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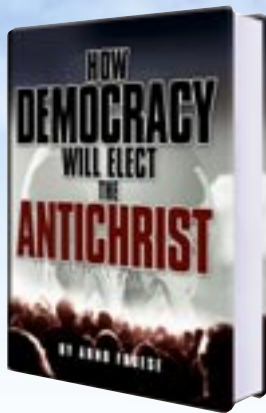
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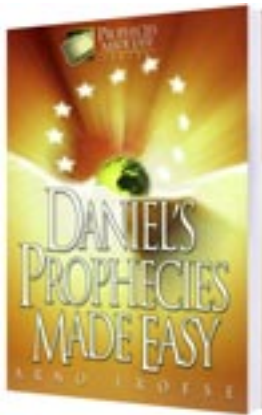
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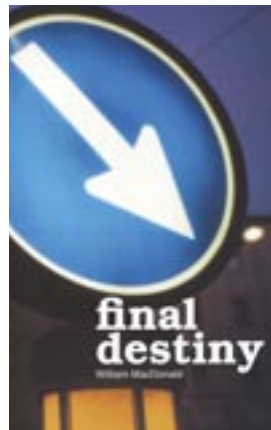
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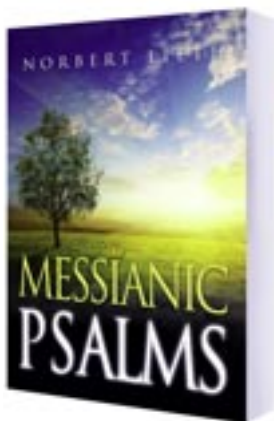
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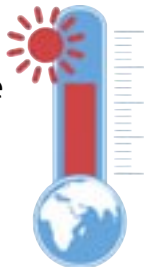


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# Spiritual Cataracts



**By Norbert Lieth**

*Director of Missions, Midnight Call International*

**D**r. Jörk Zink once said: “For miracles we don’t need fairy tales, but eyes that can see and a heart that understands.” I am writing this article just a few hours after the bandage was removed that had been applied following cataract surgery. Before that, my vision had gotten worse and worse. I needed stronger reading glasses; at a distance everything was blurry, and in the dark, I could hardly see anything at all. When the bandage was taken off, I saw things clearly again. I could distinguish contours and colors better; above all, I no longer needed glasses for distance vision.

Sometimes it seems to me as though we Christians suffer from spiritual cataracts. We no longer have a clear view for the Biblical truths that are promised to us for the long range. We are near-sighted; we only see what is right in front of us, the daily concerns—much of which are important—but biblical prophecy is neglected.

A preacher told me recently that, on average, every chapter of the New Testament deals with prophetic statements and focuses on the return of Jesus. However, in relatively few Christian cir-

cles is the prophetic Word emphasized, even though it is becoming more and more relevant. This is not meant to be a criticism; every congregation has its justified priorities, gifts and tasks. But a balanced presentation of the whole counsel of God must include eschatology, meaning the doctrine of last things or things to come.

Somewhere I read this statement: “Whenever the Church of Jesus neglects the important subject of eschatology, it engages only in introspection. But only through looking ahead—focusing on the return of the Lord—can the Church do justice to its real task.”

Anyone who hears or reads the news, learns what God has said in the Bible yesterday. Whoever reads or listens to the Bible, finds out what will be said in the news tomorrow.

Because people paid attention to the prophetic Word, they saw things that had not yet happened. Such was, for example, the Anglican clergyman J. C. Ryle, who wrote a book in August 1867 titled *Coming Events and Present Duties*. In the preface, he said: “I believe that the Jews shall ultimately be gathered again as a separate nation,

## EDITOR'S NOTE

restored to their own land, and converted to the faith of Christ, after going through great tribulation (Jer 30:10-11; 31:10; Rom 11:25-26; Dan 12:1; Zech 13:8-9)."

It is as the Apostle Peter says: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19).

This means:

- The Biblical prophetic Word is certain and reliable.
- We do *not* do well if we do *not* pay attention to it, but we do well if we do pay attention to it.
- The prophecy of the Bible provides orientation and illuminates the way.
- Until our Lord Jesus returns, we are to be focused on it.
- And the prophetic Word should enlighten our hearts; it can remove our "cataracts."

Let us therefore heed what Jesus says: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Maranatha: Our Lord, come! (MC)

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### OUR TASK

Midnight Call Ministries is a nonprofit missionary organization, dedicated to proclaiming the entire Bible as the unailing 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 nine languages. All work done through radio, literature and missionaries is supported entirely by the gifts and free will offerings of God's people.

### STATEMENT OF FAITH

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

**WE BELIEVE** Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and shed His blood to save mankind. He died and arose bodily the third day, was seen by over 500, and later ascended into heaven.

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

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

**WE BELIEVE** in the imminent, pre-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; in the resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost.



# What the Blessed Hope Means for Our Lives

**Nathanael Winkler**

An exploration of God's grace and our life of sanctification from Titus 2:11-15.

**P**eople have occasionally asked themselves, "If I knew that the Lord were returning tomorrow, what would I be doing differently today?" That kind of thinking isn't the dedication that the Lord wants. Today or a thousand years from now, my worship should always be the same. I don't do something because I think the Lord is coming, but because I love Him.

John Wesley was once asked how he would spend his time if he knew he would die at midnight the next day. He replied, "Why madam,

just as I intend to spend it now. I would preach this evening at Gloucester, and again at five tomorrow morning; after that I would ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I would then go to Rev. Martin's house, who expects to entertain me, talk and pray with the family as usual, retire to my room at 10 o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in glory."

The Apostle Paul writes in Titus 2:11-15: "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing



The grace of God is the undeserved favor shown to ungodly, unworthy sinners when He delivers them from condemnation and death.

salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

Paul starts at the beginning: with grace, God’s grace. The grace of God is the undeserved favor shown to ungodly, unworthy sinners when He delivers them from condemnation and death. But God’s grace is more than just a divine gift; it’s a divine person, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, God incarnate, is grace personified. Jesus embodies and expresses the grace of God—“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.”

Grace came to us through God in the flesh, “who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim 1:9-10).

The very purpose of God’s redeeming grace through Jesus Christ is to save man from the corruption and destruction of sin. Sin weakens and crushes human life, separates the sinner from a holy God, and persists in unredeemed humanity like an incurable and fatal disease.

Paul summarizes God’s eternal plan in Christ in Titus 2:11-14. He identifies four aspects or realities of God’s redeeming grace: 1. Deliverance from punishment (v. 11); 2. Redemption from sin’s power (v. 12); 3. Salvation from sin’s presence (v. 13); and 4. Redemption from sin’s dominion (v. 14).

