

## **January 2003**

### **The True Grace of God**

If not for God's infinite, inscrutable grace, where would we be? We would be nowhere. We would be nothing. Period.

Christian life begins with an admission, an admission of undoneness. This undoneness is called sin. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God..." (Romans 3:23) This frank admission is the beginning of real wisdom and progress.

Humanist theories may propose that man -- by just one more peace conference, one more breakthrough in science -- can pull himself up. Evolutionists may -- very unscientifically -- hypothesize that man is getting "better" now than at any time in the past. "New Ager" may dream -- with old Eastern thought -- that man is on the dawn of a better day -- if only we can do just a little better ourselves.

But the Christian is free to admit that we are at the mercy of God's plan of grace. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his [God's] grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:23, 24)

How then could anyone think of adding anything to God's grace? Would there be anything a Christian can -- or must -- do beyond being justified simply by faith because of the grace of God? The Apostle Paul says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not by works lest any man should boast." On the other hand, in another place Paul does say, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." And, of course, the Apostle James says, "Faith without works is dead." (James 2:20) Are these scriptures contradictory to clear teaching that we are saved by God's grace by faith in Jesus Christ? Not at all.

### **Faith, Works and Salvation**

Most of the Apostles' apparent arguments against "works" are taken from the context of keeping legalisms of the Law of Moses, the Law Covenant. The Apostles dealt extensively in this area, showing how once justified by faith, we cannot please God by works of the Law. Needless to say, one could not be justified before God in the first place by works of the Law -- instead of faith in Jesus.

What does it mean to be "saved by faith"? Furthermore, how are we to understand "salvation"?

First, one is saved from the condemnation which rests heavily and squarely on all Adam's posterity, "As in Adam all die." (1 Corinthians 15:22) There is nothing anyone can do to save himself from this predicament of sin and its consequence of death. "Our righteousness is as filthy rags" Only God's merciful grace alone can provide a recovery from this no-way-out situation.

Paul adds a further dimension to "salvation" when talking to the Church at Rome, "For now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed (Romans 13:11). If a Christian had salvation when he first believed, how could salvation be said to be "nearer" at any point after that time? Also, Jesus himself taught, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). Paul too warns, "Ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I have preached to you, unless ye have believed in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:2).

It is evident that after a Christian receives justification by faith, he or she must "show his faith by his works" (James 2:18). Justification is not eternal life. Salvation from condemnation is one thing. And salvation to life is another. The Christian must grow in Christ-like character and serve God with his whole heart, mind, soul and strength. Once we become "branches" in the true vine of Christ, we must bear fruit. If a branch does not bear fruits of spiritual development, it is "cut off." John 15:1-8

### **The Justified Must Bear Fruit**

Where then is God's grace? God's grace -- through Jesus -- enables the Christian to grow and mature. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). A Christian must do his part after he is freely justified by God. To expect grace to continue without growth is to "receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Corinthians 6:1). One must not presume on the grace of God. Grace received without responsible living is grace received in vain.

What kind of fruitage must a Christian bear? Peter says we are to add to our faith, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and finally love. How necessary is fruitbearing? "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:3-11).

God's grace does not stop with justification. Grace is the great enabler that nurtures Christian growth. This growth process is called sanctification. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). The Apostle Paul's personal testimony acknowledges the role of grace as an enabler, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." 1 Corinthians 15:10

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:8-10 Does the Scripture contradict itself? No. We are saved by grace through faith. Amen! But the text also reveals that we must daily walk in the foreordained will (good works) of God.

As we try to do His will we shall realize more and more, as did the Apostle Paul, how very imperfect we are, how we can of ourselves do no work that is acceptable to God and how deeply we need the grace of God in Christ Jesus. As our Lord Jesus said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke 17:10

Some of the same Christians who believe expecting "works" on a Christian's part is demeaning God's grace -- also believe countless billions will be lost forever because they do not accept God's grace now. Consider this question: Which of these two views is demeaning to God's grace -- we can do nothing now or God can do nothing later?

### **The Gospel of the Grace of God**

What did Paul mean when he so eloquently referred to the "Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24)? Paul himself identified the "gospel" as given to Abraham, "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). He goes on to explain, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Vs. 16). Is the "seed" from Abraham only Jesus Christ? Paul does not leave us to wonder. "Ye are all one in Christ. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Vss. 28, 29). Which promise?

"By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore...and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:17, 18).

Does the "gospel of the grace of God" teach that the Christian church, the seed of Abraham, would alone be blessed? No! The gospel is this: In Abraham's seed all nations would be blessed. Truly, the "seed" would be blessed by being a blessing to the nations. "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Galatians 3:9). Abraham will be blessed because he will be a blessing! If we are to be blessed "with Abraham," not specifically by him, we are to share the same type of blessing he does. The Christian Church will be the bride of the "king" and Abraham will be among the "princes of all the earth" (Psalm 45:14,16). Abraham and his "seed" together will be blessings -- of the nations.

The gospel of God's love and grace has been "preached [virtually] in all the world for a witness unto all nations." (Matthew 24:14) Are we to believe that if the nations have had the gospel "preached" to them, the promise to Abraham is fulfilled? A "witness" does not mean a conversion of the world. The gospel was sent out to "take out of them [the Gentile nations] a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). Is this preaching alone all there is to the blessing of the nations? Certainly it could not be so. Although the gospel has been printed in every language of the earth, precious few of earth's billions have really been able to hear or believe.

## God's Grace to the Nations

Might the promise to Abraham so long ago, then, have been an overstatement? Or is the promised blessing this -- the future "healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2)? For the Christian who has been blessed by believing the gospel, the promise may seem to be fulfilled -- but not so for the vast majority of people blinded by Satan. "The god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Thus the gospel has not been understood -- if even heard at all -- by the many but it will be in "due time" (1 Timothy 2:4-6).

The great opportunity for the masses of humanity to receive the gospel will come when Jesus binds Satan a thousand years "that he should deceive the nations no more" (Revelation 20:2,3). Christ's thousand-year Kingdom is when God's grace will bless the nations.

"And in this mountain [Kingdom on earth] shall the Lord of hosts destroy the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God we have waited for him, and he will save us we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isaiah 25:6-9).

To say God's grace will only save a few now while Satan is the "god of this world" -- is not grace at all. To say God's grace does not require that a Christian must grow and show his faith by his works -- is not grace at all. But God's grace does enable the faith justified Christian to grow. And God's grace has planned blessings for all others as well -- blessings that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

This grace is grace.

## **March 2003**

### **The War to Conquer the World**

The winds of war are gusting again. But really, have they ever stopped blowing? -- especially since World War I?

The conflict between peoples and nations, between good and evil -- or evil and not so evil -- has been waged for millennia. Changed are only the players -- participants in struggles for life, death, domination and control of scarce resources -- even for political ideologies or religious dogmas. Presently, United States foreign policy has identified those forces which it perceives a threat to the civilized world: Al-Qaeda, Iraq and North Korea. A coalition of nations (albeit missing some key players) has been gathered which subscribes to the US goal of neutralizing such threats to world peace....

#### **Governments of Earth**

The present -- and also potential -- conflicts have their roots in World War I. With the breakup of the Ottoman Turkish empire came a series of land grab opportunities for the old colonial powers. The Middle East found itself with new national boundaries agreed upon largely by England and France. The rise of Socialism from within the declining European states and the newly born Communist state in Russia proved to be seedbed for modern Baathist (Socialist) parties of the Muslim states.

And so, the last century saw the lives of 185,000,000 people taken from them and their families by the actions of governments. Sounds beastly, doesn't it? That was exactly how the LORD summed up the matter for the prophet Daniel when he gave Daniel a vision of the governments ("kingdoms") of this present evil world. "The four great beasts are four kingdoms..." (Daniel 7:17). While those universal empires which have trod upon Jerusalem have come and gone (Luke 21:24), the governments of earth still can be beastly.

#### **Christian Conscience and War**

As the threat of war progresses, the people of each nation are convinced that right is on their side -- and that everything contrary is wrong. But the minds of even the greatest of the wise seem paralyzed for any peaceful resolution. "...And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth..." (Luke 21:25-26).

Where is the Christian in this time of the "shaking" of the nations? While the Christian is to "live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18) and "be subject unto the higher powers" of governments "ordained of God" (Romans 13:1) -- are we supposed to support our governments militarily? Are Christians supposed to be patriotic -- or neutral?

As Christians, we appreciate the freedoms we enjoy, and we pay our taxes (Matthew 22:21). But Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight..."(John 18:36). We are to remain neutral in wars of conflict. Yes, there may be righteous causes, but no nation is without its own guilt so that it can be a policeman of the world for God.

### **The Christian's Warfare**

The Christian's warfare, however, is a different kind of warfare with different weapons. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:4-5).

The Christian's closest enemy is his or her own flesh! Daily, hourly, minute by minute, the Christian must "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). With consistent determination, Christians must "as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). Now "lusts" do not have to be only something immoral -- just something the Christian might be desiring that would have been given up as a follower in the footsteps of Jesus. (Luke 9:23; Galatians 5:24).

### **The Good Soldier**

Just as it might be easy for a soldier to sign up for duty -- so it is easy for a person to believe Jesus died for them and be "saved" from condemnation in Adam (Romans 10:9). But a Christian who enlists to follow his Captain must be willing to endure discipline and suffer hardship. "Suffer hardship with me," says Apostle Paul, "as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier" (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

Following our Captain means more than putting away anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from our lips (Colossians 3:8). Indeed, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city" (Proverbs 16:32). But to be a soldier in Jesus' army means to sacrifice our earthly comforts, preferences, hopes and ambitions.

As we draw to the closing of the Christian Age, the conflict for the followers of Jesus is just as great -- if not greater. "It is a warfare against the whole world -- no warfare so mighty and so momentous has ever been waged." Today's world with its temporal distractions and emphasis on instant gratification -- is a real source of temptation to the Christian. "Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). Instead of taking time to study the Word of God, Christians might be tempted to be very busy relaxing on a beach, making more money for vacations or just inviting the world into their homes by turning on the TV, flipping through magazines, surfing the Internet. Instead of letting their light shine, Christians might just as well blend into their environment at work and be like everybody else around them.

## **Beyond the Homeland**

Besides fighting the enemy within and the world around us -- there are invisible spiritual powers that war against the Christian. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Christians must be alert to our Adversary who attempts to make alliances with our own flesh. "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith..." (1 Peter 5:8, 9). How does he allure us -- or ambush us? He knows our weaknesses better than we! And Satan has a whole army of fallen angels -- even though having their own agendas -- who are bent on injuring the Christian soldier in particular. These "spiritual forces of wickedness" influence governments -- as well as the entertainment world. They even get involved in children's toys -- making extraterrestrial adventure a lot of fun. The negative effects might not be immediate. But, for example, Harry Potter thinking would suggest that playing with witchcraft was okay and that spirits are really harmless friends.

So the Christian has to be careful what is allowed to come through the door of his house - - or the door of his mind. What is our defense against such invasions?

## **Weapons of our Warfare**

"Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). Yes, the Christian, figuratively speaking, is provided a full "armor." "Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm" (Vs. 13).

Virtually all of the Christian armor is defensive -- except for one piece. The Word of God. Even so, it is a "two-edged" sword which sometimes slices back at the Christian. "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Truth is very powerful -- and will eventually destroy every trace of sin and evil by the work of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. Meanwhile, the Christian should truthfully examine himself or herself with the challenges of the Scriptures -- he is not to be discouraged. "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place" (Ephesians 6:14). The Christian stands in the righteousness of Christ. "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Rom 3:22).

## **A Real World Peace**

Unlike the artificial "peace" the nations are seeking by weapons inspections, disarmament and treaties -- God's peace is real. It begins with the death of Christ so that we can have peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our

Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Then the Christian is to "Follow peace with all men..." (Hebrews 12:14). So the Christian's armor also includes preaching and living peace: "... and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15).

But world peace is also promised in God's Kingdom: "And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zechariah 9:10). At that time, there will be no weapons of mass destruction because there will be no need for an armed "peace." "They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9).

### **Conquering the World to Bless It**

Yes, there is an evil axis conspiring to destroy the Christian -- the world, the flesh and the devil. But when the battles are over, faithful Christians will be promoted to the right hand of authority beside Jesus Christ (Revelation 3:21). But they will not be playing harps.... They will be ruling and blessing the whole world, "all families of the earth" (Genesis 28:14).



## **April 2003**

### **God's Love Seen in the Milky Way**

"Whoever it was who searched the heavens with a telescope and found no God would not have found the human mind if he had searched the brain with a microscope." George Santayana (1863 - 1952)

In 1992 William Keel and his associates discovered how important it is that our solar system, with planet Earth, is situated between the two spiral arms of our galaxy. Within each of the galaxy's spiral arms, the star densities are high enough to disrupt the orbits of planets like Earth. Moreover, supergiant stars reside inside the spiral arms – supergiants that would expose Earth-like planets to radiation intense enough to prevent life. Providentially, our sun is one of those rare stars that finds itself located between the spiral arms and away from supergiants and high star densities.

Our position between the spiral arms is important for another reason. The spiral arms are loaded with gas and dust. If planet Earth were located within a spiral arm, such gas and dust would block our view of anything but the nearby stars, gas and dust clouds.

But our position between the spiral arms permits us to see the other parts of our galaxy and also the other several hundred billion galaxies in the universe. That is why the Psalmist David could write, "The heavens declare the glory of God."

