, Father’—the attitude described is what the cry expresses.

“In the third place, he impels us to act up to our position as royal children by manifesting

ourselves an increasing concern to know and please him, that the reality of the Spirit's ministry becomes visible in our lives. This is the needed truth which can lift us out of the quagmire of nonspiritual views of the Spirit in which so many today are floundering” (*Knowing God*).

These thoughts shed even more light on Romans 8:14: “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” The spiritual guidance here is in the passive tense—the sons of God “are led.” We're not leading ourselves!

There's another important aspect of spiritual guidance: “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor 3:17b). No coercion, no pressure, no being pushed, and no enslavement. The Holy Spirit guides us like a teacher guides his students or a shepherd guides his sheep, in accordance with our unity with Jesus. This is already visible in the Old Testament: “And he

If we're expecting the Holy Spirit to lead us without knowledge of the Scriptures, then all sorts of unbiblical decisions will follow, up to and including ecstatic experiences.



said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest' (Ex 33:14). A pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night.

He is our guide on the way to our home above. Not with violence but with conviction, admonition, and personally, lovingly drawing us. Of course, our inner spiritual urgings can be strong, but not compulsive or domineering. This is the case in other religions, but not with the living God. He doesn't guide us like prisoners shackled together, but as liberated individuals holding onto a rope of love. We aren't forced, like animals driven by instinct. We're guided as rational creatures. This guidance comes through illuminating the mind and motivating the will.

In John 14:21, Jesus says: "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." This revelation comes through

the Holy Spirit. We see two things here: first, the involvement of the whole of the divine trinity; and second, the absolutely essential role played by the commandments (that is, the Word of God).

This cannot be stressed enough: There is no guidance from the Holy Spirit independent of the written Word. He is "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17) who inspired "the word of truth" (Eph

1:13). He therefore leads into "all truth" (John 16:13). How could He be expected to deviate from it? This is a very important point in understanding the Spirit's guidance.

When writing to the Ephesians, Paul doesn't pray for them to receive grand signs and wonders accompanied by exhilarating experiences. He prays that they will have "the eyes of [their] hearts enlightened" (Eph 1:18). And this happens through "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding" (Isa 11:2).

God created us as rational creatures. Therefore, God leads us first and foremost by means of rational understanding, followed by the practical application of His Word. God's Spirit guides us inwardly only according to the outward Word of God; He will never do otherwise. This Word is in us through His Spirit, and we should hold fast to this Word.

Yes, the Spirit blows where it wishes (cf. John 3:8), but only within the boundaries of God's



## The Lord Showed Me...

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The Bible isn't a book of oracles. God only reveals principles through the Bible that should guide our decisions.

Word. We can only confirm that the Spirit has truly spoken to us by comparing this Word with the written Word. The written Word is our only evidence that the inner voice admonishing or urging us is indeed of the Spirit. It saves us from our own wishful thinking or imagination, or worse still, from a false spirit's deception.

Because the Word of God is available to us in full in the Church Age, the Holy Spirit leads each child of God individually. Not vocally, but morally. This means that His guidance doesn't come by means of a resounding voice, but with inner impulses and desires aligned with God's Word. Yet not compulsively! And of course, He also guides us through circumstances, opening one door or closing another.

Do we understand how important it is to know the Bible? The importance of discernment? If we're expecting the Holy Spirit to lead us without knowledge of the Scriptures, then all sorts of unbiblical decisions will follow, up to and including ecstatic experiences. The Bible won't give us clues as to what color socks to wear, what car to buy or avoid, or who to marry. The Bible isn't a book of oracles. God only reveals principles through Scripture that should guide our decisions.

If we hoard all of our money, giving nothing to our neighbor or church, then buying a fancy car is wrong. But if we're generously supporting our church and our brothers and sisters in need, and still have money left over, then we can buy what we want. The same applies to

our choice of life partner. The Bible is clear: "only in the Lord" (1 Cor 7:39b), which means that they must be a believer. Within this framework, an unmarried man may prefer a black-haired or blonde woman, or an unmarried woman might be looking for a tall or a short man. If we're heeding biblical principles, there are few decisions where we actually need specific situational guidance!

How can I experience spiritual fullness and power? How can I receive strength, encouragement, comfort, steadfastness, joy, peace, hope, insight, wisdom, understanding, and revival? Through the Spirit. But these expressions are also the glorious outcomes of God's Word, as described in Psalm 119. So, we can equate being filled with the Spirit to being filled with the Word.

Let's not be in search of mystical experiences, but follow in the footsteps of the Psalmist: "Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps 119:97).

In doing so, we're submitting our hearts, thoughts, feelings, desires, intentions, and actions to the Lord. And the Holy Spirit causes us to align, be shaped by, and submit to what we have read and understood in the Bible. Scripture calls this process sanctification, and it is the consequence of faith and obedience. Then we're able to experience what Paul testifies in 1 Thessalonians 2:13b: "the word of God, which is at work in you believers."

This is what God wants to show us.

(MR0622/1255)



# FINAL ENDTIME WEALTH TRANSFERS: NO RELIEF FOR ELITES – PART 4



A popular pastime in some circles is to document the transgressions of the world's rich people and to condemn them. There seems to be a countless number of bloggers and newsletter writers that track the activities of the rich and their supposedly evil schemes.

**By Wilfred Hahn**

According to some of these observers, rich elites (whether organized or individual, Jew or Gentile) are conspiring to take over the world. They are seen to be diabolically evil—a brotherhood of demon-inspired conspirators who have sold their souls to the devil.

Perhaps some people fit this description. However, our view of conspiracy theories is that they are mostly unnecessary distractions for the Christian. Yes, there is a group that calls itself the Bilderbergers, and there may be an Illuminati.

There definitely are many types of conspiracies perpetrated by humankind. If so, then what should be the response of the Christian? Condemnation ... taking upon us the assignment of tracking their every move ... reporting publicly their every sin ... organizing political activism against such purported people?

Every human being has the same potential to sin. We are all sinners; all of us naturally give priority to our own interests (rather than loving

our neighbors as ourselves), have the same vulnerability to lusts and idols, the same inventiveness in justifying our actions. Rich people are no different as humans. They will face the judgment seat just like everyone else. All sins are sin. Then, why single out only one particular caricature of a sinner? Why not all other sinners? The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

The so-called "elites" of the last-day world have no special privileges, seen from the perspective of eternity. Long ago ... long before the intense commercialization of mankind, the Psalmist was already scribing this: "Do not be overawed when others grow rich, when the splendor of their houses increases; for they will take nothing with them when they die, their splendor will not descend with them" (Psalm 49:16-17).

When the judgments of the Tribulation period come and wealth hoards are destroyed, elites are not omitted from this outcome. "They will throw dust on their heads, and with weep-



Some movements believe that the wealth of the world—the “wealth of the wicked,” as it is sometimes called—will be transferred to the Church.

ing and mourning cry out” (Revelation 18:19a). Inhospitable conditions apply to everyone. There is no exception for the elites. “Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains” (Revelation 6:15). And when the False Prophet arrives on the scene and puts in place controls on “buying and selling,” it applies to everyone. The beast “forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads” (Revelation 13:16). The elites of the world are just as deceived and deluded as anyone else. As the Bible lays out, the challenges of wealth have existed from time immemorial, and the basic human underpinnings of conspiracies in essence are no different today. What is different is that in our time, we face global dimensions of these conditions.

### The Church, Poor and Rich

The Bible has a unique interpretation of who is truly rich and who is not. At least, that would be the opinion of most people living in our presently humanistic age, whether Christian or not. Christ pointed to the importance of true riches for His followers and the Church, saying: “So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” (Luke 16:11-12).

Yet, a large swathe of churches today stage the attractiveness of Christianity in terms of the pursuit of earthly prosperity. In this view, practical Christianity must produce earthly rewards and worldly affluence. The problem with this perspective is that it is not Biblical. Nowhere in the New Testament is there any hint of this principle. Not one of the disciples ended up a wealthy man, with the possible exception of Judas for a few days. His fate is well-known.

Instead, the New Testament shows Christians to be persecuted. Here is just one substantiation: “For you did sympathize and suffer along with those who were imprisoned, and you bore cheerfully the plundering of your belongings and the confiscation of your property, in the knowledge and consciousness that you yourselves had a better and lasting possession” (Hebrews 10:34).