### **Deliverance from Punishment**

God’s grace brings salvation to all people. The word “salvation” describes God’s desire to redeem, save, and set people free from sin. This desire is shown through His redemptive work. Salvation is by grace only, and solely through Jesus Christ. Without it, man is lost forever, condemned to hell (Mark 9:43-44; Isa 66:24). But Christ works eternal good and salvation for those who put their trust in Him, God’s Son.

Paul speaks of the grace that brings salvation “for all people.” Will God eventually save every person? God does offer His mercy and His most precious gifts to all of fallen mankind. “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared...” (Tit 3:4). But even if the

## What the Blessed Hope Means for Our Lives

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When a person is truly saved, truly converted, and given new life in Jesus Christ, it isn't just their character that changes, but their life as well. It's visible.

offer of salvation applies to all people, it only becomes effective for those who believe: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3:16-18; cf. 14:6).

### Redemption from Sin's Power

Saving grace, Paul writes, "[trains] us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age."

"Trains us" means to educate us. God's sovereign grace isn't just a Redeemer, but also a teacher, educator, advisor. When we were saved, we came under God's guidance and direction through His Holy Spirit and His Word.

Paul explains it this way elsewhere in Scripture: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual" (1 Cor 2:12-13). Also, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all

once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:1-6).

When a person is truly saved, truly converted, and given new life in Jesus Christ, it isn't just their character that changes, but their life as well. It's visible. It's impossible to be saved from the penalty of sin without also being saved from the power of its dominion: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

However, the Word of God doesn't teach us that sinless perfection is possible in our mortal flesh. Paul quite rightly says: "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:12-14).

And Paul says elsewhere: "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self,



“Waiting” doesn’t just mean longing hopefully, but also a certain, eager expectation. “Blessed hope” is an expression of happy fulfillment, bliss, and confident certainty.

which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col 3:9-10).

Our present earthly life is a time of sanctification, a two-way process of the diminishing of our old, sinful self and the growth of our new, Christian self. The Lord instructs us to renounce ungodliness and worldly lusts in this process (Tit 2:12). “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness” (Rom 6:12-13).

Renouncing something is a conscious, purposeful act of the human will; that is, consciously turning away from what is sinful. It means saying no to ungodliness and worldly desires. Ungodliness is anything that is not done for God’s glory. Regarding worldly passions, the Bible says:

“So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Tim 2:22).—“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul” (1 Pet 2:11).—“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Gal 5:16).

And so, Christ trains us “to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.” Self-controlled means not being swayed by circumstances or external influences. Upright means



obeying God’s Word, the divine standard of what is right, without reserve. Godly means cultivating a close fellowship with the Lord. And the present age is the here and now. Our rebirth, transformation, and constant renewal are meant to be a testament to a lost world.

Through grace, we are renewed and live purposefully in sanctification.

### **Salvation from Sin’s Presence**

“Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit 2:13).

One of this promise’s wonderful truths is that one day, when our redemption is accomplished, we will be glorified and made perfectly like our Lord in purity and righteousness. “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

## What the Blessed Hope Means for Our Lives

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The best is yet to come! We await the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of the Lord.



“Waiting” doesn’t just mean longing hopefully, but also a certain, eager expectation. “Blessed hope” is an expression of happy fulfillment, bliss, and confident certainty. Paul isn’t speaking about human desire, but a divinely promised certainty. That assurance is “the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”—His Second Coming.

His first coming was in grace: “...his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim 1:9-10).

And Paul writes of His Second Coming, “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim 4:1).

The best is yet to come! We await the Rapture of the Church (1 Cor 15:51-58; 1 Thess 4:13-18) and the Second Coming of the Lord. And, even if we die first, we all have the hope and

confidence that one day we will be with Him. Christ will reign in glory, and everything is longing for that day: “For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom 8:22-23).

Paul is focusing on the completion of our salvation when our Lord calls us to the place He has prepared (John 14:1-3). Even though we’re living on earth, our citizenship is in heaven. We’re just passing through! “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body...” (Phil 3:20-21).

When Paul writes about the expectation of “our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,” we also see that he is classifying Jesus Christ as God (John 1:1-18; Rom 9:5; Heb 1:1-3). The Apostle can’t mean God the Father when he writes of “our great God,” because he is speaking of a single person in Titus 2:14. The term “great” is also often applied to Jesus in the New Testament (Matt 5:35; Luke 1:32; Heb 10:21). And, above all, the New Testament never speaks of the return of God the Father, but only of His Son.

### **Redemption from Sin’s Dominion**

“Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people

for his own possession who are zealous for good works” (Tit 2:14).

Redemption permanently frees us from being possessed by sin, in the utter bondage of the unregenerate man. “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin” (Rom 6:5-7).

Our gracious Lord gave Himself to redeem us from all lawlessness, from the slavery and bondage of sin. Acts 20:28 speaks of “the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” And Peter writes, “knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Pet 1:18-19).

Since Christ “gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Gal 1:4), every believer can testify like Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

He has made us into a “people for his own possession” (1 Pet 2:9)—not temporarily, but permanently! “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and

no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (John 10:27-29).

If salvation were temporary and could be lost, then by definition it couldn’t guarantee eternal life. But not even Satan himself could rob a believer of his or her salvation. To be able to do that, he’d have to be more powerful than the God who created him and who is greater than everything.

As God’s redeemed people, we provide further proof of our salvation by our eagerness to do good works: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10).

Good deeds are a natural fruit of our faith, which we strive to live out diligently. They are a fruit of the Spirit. “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).

It has always been God’s purpose for His people to be righteous and holy; to testify to His own righteousness and holiness before the unbelieving world: “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (1 Pet 2:12). And the benchmark remains, just as Christ Himself passed on to us: “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt 5:48).

(MR0922/1280)



# POLITICAL ECONOMY: THICKER THAN JEWISH BLOOD



The world is again witnessing a surge of antisemitism. This time it takes place in the wake of the Israeli war with Hamas. According to agencies that track such trends, antisemitic acts and attacks vaulted 1,000 percent within a month of Hamas' initial attack (October 7, 2023).

**By Wilfred Hahn**

It surely seems assuring that America, Canada and other major nations support Israel. But why do these nations do so? Given that this article is published by a Christian ministry and written by a dispensationalist author, the answer would seem obvious. All of these nations are of historical Christian influence, and therefore would most surely stand by Israel ... correct? Sadly, this is hardly the case.