Astronomers have determined that the heavens' message can only be read if one is sitting on a uniquely clear-viewed cosmic window seat. Earth's inhabitants enjoy this unique window to our solar system, our galaxy and the whole universe. In any other galaxy or at any other location in our galaxy, the observableness of the universe would be obscured. Our solar system is located in the exact galactic locale that affords both a safe haven for life and a clear window on the cosmos.

By comparison, other suns in our galaxy orbit the galactic center at a rate out of sync with the spiral arms' orbit pattern. Which means those suns and their planets – if they ever do wander into the safe zone between spiral arms – won't stay there for very long.

This is thrilling! God exclusively positioned the Earth between the spiral arms so we can see and exclaim -- "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." Psalm 19:1, 2

Why was Earth's unique window view of the universe just discovered in the 1990s? We are living in end-times. The signs of the "end of the age" given by Jesus in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are all around us. Prophesying about our day, Daniel 12:1, 4 speaks of an unprecedented increase of knowledge and travel, Israel's restoration and a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."

The Twin Towers and Pentagon terrorist attacks reminded us of this time of unprecedented trouble. The run on duct tape, clear plastic, flashlights and batteries brought the war on terrorism to a level of personal fear. The globalization of terrorist weapons of mass destruction (anthrax, small pox, radiation) brings home the grim meaning of Jesus' prediction in Luke 21:25, 26 -- "distress of nations with perplexity" (Greek – no way out) and "men's hearts failing them for fear."

If the US attacks Iraq, many fear years of occupation that will spark a fresh burst of anti-American rage. By factoring in the economic, environmental and energy crises, the future could be foreboding.

Perhaps the Lord only recently revealed His awesome power by Earth's unique position in the Milky Way to assure us of the power of his loving concern for His people during these end-times. But there is much more to the awesome creative power of our God.

### **Earth, The Focus of the Universe**

For centuries Earth and its inhabitants were believed to be the center of the universe. In 1543 the Copernican system of astronomy disproved the centrality of the planet earth and became the paradigm of astronomy. Philosophically, the human race was downgraded. Evolutionists latched on to this view. Search for life elsewhere in the universe reached a crescendo of excitement in the 1950s. The noted astrophysicist, Carl Sagan, boasted there were many thousands of planets in our galaxy capable of sustaining life.

But evidence began to accumulate that would challenge these arrogant claims of evolutionists. By the 1980s the once atheistic physicist Paul Davies was compelled to concede that the whole universe was designed so that human life might exist on planet Earth.

To describe his "ingenious design" concept, Davies originated the term "anthropic principle." Why? Research since 1961 forced many agnostic and atheistic cosmologists to exclaim -- "Someone has fine-tuned the universe for life on earth." Many of them became believers in God.

Life on Earth did not just happen. Most astronomers, atheists and theists, now agree the universe evidences unique fine-tuning for life. Scientists have identified over 150 parameters for life within our solar system and 38 elsewhere in the universe. Each parameter is so exacting that they could not have happened by chance.

For example: the ratio of the gravitational force constant to the electro magnetic force constant. If it differed from its value by any more than one part in 1040, life on Earth could not be possible. One part in 1040 has been illustrated as follows:

Cover the entire North American continent with dimes stacked up to the moon (230,000 miles). Make a million other piles of dimes of equal size. Paint one dime red and hide it in the billion piles. The odds that a blindfolded person would pick the red dime are one in

1040. This is only one of the delicately balanced parameters that are necessary to allow life on the planet Earth.

These recent discoveries of the universe support Biblical creation. Ironically, some of these discoveries were made by scientists pursuing their atheistic quests to prove evolutionary life on many of the other planets of the universe. Religion, to the scientists, was the "opiate" of the superstitious and weak. Naturalistic evolution was supposed to be the reality of the brave who dared to charter the unknown.

What a shocking disappointment they experienced! For example, the eminent cosmologist, Fred Hoyle, aggressively opposed theism and Christianity. But Hoyle discovered that an incredible fine-tuning of the nuclear ground state energies for helium, beryllium, carbon and oxygen were necessary for any kind of life to exist. If the ground state energies of these elements proportioned to each other were just four percent higher or lower, there would be insufficient oxygen or carbon for life anywhere in the universe, including the planet Earth.

Other cosmologists spoke of this fine-tuning of the universe as they also discovered parameters for life on earth. Just think God fine-tuned the cosmic characteristics of the universe so that human life flourishes on Earth. Humankind must be central to God's eternal purposes. Position-wise, Earth is not the center of the universe. But from the standpoint of importance, Earth is center stage.

No wonder the Scriptures speak of each person being so precious to God. Isaiah 13:12 What an indescribable premium on humanity! Yes, there is a God and He cares for you! God has a wonderful purpose for you, for me, and for the entire human race. This is why Jesus "tasted death for every man." Hebrews 2:9.

Fred Hoyle in his journey of faith rejected the basic premise of evolution -- that the first living cell was formed by change in a swirling, boiling pool of prebiotic soup (organic chemicals). The chances of life coming from prebiotic soup, Hoyle says, have the same probability of occurring that a "tornado sweeping through a junkyard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein."

**June 2003**

## **God's "Roadmap" for the Middle East & the World**

The Middle East cannot afford any more "band aid" solutions. "The Quartet" which includes -- the European Union, Russia and the U.N. -- have bought Mr. Bush's "roadmap" as a final solution for Middle East peace. Judging by past record, any "roadmap" they draw likely will be very generous to the Arabs and very demanding of Israel. What will "The Quartet" want? What damaging surgery to the Land of Israel will satisfy them? Time will tell to what lengths God's People living in God's Land will be pressed to conform to the world's vision of peace.

No "roadmap" for regional or world peace will ever compare with the one revealed in the Bible. Yes, it's for everybody! God's "Roadmap" for Israel and the whole world is incomparable because there never was nor will be a planner, strategist, architect so wise as our great Creator -- the LORD our God.

### **A Highway in the Day of the Lord**

The prophet Isaiah speaking of the Day of the LORD wrote: "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria....In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless...." (Isaiah 19:23-25)

When Isaiah wrote, Israel had been abused like a doormat between Egypt and Assyria. But Isaiah the prophet, guided by the Divine Hand, showed us God's resolution of international conflicts. They would be resolved by God's providences -- not by man's agreements on paper -- not even with handshakes. It is comforting to know that in spite of the scheming of the nations, the destiny of Israel and the world is in God's hands.

### **The First Peace Plan**

When was the "Good News" for everybody first announced? The Gospel was NOT first preached by the angels to the shepherds when Jesus Christ was born. It was first announced to Abraham. "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations shall be blessed in you'" (Galatians 3:8 NIV). Yes, Abraham in good faith received God's commitment to bless all the nations through him and his posterity. "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore...in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed...." (Genesis 22:17-18). The blessing of the seed of Abraham is unalterably linked to the blessing of the all the nations of the earth.

Furthermore, this commitment was renewed by God with Abraham's son Isaac and grandson Jacob -- and was tied in with a Land agreement. "And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land"

(Genesis 35:12). Moses spoke to Israel in these same terms: "Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them" (Deuteronomy 1:8).

But are the Jewish people now disqualified from this contract promise to Abraham? No, the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not made on a whim. Apostle Paul affirms that Israel is still "beloved for their fathers' sakes" (Romans 11:28). God does not make promises and then renege on those promises as man does. Furthermore, if we as Christians expect God to keep His promises to us, we had best affirm that He intends to keep his promises to the Children of Israel. But when? Christ's disciples asked their risen Lord, "Will thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) He did not say, "To Israel? Why them? They rejected me, they are cast off and have no future hope." No, rather he did say, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father has put into His power." He thus clearly indicated that such a restoration was still ahead for Israel -- even though it be almost 2,000 years away.

### **Prophetic Time Schedule**

During the recent march of history God has been gathering His ancient people from all over the world to His Land -- Israel. Although it has been through "travail" of trouble, the Scriptures reveal how God feels about planting Israel in its own Land again. "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul....Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them" (Jeremiah 32:41,42).

Some depict the Israelis as conquering the Land and wresting it from a Palestinian nation. Actually there never was a Palestinian nation. What was there was virtually a barren wasteland under Ottoman Turkish control until the Jewish people bought land with money and cultivated laboriously. "And fields shall be bought in this land of which you say, "It is a desolation, without man or beast....Men shall buy fields for money, sign and seal deeds, and call in witnesses in the land of Benjamin...Jerusalem...Judah, in...the hill country, in the...lowland, and in...the Negev; for I will restore their fortunes,' declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 32:43, 44 NAS). God's prophetic time schedule is right on time:

1878 Peta Tikva -- First settlement when Jews allowed to own land again (Isaiah 40:1,2; Hosea 2:14,15)

1917 Balfour Declaration -- Called for creation of a Jewish National Homeland (Luke 21:24)

1948 Formation of the modern State of Israel (Amos 9:14,15)

1967 Jerusalem's "Old City" returned to Jewish control (Jeremiah 30:18)

Now that His people are back in His Land, the nations are again trying to divide it. But God will soon take issue with those nations: "I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land" (Joel 3:2). The Gentile nations which want to divide and partition the inheritance of Israel will be on a collision course according to God's Roadmap!

### **God's "Marshall Plan"**

World leaders have proposed many fixes for world crises. Some are noble. Some selfishly motivated. All are inadequate. After the devastation of Europe in World War II, U. S. Secretary of State, George Marshall revealed a Plan to save the wrecked economies of Europe. Marshall understood the connection between economic frustration and explosive discontent. The Marshall Plan actually was somewhat successful in building up Western Europe by dealing with "hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos." Somewhat.

Recently President Bush and his advisors considered a "Marshall Plan" strategy in the "war on terrorism" and now a similar aid effort for Iraq. What could be done with some of the proposed military budget of almost \$400 billion dollars if it were allocated to improve the health, nutrition, education, child mortality, clean water, etc., etc.? Such a plan might go a long way towards securing the peace and safety of the world community. Yes, this plan might....

But only God's Plan for peace through Christ's Kingdom will work because it deals not with the symptoms -- but wisely with the causes of inequality, greed, suffering and violence. His loving plan will change hearts of stone, to hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19). He also has the power and means to implement His plan for peace on earth. Peace on earth will begin with peace in Jerusalem. So God's people are encouraged to pray for the peace of Jerusalem -- as well as for the time when Jerusalem is established in the earth. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee....I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night....And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Psalm 122:6; Isaiah 62:6-7).

### **Not Just a Road, but a Highway**

God's road to peace is actually a highway. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness" (Isaiah 35:8). The health programs on this "highway" will not just be excellent medical care -- but will actually restore limbs...eyes...speech. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isaiah 35:5-6). As far as child mortality -- or anybody's mortality and sorrow for that matter -- "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee

away" (Isaiah 35:10). Where are the ransomed coming from? "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death...." (Hosea 13:14).

In practical terms, Jerusalem will be the capital of this Kingdom on Earth. All nations -- including their kings, presidents, dictators, prime ministers -- will have to acknowledge the government in Jerusalem and learn about the God of Jacob. "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths" (Isaiah 2:3). Resources devoted to armaments will be transferred to agriculture. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares..." (Isaiah 2:4). God's Roadmap as described in His Word will lead to a glorious and wonderful destiny for all of earth's billions. Yes, God's Roadmap is the solution.

## **October 2003**

### **Terrorism and Bible Prophecy**

*"Let the weak say, I am strong." Joel 3:10*

Two years have passed since the dastardly attack of 9/11. Despite billions spent on "home security," Attorney General Ashcroft's stringent detention policies, pep talks by President Bush, fear still preoccupies the US public.

Instead of "the friendly skies" of United Airlines, we have the 'lonely skies' of all airlines. Even with tightened airport security, many of the flying public have rebooked to driving the 'friendly highways.' Water resources, refineries, electrical generating plants, railroads, major bridges and tunnels remain vulnerable. We try to forget thousands of heart crushing tragedies compressed into that one day of infamy, but haunting concerns plague us. Is America the invincible...vincible?

Government officials tell us terrorist attacks can and will happen again. The Afghanistan and Iraqi wars proved US "military might" can defeat armies, but not the diabolical determination of Islamic terrorists.

### **Wahhabi Terrorism and Saudi Arabia**

After much investigation, Gerald Posner revealed in his new book WHY AMERICA SLEPT, that Saudi Arabia had privy to a terrorist attack scheduled for September 11 on US soil.

Osama bin Laden embraced Wahhabi terrorism in his native land, Saudi Arabia. What is Wahhabism?

Muhammad Ibn Abdi-l-Wahhab (1703-92) of Arabia founded the Wahhabi heresy. He was excommunicated from Islam by Sunni Islamic leaders. His daughter married Abdul Aziz, son of Muhammad bin Saud, head of the Saud tribe. Muhammad bin Saud adopted Wahhabism as the religion of his tribe, which occupied the eastern Arabian province of Najd.

Between 1919-1926 the Wahhabi Saud tribe conquered the western Arabian province of Hejaz, with its Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, from Sherif Hussein of the Hashemite dynasty. The Hashemites were direct descendents of Muhammad, Prophet of Islam, and the traditional guardians of Mecca and Medina.

Shortly before his overthrow Hussein, the Sherif of Mecca and Medina, had his son, Emir Feisal, sign an agreement with Chaim Weizmann (January 3, 1919) that the Jewish people could have Palestine for a Jewish State. But the Wahhabi Saud tribe was bitterly opposed to a Jewish State.