It is not surprising that Christianity would be attracted by the great worldly wealth explosion of the last days. Its lures are powerful. Apostle John reveals that the last of the seven churches mention in Revelation, is one that is lukewarm and fixated with wealth: “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (Revelation 3:17).

Nonetheless, some movements believe that the wealth of the world—the “wealth of the wicked,” as it is sometimes called—will be transferred to the Church. It is claimed that



Sadly, much of today's Church has swallowed the lie that enduring peace among men can only be found in the bowels of Mammon.

there will yet be a last-day global harvest before the Lord returns, and that the Church will need great wealth to fund this objective, as well as to eradicate poverty in the world.

We do not wish to dissuade genuine revivals. However, there are many problems with the concept of last-day wealth transfer applying to the Church. Again, there is not one verse we can find in the New Testa-

ment that even indirectly refers to a great end-time wealth transfer to the Church. Even the book of Revelation is silent on this topic, though it refers to the destruction of the wealth of Babylon the Great, “never to be recovered” (Revelation 18:14b).

Assuredly, if such wealth were to be transferred to the Church, support for this concept would have been found in the New Testament. Instead, there we only find admonishments about the deceitfulness of wealth and how the faith of many will grow cold due to the cares of this life.

### Christian Blindness

Sadly, much of today's Church has swallowed the lie that enduring peace among men can only be found in the bowels of Mammon—particularly those branches of Christendom that endorse Replacement Theology (the Church being substituted for Israel) and aspects of Dominion Theology (which is dominating political circles today), but not exclusively so.



Even much of North America's pre-Millennial, evangelical community suffers from this Babylonian occlusion. We think our riches and power (also evangelical political power) are a useful tool for God to disseminate faith in the world. We shout our judgments, the proper course for others, while replete and comfortable from the bowels of the most materialistic societies on earth.

What exactly is this occlusion? It is an optical one for the most part. Living inside the systemic global Babylon now suffusing the world, residing in its present hot spots (certainly including North America)—the time of Babylon the Great, the great city, the global village of commercial religion—they (we) cannot see. The sliver has become so large, it has become a log. “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:3).

They (we) cannot see clearly for several reasons. The most crucial one is that our point of reference has become the world, not the Bible.



The colossal global commercial system or “great city” exists today. A similar concept is still imbedded in the English language ... the global village. This global economic village has erupted upon the world in very short order.



The world enjoins us, shouting that the “future is friendly”;<sup>1</sup> that peace is attainable through the eradication of poverty (meaning equality and wealth for all); that the objective of a prosperous heaven on earth is found in religious and commercial Babylon.

A second reason for our blindness is that the same smugness and confidence found in ancient Babylon is still evident today. “Sit in silence, go into darkness, Daughter of the Babylonians; [...] You said, ‘I will continue forever—the eternal queen!’ But you did not consider these things or reflect on what might happen. Now then, listen, you wanton creature, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me. I will never be a widow or suffer the loss of children.’ Both of these will overtake you in a moment, on a single day” (Isaiah 47:5, 7-9a). While this prophecy did have a near-term fulfillment, it also speaks of a yet future event.

Isaiah’s words line up with Revelation 18:7, which describes the “great city” of Babylon: “Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, ‘I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.’” Given these characteristics of pride and complacency, they (we) are blind to the reality of true riches and the world’s extreme vulnerability

to the judgment and wrath of God.

A third reason why we may not be able to see the greater endtime Babylon today, is we may have misconceived notions. Some prophecy commentators hold the view that Babylon the Great of Revelation 18 is only a city—in other words, a physical place. Indeed, there may be a city considered to be its center. But endtime Babylon the Great is never called a city in the Bible. To be technically correct, the “economic” Babylon of Revelation 18 is always called the “great city”—in fact, six times in the Book of Revelation. It is never called a “city,” only a “great city.” This is significant.

In the Greek, the word combination “great city” is found only 10 times in the New Testament—6 times for economic Babylon, 3 times for religious Babylon, and once for the New Jerusalem. Each of its uses leaves open the interpretation that the “great city” means something bigger than just a common city—perhaps a sys-

The Bible does prophesy a major endtime wealth transfer. However, it is not to a particular church or “righteous” group, as some religious movements like to claim, but rather to Israel and to the righteous of the millennial kingdom.

tem, organization, or a unique structure. In former times, a city was the closest thing there was to an organized economic entity. In fact, ancient Greek had no word for “system” or “organization” as we understand the terms today. We are hard pressed to find words or word combinations anywhere in the Bible that explicitly refer to the idea of a system. We do find word combinations in the Old Testament that refer to globalism, but not a specific word that means “system.”

As such, Babylon the Great is not necessarily only a physical city. Rather, it seems more plausible that it is also a system; in this case, the economic trade and financial system dominated by the present or future high-income countries of the world, if not the entire world.

The colossal global commercial system or “great city” exists today. A similar concept is still imbedded in the English language ... the global village. This global economic village has erupted upon the world in very short order.

### Thoughts to Ponder

We live during a time of massive deception and corruption. Many can’t see it. A great trap is being laid for the people of the world.

Many Christians are in that number, particularly those who live in the prosperous West. We have also been duped into believing that in the end, it is Mammon that will bring peace to the world, not Christ.

There is one thing in which all prophecy scholars must agree: Babylon—whatever its type or identity—clearly comes to an end. In one hour, it falls and is judged. The final form of Babylon does not carry through into the Millennium. The great commercial colossus and its imbedded religious idolatries are ended.

The Bible does prophesy a major endtime wealth transfer. However, it is not to a particular church or “righteous” group, as some religious movements like to claim, but rather to Israel and to the righteous of the millennial kingdom.

What of an endtime wealth transfer?

The final great wealth transfer is to Israel, not the Church.

The true Church of the last days, if anything, is more a remnant than it is resplendent with wealth. Revelation 3:8 says that the church of the “open door” is weak and feeble—far from being imbued with worldly power and wealth. It is this little Philadelphian band of believers which is promised, “Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth” (Revelation 3:10).

Where should we look for wealth and power? “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (Revelation 5:12).<sup>1</sup>

### ENDNOTE

1 Advertising slogan of Telus Inc., a communications company.



# The Jordan River: A Significant Border and Demonstration of God's Power (Sites of the Bible Series)

DR. RON J. BIGALKE

The Jordan River extends from Mount Hermon (on the border separating Syria and Lebanon) southward through northern Israel to the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberius). From the sea, the Jordan flows southward and finally empties into the Dead Sea.

**W**hile the Jordan River is more than 223 miles in length, the actual distance between its principal source at the base of Mount Hermon (whose melting snow feeds it) and the Dead Sea is less than 124 miles. The stormy banks and swelling floods can result in the Jordan increasing a mile or two in width in certain areas.

The name Jordan comes from the Hebrew word *yardên*, from the root *yārad*, meaning “to descend,” which the river certainly does. The

Greeks originally called the Jordan “Aulon,” though the Arabic name “Nahr Al Sharieat” (“Watering Place”) became more popular after the Crusades. The Jordan River is the longest perennial course in Israel. Because of its tremendous length and primary location, the Jordan River is mentioned almost 200 times in the Bible, and has more biblical allusions and significance than any other river.

In Scripture, the Jordan is first mentioned in Genesis 13:10, “Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all

Credit: K. Bigalke



The Jordan River

the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—*this was* before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.” Abram had offered Lot land to “the left” or “the right” (v. 9), which would seem to suggest that he wanted to partition “the whole land” of the promise, wherein he would take one part and Lot the other. The Hebrew word for east is *qedem*, meaning “forward,” and indicates preference for that direction, whereas the word for west is *’āchôwr*, meaning “backward.” The Hebrew words indicate that the Israelites were eastern-oriented: That direction had a positive connotation, whereas the west was viewed negatively. One can note this eastern orientation and avoidance of the west in Ezekiel’s description of the millennial temple, which will be directed toward the east. Ezekiel’s temple is square in overall shape with three outer gates: one each on the north,

east, and south side. The northern part of the court will have gates, as will the southern. There is also an eastern gate but no western gate. Ezekiel’s prophecy demonstrates the Israelite preference for the east and avoidance of the west. While the Israelites were eastern-oriented indeed, God would lead Abram to the land He would show him (12:1; cf. v. 8; 13:14; 15:18).