Yes, genocide and unmitigated civilian murders are reprehensible. There is broad agreement upon these human rights perspectives. But beyond that, there are a myriad of other interests that conveniently align with support for Israel. Most of all, Israel is supported due to geopolitical and economic reasons (i.e., Political Economics ... the wellhead of human actions in the world). This is surely the case for the United States.

Please do not be mistaken: At the geopolitical level, it is not the Bible, Christian association, or biblical prophecy that holds influence upon such considerations. For the most part, these are non-factors.

That may seem a harsh assessment to evangelicals living in North America. There are many ministries and churches that are pro-Zionist and, indeed, love the Jews. This is not doubted. But again, this carries little weight at the global policy level. To emphasize, the main reason for the support of Israel is Political Economy. A closer examination will reveal this to be true.

Unfortunately, therefore, pro-Israelism is fragile. It can be fleeting. And, sadly, according to Bible prophecy, a worldwide abandonment of Israel will yet happen.

### Money Interests and Antisemitism

Spurred by the Gaza siege, an eruption of antisemitism took place around the world. Most notably, war protests and Jewish defamation occurred on many school campuses. The vast majority of protesters were pro-Hamas and Jew-haters. This is hardly in conformity with "higher education" and the balance of facts and fairness.

The National Students for Justice in Palestine, an organization with hundreds of campus chapters, called the slaughter of Israeli Jews "a historic



The Middle East continues to have the world's largest reserves of oil and gas. It is therefore crucial to control this region.

win for the Palestinian resistance.” They went on to describe the “heightened stage of the Palestinian struggle” as a “resistance” that will “bring dignity and honor to the Palestinian people.”

Elite university campuses are the one place in American society where making the intellectual case for antisemitism is fashionable. In fact, many colleges that offer radical “Studies” are funded by federal tax dollars.

As such, to no surprise, retaliations against antisemitism have taken an “economic” form. There are many sponsors and patrons that fund higher education—Ivy League colleges and universities. Some of them write big checks every year. As such, endowments of colleges in America are enormous. Consider that as of end-2022, the total endowment market value of US education institutions stood at \$807.3 billion. This is four-fifths of a trillion!

The rampant antisemitism has not been tolerated by prominent donors. For example, Harvard University faces the threat of donation withdrawal from over 1,600 Jewish alumni over antisemitism concerns. Big-money donors—high-profile multi-billionaires, hedge fund managers, etc.—are slamming Ivy League universities and pulling funding over their responses to the Israel-Hamas war. Some are threatening to pursue the rally participants, seeking to deny them post-graduation job opportunities.

Many more repercussions are yet to come. Time will tell if these sanctions will be effective in stamping out student radicalism. But likely not, as a root

cause of antisemitism is demonic ... again, as laid out in prophetic Scripture.

### In the Crosshairs of Economics

Presently, America's support of Israel seems boundless and unwavering. But, as mentioned at the outset, Israel's existence depends on supportive Political Economics. As such, what is the interest of the nations in protecting Israel? We can be assured that there are beneficial interests. There must be. After all, in geopolitics, the winner is the keeper.

Why does the United States so strongly support Israel? What is in it for America? Without a doubt, a relationship with Israel is in the best interest of the US. Allow us to explain.

This comment by Joe Biden (back in 1986 when he was a senator) reveals much:

“If we look at the Middle East, I think it's about time we stop, those of us who support, as most of us do, Israel in this body, apologizing for our support for Israel. There is no apology to be made. None. It is the best \$3 billion investment we make. Were there not an Israel, the United States of America would have to invent an Israel to protect her interest in the region; the United States would have to go out and invent an Israel.”

He has repeated this comment often over the years (most recently on October 27, 2023).

Consider the enormity of various US “interests” in the Middle East. We list some of these:

- The Middle East continues to have the world's largest reserves of oil and gas. It is therefore crucial



God will restore the Jews for the sake of His promises to the patriarchs (Romans 11:28). This is such wonderful news for Jews and Christians alike.

to control this region. Israel is the perfect outpost in this endeavor. It serves as a military base for the US in the Middle East.

- The most important trading routes on earth go through this region—the Suez Canal being the largest in volume. Over 30% of total world trade is shipped through this channel. Therefore, it must be secure.

- Since US influence in the region has waned somewhat in recent years, a relationship with Israel becomes ever more important. For example, as Saudi Arabia has become more unaligned and no longer serves as a proxy for the US, Israel must fill the gap.

- The US wishes to counteract China's Belt and Road Initiative (the New Silk Road). It is encouraging alternate trade routes (which now tend to go east-west, with the emergence of China's global trade). A route from India into the Persian Gulf is promoted. As it happens, this route will connect to Europe through Israel.

Of course, Israel and the US share similar values—democracy uppermost. However, it would not be radical to say that if Israel did not serve these and other interests of the US, Israel would find itself increasingly alone. In short, the support of Israel is based on the whims and prerogatives of secular commerce.

### Blessings of the Jews

Why would such a small ethnic group as the Jews, elicit such disproportionate hatred in the world?

Consider that, as of 2023, the “core” Jewish population of the world was 16.1 million . . . a mere 0.2% of the world population of 8 billion. They are outnumbered by a factor of 500 times.

Nevertheless, the Bible clearly says that the Jew will be a blessing to the world in many ways, this also being the case during the Diaspora. “As you have been an object of cursing among the nations, O Judah and Israel, so will I save you, and you will be a blessing” (Zechariah 8:13).

Indeed, the Jew has brought great blessings to the world in many ways. Just as the Bible said: “The remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many peoples like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which do not wait for man or linger for mankind” (Micah 5:7).

Possibly without major exception, every nation that gave harbor to the Jews eventually prospered and rose in prominence. For example, during the Golden Age of Poland in the mid-1800s, approximately 30% of all Jews were estimated to be living in that country.

Later, the Jews were severely persecuted in Poland. It has been a long time since this nation has been a world leader. The same applies to Spain after the 1400s. Before that time, Jews were a large reason for the prosperity and progress of Spain. To no surprise, Spain rapidly declined after 1492, the year the Jews were expelled.

Other examples could be cited, including Russia and also the Ottoman Empire, a Muslim empire that at one time allowed the Jews a great deal of freedom (however, not at other times, and

hardly so in Turkey today). But, how does this observation reflect upon the world today? Frankly, it begs the question of the current role of the Jew in America, in which approximately one half of the Diaspora Jews live. Consider that the period since the 1950s has been dubbed by some as the Golden Age of the America Jew.

The world must be thankful for the many achievements of the Jewish people, the many Jewish Nobel Prize laureates—about one-fifth overall (this being 100 times the rate of the rest of the population)—the great inventions and arts. We see that the Jew has excelled in almost every faculty. Gentiles laud Jews for these achievements. Few would feel jealous that many of the greatest violin soloists were Jewish, or that an outsized number of the Boston Symphonic Orchestra may be Jewish. Given this outstanding record, why seek to exterminate them, as has been attempted most notably by the Nazis during WW2.