On September 18, 1932, "King" Abdul Aziz bin Saud proclaimed the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Wahhabism, the religion of the Saud tribe, became the official state religion of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Since the 1960s the Wahhabi Saudis have been expanding their religious networks in North America, Europe and parts of Asia through aggressive missionary activities among local Arab populations. Thousands upon thousands have converted to Wahhabism and are prepared to commit mass murder in the name of this religion.

The writer has received correspondence from a US Islamic center stating it is only a matter of time before Islam conquers the US. What a striking fulfillment of Joel 3:10! The military weak Arab nations are standing up to the US, the unrivaled super power, boasting, "I am strong."

Wahhabis fear neither torture nor death. They rejoice in death, suicide and mass murder. Wahhabism is an evil, demonic, satanic religion. Wahhabis cannot be bought with bribes or material goodies that Western power leaders are accustomed to bestowing on Third World puppets. Perhaps the Islamic terrorists are part of the "worst of the heathen" prophesied in Ezekiel 7:24.

Nothing less than world domination through mass conversion or mass extermination is acceptable. The Wahhabist only provides the non-Wahhabist with two alternatives -- conversion or death.

Many "Islamic" mosques, community centers and organizations in North America and Europe are, in fact, Saudi and Gulf State Wahhabi funded. They are being prepared to serve as launching pads for their expectant take over of North America and Europe.

Al-Qaida is only one of many Wahhabi mass murder networks. Though Osama bin Laden's training camps were conveniently placed in far- away Afghanistan, bin Laden's money sits in Saudi banks with the full knowledge and approval of the Saud ruling family.

A briefing given last July 10 to a top Pentagon advisory board described Saudi Arabia as an enemy of the United States. "The kernel of evil, the prime mover, the most dangerous opponent" is how the report describes Saudi Arabia, according to an article in the Washington Post (8-5-02). Another excerpt: "Saudi Arabia supports our enemies and attacks our allies."

### **Israel -- Main Target of Terrorism**

The terrorism devastating Israel dates back to Mohammed's anti-Semitism and the venom he wrote against the Jews in the Koran. When the Balfour Declaration of 1917 promised a Jewish State in the area now occupied by Israel and the State of Jordan, Sherif Hussein of Mecca, ruler of the Arabian Peninsula and acknowledged leader of all Arab People, recognized this hatred had to stop. Hussein believed the modern Jews and Arabs could

work together and Jewish know-how would bring rapid economic progress to Arab nations. Hussein's son, Emir Feisal, said, "Arabs admit the moral claim of the Jews. They regard the Jews as kinsmen whose just claims they will be glad to see satisfied... No Arab can be suspicious of Jewish nationalism...and I say to the Jews, Welcome back home."

British and French power politics complicated this healing between Arabs and Jews. The death knell came with the overthrow of Hussein by Ibn Saud. He named his new dominion Saudi Arabia with Wahhabism as its official religion.

When Arafat became head of the PLO in the 1960s, much of his backing was from Wahhabi money in Saudi Arabia.

### **Palestinian Myth**

Strip away the rhetoric, and the Arab war against Israel is based mainly on Islamic hatred of Jews. To justify their violence, Arab propagandists have developed an elaborate mythology about a stolen homeland, an ancient Palestinian nation and cruel expulsion at the hands of Jews. They have repeated it so often and so loudly that much of the world believes it. The media has bought into this propaganda and endeavors to separate Palestinian acts of violence from international Islamic terrorism by portraying Palestinians as freedom fighters. Never mind that history, the Bible, and archaeology prove the Jews thrived as a nation for over 1700 years in the ancient Land of Israel. Forget there have been Jews in the Land of Israel uninterruptedly for over 3,000 years. The public is told that Jews never lived in the Land until recent times and many believe it.

For decades many maintained that Palestinians held a morally superior position to the Israelis. They were an illegally subjugated people striking back in what may have been violent yet appropriate ways. Palestinian moral superiority became suspect when the world saw a Palestinian mob cheering a young man holding up hands and arms red with the blood of an Israeli soldier torn and beaten to death -- or perhaps it was when Palestinians stomped two boys, one a US citizen, to death in a cave. Perhaps it was some other moment of gross and gleeful murder. Palestinian violence is terrorism. It is part of the Islamic network of terrorism. Remember the Saudis give Palestinian families of suicide bombers a \$25,000 reward.

Unfortunately sometimes children and civilians are killed during Israeli attacks on Palestinian terrorists. Some claim this makes Israelis terrorists. Remember, Palestinians purposely target civilians. Israelis do not[\*].

During Iraq Solidarity Week, Palestinian banners proved that Palestinians are a component of the global network of terror. "Aggression against Iraq represents aggression against Palestine and the whole Arab nation," read one banner. "Iraqis and Palestinians are in the same trench," said another. At a Hamas rally, signs read, "Death to America" and "Victory from Jerusalem to Baghdad." No wonder bin Laden pre-empted

Bush's declaration of war on terrorism by a year when he declared war on the two "Satans" -- the US and Israel.

But, there is hope. These end-time prophecies are precursors of God's Kingdom. Haggai 2:7; Zephaniah 3:8-9; Psalm 46:8-10 Send for your free copy of the new booklet: Israel's Land Rights -- Biblical, Historical and LeGalatians

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\* We do not condone all Israel does.

**December 2003**

## **Luther: A Shooting Star out of the Dark Ages**

"It was a dark and stormy night..." and so the story of Martin Luther the Reformer began.... But the bolts of lightning in the darkness of that night when Martin Luther prostrated himself before God were more than the storm Luther sought to escape. Although it is not "politically correct" to refer to the "Dark Ages," in the recently released movie -- Luther -- Martin is called a "star" rising out of a very dark time in Christian history. Luther appears to be one of the "stars" in the hand of Jesus to enlighten true Christians (Revelation 1:20). Even though the film did not specifically emphasize justification by faith (Romans 1:17) -- it certainly advocates a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as the basis of our Christian faith.

The Number of Protestant Christians who will see the movie Luther may not be great. Catholics have been warned against seeing it. And certainly it is a bump in the road to ecumenism since the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" by Lutherans and Rome was signed October 31, 1999.

### **A Match that Lit the Reformation**

Earlier attempts to reform the church of Rome by Peter Waldo, John Wycliffe and John Hus came short of the dramatic success Luther would achieve. Graphically portrayed in Luther, the Reformer responded powerfully to the practice of selling "indulgences."

It was nearly a century after the invention of printing. Men were beginning to think for themselves. The public sale of indulgences by the authority of the Pope for the purpose of raising money for the completion of St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome -- and particularly by one John Tetzel, a Dominican monk of notorious character -- aroused general indignation. Responding in 1517, Luther nailed his famous "95 Theses" to the door of the Church at Wittenberg and launched the Reformation.

Perhaps Tetzel is gone, but the Papacy still provides indulgences for those looking for justification beyond the blood of Christ. Notably, people will remember "The Great Jubilee of 2000" when indulgences were publicly encouraged for saving souls from Purgatory.

### **Reformation only Helped a Little**

As incomplete as Luther's personal work of reform was, it was nevertheless a landmark effort in facing the corrupted Church of Rome and its raging abuses. The work of Luther and others brought western society a step away from the intoxication of a Church which fraternized with emperors such as Constantine and kings such as Charlemagne. Nevertheless, Luther's own conservatism and his need to cooperate with the princes of Germany continued church-state union abuses. However, the most serious abuses were

later dismantled during days of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era when the heavy handed persecuting power of Rome was broken.

Under the bold leadership of Luther, Zwingli, Carlstadt, Melancthon, and others, a Reformation movement progressed -- albeit beset by many hindrances. So the Reformation pressed forward the utter repudiation of priestcraft and the various superstitions and errors of the Dark Ages, back to the primitive simplicity and purity of the apostolic church -- both in life and doctrine.

### **Luther and the Common Man**

While hiding for ten months in Wartburg Castle under the protection of Elector Frederick, Luther translated (1534) the Bible into a more readable form of the common language of the people. This alone was a revolutionary act, in defiance of Rome, but it met with the support of local secular rulers.

The people encouraged by Luther (as well as by some others) gathered in associations and drew up their grievances against the oppressive practices of princes and landlords in a petition called the Twelve Articles. This was followed by episodes of the armed Peasants' Revolt. Although sympathetic to the grievances of the peasants, Luther was also attentive to the privileges and duties of the nobles. Luther called on the authorities to suppress this revolt without mercy.

### **Luther and Antichrist**

Although the film does not show Luther calling the Church of Rome as Antichrist -- it does portray Luther as refuting the Pope as the one built upon the Rock Christ -- instead of the true church itself. But, in fact, by 1520 Luther was very specific in identifying papacy as Antichrist. (History of the Christian Church, Phillip Scahff, vol. VII, ch. III sec. 48).

Luther and others of that time, though still befogged by the errors of Antichrist made remarkable progress out of the darkness toward the full and clear light. When all the circumstances of their time are appreciated, it cannot be denied that they were remarkable men, and that they not only took a courageous step, but a long step in the right direction.

In the movie the liaison of the Church of Christ with the worldly kings and princes was vividly enacted as though it was the Kingdom of God on earth. The pure virgin Christian Church in reality did not wait for Jesus Christ to return. Instead, she united with the kings of earth to set up an apostate Kingdom. Perhaps if Luther would have understood that Antichrist was not just the Popes -- but the Pope with the Church of Rome -- he would not have compromised himself with the German princes. Sadly, Luther's dependence upon the German princes led to yet another brand of church-state cooperation and fornication.

The German princes, on the one hand, were glad to be freed from their abject bondage to Papacy and, on the other hand, glad to escape the growing tendency of teachings such as Zwingli's. They recognized in the teaching of Luther and Melanchthon a way of escape from both, which would still preserve their powers -- and even increase them. From expediency, therefore, many of the German princes embraced the Lutheran cause, which prospered, while the more thorough reformers and their works went down. So while Luther identified the "mother of harlots" (Revelation 17:5), he did not see the daughters that followed her.

### **Shining Light Contribution**

Why didn't God forward the greater and purer views? it may be asked. Because it was not then due time. Slowly, after centuries have passed, thinking people will admit that Zwingli and Carlstadt were much nearer the truth, much more thorough teachers of reform than Luther. D'Aubigne (History of the Reformation, vol. 3, p. 243.) upon this subject, cautiously but forcibly remarks: "Notwithstanding his opposition to Papacy, Luther had a strong conservative instinct. Zwingli, on the contrary, was predisposed to radical reforms. Both these divergent tendencies were needed. If Luther and his followers had been alone in the work, it would have stopped short in its progress; and the principle of reformation would not have wrought its destined effect."

The impact of Luther's challenge to the Church of Rome came after sincere attempts to reform abuses he believed were damaging the Church. By far, Luther's greatest contribution to the Church was his shining of light on the doctrine of "Justification by Faith." In spite of all his other imperfections, his work opened the way for a reformation movement which far exceeded the work of his predecessors. By the time the impact of Luther's influence was complete, the world would also see revisions in social, political, economic as well as religious reform. By the end of the 18th Century the Dark Papal System which Luther valiantly confronted would be humbled first by the people of France -- the citadel of the Church of Rome -- and eventually by Napoleon.

Luther's name and the Protestant Reformation are virtually synonymous. The need for that reform was great -- and certainly he was a bright shining star for his time. But today as the storms of the nighttime of sin ravage the whole world, we need to correctly understand what many Christians have known for centuries -- the identity of the Antichrist! Let us remember that Luther already identified the Antichrist system.

## **Winter 2004**

### **The United States in Prophecy**

Generally, Bible believing Christians affirm the US as favored by Divine providence. Some in their ardor would like to craft the US into a vehicle of the church or an ideal of God's Kingdom even though most realize God's Kingdom will not begin until the Church of Christ is united with her returned Lord. Isaiah 18, a remarkable prophecy, seems to define the US role in the Divine arrangement. The following is a translation of Isaiah 18:1-2, based on three highly recognized authorities of Biblical Hebrew.

1. Alas oh land [United States] shadowed by wings, which is beyond the river of Ethiopia. 2. That sends heralds, even as books of paper, across large bodies of water, ...saying [by it's favorable laws and Christian preference], Go, you swift messengers, to a nation scattered or dragged and polished by scouring, to a people reverent from their beginning hitherto; a nation measured and trodden down, whose land the river has cut off.

Vs. 1 refers to a "land" or nation under the shadow of wings located "beyond the river of Ethiopia," or beyond the known world of ancient Bible times. It was a small world back then—Southeastern Europe, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Ethiopia. Beyond that, little was known. Vs. 2 locates this nation beyond a great "body of water." This is true of the US.

The phrase "a nation shadowed [or protected] by wings" certainly is true of the US. The affairs of our nation have been divinely overruled for Christians. Since its founding, the religiously and politically oppressed have been welcomed. Christianity has thrived in this haven of divine providence.

Vs. 2 tells us something additional about the US. From its shores, "messengers" in the form of "printed books" "herald" the Gospel to a "nation." Who is this nation? Remember 1Peter 2:9 designates the church as the "holy nation." Isaiah shows this [holy] "nation" or Church is "dragged" or "scattered" around the world and "polished," that is, made noble by the "scouring" of the Word of truth. Indeed, the Church "reverent from its beginning" endured "trodden down" experiences as "meted or measured out" by the Lord for their character development.