In all likelihood, Abram made his offer to Lot as they were looking toward the east, since “Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan” (13:10), which would be to the east of where they were standing. What he apparently offered on “the left” would have been northern Canaan, the territory surrounding Shechem (cf. Gen 12:6; 13:3; 33:18-20; 37:12-17). The choice on “the right” would be southern Canaan, which would include both Hebron and the Negev (cf. 13:6, 9; 13:1, 18; 20:1; 24:62). Lot, however, did not chose either “the left” (north) or “the right” (south), but what was “like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt” (13:10). Both are positive descriptions within the context of Genesis, though the latter may be a subtle warning considering Israel’s bondage there. This seems confirmed in that the land chosen by Lot was “as you go to Zoar,” the city he fled to when God determined to rain brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah (19:19-24). To some extent, Lot’s decision seemed to have been made based upon the desire to align himself with the native inhabitants (cf. 13:7, 12; 19:1-26), in addition to the natural abundance of the Jordan valley (13:10). Lot’s choosing “for himself all the valley of the Jordan” and journey “eastward” resulted in separation from Abram (v. 11), and the reference to Zoar (v. 10) anticipates the result of that decision.

## The Jordan River: A Significant Border and Demonstration of God's Power

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Worthy of note is that Adam and Eve were driven “east of the Garden of Eden” (3:24), and “Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden” (4:16). Additionally, the people of Babel “journeyed east” in their determination to rebel against God (11:2). Lot’s decision, therefore, should be unsettling. The Jordan River was the eastern border of Canaan in the time of Lot, and the contrast between “the land of Canaan” and “the cities of the valley” (13:12) confirms Lot’s intent to separate from Abram. In the same manner as the rebellious people who “journeyed east . . . in the land of Shinar,” where they sought to build the city of Babylon (11:1-2), so did Lot journey “eastward” from the Promised Land into “the cities of the valley” when he “separated” from Abram (v. 14).

Years later, as opposed to seeking the Lord’s best, the tribes of Reuben and Gad were herdsman and thus requested permission not to cross the Jordan River but to settle east of it, since the land was more suitable for their “exceedingly large number of livestock” (Numb 32:1-5). “The land of Jazer and the land of Gilead . . . was indeed a place suitable for livestock” (v. 1), yet the decision of the tribes to settle (half of the tribe of Manasseh would join them later, v. 33) seemed to be more of a concession from God rather than His first intent. While it is true that God had given all that land to His people (Numb 21), and all His people needed to do was fortify and occupy it, the Gadites and Reubenites would be settling in the fringes of the land as opposed to the more essential territory. Moreover, the Jordan would separate them from the nation, thus precluding them from the nucleus of life in the Promised Land and making them prone to foreign influence.

The request of the tribes concerned Moses, and he referred to them as “a brood of sinful men”

(Numb 32:14). He feared their attitude would discourage the other tribes “from crossing over into the land which the LORD has given them” (v. 7). Certainly, there was a basis for Moses’ concern: Their satisfaction with less than God’s best, as opposed to inheriting the fullness of His blessing, could negatively influence the other tribes. Moses feared they were mimicking the unbelief of their fathers at Kadesh-barnea (vv. 8-15), and made certain the Gadites and Reubenites understood there was a battle to fight. They must be prepared and willing to fight alongside the other tribes until the Promised Land was conquered, to which they promised to assist “the sons of Israel” until every tribe possessed their divinely given “inheritance” (vv. 16-19). Their sin would be failure to fulfill their vow (v. 23), which the tribes did keep, yet their location across the Jordan was problematic (cf. Josh 22).

According to Hebrews 4, claiming the inheritance in the Promised Land is an illustration of how the church relates to the will of God and His promises in Christ Jesus. Some can be compared to the generation that perished in the wilderness, never entering the land. Others are similar to the ten spies, who saw the blessing of the land yet failed to enter. The tribes of Gad and Reuben (and half of Manasseh) entered the Promised Land yet did not remain, preferring the land on the border where they could raise their livestock. Moses was precluded from entering the Promised Land and was only allowed to view it—prior to his death—from the “mountain of Abarim” across the Jordan (Numb 27:12; Deut 31:2; 32:48-52). Yet God promised Joshua that He would give possession of the land which He swore to Abraham and his descendants (Josh 1:6; cf. Gen 12:6-7; 13:14-15; 15:18-21).

As the new generation of Israelites was finally prepared to enter the Promised Land, the Jordan River was the only obstacle. God instructed Joshua to have the priests carry the ark of the covenant into the Jordan, and when they obeyed, “the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap . . . and the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan” (Josh 3:16-17).

Two heaps of stones were erected as “a memorial to the sons of Israel forever” (4:7). Twelve stones were “set up . . . in the middle of the Jordan at the place where the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing” (v. 9), and another twelve stones were “taken from the Jordan” and placed “at Gilgal” (vv. 1-8, 10-24). The memorials would serve as perpetual witnesses to how God rewards faith and works on behalf of those who trust in Him. However, even Joshua failed to attain complete rest for Israel for the same reason as Moses; namely, the people’s unbelief (Heb 4:1-14). The generation that crossed the Jordan only partially experienced God’s rest, because they failed to obey and trust the Lord entirely. Believers today must be careful not to “come short” of God’s rest and “be diligent to enter that rest” (vv. 1, 11).

The Jordan River is mentioned many more times in the Old Testament, usually in reference



to battles and disputes involving God’s people. The Jordan was strategic in Gideon’s great victory over the Midianites (Judg 7:23-25; 8:4-5). Saul and several of his sons later perished in a battle near the Jordan River (1 Sam 31). Other passages mention how the Jordan was crossed to engage an enemy (2 Sam 2:29; 17:22-24; 19:15-40). Elijah “lived [for a time] by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan” (1 Kgs 17:5). Elisha told

Naaman the Syrian to “Go and wash in the Jordan” to be cured of his leprosy (2 Kgs 5:10), and an axe head was miraculously recovered there (2 Kgs 6:1-7). The prophets Elijah and Elisha crossed the Jordan prior to the former’s translation (2 Kgs 2:7-8, 13-14).


The New Testament refers to the importance of the Jordan River at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (Matt 3:13-17). John baptized in the same area of the Jordan where Elijah was translated (2 Kgs 2:11). Jesus came to John at the Jordan “to be baptized by him” (Matt 3:13). Jesus did not need purification or to repent. He was baptized as an identifying representation of obedience at the beginning of His ministry. Jesus understood that God’s will was for John to baptize Him as an indication of His submission (v. 15). Furthermore, the Lord’s baptism not only authenticated John’s ministry but also identified Jesus with the godly remnant of Israel. At the Jordan, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to empower Jesus to accomplish His messianic ministry (v. 16), which was soon to begin (4:17). (1355)

# WORLD FOCUS

 USA

## ChatGPT to 'See, Hear and Speak'

OpenAI's ChatGPT is getting a major update that will enable the viral chatbot to have voice conversations with users and interact using images, moving it closer to popular artificial intelligence (AI) assistants like Apple's Siri.

 Similar AI services like Siri, Google voice assistant and Amazon.com's Alexa are integrated with the devices they run on and are often used to set alarms and reminders, and deliver information off the internet.

Since its debut last year, ChatGPT has been adopted by companies for a wide range of tasks from summarizing documents to writing computer code, setting off a race amongst Big Tech companies to launch their own offerings based on generative AI.

ChatGPT's new voice feature can also narrate bedtime stories, settle debates at the dinner table, and speak out loud text input from users.

-*www.reuters.com*, 25 September 2023

**Commentary:** We have been watching the development of artificial intelligence with some interest lately. This year in particular has seen stunning advances in "large language models" (LLM), which has resulted in these



REUTERS/Dado Ruvic/Illustration/File

computer algorithms mimicking conversation so well that they almost seem alive. Nevertheless, they are deterministic algorithms that are in fact just advanced predictive text engines.

Still, this technology seems to leapfrog itself month after month, blowing away expectations each time. Reuters' headline, "OpenAI's ChatGPT will 'see, hear and speak'" of course caught our eye, since it reminds us of Revelation 13:15: "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." To be clear, we do not say this technology is the image of the beast; Revelation 13 makes it clear that it is the beast (Antichrist) who will "give life unto the image of the beast." We are, however, living in a time when technology can convincingly mimic human thought and communication for the first time.

-By J. Froese

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(See *Foreshadows*, Item #2393, \$17.99.)