### Thoughts to Ponder

As Christians, we do not need to be apologists for the Jews, nor condone every action of the modern State of Israel. However, there are several things we must do. First, “If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you” (Romans 11:17-18).

Next, “Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either” (vv. 20b-21).

While a judgment and restoration has been set for the Jews, the Gentile best remember that judgment awaits them also. For the Christian, the Bema seat (and persecution) still lies ahead for us. Thanks to the Jew—Jesus Christ, in the flesh—we are spared eternal damnation (and so also the House of Jacob), but we do not escape judgment. That trembling time still lies ahead. Oh, may God’s severity that he has shown the Jew pass over us! How many countless times have we been disobedient, as were Israel and Judah? Yet, Jesus Christ has been faithful to forgive us.

According to the Prophet Hosea, this restoration surely draws near. Hosea was inspired to say, “After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence” (Hosea 6:2). As a “day is as a thousand years” (Psalm 90:4, 2 Peter 3:8), it is now well into the second half of the third day for the Jews.

God’s plan decrees that one day there will be a global Jewish confederacy. It will be the Millennium . . . and not as the result of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” or any other contrived conspiracy theory. Gentiles will then be thankful that Jews are not the evil they are often made out to be. “In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you’” (Zechariah 8:23).

God will restore the Jews for the sake of His promises to the patriarchs (Romans 11:28). This is such wonderful news for Jews and Christians alike. For if God is willing to go to such lengths to keep His promise for “David’s sake,” how much more so on behalf of Jesus Christ, His own Son?

It is time to stand up for Jews! (MC)



## DR. RON J. BIGALKE

“Tricia Nixon” (on 12 June 1971) is the answer. The question is, “Who was the last child of a president to be married at the White House?” In the 21st century, Naomi Biden became the first grandchild of a president to have a wedding at the White House, which was the first ever to be held on the South Lawn. Her nuptials are distinguished as the 19th wedding held at the presidential seat of power.

**A**ny American can receive a congratulatory note for his or her wedding, but the majority of people will never marry at the White House, and few will receive an invitation to one there. White House weddings are typically confined to members of the pres-

ident’s family, or at least those close to the commander-in-chief. Historically, such weddings have promoted an often specious feeling of satisfaction for the country, yet with great esteem for the president, who is seen as the cheerfully pleased father.



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What an honor it would be to receive an invitation to a White House wedding! Yet do you know that an infinitely more important event is set to occur, for which there is an open invitation?

Imagining the beauty of a White House wedding is not difficult, especially when the press refers to them as an American expression of being “royal.” Certainly, the extremely ornate would characterize such an affair. One can easily imagine the military band playing, in addition to the regality of the attire and the most exquisite food prepared by expert chefs. Imagination is needed, of course, since the majority of people will not be invited to such a wedding.

What an honor it would be to receive an invitation to a White House wedding! Yet do you know that an infinitely more important event is set to occur, for which there is an open invitation? There is much greater privilege and significance to this wedding than being invited to the White House or some earthly palace. You do not want to be preoccupied with other affairs, or to appear without proper attire (see Matt 22:2, 5, 12)!

### **A SUMMONS**

(Matt 22:1-14) Jesus responded to confrontation regarding His authority (Matt 21:23-27) by introducing three parables regarding two sons (vv. 28-32), a landowner (vv. 33-46), and a wedding feast (22:1-14). Matthew 22 is thus a continuation of the previous chapter, wherein Jesus emphasized His message with another parable. A king (representing God the Father) planned an exceptional banquet for his son’s wedding. The bridegroom is the Mes-

siah, and the wedding feast is the banquet that will occur when Jesus returns to earth in glory and power (Rev 19:9).

As in the parable of the landowner (Matt 21:33-46), the slaves are the prophets of God who announced the coming of the feast and urged those invited to prepare themselves. Yet sadly, “they were unwilling” (22:1-3). Demonstrating his grace and patience, the king repeated his invitation, which essentially was a command (v. 4). To ignore the invitation was unprecedented, yet to seize, mistreat, and kill the king’s slaves was downright evil (vv. 5-6) and irrational, when the lord only intended good. Rightly so, “the king was enraged” (v. 7).

The parable of the marriage feast reveals that God would judge Israel’s leaders for their rejection of Jesus as Messiah. The entire parable indicates Israel’s response to the ministry of the Godhead. Israel rejected the Father by refusing to heed the preaching of John the Baptist; they refused God’s Son by having Him crucified. The beginning chapters of the book of Acts indicate that the nation’s leaders also rejected the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, in addition to how they persecuted the church. Stephen would later declare of the nation’s leaders, “You ... are always resisting the Holy Spirit” (Acts 7:51). The nation is collectively condemned for their contempt toward God’s gracious offer to enter the Lord’s kingdom by faith in Jesus Christ. The kingdom would be postponed as a result, which was made certain

## An Open Invitation

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Jesus mentioned a person “without wedding clothes” to prevent misunderstanding, for it would seem that one could enter the Lord’s kingdom indiscriminately (Matt 22:9-10). The image is of a person not clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and thus attending the feast on his or her own terms, whereby that person will be excluded (vv. 13-14).



by Jesus’ prophecy of Jerusalem’s destruction (Matt 22:7; cf. 24:1-2), as did occur in AD 70.

The king sent messengers for a third time with an indiscriminate invitation to all people, whether good or bad (22:8-10). The king’s impartiality represents the grace of God, who invites all people “from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev 5:9)—without distinction—to the wedding feast. The king filled the wedding hall with those who availed themselves of God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. God’s kingdom will be filled with trusting (believing) people from all nations.

Jesus mentioned a person “without wedding clothes” to prevent misunderstanding (Matt 22:11-12; cf. Rev 19:6-8), for it would seem that one could enter the Lord’s kingdom indiscriminately (Matt 22:9-10). The image is of a person not clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and thus attending the feast on his or her own terms, whereby that person will be excluded (vv. 13-14). Jesus identifying the person individually makes it evident that entering the Lord’s king-

dom is personal. Every person is responsible to come in his or her own faith to be clothed in Christ’s righteousness (cf. Gal 3:26-27).