From God's standpoint, the US is not perfect. Yet it has been a blessed haven of liberty and prosperity for Christians so that they could herald the Truths of God's Word over the seas and around the world. But times are changing. Since the US became the "lone superpower of the world," the corroding effects of pride have become evident. This is why Isaiah begins the prophecy with a Hebrew word that can be translated "Woe," pronouncing calamity. But according to Gesenius (noted Hebrew lexicographer) it sometimes, and probably here, means an exclamation with a touch of pity -- alas. The prophet is saddened. The Church, the antitypical Isaiah, is saddened as we see the accumulation of shortcomings tarnishing "America the Beautiful" whom we highly esteem. The following is a partial list.

## **US Stonewalling on Pollution Problem**

The scientific community agrees that greenhouse gases caused by the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) largely contribute to global warming. A certain temperature peak would melt the massive icebergs causing a flood that would wipe out coastlines over 20 miles inland. Cities like New York would be destroyed, while large fertile land areas are baked into deserts. Being a nation of SUV gas-guzzling drivers accentuates this problem. Industrial nations like the US cause 75% of the world's pollution, yet the US reneged on its International commitment to reduce pollution according to Kyoto Protocol criteria.

## **The Saudi Intrigue**

The "US News and World Report" (Dec. 15, 2003) has a nine-page article identifying Saudi Arabia as the main exporter of global terrorism. From 1996 the CIA knew of the export of global terrorism, but chose not to probe. "Vast sums from Saudi contracts bought friends and influence here." Big Washington names were involved. Many think this US cozy economic relationship with the Saudis provided a "good friendship" cover for the Saudi clandestine exporting of global terrorism.

The fruits of the Saudi support of bin Laden was the 9/11 Twin Towers/Pentagon tragedy in which 15 of the 19 terrorists were Saudis. What acerbates 9/11 is evidence indicates it could have been prevented. President Bush appointed former New Jersey governor Thomas Kean to investigate if 9/11 resulted from any negligence. After reviewing thousands of documents, Kean in a preliminary report of Dec. 18, 2003, stated that there was negligence in the FBI, the CIA, and even the White House. Now, belatedly, the US is forcing the Saudi Government to crack down and eliminate the elements within the Saudi royal family and it's economic tycoons that finance the exporting of Islamic fundamentalism.

Don't "spoil" Israel. The US has been Israel's staunchest friend. But if Arab oil causes the US to force Israel to surrender the West Bank and Gaza, rendering Israel vulnerable to Palestinian attack, then the Lord's promise of Jeremiah 31:16 will come into play -- "they that spoil you [Israel] I will spoil."

## **Beating Plowshares into Spears**

"For 45 years of the Cold War we were in an arms race with the Soviet Union. Now it appears we're in an arms race with ourselves."—Admiral Eugene Carroll, Jr., US Navy (Ret.)

The US will spend \$399 billion on defense this year. It is claimed a fraction of this expense could eliminate humanity's tragedies.



Costs of solving the world's top global issues:

Eliminate Starvation (\$19 billion)  
Provide Shelter (\$21 billion)  
Remove Landmines (\$4 billion)  
Build Democracy (\$3 billion)  
Eliminate Nuclear Weapons (\$7 billion)  
Refugee Relief (\$5 billion)  
Eliminate Illiteracy (\$5 billion)  
Provide Clean, Safe Water (\$10 billion)  
Health Care & AIDS Control (\$21 billion)  
Stop Deforestation (\$7 billion)  
Prevent Global Warming (\$8 billion)  
Stabilize Population (\$10.5 billion)  
Prevent Acid Rain (\$8 billion)  
Provide Clean, Safe Energy (\$50 billion)  
Stop Ozone Depletion (\$5 billion)  
Prevent Soil Erosion (\$24 billion)  
Retire Debt 3rd World Nations (\$30 billion)

Figures are from the World Game Institute, based on an annual budget with a 10-year period needed to achieve complete success.

Only \$217.5 billion would eliminate man's devastating problems. Subtracting \$217.5 billion from the US defense budget of \$399 billion would still leave \$181.5 billion for defense. This far exceeds Russia who has the second highest defense budget—\$65 billion.

Remember the Abrahamic promise. "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18. In Galatians 3:16 the Apostle Paul identifies Jesus as this "seed." Jesus' death is the sole basis for salvation. In vs. 26-29 Paul reveals an incredible promise. The Church being one in Christ will, as part of the "seed," bless all mankind. What a hope -- fulfilled when Christ reigns with his Church in the Millennium. Revelation 20:6.

End-time prophecies speak of a great increase of knowledge. Daniel 12:1,4. The Lord seems to be saying to Christian nations like the US -- I have given you the technical know-how to alleviate the problems of the world. What are you doing about it? No matter how noble, Christian and political leaders are flawed by human frailties. They are unable to arise above vested interests. Still most of us would rather live in the US than any other nation. But, Isaiah 18:3-6 predicts the destruction of the nations.

Yes, all nations "shall be devoured with the [symbolic] fire of his[God's] jealousy [zeal for moral perfection]." After the removal of these imperfect governments, the people are still here. Then the people will be taught "a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent." Zephaniah 3:8,9; John 5:28,29.

Isaiah 18:7 ends with this thrilling climax! The "trodden down" of verse 2 are exalted into the presence of the Heavenly Father. Then the glorified church together with Christ as "mount Zion," the government of God's kingdom, will reign as kings and priests offering eternal peace, happiness and the "water of life" to "whosoever will." Revelation 22:16.

**April 2004**  
**Passion and Forgiveness**  
**Anti-Semitism never justified....**

Bringing the most outstanding event in all history -- no, actually in all time -- to the public through the film, "The Passion of the Christ," and to a worldwide audience at this time is bound to have a significant impact on the passions of its viewers. Some, no doubt, will be motivated to great heights of compassion and appreciation for Jesus Christ. Others will be pushed to greater stimulation for their already latent anti-Semitism.

**Responsibility**

Whether First Century Jews were responsible for Jesus' death or not -- the anti-Semitism, forced conversions and persecution of the Jews by Christians though the centuries have never been justified. And, of course, the Romans were responsible too. Apostle Peter quoting from the Psalms said, "Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed" (Acts 4:27 NIV).

But Roman culpability -- according to Jesus -- was not as great as that of the chief priests: "'Do you refuse to speak to me?' Pilate said. 'Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?' Jesus answered, 'You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one [Caiaphas] who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin'" (John 19:10-11 NIV). Still, Rome was not without blame.

Even though Jesus was acclaimed King just days before his crucifixion by the Jews who went up to Jerusalem for Passover, the leaders influenced the Jews of the City to demand his death. And even though he called the scribes and Pharisees, "hypocrites...whited sepulchers" and "serpents....a generation of vipers" (Matthew 23:27, 33) -- Jesus wept over the City just days before his crucifixion. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing." Then Jesus adds, "Look, your house is left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:37-38 NIV).

**In Ignorance**

Thus responsibility, actually, is laid specifically on the Jewish religious and civil leaders who represented the whole people by Apostle Peter who said, "You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this... Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders" (Acts 3:14-18). So, it was done in ignorance! In fact the Apostle Paul. "None of the princes of this world knew [who Jesus really was]: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8).

## **Favor Has Returned**

In any case, how long must Jews have to reap the consequences of what happened almost 2,000 years ago? In fact, prophetic time prophecy indicates that the time to favor Jewish people has come! (And it has nothing to do with Vatican II.) "You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come" (Psalm 102:13 NIV) Since when? "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1-2 NAS) "Double for all her sins" does not mean twice as much as Israel deserved -- but an equal time (a duplicate, kephel) of disfavor to the time Israel had God's favor. That disfavor ended precisely and dramatically in 1878 when the Cyprus Accords associated with Berlin Congress of Nations allowed non-Muslims to buy Land in Israel. Jews to this day look back on Petah Takvah, the settlement founded in 1878, as the roots of the reborn State of Israel.

Yes, there has been much trouble and travail accompanying Israel's restoration -- but God is clearly re-establishing Israel. The Prophets are equally clear that Israel as a people will mourn for what they did to Jesus and accept him as their Messiah when God's spirit is poured out on them. "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son" (Zechariah 12:10 NIV)

## **Once for All**

Nevertheless, some movie critics -- perhaps in their attempt to be "politically correct" have said, We all crucify Christ again and again every time we sin. But is that true? Does Jesus have to die more than once? Apostle Paul said, "He died once for all to end sin's power" (Romans 6:10 TLB). The whole point in the Book of Hebrews is that although the animal sacrifices had to be repeated yearly under the Law Covenant, Christ died once for all. "...who does not need daily [yearly], like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews. 7:27 NAS See also 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10).

Therefore, after Jesus died for our sins, the animal sacrifices in the Temple which continued for some years -- were rejected by God. In fact, what continues to be an abomination to God's face are those who would say they have "sacrificed" for them the body of Jesus again and again and again.

"The doctrine of the Holy Eucharist...a real sacrifice, instituted by Christ at the Last Supper. It represents Christ's sacrifice of the Cross, but in an unbloody manner...The Eucharistic sacrifice is offered to God in ... atonement, for the living and the dead... Christ is really present in the Holy Eucharist, even when not being received... For the wheat bread and grape wine are transubstantiated by the ordained priest into the flesh and blood of Christ..." [www.Catholic.org](http://www.Catholic.org)

This celebration of the mass is an abomination because it makes desolate the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So while the Jewish nation crucified Jesus Christ once -- the Catholic church, claiming to be followers of Jesus, have crucified him millions of times continually through the centuries...even to this day.

### **Rome**

What about the Romans? The Gentiles from the Kingdom of Rome were prophetically depicted as "dogs" around the cross of Jesus (Psalm 22:16). Although the Roman empire has long disappeared from the surface of the earth, the heir of the Roman empire's religious authority -- the Roman Catholic Church itself -- is explicitly implicated in scripture in the crucifixion of Christ.

In the symbolic book of Revelation, the great city of "Babylon" is the name ascribed to false Christendom, particularly the "mother" church. It is also symbolically compared to Sodom (a city of perversion) and Egypt (a city of bondage) in Revelation 11:7-8: "Their bodies [of the two witnesses, the Old and New Testaments, vs. 3-7] will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified." Crucified in Christendom! Yes, Christ Jesus has been crucified in Christendom itself by its own claim, though false, to sacrifice him again.... Moreover, the blood of saints and martyrs is on the hands of Christendom inasmuch as the Roman church has persecuted to death millions.

### **Anti-Semitism**

The mistaken idea that God -- not the Son of God -- was killed at Calvary only further intensified the bitterness of anti-Semitism. But what responsibility do we as Christians have in a brewing anti-Semitic climate? And what about the new anti-Semitism which targets the survival and prosperity of the State of Israel?

From prophecy we know that the risen Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God gathering His people back to their ancient homeland in preparation for His Kingdom on earth. So although we would not necessarily condone everything the Israeli government does -- we should be enthusiastically supportive of Israel. (Ezekiel 20:33-34) Christians are to pray for the real "peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:6), and as faithful "watchmen" we should not give God any rest until "He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah 62:6,7).

Knowing that Jesus in the end times is standing up for his people, we too should stand up for the Jewish people as we have opportunity (Daniel 12:1). It might cost us something.

### **Forgiven**

While the time has arrived for the Jewish people to be forgiven and restored -- the time has simultaneously arrived when the Papacy with all nominal Christendom is judged...and their days are numbered. But the blood of Christ -- his sacrificed life -- was

provided once as a "ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6). "All" means not just Protestants and "born again Christians," but the Jews, the Romans, Catholics, Hindus, Muslims.... Jesus did not exaggerate when he said, "All." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:32-33). When? When Christians who have been invited to suffer with Christ will bless and heal the world in Christ's Kingdom (Revelation 22:2, 17).

Send for your free booklet -- "The Last Week of Jesus" -- free of charge.

**July 2004**

## **The Jewish People are really Jehovah's Witnesses!**

"You are My witnesses,' declares the LORD [Jehovah]..." Isaiah 43:10 NAS

The name, Jehovah's Witnesses or Witnesses of Jehovah -- however used -- is a scriptural concept. But to whom did the LORD give this name?

Has the LORD instructed Christians to be witnesses for Jehovah -- or witnesses for Jesus?

### **Witnesses of Jesus**

There is not a single New Testament (or Old Testament) scripture that calls Christians to be the witnesses of Jehovah. On the other hand, the New Testament commissions Christians to be the "witnesses of Jesus" (Acts 1:8), the "ambassadors of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20) and as "beheaded for the witness of Jesus" (Revelation 20:4). The commission given to Christians by Jesus was that they should be his witnesses in all the world by preaching the Gospel (Matthew 24:14).

But the Jewish people are witnesses for Jehovah in a different way. It was not because Israel preached God's Word that they were called His "witnesses." Rather, it was because God revealed His glory and character to others by the miraculous manner in which He guided them, chastised them and saved them!

In three instances in the OLD Testament God said to Israel, "Ye are my witnesses." These three times are to be found in Isaiah 43 and 44. In those two chapters, Isaiah establishes five historic facts concerning who are the "Witnesses" of Jehovah.

### **The "Witnesses" of Jehovah...**

Were delivered from the land of Egypt (43:3)

Offered animal sacrifices to the LORD (43:23)

Transgressed the Law Covenant (43:24,25)

Are forgiven for the LORD's sake (43:25)

Are being regathered from all over the world to the Holy Land (43:5,6)

Now these five identifications are true only of one people -- the Jews! Therefore, it is clear that the Jewish people -- the "ancient people," "my chosen" -- are the real "Witnesses" of Jehovah (44:7; 43:20).

### **"Replacement Theology"**

"Replacement theology" would say that the Jews have long since forfeited this title. But this text in Isaiah 43:5,6, was a prophecy that is only now in the process of fulfillment!