 PERU

## Anger Against the Government

The anger of Peruvians against their government is nowhere more visible than in Andahuaylas, a remote rural Andean community where the poor have struggled for years and where voters' support helped elect now-ousted President Pedro Castillo, himself a peasant like them.



A supporter of ousted President Pedro Castillo returns a tear gas canister to police in Lima, Peru (AP Photo/Martin Mejia)

 While protesters have also gathered in Lima, the capital, the demonstrations have been particularly heated in rural areas that were strongholds for Castillo, a former schoolteacher and political newcomer from a poor Andean mountain district.

Protesters went a step further by blocking access to an international airport for several hours in southern Peru and occupying its runway. Demonstrations in Arequipa, where the airport is located, left one protester dead, Minister of Defense Alberto Otarola told law-

(continued next page)



## Anger (continued from page 24)

makers during a session of Congress focused on the civil unrest.

Peru has had six presidents in the last six years. In 2020, it cycled through three in a week.

The latest presidential crisis is taking place as the Andes and its thousands of small farms struggle to survive the worst drought in a half-century. The country is also experiencing a fifth wave of COVID-19 cases.

-apnews.com, 12 December 2022

**Commentary:** Peru is a country not often in the news, but historically quite significant. For example, tomatoes and potatoes originate from the Andes Mountains in Peru. One staple for the USA is maize (corn), coming from Mexico.

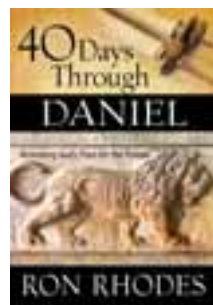
But there's more; namely, the growing demand for electric vehicles to replace those based on internal combustion engines. But electric vehicles require four times as much copper as traditional ones. While neighboring Chile produces almost 20% of the world's copper, Peru's part is significant, at 8.3%.

What's wrong with Peru? One word: politics. Thus, the ever-increasing protest of the general public against the government.

Peru's population stands at about 32 million people, with a relatively low life expectancy of 68.9 years, according to the *CIA Factbook*. Sixty

percent of the population is listed as Roman Catholic, with a significant 14.6% Christian, including 11.1% evangelical.

What is Peru's future? The same as any other country on planet earth. Daniel summarizes the future of world history: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these king-



doms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

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(See *40 Days Through Daniel*, Item #2304, \$15.99.)



ISRAEL

## Guaranteeing 'Christian' Safety

In January, two Jews were captured on camera vandalizing dozens of Christian graves in Jerusalem's historic Old City, drawing condemnation from church officials and the United Kingdom. The two suspects were later tracked down by police, who were arrested and charged.

 In another case, Russia condemned an alleged attack by "Jewish radicals" on the Church of the Assumption in Jerusalem's Old City, with foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova commenting that "there can be no excuse for such criminal attacks."



**Jerusalem Police District chief Doron Turgeman speaks to local Christian community leaders**  
(photo credit: ISRAEL POLICE SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT)

Israel is committed to the personal security of Catholic churches in Jerusalem and the religious freedom of the city's Christian community, Israel Police stressed in a meeting with community leaders.

In a "special" meeting held at the initiative of police, Jerusalem District commander Doron Turgeman, flanked by high-ranking police officials, met with the Christian community leaders at the Tower of David museum amid a surge in hate crimes carried out against Christians in the Israeli capital.

The meeting was held in order to establish an open dialogue with the Christian community, police said, as well as to address issues, strengthen ties and enhance the coordination between police and representatives of churches across Jerusalem.

-www.jpost.com, 8 August 2023

**Commentary:** We need to distinguish between Christians and the Christ-

(continued next page)

## Safety (continued from page 25)

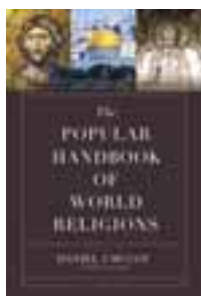
ian religion. The Christian religion—manifested by historic church buildings—has been protected; not only throughout Israel’s modern history, but also during the Muslim Ottoman Empire. The fact that these buildings still exist is the proof.

The other side of the story is that true Christians, born again of the Spirit of God, are to be found throughout the land of Israel, as well as the Middle East and the wider world. These Christians meet in various places—sometimes secretly—but they are a real presence. As the Bible tells us, the Church of the living God is an invisible reality. Paul asks the question: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

The good news is the spiritual temple continues to grow despite opposition, and will do so until it is perfected. That is the point when Jesus takes His Church to heaven. The result will be catastrophic, because the light and the salt will have been removed from planet earth. Utter chaos will prevail, albeit only temporarily.

8091

(See *The Popular Handbook of World Religions*, Item #2380, \$24.99.)



## JAPAN

### Exploring the Origins of the Universe

The launch of the HII-A rocket from Tanegashima Space Center in southwestern Japan was shown on live video by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, known as JAXA.



 Thirteen minutes after the launch, the rocket put into orbit around Earth a satellite called the X-Ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission, or XRISM, which will measure the speed and makeup of what lies between galaxies.

That information helps in studying how celestial objects were formed, and hopefully can lead to solving the mystery of how the universe was created, JAXA says.

JAXA is developing “pinpoint landing technology” to prepare for future lunar probes and landing on other planets. While landings now tend to be off by about 10 kilometers (6 miles) or more, the Smart Lander is designed to be more precise, within about 100 meters (330 feet) of the intended target, JAXA official Shinichiro Sakai told reporters ahead of the launch.

-www.npr.org, 7 September 2023

**Commentary:** We continue to take note of so-called space exploration. In previous analysis, we came to the conclusion that the real reason for this undertaking is national pride. They all attempt to do something which cannot be done: “[solve] the mystery of how the universe was created.” We know how it was created: simply by God speaking it into existence, making something out of nothing.

When reading the first 11 chapters of our Bible, we are faced with a clear description of the world’s origin. When God created man, we read in Genesis 1:28: “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” That is what mankind has done: subdue God’s creation, for indeed he has dominion over the animal world. However, when it comes to space, mankind touches the unknown. We mentioned the motive, which is encouraged by the great imitator, who desires to be god-like. The prophet Isaiah exposes him: “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:14).


8084

(See *Cosmos, Creator, and Human Destiny*, Item #2251, \$30.)

 U K

## Lab-grown, Human Embryo-like Structures

Scientists have developed human embryo-like structures without using sperm, an egg or fertilization, offering hope for research on miscarriage and birth defects but also raising fresh ethical concerns.

 Earlier this year, several labs around the world released pre-print studies that had not been peer-reviewed, describing their development of early human embryo-like structures. Now one group's research has been published in the peer-reviewed journal *Nature*, describing how they coaxed human embryonic stem cells to self-organize into a model resembling an early embryo.

The researchers say their work differs from those of other teams because it uses chemically rather than genetically modified embryonic stem cells and produces models more like real human embryos, complete with yolk sac and amniotic cavity.

The research "is a step towards opening a window on the period of human development where many pregnancies fail and which has been really difficult to study up until now."

The research and other recent work show "that models of human embryos are getting more sophisticated and closer to events that occur during normal development."

In Britain, Cambridge University has begun developing the country's first governance framework for stem cell-based human embryo models.



**Dr Jacob Hanna, a specialist in molecular genetics at Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science, holds a vial containing five-day-old synthetic mouse embryos grown in an electronically controlled ex-utero roller culture platform, in a lab in the Israeli central city of Rehovot.** AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP/Getty

British law prohibits the culturing of human embryos in labs beyond the 14-day mark, but because the structures derived from stem cells are formed artificially, they are not explicitly covered by existing regulations.

Still, most researchers have adopted voluntary limits on their work at this stage.

-*www.cbsnews.com*, 7 September 2023

**Commentary:** When reading such material, one must ask the question: What next? Granted, medical science has greatly contributed to increased life expectancy and general health improvements around the world, but where is the limit? That is the big question.

It is this writer's personal opinion (and as the article also indicates) that "The work will ... renew debate on the need for clearer ethical rules on development of lab-grown human embryo models." One senses the desire of mankind to actually mimic the

Creator. John begins his Gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). 8081


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

 F I J I

## Deports Leaders of Korean Sect

Fijian authorities said they were in the process of deporting six leaders of a South Korean religious sect that a decade ago moved hundreds of followers to Fiji and built a series of thriving businesses into an empire.



 But authorities said they were only able to apprehend four of the principals of the Grace Road Church, and that senior director Daniel Kim and another man were on the run.