### A VALIDATION

(Matt 22:15-22) In response to a plot intended to entrap Him, Jesus proved His authority in the realm of politics. The Sanhedrin sent the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus (vv. 15-16a). Sworn enemies were allied in opposing Jesus. The ancient proverb still rings true: “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

The Bible says much regarding flattery, and none of it is good (cf. Ps 5:9; Prov 26:28; 28:23; 29:5). Jesus always conveyed truth and could not be ensnared by His opponent’s words (Matt 22:16b-18). Learn from Jesus not to let your ego inflate or pride cause you to be unprepared. Jesus is the “wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:30) and would not be overcome by flattery.

Ironically, the Lord did not have a denarius, but His opponents did (Matt 22:19-20). Jesus then spoke what are some of the most significant words in history: “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s” (v. 21). He acknowledged the legitimacy of human government, which God has ordained. Thus, it has the right to levy taxes and the prerogative to make laws. Authority by nature reflects God’s sovereignty (cf. Rom 13:1-7; 1 Tim 2:1-6; 1 Pet 2:13-17). God’s people have legitimate responsibilities



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Jesus acknowledged the legitimacy of human government, which God has ordained. Thus, it has the right to levy taxes and the prerogative to make laws. Authority by nature reflects God's sovereignty.

to the government, so long as those do not interfere with the ability to honor, obey, and worship the Lord.

### **AN OBLIGATION**

(Matt 22:23-46) The Pharisees and Herodians failed in their attempts to entrap Jesus, so the Sadducees (the majority sect of the Sanhedrin) came to Jesus with a theoretical question concerning the resurrection (vv. 23-28). The Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, did not believe in resurrection. Their hyperbolic and hypothetical question was based upon Deuteronomy 25:5, which said that if a man died childless, it was the obligation of his next younger brother to marry his widow and bear a child to continue the family line. Jesus had no difficulty answering the question, and chided the Sadducees for not understanding “the Scriptures nor the power of God” (v. 29). Proving His theological authority, He then explained that in heaven, “they neither marry nor are given in marriage” (v. 30). Propagating the human race is needless in the new existence since there is no death (Rev 21:4). Jesus concluded by affirming resurrection, because God is the Lord of the living (Matt 22:31-32).

While the crowds “were astonished” at Jesus’ authority (v. 33), the religious leaders plotted further (v. 34). Rabbis counted 613 precepts in the Mosaic Law (248 commands, 365 prohibitions). Recognizing that all were not equally foundational or important, they debated the “light” and “weighty” commands (cf. vv. 34-36).

Jesus quoted the *Shema* (v. 37; Deut 6:4-5) and specified the primary obligation of humanity: to love God with one’s entire being. He then added a second command: love your neighbor as oneself (vv. 39-40; cf. Rom 13:8). Every biblical instruction entails an expression of love toward God and other people.

Prior to His opponents thinking of another ensnaring question, “Jesus asked them a question” (Matt 22:41). Quoting Psalm 110, which the Jews knew to be a prophecy of the Messiah, Jesus asked how David could call a son of his “Lord.” The only manner in which a son could be greater than his Father was if he was more than simply the son of the Father. Therefore, the Messiah for whom the Jews longed must be the Son of God; that is, both God and man (Matt 22:42-45).

Jesus’ enemies retreated, for “no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question” (v. 46). Their silence was a tribute to His authority. Scheming opponents were quieted by the manner in which Jesus answered and asked questions, which prioritizes the need for His followers to be skillful in doing likewise. “In the midst of wolves ... be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves” (10:16). First Peter 2:12 admonishes, “Keep your behavior excellent ... so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1364)




# WORLD FOCUS

 USA

## We Don't Know How Good We Have It

Something weird is happening in America. GDP growth for Q3 was just revised up from an already scorching 4.9 percent to 5.2 percent, more Americans have jobs than at any time in history, but the public is up in arms about economic conditions, with consumer confidence dropping to a six-month low. There really is no pleasing some people.

 So what's going on? FocalData ran a poll ... asking a representative sample of 2,000 US adults whether they thought economic circumstances had improved or deteriorated over recent years. The results were startling: Americans are consistently wrong in the negative direction on almost every measure we polled. By huge margins, they believe inflation is still rising (it's falling), that it has outstripped wage growth (wages have outpaced prices), and that they have become less wealthy (they've become much wealthier).

The most striking response from our survey concerned the sense of longer-term progress. Large majorities of Americans think the median income today pays for a worse lifestyle than 30 years ago (demonstrably false), and that poverty is higher than it was a generation ago (it has plummeted). One particularly revealing statistic is that Americans' assessment of their

own financial situation has barely budged over the past five years, but their rating of the national economy has worsened steeply. It seems they have decided that the vibes are bad, so things must be going badly for most other people, even if not for themselves.

It seems US consumer sentiment is becoming the latest victim of expressive responding, where people give incorrect answers to questions to signal wider tribal political or social affiliations. If you want to know what Americans really think of economic conditions, look at their spending patterns. Unlike cautious Europeans, US consumers are back on the pre-pandemic trendline and buying more stuff than ever.

-[www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), 1 December 2023

**Commentary:** For decades, we have been pointing to Scriptures such as Matthew 24:38a, "For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," as evidence of a prosperous and normal life in the end times. While some people currently endure hardship in America—as is the case in all times—and future economic downturns are inevitable, we must acknowledge that we are living in times of plenty when it comes to material comforts.

-By J. Froese

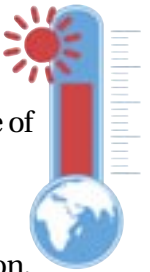
8144


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

WORLD

## Hottest Decade on Record

The decade between 2011 and 2020 was the hottest on record for the planet's land and oceans as the rate of climate change "surged alarmingly," according to a new report from the World Meteorological Organization.



 Climate pollution from all fossil fuel types—coal, oil, and natural gas—increased around the world, the Global Carbon Project found, but some proved to be more dominant than others. Coal and oil emissions, for instance, have increased significantly in India and China, while the US and the EU showed strong declines in coal.

"The impacts of climate change are evident all around us, but action to reduce carbon emissions from fossil fuels remains painfully slow," said Pierre Friedlingstein, a professor at the University of Exeter's Global Systems Institute. "It now looks inevitable we will overshoot the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement, and leaders meeting at COP28 will have to agree [to] rapid cuts in fossil fuel emissions even to keep the 2°C target alive."

-[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com), 5 December 2023

**Commentary:** That these measurements are correct is not subject to debate; however, one must note that the "WMO's

(continued next page)

## Hottest Decade (continued from page 20)

findings on the hottest decade continue a 30-year trend.” No reliable data is available on what happened several centuries ago. Thus, the question: Is climate change—also known as global warming—due exclusively to the burning of fossil fuels? Here again, no one really knows.