The Jewish people are being regathered from all over the world to the Land of Israel. Although their regathering has been motivated not only by religious fervor, but by a practical solution to the Diaspora -- this does not matter. The Bible reveals that as the Jews are regathered to their Land, the LORD would bring them through experiences in which they would gradually lose their faith in man's "peace process," but increase their faith in God. This faith would enkindle a true religious vitality that will reach their "inward parts" and fit them for their special role in God's 1000-year Messianic Kingdom on earth (Isaiah 2:1-4).

### **"Witnesses" of Jehovah**

Through history the Jewish people have thus been the "Witnesses" of Jehovah in specifically two ways: First, God has revealed His power and glory by the miraculous manner in which He has dealt with them (Isaiah 43:-12). God delivered them from Egypt, led them through the Red Sea, sustained them in the wilderness, led them through the River Jordan, gave them the land of Canaan -- and made them a nation. During their chastening and dispersion, the phenomenal preservation of the people of Israel over the centuries as a distinct and identifiable people among nations is itself a miracle of history. They have left blood-stained footprints of martyrdom in every nation they have trod. Neither persecution, nor famine, nor any other force was able to cause them to disappear in assimilation. However, after 2,000 years -- contrary to every pattern of history -- they are now reestablished in their homeland, an independent nation. Surely the LORD's power and glory have been witnessed through this people!

The second way they are the "Witnesses" of Jehovah is how their history proves the validity of God's Word -- the Bible. Every detail of their history has been prophesied and is either fulfilled already, in process now or yet to be fulfilled in the future. Their original establishment as a nation, their destruction as a nation and dispersion as a people, the circumstances of their regathering, their future role -- all were prophesied in the Bible. All this detailed fulfillment is an extraordinary witness to the immutability of God's Word. Therefore, these are the reasons why the LORD has said to the Jewish People -- "YE ARE MY WITNESSES, SAITH JEHOVAH."

### **Promises to Christians and Jews**

The "JW's" today -- and other replacement theology-believing Christians -- do not see any special future blessing for the Jewish People as a whole. However, God's Plan does hold out hope -- "From the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:28-30 NAS). Since God promised that the Seed of Abraham would inherit the Land and bless all the families of the earth from Jerusalem (Genesis 22:18, 19; Jeremiah 32:41; Isaiah 2:2,3) -- what right have any Christians to annul this promise? These blessings were never forfeited! Their promises are "forever" (Amos 9:14, 15).

If we say God as cancelled his promises to the children of Israel, what confidence can we have in His promises to us as Christians?



## **Disinheriting God's Chosen People**

Some Christians, on the other hand, strongly support Jews going back to the Holy Land because they believe, in fact, that as soon as a Jewish Temple is built, Jesus will return. Their theology says that then 144,000 Jews will accept Jesus -- while the rest who do not will be eternally damned. That would mean that there would be more than 6 million more Jews who would not just suffer and die -- but also be tormented forever. Unbelievable? This second and "final" holocaust is really what Evangelicals actually believe. So even some who criticize their fellow Christians for their replacement theology believe this final horrific scenario.

But that view would make Apostle Paul's statement, "All Israel will be saved," a gross exaggeration (Romans 11:26). Christians cannot afford to disinherit God's chosen people. Otherwise, they might expect to find themselves disinherited! Speaking to the Gentiles, Paul said, "Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you" (Romans 11:13-22). Apostle Paul explains that we Gentiles should not be conceited just because we benefited by Jewish blindness to their Messiah. There would only be a temporary rejection and hardness of heart: "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in." (Romans 11:25 NIV). When the Christian church is complete, she will be part of the Deliverer with her Head Jesus Christ: "And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins" (Romans 11:26,27 NIV).

In the meantime, Christians are to speak "tenderly" to the Jewish people and assure them God is blessing them now and that they should believe their prophets and cherish their destiny (Isaiah 40:1,2 NIV).

## **Real Jehovah's Witnesses, A Glory to God**

After the People of Israel, Jehovah's (actual) Witnesses, have been gathered back to the Land of Israel, God will be glorified in their example and leadership among the nations. "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory..." Isaiah 43:5-7

Then all peoples of all nations and customs, and cultures and religions -- (even the self-proclaimed JW's) -- will have to go up to Jerusalem to learn about the God of Jacob from the Jewish people....

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2:1-4

Send for your free booklet -- "Israel a Nation of Miracles" -- free of charge.

## **December 2004**

### **What are you expecting from Christmas?**

**...from Jesus' birth, death and resurrection...**

Expectancy fills the air as we approach the Christmas season again...Perhaps there will be special days off from work to share with the family. Then there are all those gifts shared as tokens of love at this time of giving and sharing.

But for many it has been a hard year. Perhaps there is a lost loved one who will be painfully missed for the holidays. Perhaps the specter of world events of what will happen in 2005 renders the Christmas holiday a little less promising of all our expectations for "peace on earth, good will toward all."

### **Expectations of Messiah**

When the Wise Men followed the star to Bethlehem, they were expecting the birth of a King -- the Biblical Messiah based on prophecy (Numbers 24:17; Micah 5:2)....

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him...he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child...When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Matthew 2:1-6

Of course, the Babe Jesus was not presented as Messiah until he presented himself to John the Baptist for baptism at the age of 30 at the Jordan River. Right about that time people, in fact, were expecting the Messiah and wondering even if John was the Messiah.

"Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he might be the Christ." Luke 3:15 NAS

Actually, a very important prophecy in Daniel (9:24-27) told God's people to expect Messiah the Prince after 69 (symbolic) weeks -- which would amount to 69 x 7 figurative "days," or 483 literal years, from the time when the walls of Jerusalem began to be rebuilt.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks [7], and [+] threescore and two weeks [62]: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." Daniel 9:25

No wonder they were expecting a Messiah to save them at that time!

### **God's People Expected Deliverance**

But even though the Messiah Jesus was presented precisely on time, the people of Israel generally were not prepared to accept their Messiah. Why? They were expecting the wrong thing -- at the right time! They expected Jesus Christ to deliver them from the yoke of the Romans. They expected a conquering king to establish the children of Israel as a "light to the gentiles" to bless the people of the world -- as the prophets predicted (Isaiah 2:1-4; 49:6, etc.).

Instead -- Jesus came to Jerusalem, lowly, riding upon a donkey's colt. Then instead of reigning as a king, he was killed in the most dishonorable and despicable way imaginable -- crucified on a cross! Shortly thereafter, although a small number believed and taught Jesus was raised from the dead, the majority did not. Subsequently, the temple and the city of Jerusalem were both destroyed completely!

### **Fearful Expectation**

This coming year is not terribly different from that far distant time. Our society worldwide faces unprecedented oppressive forces which would conquer and destroy all flesh. Surely, we have come to the time, "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:22).

Yes, people who do not have faith in God and His Plan are in reality expecting the worst. Unfortunately, many Christians, too, expect the worst for mankind.

"...Men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21:26-28 NAS

Again, people generally do not understand what to expect when Jesus Christ returns. They expect Jesus to return in his flesh on a literal cloud and that everybody would see him. In spite of popular expectations, Jesus cannot appear in his flesh for the world to see. "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more" (John 14:19). When Jesus died in the flesh, he gave it as a ransom price for man. He could not and will not take it back!

"My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world..." (John 6:514) "For even the Son of man came... to give his life [his humanity] a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

Jesus returns in a time of trouble. "Cloud" or "clouds" represent a storm coming, a great storm of trouble.

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Revelation 1:7

It was prophesied that the whole world would see the trouble accompanying Jesus' return, but they would not literally "see" him. In other words, they discern (Greek, *opsomai*, "mental...the discerning mind," VINE'S EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY) him with their minds because of the trouble.

But many Christians too are filled with expectancy for the second coming of Jesus -- with a "rapture" of the faithful. But their forecasted expectation for the majority "left behind" is pitifully dismal. In spite of efforts to portray God, our Heavenly Father, as merciful by suggesting that "millions" will go to heaven -- that would leave billions to suffer eternal torment! ...Certainly our God is much wiser in His planning and more infinitely powerful in His carrying out of His Divine Plan!

But Luke's Gospel account explains that when Christians see these ominous signs of trouble gathering, they should actually rejoice.

"But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Luke 21:28 NAS

Why should they rejoice to see Jesus' return with such foreboding trouble? They can rejoice because it means not only their deliverance -- but the answer to all creation's longing expectation.

### **All Creation in Eager Expectation**

All people are anxious to be rescued from the present travail of their lives -- both personal and what they see happening around them in the world. They don't know exactly what they are expecting -- but they are somehow waiting for a "better day." So what do they really expect?

"The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed." Rom 8:19 NIV

They are waiting for not just the Son of God -- but the sons (plural) of God! Although they do not know it, they are waiting for Jesus Christ with his faithful followers -- God's sons -- who will bless them. God's sons will be like Jesus (1 John 3:1) and with God on His throne (Revelation 3:21).

Heaven is God's throne, but earth will be made His glorious footstool (Isaiah 66:1; 60:13) That will be the time for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth

as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Earth will be restored to man as a Paradise. Then there will be no more death, no more war, no more suffering in all the earth.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isaiah 25:8-9

When this Kingdom of blessings arrives, all men will realize it is what they were waiting for and expecting all along. Then all people will have no fearful forebodings, but only joy. What the angels proclaimed when they announced Jesus' birth will be a fulfilled reality. "Tidings of Great Joy to ALL people!"

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" Luke 2:10

Families will be reunited! Indeed, and remarkably, the whole world will be one family! Then the true meaning of what we can hope from not only Jesus' birth -- but his death and resurrection -- will be a reality to all the ends of the earth.

Send for your free booklet -- "I Will Come Again" -- free of charge.

## **Winter 2005**

### **Where Was God?**

An earthquake force of a million atom bombs sent tsunamis, a series of waves, surging 440 MPH across thousands of miles of water devastating a vast arc of eleven countries from Somalia, E. Africa, to Indonesia, SE Asia. Over 150,000 people were killed with vast numbers of bodies backwashed into the ocean, never to be counted. Over 5 million are destitute of food and shelter.

Satirically, skeptics speak of the tragic Southeast Asian Tsunami as God's Christmas present. Among Christians, reactions are mixed. Nominal, even some sincere, Christians question, "Where was God?" Other Christians, listening to the news flashes of the incredible mounting disasters, are overwhelmed with grief. They better understand why Jesus wept with Mary and Martha, sorrowing over the death of their brother Lazarus.

Some Predestinationists are smugly content in the "sovereign justice" of God. After all, the victims were mainly Hindus, Buddhists and Moslems, along with a few thousand vacationing Jews, who before birth were doomed to everlasting woe anyway. If any of the vacationing Christians were indeed God's elect, divine fate ushered them into their eternal joys.

This begs the question -- Why does anyone, Calvinist or not, who considers unbelievers worthy of eternal torment, grieve over this massive loss of unbelievers in death? After all, they aver, God plans to imprison the vast majority of His creatures in a calamity, to which all the horrors of all earth's tragedies by comparison are nothing but a mere prelude to the most awful indescribable torment that God with fiendish cruelty will perpetuate for eternity.

And why this punishment of eternal torture? Simply because, when told by Christians that such was God's character and purpose, these unbelievers could not love Him nor praise His "good and just" (actually, diabolical) plan. Yet, other millions have died never even hearing the name of Jesus, through whom alone is salvation. How can anyone believe that thousands in the Indian Ocean's indiscriminate killing went straight to hell, never having had an opportunity to believe in the Lord Jesus?

### **Where Was God?**

But where was God in this humongous tragedy? God was feeling the pain of this trauma. God suffers with humankind in their disasters. Jeremiah uses the imagery of God weeping or crying for Israel suffering tragedies for their disobedience (Jeremiah 9:17, 18). How can the Omnipotent One communicate His capacity to suffer with fallen man? God uses an imagery we can understand -- tears. God doesn't literally cry. Far from being an indication of weakness, God's imagery of shedding tears assures us of a profound fatherly care and concern that He is capable of feeling even during man's waywardness.

Where was God? The massive response of people around the world -- their outpouring of love and concern manifested in the monumental relief effort -- was overwhelming. All this love and sympathy in humankind is only the remnant of the original divine likeness in which Father Adam was created. This divine likeness was not wholly effaced during thousands of years of mankind's degradation in sin. God is represented in every act of kindness, whether by Christians or by others in the world. Certainly this outpouring of love did not come from blind evolutionary development. Impossible! These actions of love reflect a measure of God's character.

However, this measure of love has also been marred by fallen man. The US made a generous offer of \$350 million for the tsunami relief victims. Regardless of our views on the Iraqi war, compare the \$350 million relief effort with the \$177 million a day it costs the US to wage war in the killing fields of Iraq. And, yes -- Bush's inaugural celebration will total \$45 million.

### **Awesome Power of God**

Earthquake 6 miles below Indian Ocean floor equaled power of 1 million atom bombs.

Moved Sumatra Island 100 ft.

Moved the North Pole 1 inch.

Accelerated earth's rotation -- shortening days by a fraction of a second.

Caused planet earth to wobble on its axis.

Waves jolted away from epicenter at over 440 MPH.

Shoreline hit by waves over 90 ft. high.

Towns over 9,500 population completely wiped out.

### **Why God Permits Calamities?**

A suffering God puts the question of the permission of calamities in a practical perspective. If God shares our suffering why would He conceive a plan that would result in His own suffering? The question is no longer -- why do good people suffer or why do innocent children suffer? Rather, why has God permitted a horrific human history of not only calamities, but also of blood, tragedy, pain and mental anguish that would just tear away at His Fatherly emotions of love?