It's unclear how the deportations will affect the estimated 400 South Korean adherents who remain in Fiji and the hundreds of local Fijians they employ. Grace Road businesses are prominent across the island country and include farms, restaurants, supermarkets, gas stations and dentists.

The sect first moved to Fiji under Daniel Kim's mother, Shin Ok-ju, who

(continued next page)

## Korean Sect (continued from page 27)

told her followers that Fiji provided a safe haven from impending war and famine. She is currently imprisoned in South Korea after being found guilty of various crimes, including holding followers captive and assaulting them.

In 2019, a South Korean court found that, in Fiji, Shin forced her followers to work without pay. The work included farming, hairdressing, construction, and restaurant services. They lived together at a facility that separated family members as well as men and women, the court found. Most of the devotees' passports were confiscated.

Shin held a ritualistic event almost every day to get followers to beat each other in the name of "driving away evil spirits."

*-abcnews.go.com, 7 September 2023*

**Commentary:** It's interesting how similar what the leaders of this sect were espousing to what the ultra-rich secular apocalypse preppers envisioned (see article on Nauru, Sept. 2023 *Midnight Call*, p. 25). The founder led her followers to Fiji to escape "impending war and famine." Most egregious is the fact that workers were not paid, despite "a series of thriving businesses ... an empire." Not to mention the abuse of

parishioners in the guise of "driving away evil spirits."

This is a wakeup call to Christians to be alert and not fall prey to false doctrines. The cult's practice of separating married couples was a clear violation of Scripture, originating from the devil himself: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry..." (1 Timothy 4:1-3a).

-By K. Farmer


8079

*(See The Church Subtly Deceived? Item #2091, \$9.99.)*

## RUSSIA

### Embassy Branch in Jerusalem

Russia plans to open a branch of its embassy in Jerusalem in exchange for acknowledging the boundaries of Moscow's historical and present ownership of the plot of land on which the office will be built, the sides announced.

 The Foreign Ministry said the building complex will include a residence for Russian diplomats and a conference hall, which makes it more than a regular consulate.

The ministry called the agreement a "diplomatic achievement."

Russia recognized western Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017.

The US moved its embassy from Tel Aviv to Israel's capital, Jerusalem, in 2018. There are currently three other embassies

in the capital: Guatemala, Honduras and Kosovo. Ten countries have diplomatic offices in Jerusalem.

*-www.jpost.com, 17 June 2023*

**Commentary:** This is quite interesting, because Russia recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017, followed by the US in 2018.

Likewise, Russia officially recognized the State of Israel before the US—though President Harry Truman, via the State Department and addressed to "certain American diplomatic and consular offices," sent a top-secret telegram immediately after the declaration of the State of Israel by Ben Gurion, stating, "Recognize provisional Jewish government as de facto authority of a new Jewish state." The official (de jure)

recognition of the State of Israel by the USA followed on 31 January 1949.

Here we see that blood is thicker than water. The majority of the immigrants who founded the State of Israel were from the Soviet Union. It is for that reason Israel has thus far not permitted its weapons systems to go to Ukraine. This is due to the "continued Russian presence in Syria and the sizable Jewish community," as states a *Jerusalem Post* article from 18 June 2023.

8077

*(See Why Jerusalem Is Jewish, Item #1070, \$2.)*



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# Biblical Answers to Why Jesus Hasn't Yet Returned

## – Part 2

Norbert Lieth

If we read the Bible with redemptive history in mind, we'll realize why the Lord is waiting patiently to return. It relates to three deferments associated with the Lord's coming, Israel, and the Church. An exposition.

Some Christians are distressed that Jesus still hasn't returned.

One friend of our ministry had been awaiting and proclaiming Jesus' return for his entire life. And yet in old age he lay on his deathbed, embittered that the Lord hadn't returned in his lifetime.

Our forefathers (and mothers) in the faith lived in firm expectation of the Lord's return, but they didn't experience it during their mortal lives. Why is it taking so long? There are very specific reasons for this; namely, humanity's salvation, and above all the glory of God, who has an incredible plan. With regard to God's kingdom,

the Bible speaks of three deferments in His plan of salvation which clarify why the Lord hasn't yet returned.

### **The First Deferment**

God had already announced a first deferment in the Old Testament: "...He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come" (Isa 21:11-12).

There was a deep spiritual darkness over the world and Israel at the time of Jesus' first coming.

## Biblical Answers to Why Jesus Hasn't Yet Returned – Part 2

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There was a deep spiritual darkness over the world and Israel at the time of Jesus' first coming.

But with God's incarnation in Christ, a new day broke out and a new chapter of salvation began. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa 9:2; cf. Matt 4:15-16).

But the Jewish people rejected their Messiah, Jesus. Although dawn had broken, night immediately fell over Israel. Morning came, and night too. Jesus (and with Him, the rising sun) departed from the people and ascended into heaven. Night's death shadows deepened over Israel. The Lord's presence on earth was but a brief morning of salvation for His people, a moment of light. The kingdom offered through Jesus didn't break through in its fullness. Instead, the prophet Hosea's prophecy came true: "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early" (Hos 5:15). Christ is enthroned in heaven until His people Israel turn to Him and say, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hos 6:3).

Israel is currently asleep in terms of redemptive history: "(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day" (Rom 11:8). And the Apostle Paul explains to the Church: "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be

sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thess 5:5-8).

Israel's dawn will occur at the end of the Apocalypse: when the people seek the Lord diligently in their distress and Jesus returns, saying, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev 22:16).

This is why the watchman in Isaiah 21:12 says, "The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come." Or in other translations, "If you would ask, then ask; and come back yet again" (NIV); "If you want to ask, ask! Come back again" (CSB).

The tone is prophetic, as if the watchman's words are pointing to a future replay of the event. Jesus will in fact come again, and the people will ask about the Lord again in the end times. That's why there's an assumption that this Old Testament prophetic question will be asked again in Israel. This is similar to the Lord's first coming, when He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and the people cried out, "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matt 21:9). Jesus later said that the same thing will happen at His return: "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt 23:39; cf. Ps 27:7-9).

Jesus had already prophetically announced this first deferment on various occasions. He

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said, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). For example:

In the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy kingdom come” (Matt 6:10).

When Jesus prophesied to the people of Israel: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt 21:43).

In the Parable of the Talents: “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods ... After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them” (Matt 25:14, 19).

In the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins: “While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (Matt 25:5-6).

At that time, nobody was aware of this deeper plan of God.

In the time of Jesus, the disciples weren’t mature enough for deeper biblical revelations: “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). They couldn’t yet bear that there would be a Church of Jews and Gentiles alike, a body where no difference between them existed. They couldn’t bear that this body would become a single organism—one body, with Jesus as the Head. They couldn’t bear that this body would be made complete (2,000 years so far) when the full number had come in, and then be united with the Head (Rom 11:25-26). They couldn’t yet bear the fact that God would call an additional Apostle—namely, Paul—for an extended Gospel.

Paul also reveals deeper truths that aren’t found in the other New Testament writings, as he himself says: “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God” (Col 1:25). One example is the mystery of Christ in His Church, which was only revealed to Paul (v. 27).

Jesus was crucified to resolve the issue of guilt, and will return to resolve the issue of power. After His death on the Cross, He rose from the dead and returned to heaven, just as He had foreshadowed. The King was gone from His people. The dawning of God’s kingdom was thus deferred ... or initially received a different priority.

### **The Second Deferment**

The next deferment is from the Gospels to Acts.

The Apostles had witnessed that the kingdom Jesus announced hadn’t broken through during

## Biblical Answers to Why Jesus Hasn't Yet Returned – Part 2

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Jesus was crucified to resolve the issue of guilt, and will return to resolve the issue of power.

His ministry here on earth. Now they were hoping it would be established shortly after His ascension. At the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, the emergent Jewish church was still anticipating the Lord's return. Everything was characterized by His kingdom, and miracles were happening again during this time. The disciples asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). To which the Lord replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7).

In Acts 3, Peter proclaimed to the Jewish people, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you" (vv. 19-20).

But the people didn't repent, and the stoning of Stephen was the last straw. The bridegroom deferred His coming. The times of refreshment in the messianic, millennial kingdom—the kingdom of God on earth—have not yet come.

### The Third Deferment

We see the last deferment in looking from Acts to the Epistles for the Church.