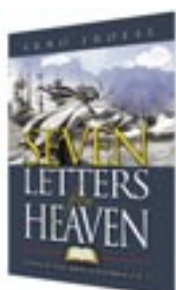
Another part of the article reads: “There was one piece of good news: The report found the ozone layer is on track to recovery thanks to international efforts to phase out ozone-depleting chemicals.” Again, there is no hard evidence that “international efforts” were responsible for the ozone layer recovery.

Here we must point out that before judgment comes, there is success galore. That happened before Noah’s flood, and later when Sodom and Gomorrah were judged. Scripture mentions the Church in the end stages of the end times; the Laodicean church states: “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17)—a clear indication that the success of globalism has polluted the mind of the Church. Thus, the Lord’s request: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will

come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

8143


(See *Seven Letters from Heaven*, Item #1081, \$4.50.)



## CHINA

### World’s First Fourth-Generation Reactor

China has started commercial operations at a new generation nuclear reactor that is the first of its kind in the world, state media said.

 Compared with previous reactors, the fourth generation Shidaowan plant in China’s northern Shandong province is designed to use fuel more efficiently and improve its economics, safety and environmental footprint as China turns to nuclear power to try to meet carbon emissions goals.

Xinhua news agency also said the 200 megawatt (MW) high-temperature, gas-cooled reactor (HTGCR) plant developed jointly by state-run utility Huaneng, Tsinghua University and China National Nuclear Corporation, uses a modular design.

Modular plants refer to those of less than 300MW that can be constructed off site. Proponents say they can operate in remote locations and power traditionally hard-to-abate heavy industry sectors, but critics say they are too expensive.

NuScale Power, previously expected to be the first U.S. company licensed to build a small modular reactor, said it was terminating a planned 462MW project in Utah because of rising costs.

China has a goal to produce 10% of electricity from nuclear by 2035 and 18% by 2060, but as of September this year had not met its 2020 target to install 58 gigawatts of nuclear capacity.

China has also not signed a pledge by 20 countries at the COP28 climate confer-



The fourth generation Shidaowan plant in China’s northern Shandong province is designed to use fuel more efficiently. File Photo.

ence taking place in Dubai to triple nuclear power capacity by 2050.

-[www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com), 6 December 2023

**Commentary:** It is no longer a surprise when one reads of China’s goal to be the world’s leading nation when it comes to nuclear energy. Several years ago, the Chinese president specifically encouraged his people to aim for high-tech.

Observing China, we see similarities to the nation of Japan. They were once known for copying successful products. They did so with passenger vehicles, which in the 1970s were considered inferior. Today, Japan’s auto industry is superior.

How does this relate to Bible prophecy in particular? We reiterate, equality is the key to unity. Today, the nations of the world are intertwined; every nation depends on the other to a certain degree. At this point in time, the financial market looks somewhat worrisome toward China, since their economic growth has significantly slowed down in comparison to previous decades.

(continued next page)

## Reactor (continued from page 21)

Yet globalism marches on: Statista.com shows that in 2014, 5,101 container ships sailed the oceans with cargo; for 2022, that number rose to 5,589. Research confirms that the total worldwide fleet of commercial aircraft stands at 28,674. They fly with passengers and cargo 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, exchanging people and merchandise across the globe. Unless something unexpected like Covid-19 occurs, we may expect this type of global cooperation to increase.

For Christians, we do well to read Isaiah 40:17: “All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.” It does not matter who does what, when, and where; the Lord calls the nations “less than nothing.” Yet hidden is the Church. Millions upon millions are being added to the body of Christ from around the world, particularly in Asia and Africa these days.



8142

(See *The Sure Foundation of the Church*, Item #1066, \$18.50.)

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## EUROPE

### Uncovering the Secrets of a Planetary System

A European Space Agency exoplanet chaser, Cheops, has unlocked the mystery behind a system of six exoplanets that has bewildered scientists for years.

 Investigators had been looking at a star about 100 light-years away and noticed dips in its brightness that indicated the existence of two planets.

But it was the Cheops (CHaracterising ExOPlanet Satellite) satellite that provided the key data to show there are in fact six planets in the system.

An orbital resonance is when two or more planets orbit their star in relation to one another, causing their relationship to be affected by gravitational influences. This happens because when planets are in orbital resonance, they cause a gravitational force over each other and influence how they orbit their sun.

“Cheops gave us this resonant configuration that allowed us to predict all the other periods. Without that detection from Cheops, it would have been impossible,” said Rafael Luque of the University of Chicago in a press release.

As mentioned above, orbital resonance can be disturbed. So finding this “pristine configuration” makes HD 110067 a special discovery, said Rafael: “We think only about one percent of all systems stay in resonance.



**The European Space Station's Cheops satellite built on earlier work by NASA to determine how planets orbit the star HD110067 (this, however, is just an illustration) Image: ESA/ATG medialab**

[This] shows us the pristine configuration of a planetary system that has survived untouched”—untouched for about a billion years.

-[www.du.com](http://www.du.com), 29 November 2023

**Commentary:** For those who believe in and occupy themselves with space exploration, there seems to be no end in sight to “new discoveries.” We may add, these discoveries are only a drop in a bucket. Space is infinite; stars and planets are without number. Albeit fascinating, we can rely on the simple foundation of God’s Word. Isaiah 40:26 declares: “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.” Infinite deity is confirmed in Psalm 147:4: “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.” 8139



(See *The Heavens*, Item #2391, \$19.99.)

“The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2).

BY ARNO FROESE

David is often called the psalmist, because about half of the book of Psalms was authored by him.

We all know that David was severely persecuted by King Saul, who had repeatedly made up his mind to destroy him. Interestingly, David does not mention the enemies by name, but expresses his total dependence upon his God. He had all the reason in the world to complain about the horrible position he was in. While once a hero and a savior of Israel, he was now marked as *persona non grata*.

Our trust and total confidence, our hope for the future, is never based on circumstances; never based on what the world says, whether it be politicians, scientists, experts, historians, etc. For us, the all-encompassing answer is always God, the Creator of heaven and earth. That is why the New Testament clearly identifies our real enemy; it's not the left wing or the right wing, the various political philosophies prevalent throughout the planet. What counts is the invisible activity. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,

but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Who rules this world? The god of this world. That does not mean those with whom we disagree, or whom our nation considers enemies. Our real enemies are “the rulers of the darkness of this world.” These “rulers of darkness” are in charge of planet earth—yes, of your country too. I can “Christianize” my county a million times over, but it is still the devil's territory. Why? The Bible answers: “He who sins is of the devil” (1 John 3:8a).

When we follow the men and women of God in the Bible, we quickly learn that they did not prioritize certain enemies, but their refuge, hope, and confidence always lay in who God is and what He says in His Word.