To fully understand why God permits evil -- including calamities -- we must go back, back to when God dwelt alone. God desired a family, to be a parent -- a father or life-giver -- The Heavenly Father. The most loving parents are not overly protective; rather, they are willing to permit hard knocks realizing it will cost themselves dearly in pain as they watch their children struggle to maturity.

God knew His children could only be happy individually and collectively if each one loved and obeyed His laws for the well being of all. Therefore, God created Adam and Eve in "His own image" -- free will and moral discernment. God could have programmed the ideal man and utopia would have been inevitable, but man would be no better than a robot, nor would he be happy. But free will has a built-in dilemma. God told Adam that if



he obeyed he would live. If he disobeyed he would die -- "dying thou shalt die" (Genesis 2:17). Because of lack of experience God knew Adam or anyone of us would disobey.

A parent will tell a baby not to touch the stove because it is hot. But what does a baby know about pain? Inevitably the baby will touch the stove. A wise parent will lightly and quickly touch the child's hand where the heat is not too severe. Likewise, God is giving mankind a controlled experience with sin.

Knowing man would disobey him, God planned for man's redemption before he even created the earth and man. First Peter 1:19-20 speaks of Jesus as slain before the foundation of the world. God lovingly planned the best for His future human children. This meant a plan that would deeply grieve His fatherly heart as He watched man trampled down into death by the machinations of evil while learning the consequences of sin. Also, it would cost the ultimate in fatherly suffering -- watching His only begotten son suffer the agony of being vilified and crucified. God's gift of Jesus was the greatest demonstration of fatherly suffering in history.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed, God withdrew His fellowship. Loneliness, stress, depression engulfed them. The latest scientific research confirms the Biblical account of man's "Fall" into sin. Loneliness, stress and depression render both the mind and the body prone to disease. Fear, hostility and aggressiveness became the norm. Exploitation, crime and violence were the inevitable consequences. The body's immunity to disease soon broke down. The dying process had begun. Yes, Adam's children, the human race, were born sinners (Psalm 51:5) worthy of death (Romans 6:23). This is "the sore travail God hath given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith" (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 3:10).

### **The Unfinished Earth and Calamities**

Since Adam and Eve disobeyed, mankind is learning by experience the bitter consequences of moral sin and evil that results in death. Additionally, they were cast out of their Edenic paradise into the unfinished earth, where the components of nature were still unbalanced. Here mankind has "toiled by the sweat of their brow" and are subjected to sporadic upheavals of nature. Perhaps these upheavals of nature are gradually preparing the earth to become the Edenic paradise in the 1000-year Kingdom of God.

Often parents, who remand a disobedient child to their room for the evening, have loving thoughts of their continued relationship. God has remanded His human children to their room -- the unfinished earth. In their affliction, He is afflicted and He has wonderful loving thoughts -- recorded in the Bible prophecies -- concerning their restoration to His favor. Yes, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:22, "as in Adam all die" but he continues, "so in Christ shall all be made alive." Why? Because Jesus died "a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6 and Hebrews. 2:9).

## **A Suffering Savior and Suffering Christians**

But before all are made alive in Christ's Kingdom, God has been training Christians -- a "little flock" (Luke 12:32), by contrast with the billions of mankind. Why? That they might reign with Christ in his Kingdom as priests and kings (Revelation 20:6). Like Christ, they are being made sympathetic priests through suffering (2 Timothy 2:11-12). The minds of men are scarred and twisted by tragedy. Christians experience the same disasters (1 Corinthians 10:13) but by the power of the holy Spirit are healed and made compassionate. Why?

They will be able to heal the minds of their fellowman when mankind comes forth from the grave (John 5:28-29, NASV) to their "judgment" (Greek Krisis denotes future probation) trial time in the Kingdom. Mankind will have a vivid remembrance of the bitter effects of sin and evil. Then they will learn the joyful rewards of living righteously with their fellowman and make their choice for eternity (Jeremiah 31:29-31, 34). Many scriptures reveal that the majority of mankind will share the joys of eternal life.

God's foreknowledge of His own suffering in sharing mankind's plight proves that the permission of evil is a necessary experience for man's eternal welfare. God's fatherly sorrow contains no anxiety like a human parent. With Divine serenity, He knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). All the forces of evil are overruled for man's eternal welfare (Psalm 76:10). By faith we can have this same peace of God (Philippians 4:7). The present sufferings are but a moment compared with the joys of eternity (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18).

For the answer to the question -- why does God permit calamities? Send for a free copy of the booklet: *And God Cried*.

## **March 2005**

### **Behold the Man**

"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." I Timothy 2:5, 6

God's justice is perfect. It is the very habitation of His throne (Psalm 89:14). Because of His justice, peace and harmony will prevail throughout the ages of glory to come. His plan of atonement by the ransoming work of Jesus is based upon perfect justice. Scripture after Scripture repeatedly affirm that atonement was secured by "the man Christ Jesus" and his shed blood. No Scripture proposes Christ's divinity to be the basis of atonement.

But -- of all the various Christian beliefs, there is one centuries' old belief purporting to stand beyond the reach of logic or Scriptural definition. It also maintains it should not be judged because of the decisions and reverses of historic church councils. It also, albeit unwittingly, challenges the basis of God's work of Atonement. That doctrine is the belief that, together with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are also God, and these three are mysteriously one, co-equal, co-eternal.

Although the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, John 1:1 is called upon to establish the trinity, "The Word (Logos) was with God, and the Word was God." The common translation contains a contradiction -- how can the Word both be God and with God at the same time? Aside from logic, this contradiction is not supported by the Greek text: "the Word was with God, and a god was the Word." (EMPHATIC DIAGLOTT, INTERLINEAR) [see "Testimony from an Early Church Father"]

Contrary to some popular beliefs of his day, the Apostle John was expressing the thought that Jesus had a pre-human existence as "a mighty one" ("a god"). The Everlasting God Himself had no beginning. "He is from everlasting to everlasting." But "in the beginning," -- the Word's beginning -- the Logos was with God as the "only begotten God." (Vs. 18) The common version hides the correct translation by rendering "only begotten Son." But the Greek reads "only begotten theos" ("God"). Jesus in his pre-human existence was indeed "a mighty one" who received life (was "begotten") from the Father. Tertulian writing in the second century said, "There was a time when the Son did not exist." THE EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS. P.21

### **Jesus, A Son**

John's account of the Gospel is full of allusions to Jesus' relationship to God as actually being a Son. Jesus acknowledged his Father as greater and continually sought to do His will. Jesus was not God himself, but the obedient "only begotten Son," sent of God (1 John 4:9):

"I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I" "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 14:28; 5:30)

These direct scriptural statements show us God is greater than Jesus and that Jesus was not God or His equal, but obedient to God who sent him [see "Equality with God"].

"Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou has given me, that they may be one as we are.... As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.... I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John 17:11, 22; 20:21,17)

Ponder that! We are called to this same intimate oneness shared by God and His Son. We shall be one as they are but, certainly, we are not part of a trinity too.

The Scribes and Pharisees could not appreciate Jesus' prehuman existence when he proclaimed "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:57-59). They took up stones to cast at him. Jesus was saying "I am" as the subject and verb of an ordinary sentence meaning simply that from before Abraham's time until the present he had had a continuous existence. To make "I am" a title in this sentence -- as appears in Exodus 3:14 referring to God as the "I AM" -- is not possible. In any case, the word "Jehovah" does not really mean "I am" but "He Who Becometh," as J. B. Rotherham (a recognized Evangelical authority) explains in his translation of the Bible. The popular rulers of the day could not tolerate Jesus' claim that he existed before he was sent by God to redeem men.

### **A Mystery**

Many who hold the trinity dear concede that the doctrine is out of the realm of logic. It is inexplicable how Jesus could be sent of God and be God Himself. . .how he could pray to God and be praying to Himself at the same time. . .how Jesus could say his Father is greater and yet be "co-equal," etc. The scripture, they say, that says God and Jesus are one -- in the same way as Christians are to be one -- does not simply mean that at all. This is called the "mystery" of the trinity.

But what does the New Testament say about "mysteries" and Christian understanding? Nowhere is the term "mystery" attached to the unexplainable doctrine of the trinity. Rather, what is a mystery to outsiders, the Christian knows: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matthew 13:11).

Paul asked prayers for help in preaching "that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19). What a profound privilege to be given the responsibility of understanding the mysteries of God: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25).

Our faith is reasonable and we accept scriptural language, unless symbolic, at face value. When questioned on our faith, we should be able "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

## **The History**

If the trinity is not reasonable, logical nor taught in the Bible, where did it begin? What is the source of this doctrine? After the twelve apostles died, a gradual falling away from the original faith occurred. Great numbers of Pagans entered the Church, bringing with them Pagan ideas. The trinity is one of many Pagan concepts which corrupted Christian doctrine during the early centuries of the Christian Era. [Originating in Babylon, the "trinity concept" spread throughout the ancient world and became a prominent feature of the Egyptian, Persian, Grecian, Roman, Japanese and Indian mythologies.]

During the early years of the fourth century, a heated controversy raged between the Arians and the Trinitarians, led by Athanasius. The Arians maintained that Jesus is a created being, pre-existent, though having a beginning in time, a son in the normal sense of the word and subordinate to the Father. The Athanasian party argued that the Son is fully God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father.

Fearing that religious dissension might disrupt the political unity of the Empire, the Emperor Constantine summoned a general council of bishops to settle the dispute. The Council of Nicea in 325 AD chose the teachings of Athanasius and formulated the Nicene Creed. Arius was excommunicated and banished with the other bishops who resisted the decision of the majority. The decision was reversed ten years later in 335 AD. But the basic trinitarian position was finally forged at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD. Rather than settling the question by the Scriptures and sound reasoning by spiritual men, it was settled by those who had more political power and the means to physically enforce a decision by use of arms.

Therefore, the tradition of the doctrine of the trinity is not validated by church history that would give one confidence to believe a doctrine, which itself is not reasonable or scriptural. Jesus was a mighty god, begotten, created of Jehovah, truly the Son of God.

We compassionately understand the concern some Christians have regarding the trinity. They believe that if Jesus is not God Almighty no atonement has been made. How could a centuries' old teaching of the Christian church not be correct? The increasing light of the Scriptures and freedom from superstition in our day reveal a profound beauty, logic and perfect justice in God's atoning work. We do not seek to diminish the Atoning power of Christ's sacrifice. Rather we preach the truth of the ransoming work, the power of Christ's perfect human sacrifice and its far reaching benefit to the entire Adamic race.

Fear weighs heavily as a coercive force to accept the Trinity. The Athanasian creed traditionally has been recognized as the epitome of faith regarding the trinity. We quote from the Catholic Encyclopedia: "And in this Trinity none is afore or after another; none is greater or less than another. But the whole three persons are coeternal, and coequal....

This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved." We especially reject the latter statement. It is meant to frighten the superstitious.

Biblically enlightened Christians see that the Athanasian Creed does not harmonize with God's word. Some evangelicals concede that Jesus in the flesh was subordinate to the Father because of the limitations of his flesh; but believe the risen Lord is equal with the Father.

"I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ [the risen Christ] is God.... And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son [the risen Son] also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." 1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:28 The Scriptural testimony is that even the risen Christ is subordinate to the Father. The concept of "co-equality" is without Scriptural foundation; it is a doctrine of men.

### **Behold, The Man**

Why make such an issue over the trinity? This doctrine limits God's plan of salvation. It makes atonement a nebulous and arbitrary philosophy. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

It was a man who sinned. It was a man who was sentenced to die for his disobedience. What would be the just price to ransom that man from the grave? Sacrificing God Almighty? No! An angel from heaven? Of course not. The equivalent price would be a man. In this case, "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" as a substitute for father Adam and the race of men yet in his loins.

As the entire race was in Adam when he was condemned, and lost life through him, so when Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all" his death involved the possibility of a yet unborn race in his loins. A full satisfaction, or corresponding price, for father Adam and all men was thus put into the hands of Justice -- to be applied "in due time," and he who thus bought all has full authority to restore all who come unto God by him.

"As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Romans 5:18,19)

The proposition is a plain one: As many as have shared death on account of Adam's sin will have life-privileges offered to them by our Lord Jesus, who died for them and sacrificially became Adam's substitute before the broken law, and thus "gave himself a ransom [Greek "antilutron" a price instead of] for all." He died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3:18)

We must not forget, however, that all of God's provisions for our race recognize the human will as a factor in securing the abundantly provided divine favors. Some overlook this feature in examining the text just quoted -- Romans 5:18,19 -- and preach that eternal salvation is universal. The Apostle's statement, however, is that, as the sentence of condemnation extended to all the seed of Adam, even so, through the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Father's plan, by the sacrifice of himself on our behalf, a free gift is extended to all. That gift of forgiveness, if accepted, will constitute a justification or basis for life everlasting. And "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be [not were] made righteous." If the ransom alone, without our acceptance of it, made us righteous, then it would have read, by the obedience of one many were made righteous.

Atonement is universal, eternal salvation is not -- though it will be offered to ALL. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17

But though the ransom-price has been given by the Redeemer, only a few during the Gospel age have been made righteous -- justified -- "through faith in his blood." But since Christ is the propitiation (satisfaction) for the sins of the whole world, all men may on this account be absolved and released from the penalty of Adam's sin by him -- under the New Covenant blessings in God's incoming kingdom on earth.