The coming of the kingdom was further postponed through God's providence. It was a matter of great mystery: The Church was to represent a

single body of Jews and Gentiles. Paul was saved, called, and sent for this reason.

In Hebrews 11:39-40, we read about the believers under the Old Covenant: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." The better thing is the future perfect glory of the body, to which the nations are also called—the New Testament Church.

If Jesus had returned sooner, this body would never have formed: A kingdom of Jews would have arisen instead. Gentiles could indeed have taken part in it, but never as equal members of a body in which there is no longer any distinction. We would also never have come to the big issue of the Rapture of the body of Christ. And we wouldn't have come to Paul and his deep revelations.

"And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7). So, this statement suggests more than is commonly understood, and indicates that God the Father had a broader plan than the disciples commonly believed. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).

(MR1222/1306)

*(To be continued.)*





“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God”  
(Isaiah 40:1).

**BY ARNO FROESE**

**A**fter reading chapter 39, we notice that Isaiah 40:1 is quite different. It appears suddenly, and has caused many commentators to shine the light on the Church and not Israel. Actually, the commentary of the *Geneva Study Bible* says, “This is a consolation for the church.”

One thing we know for sure: while we may spiritually apply it to the Church, when we continue to read, it becomes self-evident that this speaks of the people of Israel. Here is the proof: “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (verse 2). A geographic location is given, and that does not apply to the Church. The Church of the living God does not have an earthly inheritance. We do not have a headquarters, nor do we have one language. We who are sealed by the Holy Spirit, are present

globally—all continents, all countries.

There is another noticeable statement: “her warfare is accomplished.” Obviously, not so at this time. Jerusalem is a controversy to the whole world, a stumbling stone for all nations. But note, “her iniquity is pardoned.” We know again that this is future. The prophet Zechariah speaks of it: “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced” (Zechariah 12:10a).

There is more: “for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” This is not applicable to the Church but concerns the Jewish people. When reading Jewish history, it’s simply mind-boggling that these people did not cease to exist. The horrible atrocities they went through, the persecution they endured, and the slaughter by the



millions is unparalleled. Think of the Holocaust; during Germany's Nazi reign, six million Jews were systematically murdered for no other reason than being Jewish. It is this writer's opinion that this qualifies as "double for all her sins."

From Biblical history, we learn that after Solomon's temple was destroyed and the Hebrews were led captive to Babylon, the prophet Ezra confesses: "And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this" (Ezra 9:13). The punishment the Jews received at the hands of the Babylonians was "less than our iniquities deserve."

When it says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," this is speaking to the Gentiles. We are called to comfort Israel. That is why we stand behind this nation unconditionally. It matters not what they do or don't do; it's not our task to issue opinions or judgments. We comfort Israel out of respect for God's chosen.

In reading Genesis 12, we note that the "I will" of God is repeated:

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (verses 2-3). Abraham and his descendants were not required to earn the fulfillment of the promise: It is unconditional.

A striking example is recorded in Numbers 23. Balaam, the Gentile prophet, was requested by King Balak to curse Israel. But what does Balaam do? "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them ... Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" (Numbers 23:21, 23). Is this prophet telling lies? He says he has "not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." That is quite contrary to the report we have in Exodus; Israel was exposed as a stiff-necked people who continually rebelled against the Lord.

When it says, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,” this is speaking to the Gentiles. We are called to comfort Israel. That is why we stand behind this nation unconditionally. It matters not what they do or don’t do; it’s not our task to issue opinions or judgments. We comfort Israel out of respect for God’s chosen.

That is true, but we must understand that Balaam was a Gentile prophet; he had no business looking into the affairs of the family of Israel. He was not shown the iniquity and perverseness of Israel; it was simply not his business. Nor is it our business today to condemn or judge the Jewish nation—It’s in God’s camp. In Romans 3, the apostle Paul asked the question: “What advantage then hath the Jew?” He answers: “Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

During the many years and even decades of support for Israel, we have often been called various names, one being “Israel fanatics.” That, unfortunately, is true for some of us. But we at Midnight Call Ministries observe Israel realistically, with the full conviction that God has given them an unconditional covenant. The Lord Jesus Himself stated, “Salvation is of the Jews.” May these truths sink deep into our hearts, so we are enabled to truly, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.” <sup>MC</sup>

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# 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.

## JUBILEE... SHEMITAH... BETTER TIMES

### **Jubilee**

Dear Editor,

In the Ebenezer article on the Jubilee, page 34 of the September *Midnight Call*, it says: "...there is no evidence in the Bible that the Israelites really kept [the Jubilee]." Is there really no proof of this in the history of the Jewish people?

-W. Baggett, LA

**Answer:** According to a blog found after a cursory Google search (with many references):

"With the Israelites' failure to keep the sabbatical years during other time frames, like the monarchial period (2 Chron 36:20-21), it would suggest that the year of Jubilee was not enforced. However, while there is no clear evidence of it ever being observed, there are allusions to it in other parts of the Old Testament (Isa. 5:7-10; 61:1, 2; Ezek. 7:12, 13; Neh. 5:1-19). Simply stated, we do not know if the Year of Jubilee was ever observed."

(<https://seekingourgod.wordpress.com/2015/02/17/was-the-year-of-jubilee-ever-observed/>)

### **Shemitah**

Hello Arno Froese,

The generation that sees the fig tree (Israel) leaf out, "shall see all these things and know that it is near" (Matthew 24:32-34). I was nine years old when Israel became a nation again. I expect to see all these things.

A messianic Jew who has a ministry in Washington State, says 2023 is the seventh year of a Shemitah, and next year is a Jubilee. He says if Christ does not come back this year, He will have to wait fifty years.

-P. Watson, TN

**Answer:** While Matthew 24 does not necessarily speak of the Rapture, it makes one thing crystal clear: We are to be ready at any



moment. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:42). In verse 44, He reconfirms: "...for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Any mathematical configuration—be it holidays, feast days, or Year of Jubilee—is not our guideline regarding the moment of the Rapture. Let's not forget the many false dates that were set, or events that were seen as "clear signs": all failed. Thus, we can be sure that the "Shemitah" or "Sabbath Millennium 2023" will fail, as we will soon find out.

### Better Times

Dear Midnight Call,

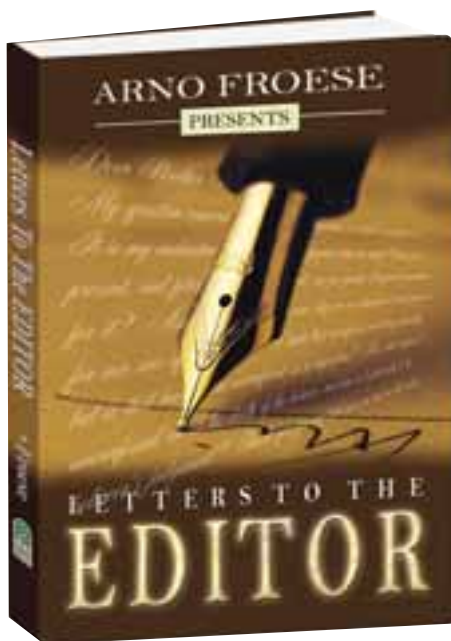
Thanks for the fine article about tracks and the example steps we all leave behind (June *Midnight Call*, pages 4-5). It reminded me of some information I gathered about 30

years ago and passed along. Also, here is something new I wrote (to our grandsons in college) about "whine." Enjoy.

-J. Cardie, CO

**Answer:** The article you enclosed, "Have an Attitude of Gratitude," is right on target. It relates to my continued insistence that we've never had it so good. Obviously, it will continue to get better: Whether it's food, shelter, clothing, etc., all are constantly being improved year by year. Of Sodom, the prophet writes: "...thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness..." (Ezekiel 16:49). In Revelation 18:7b, we read: "...I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." And Proverbs 16:18a says: "Pride goeth before destruction..."

Prosperity galore is the great end-time sign for believers. (MC)



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ITEM #1045

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Author: Arno Froese



# EVOLUTION



By Peter Malgo

On the 7th of March 2010, America launched the new Kepler telescope into space via a rocket. It was meant to search for habitable planets and, above all, to clarify the question of whether there are other living beings in space, or if we are alone.

It is only an acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution that allows for such a question to be asked. Ed Weiler, [former] deputy chief of NASA's science department, stated that Kepler will bring certainty about whether planets like Earth are common in the universe. He said: "Maybe we are on the only earth. But I think that would be a very bad answer, because I wouldn't want to live in an empty universe where we are the best there is."