David speaks of the world of nations in Psalm 2:1-2: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against

his anointed...” That identifies the whole world. We see a pre-fulfillment of the world’s nations against the Anointed about a thousand years later: “The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together” (Acts 4:26-27).

### **Gaza War**

In a cruel manner, this war revealed the diabolical behavior of people who permit themselves to be indoctrinated by the father of lies.

At this point in time, it is not necessary to go into details; that was and is being done by the world press, whether negative or positive. We are not in competition with them, but we must emphasize what the Lord says about what is happening in the invisible world.

Six thousand plus years of recorded human history document the rules of war: Winner takes all. He dictates the future of conquered territories, and forces the inhabitants to obey the law of the conqueror.

On the American continent (North and South), the original inhabitants were eliminated at a horrific rate. A real number cannot be determined; estimates begin at the low end of 5.4 million people, to as high as 70 million.

What happened to their ancestral homeland? Thirty-five sovereign nations were established. To become a citizen of any of these nations, one is required to swear or sign an oath of allegiance. Winner takes all: The conqueror makes the laws.

That also was the case in Europe after the Second World War. The Soviet Union (with limited participation of their allies) fought Nazi Germany, losing some 27 million people (roughly 9 million military and 19 million civilian). The territory of the enemy—Germany, Austria, and Hungary—was reduced substantially. Yet today, no one speaks of “occupied territory”; no terrorist organization has been formed to “liberate” lands that had been conquered by the victor. The family of this author had the choice to either sign allegiance to the victorious Soviet forces, or leave.

These laws, valid since the beginning of human history, were suddenly changed in 1948, at the founding of the State of Israel. Territory conquered by Israeli forces is loudly and clearly proclaimed to be “occupied territory” by the world’s media.

Thus, we come to the summarizing question: What is the power structure behind Israel’s territorial conflict? Psalm 2 answers: Presidents, prime ministers, chancellors, monarchs, and dictators “of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his



When we follow the men and women of God in the Bible, we quickly learn that they did not prioritize certain enemies, but their refuge, hope, and confidence always lay in who God is and what He says in His Word.

anointed.” The truth is, much of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, as well as Gaza is Arab-occupied Israeli territory. When the territorial issue is solved, there will be no more conflict in the Middle East.

Interestingly, in the south, some Bible scholars believe that much of the Sinai is Promised Land. Not so. How do we know? When reading Exodus and Moses’ summary in Deuteronomy, we find all the places listed where Israel traveled under the leadership of Moses. However, this great leader could not enter the Promised Land. Deuteronomy 34:4 testifies: “And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto

Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.” Based on this Scripture, the Sinai Peninsula is not Promised Land but Egyptian territory.

When analyzing the spiritual movement behind the conflict in the Middle East, what is our task? We continue to pray for Israel, for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. It is important to remember the suffering of the Arabs in Gaza as well as the Jews in Israel. Above and beyond, we continue to pray for His Church to be strengthened, comforted, and to keep the faith until He comes again. (MC)

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



## 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.

# ISRAEL'S GAS DISCOVERY... "ONE NATION UNDER GOD"... ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED

## Israel's Gas Discovery

Dear Mr. Froese,

I believe you should do a story concerning the natural gas fields that Israel has found in the Mediterranean Sea and the pipeline that may be built to Europe. Isaiah 60:4-5 prophesies that the Jews will return, and "the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee" (Isaiah 60:5b, ASV). I believe the selling of natural gas to Europe fulfills this prophecy.

-R. Catlett, TX

**Answer:** On several occasions, we have mentioned Israel's discovery of natural gas and oil in the sea. Indeed, plans are to pipeline gas to Europe, but the reality is, it's minimal. At this moment, Norway has overtaken Russia as Europe's main natural gas supplier, at apparently 45% of the need

(Russia supplying 40%). The potential volume Israel could supply lies between 5 and 7% of Europe's need.

Regarding Isaiah 60:4-5, "the abundance of the sea" refers to the Gentile nations, in which "the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee."

## "One Nation Under God"

Mr. Froese,

I am a regular reader of *Midnight Call*, and thank you for your insightful columns. I am writing for the first time because in the email article I received today about the US, it says: "Some of the most immediate causes of America's high death rate are guns, drugs, and cars." The high death rates in the US are the result of a nation rejecting God. Godless people kill people. Cain killed his brother Abel. Although the Bible does not say how Cain killed him, if Cain killed



him with a rock or shovel, would we say rocks or shovels are the causes of high death rates? Of course not.

-R. Alexander, WA

**Answer:** Your statement, “The high death rates in the US are the result of a nation rejecting God,” is amiss. There is no nation “under God,” only under the god of this world. Please don’t confuse geopolitical identities with the real thing: the global Church of Jesus Christ. The world is described in Galatians 1:4, Philippians 2:15, and 1 John 5:19.

### Once Saved, Always Saved

Dear Brother Arno!

I just enjoyed reading much of your *Midnight Call* magazine. However, I noticed that you stated your belief, “Once saved, always saved.” While that sounds and feels good to us fallen and regularly sinful creatures, how is

it that I am given freedom as God’s child to say “yes” or “no” to His free gift of salvation, but then that precious freedom is gone after my “yes”?

While I continue to enjoy my forever freedom to choose to stay happily connected to Him, with His help, I know I am also free to disconnect, as some obviously do.

-L. Conrad, WI

**Answer:** “Once saved, always saved” seems a light-hearted, even flippant statement. It begs the question, *what* is saved? It is my newborn spirit, not my flesh. That spirit is His new creation. Ephesians 2:10a says: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...” But what I do in the meantime is a different story. Thus, my life in the flesh will determine if I “receive a reward” or “shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved” (1 Corinthians 3:15b). (MC)

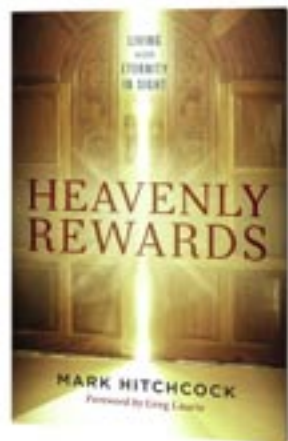


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Author: Mark Hitchcock



# Breaking News: Purchasing the Ebenezer Home!



By David Phillips (*Ebenezer's CEO*)

**Y**es, you read that right!!! But before continuing, I would like to share something with you from Scripture.

In the Bible, we find principles that guide us through our life and faith. One of these is the principle of multiplication. We see the Master, Yeshua, speaking about these principles and giving us many examples to learn from. In a spiritual way, He sends us out to make more disciples and bring forth spiritual fruit. In the physical sense, He gives an example of the servants who received the talents. The parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 is what I would like to discuss here.