There is no unrighteousness with God; hence "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) As he would have been unjust to have allowed man to escape the pronounced penalty before satisfaction was rendered, so also he here gives us to understand that it would be unjust were he to forbid man restitution, since by his own arrangement our penalty has been paid for us.

The same unswerving justice that once condemned man to death now stands pledged for the release of all who, confessing their sins, apply for life through Christ.

We leave you with these lovely words of life....

"It is in Him, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance -- the forgiveness of our offences -- so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it -- the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in Heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him." Ephesians 1:7, Weymouth

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one

mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." I Timothy 2:3-6

Send for a free copy of the booklet: "The Lord our God Is One"



**April 2005**  
**Church & State: At the Crossroads**  
**The Bride Who Will Not Wait for Christ to Return**

"I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State." Thomas Jefferson, 1802

Are Christians supposed to be involved in politics? After all, don't Christians have a better idea for what is good for people in society? Shouldn't Biblical laws be used as rules for governing our world?

If the politically minded Christian Right -- who helped elect our President -- had its way, there would be laws against "gay rights," "abortion rights," etc. Those "rights" certainly, of course, are not Biblical. Interesting, recently fifteen US Senators from both parties consulted with Evangelist Rick Warren whose popular book sold 20 million copies over the past two years. The Senators wanted to hear his plan for tackling poverty and disease with his network of perhaps more than 40,000 churches.

**Christians in Politics and Government**

Let us be clear, Christians who volunteer and devote their time and energy for improving -- or salvaging -- society are to be commended. But are they doing God's will for them as Christians -- or just being noble and good citizens of this world? Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world..." (John 18:36). This "present evil world" (Galatians 1:4) is temporarily being managed by the "god of this world" -- Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4). The prophecies of Book of Revelation state that when Christ would return at the end of the Age, the seventh Trumpet would sound -- then the kingdom of this world would become Christ's. "And the seventh angel sounded...The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15). Not before.

True. Meanwhile, Apostle Paul says the Christian is to be subject to existing government authority -- but that does not mean the Christian should get involved in government.

"Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves...for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid...for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil." Romans 13:1-3 NAS

The thought behind government rule as an "avenger" does not mean terrorizing evildoers as some might suggest. "Avenger" means a government is for "carrying justice out"

(Strong's CONCORDANCE #1558). In any case, this text teaches not control of government by Christians -- but obedience to "Caesar" (by such appropriate things as taxes, Matthew 22:21).

Although historically, England, France, Germany and Russia have merged or linked church and state, America has in its Constitution, according to Thomas Jefferson, a "wall of separation." England's queen is still the head of the Church, and changes in church policies must be approved by the House of Lords. After the fall of Communism, the Russian Orthodox Church has been given special status. The German government today collects withholding taxes from members on behalf of national churches -- Protestant or Catholic.

### **Waiting for Jesus' Return**

Merging church and state for mutual benefit is nothing new in Church history through the centuries. However, with what instructions did Jesus leave his Church for when he would be gone? Did he say to set up a Kingdom for him? By parable Jesus told his followers that when he would leave, he would return again with a Kingdom. "He said: A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return" (Luke 19:12 NIV). Those who were faithful with their stewardship while he was gone were then given authority over "cities" when he returned (Luke 19:17,19). In a similar parable about stewardship over faithfulness with "talents," Jesus taught that only when he would return he would reward his faithful followers with authority to "rule over many things" (Matthew 25:13-23). When he said, "Occupy till I come," he meant, Do business with this ["money," NAS, NIV]. Nothing in the parable teaches Christ's disciples try to rule the world and set up a Kingdom before Jesus would return.

When Jesus commissioned his disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations," (Matthew 28:19 NAS) -- did he expect Christians to convert the world and set up his Kingdom before he would return? No, Jesus knew that Satan as the "god of this world" had "blinded" (2 Corinthians 4:4) most people. He only expected to find a "little flock" (Luke 12:32) of faithful Christians. At his return, he would take care of Satan -- and then set up his Kingdom.

### **Marrying Kings of Earth**

Jesus expected his Bride to wait for his return (Revelation 22:20), but warned her to expect persecution. As Apostle Paul said, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him..." (2 Timothy 2:12). But many Christians became impatient waiting for their Heavenly Bridegroom to return. After heavy persecutions in the early Fourth Century, providence seemed to open a door of relief for the Christian church. Constantine proclaimed the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313) and essentially courted Christ's Bride. The Roman government needed the glue of the Christian religion to keep the empire together. So after three centuries of waiting for Christ many of its leaders, eager for power, were willing to accept the proposal. So the Christian Church "married" the Roman Empire! Church leaders concluded this was the way to set up Christ's Kingdom -- Christendom.

But in scriptural language, the church violated its vow to Christ and became a harlot -- a "mother of harlots" (Revelation 17:5). Besides the Roman church becoming a harlot, her Protestant daughters also married the kings of earth. Thus the Church has reigned without Jesus! The Christian Church set up its own Millennial Kingdom.

But this Roman "kingdom" did not have such a good record for ruling and blessing the world. For one thing, the capital of Christ's Kingdom on earth is not supposed to be Rome -- it will be Jerusalem. All nations are supposed to come up to Jerusalem to learn about the God of Jacob -- and achieve peace as they convert their military resources to agricultural programs:

"Now it will come about that in the last days, The mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains... And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war." (Isaiah 2:2-4 NAS)

This prophecy is awaiting its fulfillment....And today only about one third of the world's population even claims to be Christian. But what about the rest and the billions who died and never heard of or accepted the only Name under heaven "whereby we may be saved" (Acts 4:12)? Certainly God's plan for "Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" has not failed! So when does His Kingdom on earth come?

### **Pre-Millennialists**

Today we have very sincere Evangelicals who are expecting Jesus Christ's imminent return to set up his Kingdom. They are called pre-Millennialists. However, Evangelicals feel responsible to convert as many as possible to Christ. (By contrast post-Millennialists claim to have a more "victorious" outlook since they expect to establish Christian government and world conversion before Christ's return.)

Pre-Millennialists expect to see Jews back in Israel, a Third Temple built, the appearance of Anti-Christ and the conclusion of the Age. Pre-Millennialists expect Christ to return in the flesh. But Scripture does not support this since Jesus sacrificed his flesh! "This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51

Some insist that everyone shall literally "see the Son of Man coming with clouds" (Revelation 1:7). Yes, they will see in the sense of understanding and comprehending that Jesus had returned. But they will not ever literally be able to see Jesus. Why? Because he is a divine spirit being. "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more..."(John 14:19)

Actually, Jesus did give as one of the signs of the end of the Age as the "fig tree" blossoming (Matthew 24:32). And Israel, in fact, is represented by a fig tree. But, according to many Evangelicals, only tens of thousands of Jews are to be saved and the rest lost. If this were so, would not Apostle Paul be grossly exaggerating when he said "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26)? Therefore, we would understand these Evangelical Christians might be expecting the wrong thing -- although at the right time!

### **Dominionist Post-Millennialists**

During the last half century, another Christian movement has been quietly, steadily and stealthily gaining presence and momentum. Some of the popular televangelists have been promoting a "dominionist" view of Christian responsibility. Basically they are taking God's commission to Adam to have dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28) -- as something Christians should be doing now in this world. They are not advocating church-state per se, but promoting Christian government, that is, Christians controlling government at every level.

Specifically, Dominionists want to institute "Theonomy" taking the Law of Moses (including its code of punishments) and try to integrate it into American law and to reconstruct its institutions and society. Hence, the term "Christian Reconstructionists."

But Apostle Paul clearly said a Christian who believes Jesus Christ died on the cross for us is not obligated to the Mosaic Law Covenant! "...having canceled the written code, with its regulation [not just ceremonial laws], that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he [Jesus] took it away, nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14-15 NIV). Nevertheless, if even one feature of the Law is broken, one is guilty of all (James 2:10). But Dominionists believe that "Biblical Law" should be the basis of the American legal system -- and eventually for the rest of the world. The Christian Reconstructionist goal then is to subdue all enemies worldwide -- at which point Jesus will return.

This neo post-Millennialist view is really nothing new. It is just a rework of the Papal Kingdom -- setting up Christ's kingdom with the governments of earth -- without Christ. But instead of Rome, America. Or instead of Calvin's Geneva or Puritan New England, the Dominionists of Washington, DC

What will that mean? It will mean the danger of abusing perfect Biblical laws when imposed by very imperfect men.

### **The Churches and the U.S. Constitution**

Some have observed as significant the concept of Marvin Olasky's "compassionate conservatism" and the President's "Faith-Based Initiative" in America. The premise puts government in a position of funding various churches to provide social programs for the neediest citizens. Although still constitutionally controversial, the President affirmed his position in the State of the Union address this year: "Our government will continue to

support faith-based and community groups that bring hope to harsh places." At the end of 2004 (December 16), a federal judge dismissed the most sweeping portions of a lawsuit that challenged the President's faith-based initiative as unconstitutional. Even Senator Hillary Clinton said recently, "There is no contradiction between support for faith-based initiatives and upholding our constitutional principles." Nevertheless, there appears to be consistent motion in the direction of cooperation for mutual benefit between U.S. government and religious institutions.

On June 27, 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school vouchers for religious schools are constitutional. The Court somehow decided that even though 96 percent of the students receiving vouchers in Cleveland are enrolled in religious schools, the program doesn't constitute state sponsorship of religion because parents have "a range of secular and religious schools to choose from"

Congress passed the first federally funded school voucher program on January 22, 2004, allocating \$14 million to establish a program for low-income students in the District of Columbia. This will likely renew the national debate over school choice issues, including controversy about public money going to religiously affiliated schools.

Whether or not Christian schools will continue to be funded by the federal government, Christian schools and a strong home school movement seem to be critical to the Dominionists. One outspoken proponent, Gary North, said, "Until the vast majority of Christians pull their children out of the public schools, there will be no possibility of creating a theocratic republic." As many as 85 percent of parents who opt for home schooling are believed to do so based on their "religious convictions." Furthermore, it has been asserted by Joseph Morecraft, a Christian educator, that "children in the Christian schools of America are the Army that is going to take the future."

### **The Churches and the European Union**

Certainly Europe in the past was church-state through the centuries. Today Western Europe seems to be waning as far as enthusiasm for Christianity. Nevertheless, there are two ecumenical bodies, CEC (Conference of European Churches) and COMECE (Commission of the Bishops Conferences of the European Community), which both strongly advocate political and religious integration in the EU. They say openly that they want to be the link between the Commission and the people.

In any case, Eastern Europe -- having escaped from the oppression of Communism -- seems to be renewing its religious zeal. There has been a rapprochement between the Orthodox Churches and countries of Eastern Europe. Churches have been springing up everywhere. Church leaders are requiring religious instruction within the public schools.

### **The Object of Christ's Return**

The enormous growth rate of Islam in the world today bodes poorly for a post-Millennial view. At this rate it does not appear possible that the world can be won for Christ prior to

his coming. Pre-Millennialists seem more realistic. Unfortunately, their concept that all enemies of Christianity will be lost at Christ's return contradicts the whole object of Christ's return. The purpose of Christ's Kingdom -- when his faithful Bride rules with him -- will be to offer the first real opportunity for the unsaved world to choose life. "And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (Revelation 22:17).

Then with Satan bound during the Millennium, Moslems, Hindus, atheists, even Christians in name only, in fact, all the rest of the world will be truly free to drink the water of life and live forever. Yes, Christ's Kingdom will be an "iron rod" (Revelation 2:27), but it will be the rod of the Great Shepherd who will be reclaiming the lost "sheep" (Luke 15:4) with his Church at his side on the throne of God (Revelation 3:21).

What does the Bible say about Church-State union in prophecy? Send for free booklet: "Church Union and the Anti-Christ."

## **May 2005**

### **The Latest Scientific Discovery -- God**

In the 20th century many traveled the road of science to atheism. Now many of these same atheists are traveling the road of science and are becoming theists -- believers in God. The latest scientific discovery is God.

The Public Broadcasting System in billing their 2001 seven-part television series, Evolution, asserted "all scientific evidence supports evolution" as does "virtually every reputable scientist in the world." That pompous statement lit a fuse that exploded in an indignant reaction that appeared as a two-page ad in a noted national magazine.

The ad was signed by 100 scientists -- biologists, chemists, zoologists, physicists, anthropologists, molecular and cell biologists, bio-engineers, organic chemists, geologists, astrophysicists, and other scientists. Their doctorates came from such prestigious universities as Cambridge, Stanford, Cornell, Yale, Rutgers, Chicago, Princeton, Purdue, Duke, Michigan State, Syracuse, Temple, and Berkeley. They included renown professors and researchers on the cutting edge of science.

These scientists wanted the world to know one thing -- that evolution, the purported emperor of science, had no clothes.

Defiantly they asserted, "We are skeptical of the claim of the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexities of life." These were not fundamentalists or rabid religious fanatics -- they were respected world-class scientists.

### **Background**

In their quest for evolutionary life on other planets, agnostic and atheistic scientists in the 1960s began to document parameters of tolerance of properties and forces in the universe within which life could exist. What a shocking disappointment they experienced. By 1990 they discovered 100 parameters for life that had to be met in various parts of the universe in order for life to happen on Earth. The tolerances of each parameter were so exacting that they could not have happened by chance.