To answer these questions, we don't need an expensive telescope in space; we just need to consult our Bible! Scripture emphasizes that there is only one God who accomplished all of Creation. This is clearly expressed in Isaiah 44:6: "Thus saith the LORD . . . I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." It is unthinkable that somewhere there should be another God.

It is significant that at times "heavens" (plural) is mentioned. Without a doubt,

that is to make us aware of the immense expanse of the universe; for example, in Nehemiah 9:6a: "Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein." By contrast, the earth is always spoken of only in the singular. It is the only earth in this vast universe.

That there is only one inhabited earth is also demonstrated by the fact that all of God's actions are directed toward this earth. The divine focus is on us humans, on our hearts.

Besides the concept "earth," which means the spatially clearly definable blue planet, the Bible often uses the term "world." This concept is broader and, in its widest interpretation, encompasses the universe or "space." That "world" is not to be equated with "earth" is made clear in Psalm 90:2: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the



Yes, we humans are alone in this universe. But we will not remain alone once we are allowed to be with Jesus and His hosts.

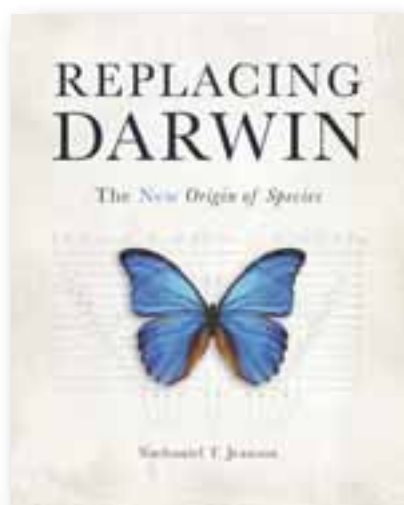
earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” This clearly refers to the universe. In the original Hebrew text, there is a word that means universe.

The Creation account clearly shows that we are indeed the only living creatures of human nature and, in that sense, are alone. In the beginning, Adam literally lived alone on this singular earth. Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that . . . man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18), and created a helper for Adam. According to the Bible, we were created personally by God to be “the best there is.” “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him...” (Genesis 1:27a). Man was the crowning glory of Creation. That is confirmed in Genesis 5:1b: “In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.” However, through sin,

man lost his divine likeness and degenerated.

Let us switch to the New Testament: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish...” (John 3:16). In the original Greek text, the word “cosmos” stands for “world.” Thus, it does not say: “For God so loved the earth...” God loved everything He had made, all of Creation. But His goal was to return the crowning glory of His Creation—man—to bearing His image. For this He gave His Son. Jesus did not go to some other planet . . . He came to this earth. He came for us humans. That is unique!

Yes, we humans are alone in this universe. But we will not remain alone once we are allowed to be with Jesus and His hosts. And then, as 1 John 3:2 tells us, we will be like Him. (MC)



## The Origins Puzzle Comes Together

Darwin’s theory of evolution may be one of science’s “sacred cows,” but genetics research is proving it wrong. Changing an entrenched narrative, even if it’s wrong, is no easy task. *Replacing Darwin* asks you to consider the possibility that, based on genetics research, our origins are more easily understood in the context of “In the beginning, God” with the timeline found in the biblical narrative of Genesis. There is a better answer to the origins debate than what we have been led to believe. Let the revolution begin!

REPLACING DARWIN ITEM #2331 • 335 pgs. • **Hardcover**

~~\$24.99~~ **Sale \$20** Author: Nathaniel Jeanson



# A Surrendered Life: Faithfully Serving the Lord to the Very End: Part 1

*In Memory of Annie, An Ebenezer Home Resident*

By David Phillips (*Ebenezer's CEO*)

Annie, along with her twin sister Minnie, was born in 1932 in the Dutch East Indies, where their parents were missionaries.



## **Serving As Missionaries in the Dutch East Indies**

Father van de Weg went to Bible training at St. Chrischona Bible School in South Germany. On the day of graduation, Mother van de Weg walked through the door. Annie's father said that when she walked through the door, the Lord said to him, "There is your wife walking through the door." They got married and went to Indonesia as missionaries, where they served for many years. Minnie shared how their father traveled through Java, Bali, and Sumatra.

Annie's parents had their first child, Alie, during their furlough in Holland in 1930, and then they had Annie and her twin sister Minnie, in the Dutch East Indies in 1932.

However, in a dramatic turn of events, the van de Wegs' lives would be changed forever.

## **World War II & the Concentration Camps**

Hitler invaded Holland on May 10, 1940, and the Netherlands declared martial law on the Dutch East Indies. Two years later, the Japanese invaded Indonesia (previously known as the Dutch East Indies). Annie was 8 years old.

When the Japanese invaded Java, Mother van de Weg and the girls fled quickly to a mountain village. Minnie shares how the Japanese were flying in a V formation and bombs were falling all around them. Everything burned. They ended up fleeing back to Java. In the days that followed, Mother van de Weg suddenly had a heart attack and died.

The Japanese were waiting for them as they returned from their mother's funeral, arresting Father van de Weg and sending him to a work camp. Minnie shares how the girls begged him, "Father, don't go!" but of course he had to go. The three girls (along with a young lady who was with them) also ended up being sent to a concentration camp for 1.5 years. It was a terrible time for all of them, but with God's help, they survived.

Miraculously, their father also survived the work camps and came back after the war, just skin and bones. Minnie later learned that he only survived because they forced him to take some medicine. "One for Alie, one for Minnie..." they said. He swallowed it for his daughters.





After their release, Annie prayed to the Lord that He would erase the horrible memories of the war, and she could honestly say God had really done that for her. She shared how it pained her to see how some of the other residents at Ebenezer still suffered from the traumatic memories of the war.

**Recovering from the War**

After they released Father van de Weg and the three girls in 1945, they all went back to Holland. Later, the girls joined Corrie ten Boom’s Bible studies for young women who had survived the war. Minnie shares that some of the greatest lessons they learned from Corrie were to be full of the Lord, or the love of the Lord. To keep calm, be patient, and be yourself. She shared how Corrie was “at home” with everyone. Whether they were old or young, hippies, intellectuals, or simple-minded, it didn’t matter because she radiated HIS love. This made Corrie a great blessing to many.

**Serving the Lord**

Corrie’s godly example clearly influenced both Annie and her sisters, and they accomplished many things for the kingdom of God. Minnie worked as a nurse/midwife in the UAE and helped to build the first clinic, where she served for over 45 years (and still lives there). Her sister Alie became a doctor in Holland. Annie studied to be a nurse and then a midwife in Holland, before feeling called by God to go serve in Israel.

Annie shared that after her training, she worked as a midwife at the midwifery training school in Amsterdam, where she soon became head of the labor ward.

“I loved my job,” explained Annie, “and I didn’t want to leave it. I really battled with the Lord when He called me to come to Israel in 1973. I joined Near East Ministries in 1975, and replaced another Dutch midwife who left the Poriya hospital in the north of Israel. I worked in Poriya as a midwife for 23 years, and also helped women who wanted to have home births.” *(Continued next month.)*



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

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### GERMANY

# A Uniquely Arabic Break BY ELIA MORISE

A special Arabic break was held in Germany by God’s grace, thanks to many brothers and sisters in the faith.

**T**hree brothers and I led a program with the motto “Arise and Build” for an Arabic summer camp. Our topic was Nehemiah, with a focus on Nehemiah 2:20.

About 100 people participated, and for the first time, there were many converts from an Islamic background.

I picked some of them up using a Midnight Call shuttle bus, and one of them began to share his testimony on the way. About three hours later, a second person told of his conversion. It was a very pleasant and encouraging start to our time together.

But I have to be honest: I was a little worried that the atmosphere would be tense. We were going to have evangelicals, Catholics, Orthodox, Arameans, and converts from Islam, all in one place. You can just imagine what worship looked like: Some were lifting their hands, others stood stiffly in place, and the converts looked around, trying to figure out what proper behavior was. But as I proclaimed

God’s Word and talked about “The Broken Wall in Your Life,” God’s Spirit was palpable. He spoke to all of us, regardless of background.

This time was a special one for me, because second-generation youth were there: born in Germany to Arab parents. They conducted their Bible study in German.