When the master left, he expected his servants to work with the talents he gave them, and to multiply them to bring forth more fruit. Many times, we will receive the opportunity to fulfill this principle of multiplication, as I'm sure you've found in your own life.

The more we invest in the talents He gives us, and the more opportunities we use, the more honor we bring to the One who has left us with these talents.

In the September article, I addressed the opportunity we may have in purchasing a facility near the Ebenezer Home. Listening to the Master's voice, we knew that He clearly closed this door, and we were very thankful for this, knowing it meant He had something better in store for us.

I also mentioned the option of us becoming the owners of the Ebenezer facilities, which would enable us to move forward with expanding the living space, allowing more elderly believers to be cared for. And yes, this door God opened wide!

The Ebenezer Home ministry consists of three facilities. Our primary facility (facility #1) is where the residents live. Facility #2 and #3 serve as accommodations for future residents, team members, volunteers, and a few rented apartments that contribute to Ebenezer's income.

Let's go back to the parable of the talents and how **your** gifts have been multiplied. The owners will gift these facilities to us, so long as we pay the taxes—including grappling with a lot of bureaucracy—and we will not



The more we invest in the talents He gives us, and the more opportunities we use, the more honor we bring to the One who has left us with these talents.

need to pay the purchase fee, which is far beyond our capability. Because of your gifts, we are receiving ownership of our facilities! *Toda LaEl* (Thank the Lord)!

We completed everything for facility #2 and are now the legal, rightful owners! By the grace of God, we could multiply your gifts by roughly 350% (which we pray to continue doing)!

Right now, we are working desperately on our primary facility (facility #1) and facility #3, which are more complex because of legal issues. The exciting news is that we have almost finished fundraising to pay for facility #3! We pray the same will happen soon for our primary facility, where the residents live.

This article may sound somewhat technical, but don't forget that Yeshua spoke about 1, 5 and 10 talents. Sometimes I feel like I'm that servant who is receiving the talents, and have the responsibility to work with

them in a God-fearing, responsible way. We do this by keeping our focus on our ministry's vision: providing elderly believers in Yeshua a home, and multiplying the living space to care for more senior believers.

His work will go on until the day He calls us home.

We are excited to share with you that at the time of this writing, we need roughly \$490,000 to complete the transaction of ownership of our last two facilities (our primary facility and facility #3). After we complete these last two transactions, we can move forward with our building and renovation project: multiplying the space we have, to create a better and larger facility. Please pray with us so we can finish raising the last needed amount. We have never been so close! Thank you for sharing our vision and multiplying what God has given you.



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

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# Midnight Call's February Resource Guide



## Moscow Is Furious—and Plotting Revenge

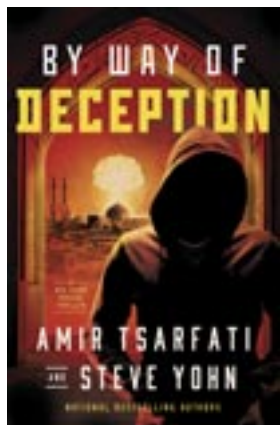
As Israel's elite fighting forces and the Mossad go undercover, they detect the Kremlin is planning a major attack against Israel. Hunting for clues, Mossad agents Nir Tavor and Nicole le Roux plunge themselves into the treacherous underworld of Russian oligarch money, power, and decadence.

In this electrifying thriller, hostilities explode as Tavor and le Roux fight to prevent a devastating conflict. Will they be able to outwit their enemies, or will their actions have catastrophic consequences? And how can Tavor's Kidon team possibly survive when forces beyond the Mossad's control step in and turn the whole operation upside down?

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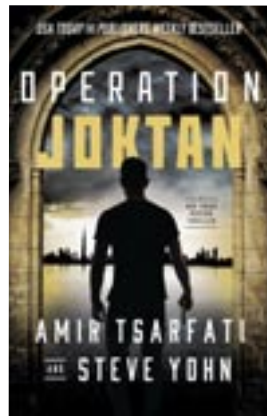
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## Nuclear Deception

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## “It was the perfect day—until the gunfire.”

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

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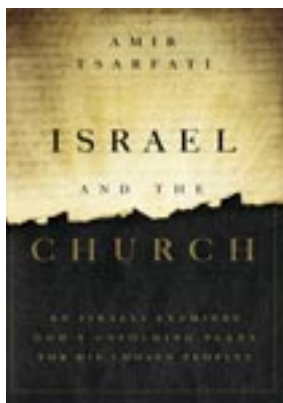
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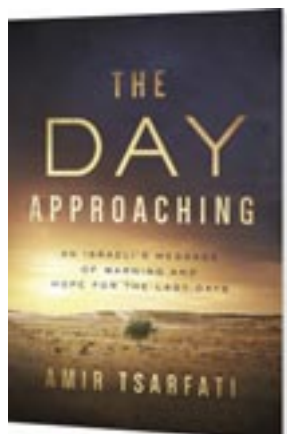
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# 52 Weekly Bible Lessons – Personal Q&A with God

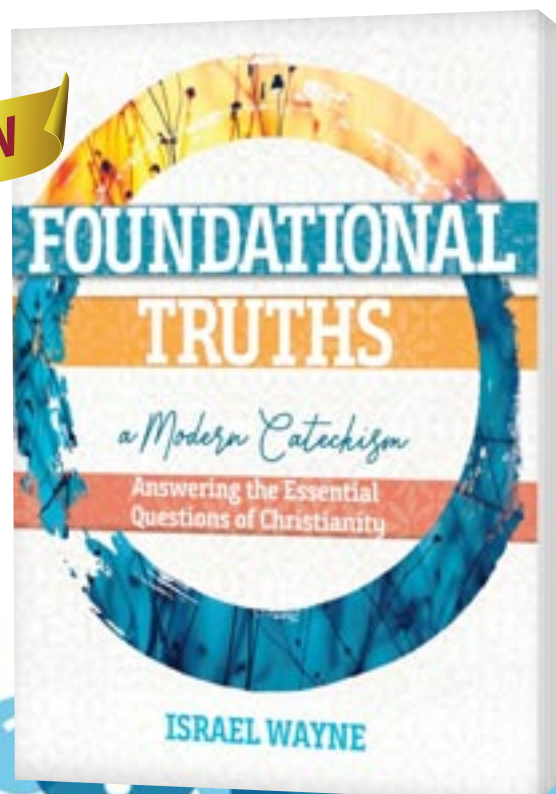
Inside the colorful and engaging pages, you will find answers to 52 important biblical questions such as:

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