On the final evening, a memorable experience took place. I was exhausted after preaching, holding many personal conversations, and extending pastoral care. As I picked up my bag to leave, one of the youth came up behind me and asked, “Could I ask you to pray with me? I want to give my life to Jesus.”

I can’t describe the strength I received in that moment, but I was able to listen to the young man, pray with him, and discuss the spiritual realities of his new life as a Christian.

I’d like to thank everyone who supports this work through prayer and donations. We also want to “arise and build”!  
(MNR0923)

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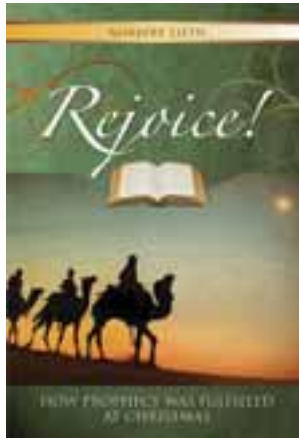
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## How Prophecy Was Fulfilled at Christmas

In the celebration of Christmas we hear about Jesus' great victory over pagan cults, which He has displaced. For instance, the Christmas observance has led to the displacement of the Roman pagan "Solstice." The coming of Jesus reminds us that He broke the power of Satan and paganism. Whereas in earlier times idols and pagan altars were worshiped, Christ will be remembered today.

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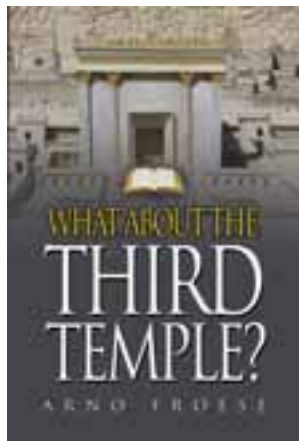


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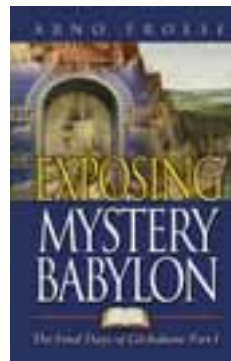
## A Closer Look at the Third Temple

Only when that temple is completed—when the last from among the Gentiles has been added to it—will the Church, the body of Christ, the spiritual temple, be raptured into the presence of the Lord. Furthermore, the Church—in which dwells the Holy Spirit—is also the hindering element for the salvation of Israel, as Paul documents: "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25b).

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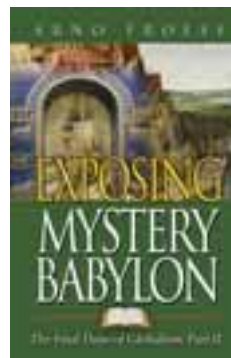
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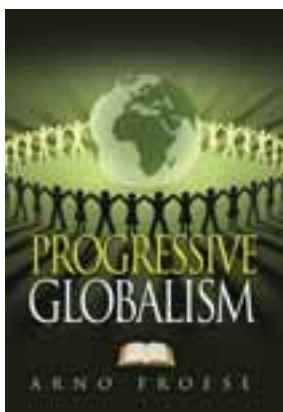
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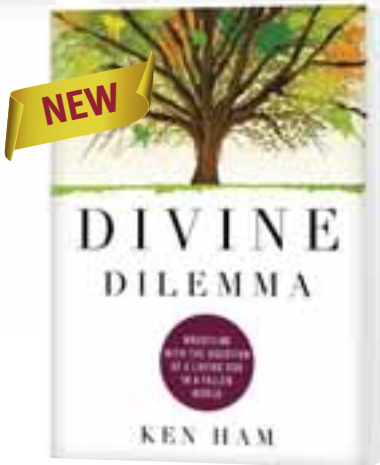
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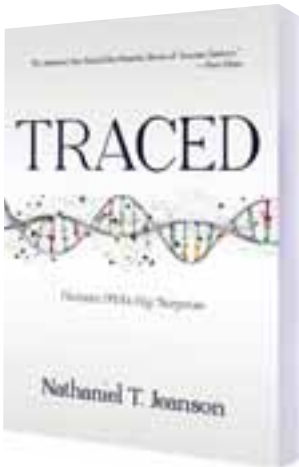
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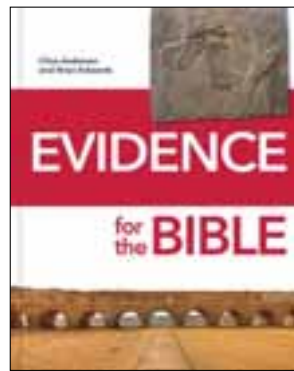


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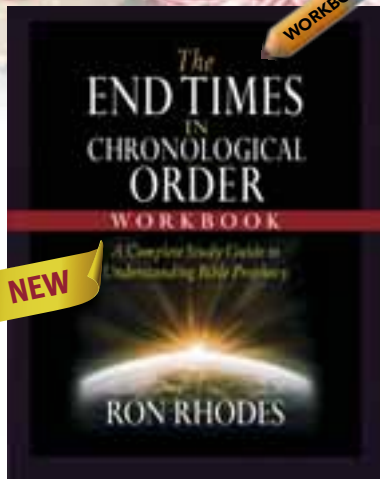
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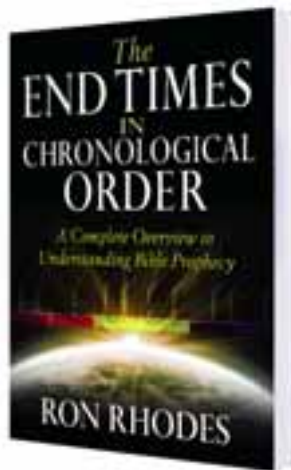
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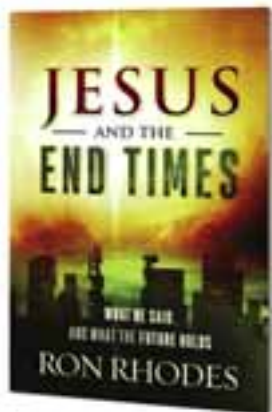
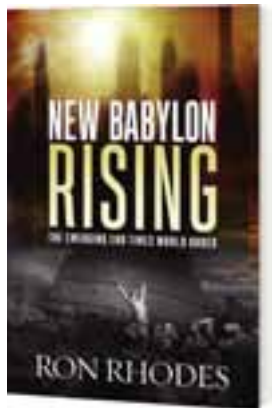
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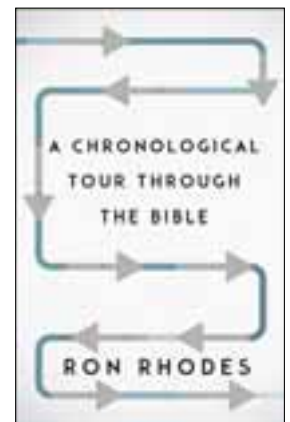
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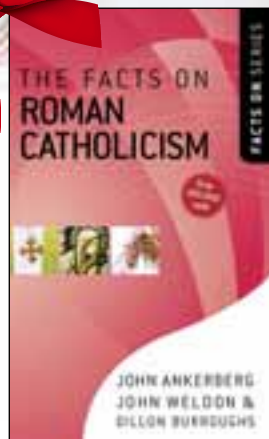
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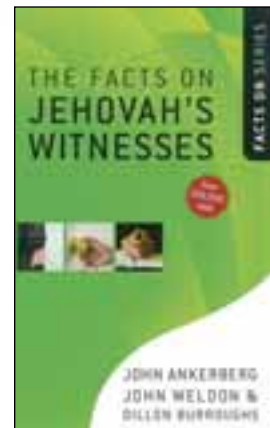
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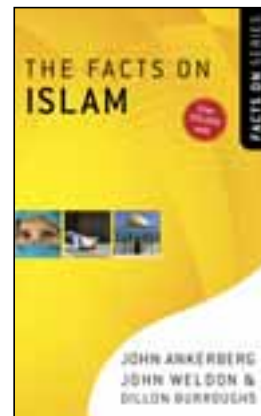
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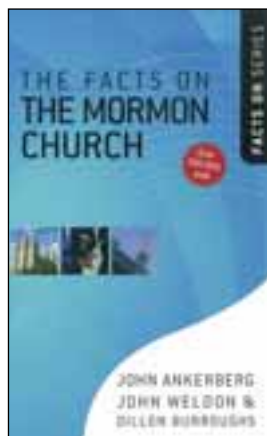
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