The yeast of doubt began to ferment in the minds of crystallized atheistic evolutionists. In 1993 scientists and philosophers from major academic centers of the world gathered incognito in the relatively obscure village of Pajaro Dunes, California. There they shared their mutual doubts about evolution. In the discussions they pursued, a concept began to form -- a concept that would challenge the intellectual world -- Intelligent Design. Yes, the universe and life on Earth was the design or plan of an intelligent creator. Consequently, the majority of astrophysicists and cosmologists now agree on over 190 parameters for life that have to exist in the universe before life can occur on Earth.

## **The Ripple Effect**

Christianity Today (March 2005), the noted periodical of evangelical scholars, contained an article entitled "The Twilight of Atheism." The main point of the article was that atheism is no longer a philosophical influence in our society. [See "Atheism and Eternal Torment"]

The April 2005 issue of Christianity Today featured an article "Thinking Straighter: Why the World's Most Famous Atheist Believes in God." Anthony Flew, one of the world's leading philosophers, has changed his mind about God. He attributes the Intelligent Design concept he encountered in the 1990s as influential. Yes, the latest discovery of science is God.

In the Christian culture of a century ago that would have raised no problem. But in the multi-religious culture of today, some of our best neighbors are Indian, Chinese, Arab, etc. Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic places of worship dot the landscape. Today the question is which god or gods provided the intelligent design for our universe and life on planet Earth.

## **The God of Science**

Science is a systematic knowledge of the physical or material universe gained by observable facts. The sacred writings of all world religions are a system of faith. Yet each does make statements within the province of science that provide a uniquely valid test to prove their authenticity. If their scientific observations are, in reality, superstitions reflective of the culture in which they were written, these so-called sacred books are disqualified as the inspired Scripture of God.

If, indeed, the scientific observations of any of these purported Holy Scripture agree with the facts of science today, then that Bible is the inspired Word of a true and living God. Why? The Creator and God of the universe is the God of science -- the author of the scientific laws that govern His universe. Only the God of science could cause scientific facts to be recorded in a book -- the Bible -- hundreds or thousands of years before scientists discovered them.

Only the Judeo-Christian Bible contains scientific facts that anticipated scientific discovery by hundreds and in some cases several thousand years. The following are examples of these remarkable scientific observations.

## **What Holds the Earth Up?**

Three thousand years ago Hindu Scripture recorded the Earth was resting on the backs of several huge elephants. The elephants were resting on the back of a very large turtle that was swimming in a sea. Greek mythology claims that the god Atlas was holding the Earth on his shoulders. But our Bible says in Job 26:7 -- "[God] hangeth the earth upon nothing." What a remarkable statement of fact. The earth is suspended in space. Nothing



is holding it up. Job wrote about the same time the Hindu Scripture was written. How did Job know this scientific fact? Only God could have revealed this to Job. The Old Testament prophets wrote as they were moved by the holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). The Judeo-Christian Bible is the inspired Word of God.

### **Sun, Moon and Stars -- Who? What?**

Ancient people were afraid of the sun, moon and stars. They thought they were alive -- that they were gods. But over 5,000 years ago, the Judeo-Christian Bible in the first chapter of Genesis pointed out that the sun, moon and stars were created by God. Remember, our God states that He is the one and only God. This proves the sun, moon and stars that He created are not gods.

Eclipses are an example of what people feared. An eclipse happens when the sun's light is blocked by the earth or moon. The moon is bright because it reflects the sun's light. But when the earth blocks that light, the moon looks as if it is disappearing. Also, when the moon comes between the Earth and the sun, it looks as if the sun is disappearing.

This was frightening to people long ago. Some thought eclipses happened when the moon was mad at the Earth and turned its face away. The Chinese believed that an eclipse was caused by a demon or some huge animal that ate the sun and then would give them up again. God told Jeremiah (10:2 KJV): "Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them." God went on to reassure Jeremiah that the universe is under His control.

Later scientists learned that heavenly bodies were not alive and that man need not fear them. Thousands of years before scientists discovered that the planetary bodies were inanimate, the Judeo-Christian Bible contained this scientific fact.

### **The Bottom of the Ocean**

Until modern times people thought the ocean floor was sandy like the desert and saucer shaped -- deepest in the middle. This was even true of the pre-1900 geologists. But in the 1900s oceanographers found that the sea had many deep valleys or canyons. The deepest canyons are called trenches. The Marianas Trench in the Pacific is so deep that if Mt. Everest (29,000 feet high) were dropped into it, the peak would still be a mile below the water's surface. There are also underwater mountains. The Atlantic Ocean contains an undersea range of mountains 10,000 miles long.

In addition, 3,000 years ago the Judeo-Christian Bible spoke of the valleys and mountains of the sea. In Psalm 18:15 (NIV) David wrote of God being the creator of "the valleys of the sea." God asked Job (38:16, NIV): "Have you...walked in the recesses [valleys] of the deep [sea]?" The prophet Jonah was thrown off a ship and spoke of falling to the "bottoms of the mountains" in the sea (Jonah 2:6).

The Judeo-Christian Bible spoke of the valleys and mountains of the sea thousands of years before scientists discovered them.

### **Which Bible Is Inspired By a Living God?**

The Judeo-Christian Scripture made scientific observations that have been confirmed centuries later by modern science, while the sacred scripture of other world religions merely reflected the scientific superstitions of their culture. How could the Judeo-Christian Scripture anticipate scientific discovery by 3,000 years? It was written by men inspired by the Creator and God of the Universe -- the God of science. Only the Judeo-Christian Bible is the Divine Revelation provided by our infinite Creator to direct us on the path to eternity. Therefore, the God of our Christian Bible is the Intelligent Designer Who created the universe and life on planet Earth. The time is soon coming when Satan's deception of these false gods will be revealed. Then all the families of the earth will know and worship the true God in His 1000-year Kingdom.

Please send me a free copy of the booklet, "Do We All Worship the Same God?"

## **September/October 2005**

### **The End of Terror**

"WASHINGTON -- The nation is woefully unprepared to respond to a bioterrorism attack despite a \$20 billion government investment in bioterrorism preparedness since 2001, according to top government and public health officials and members of Congress." USA TODAY August 1, 2005

Not only is escalating terrorism becoming a worldwide anxiety -- but people themselves are feeling terrified just thinking about what is coming. "Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world..." (Luke 21:26). Random -- yet seemingly well calculated -- terrorist attacks appear to be giving the "weak" power over the "strong." Uncertainty is the call of the hour!

Innocent citizens try to be patient when they are searched at airports...or found to be on "Watch Lists" ...or find that the tunnel they were supposed to drive through will be "closed for security." The recent permanent renewal of the US antiterrorism law -- the Patriot Act -- gives government officials authority to investigate suspected terrorists. A 2005 renewed Patriot Act allows the government's use of secret search and surveillance powers. But certain civil liberties organizations have challenged the use of this law as possibly being abusive. There are no easy solutions!

Although a "war on terrorism" was declared after 9/11, some have pushed to change the mission name to the "global struggle against violent extremism." Billions have been "invested" to "stop the terror." In any case, terrorism has not stopped -- but on the contrary, escalated.

### **What is Terrorism?**

Terrorism is motivated by sociological or religious reasons -- as opposed to criminal violence used to get money. Terrorism is aimed at civilians and is designed to inspire fear -- as opposed to guerrilla warfare against military targets. Terrorism might be defined as being carried out by "subnational" groups -- not by the army of a country. Terrorism is designed to influence a wider audience beyond the victims of the violence itself. In a sense, terrorism is like theatre. Some have argued, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." In principle, then, terrorism might be defined as, "The weak say[ing], I am strong" (Joel 3:10).

### **Terrorism's Hottest Target**

Proportionate to its population, Israel has been the victim of more than the equivalent of fourteen 9/11's. Since the beginning of the Oslo "Peace Process" in 1993, over 1,200 Israelis have died at the hand of Arab Palestinian terrorism and there have been almost 8,000 casualties. After Oslo, a new form of terrorism became increasingly common: bus bombings. These attacks were especially vicious, the fatality rate much higher with the

explosion confined to a small enclosed space. Suicide bombing and other violence spread rapidly to all areas where civilians congregate: dance halls, shopping malls, birthday parties, holiday celebrations, even children's bedrooms. No one was safe.

The great irony here is that it is not Israeli "occupation" as continually claimed that provokes escalations of Palestinian terrorism. It is rather when Israel takes steps to diminish the Israeli presence in the territories that terrorism is increased! Palestinian terrorism has only increased since Oslo. And the greatest escalation of terrorism in history came after the historic peace offer of Camp David 2000, when Israel offered a plan that would have ceded to the Palestinians virtually the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip plus shared control over Jerusalem. The Palestinian response to this peace offer was a pre-planned Second Intifada, which grew so bloody, to the point of suicide bombing attacks almost every day. Israel had to take drastic measures -- Operation Defensive Shield -- and reenter the Palestinian cities that had been granted autonomy under Oslo. So far this Palestinian answer to the peace process has been a tragedy for Israel. Withdrawal such as in Gaza has not been -- and likely will not be -- the answer to terrorism.

### **When Did Terrorism Begin?**

Although fear and terror have evidently always been a part of human history, "terror" or "terrorism" was probably first coined with the "Reign of Terror" in France (1793-1794).

But the advent of the 20th Century brought with it Anarchists whose goal ironically was to bring about a peace loving society through the use of terrorism. With the arrival of the 21st Century, international terrorist forces have struck out mainly against "infidel" cultures. Truly, terrorism is one of the signs of the "end of the world [age]" (Matthew 24:3) "For then there will be great distress [tribulation], unequaled from the beginning of the world until now -- and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:21, 22 NIV).

The "Father of Modern Terrorism" launched his career in 1970 with the bombing of a Swiss Air Flight in route to Tel Aviv, murdering 47 passengers and crew. Just eight months later in September, four planes bound from Europe to the United States were hijacked. Three of the planes were taken to Jordan to be part of a coup by Arafat. By the time Jordan's King Hussein drove Arafat's band out of his country, over 2,000 people had been killed. In 1972, in the Munich Summer Olympic Games, nine Israeli athletes were taken hostage and killed. Although three of the eight terrorists were captured alive, the German authorities capitulated to renewed Arab Palestinian terror by releasing the surviving terrorists when a Lufthansa jet was hijacked the following month.

### **Terrorism Today**

The 9/11 attacks on the United States raised the weapon of terrorism to new heights and dimensions of distress. Besides the emotional devastation still felt today, those terrorist attacks caused substantial losses for the insurance industry with current estimates topping

\$32 billion in liability. As a result, insurance companies have begun excluding terrorism coverage from their policies. Because businesses have inadequate financial protection, the nation is left vulnerable to economic disruption if there is another major terrorist attack.

In March 2004 Islamic terrorists bombed the transit of Madrid, Spain. In July 2005 a series of four bomb attacks struck London's transport system during the height of rush hour. While key members have been captured or killed, al Qaeda and affiliated terrorist groups claim they will continue to launch attacks. These terrorists are now the focus of the US-led global war on terror.

### **Solutions to Terrorism**

"Think tanks," such as the Rand Corporation, have been commissioned to figure out a protocol for the protection of Americans in the certainty of future terrorist attacks. Communicating with the Department of Homeland Security, these commissions calculate the real challenges. The Washington Post reported on August 8, 2005, "In 2000, the Pentagon's Defense Science Board concluded that to respond successfully to a biological terrorism attack, the United States would need 57 specific drugs, diagnostic tools, and vaccines. At the time, only one drug was available. Five years later, officials say, that number has increased to two."

The Patriot Act has been gradually transformed from a temporary antiterrorism measure to a permanent one. This legislation allows "sneak and peek" warrants for search of businesses and homes. These provisions allow searches that "leave no trace and are conducted without immediate notification of the subject" (Seattle Times, August 1, '05). But some concerned civil rights groups want to scale back some of powers of the Patriot Act.

### **Terrorism and the Christian**

"Who abides under the shadow of the Almighty? Who needs not fear the terror by night?" (Psalm 91:1) However, the Christian -- full of faith -- does not fear as his neighbor might for what will be happening next. Why? The Christian's peace is not based on "homeland security," but in the security of God's will for him. Does the Christian feel that God will always miraculously protect him from physical harm? Not necessarily. But Christians know that Almighty God is in control of their lives and is not only all-loving, but all-wise and all-powerful.

Is this a selfish, self-centered love for themselves and their families? Not at all. Christians who know God's plan for mankind realize that although a great trouble is prophesied at the end of the Age -- beyond it lies God's peaceable Kingdom on earth. Why else would we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"? That prayer is soon to be answered!

It's a comfort for Christians to know Jesus told his followers that at the end of the Age when he would come, the nations would be in "perplexity" (Luke 21:25) when "Men will faint from terror..." (vs. 26) That word "perplexity" comes from a Greek word meaning, "no way out" (Strong's #640 fr. 639). In other words, man has no solutions!

### **Waiting for the End of Terrorism**

When the Christians see these fearful things happening in the world, they are to rejoice because their deliverance is coming soon. "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28). But when the whole Christian church is completed, it will signal the time the whole world is waiting for... Apostle Paul said so. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now... The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed" (Rom 8:19, 22).

Peoples and nations are scrambling for solutions to make "peace on earth" -- they are waiting, hoping for something better. Actually, they do not know they are waiting for Jesus with the "sons of God" to bless them. This is God's plan. But when that time comes, they will say, "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isaiah 25:9).

### **Searching Hearts instead of Suitcases**

Gradually God's Kingdom will be set up in power and accepted by the peoples of earth. Instead of searching suitcases for hidden weapons that harm -- hearts will be searched. Instead of laws just written on paper, they will be written in the peoples' hearts: "After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

Jesus spoke of the time when all hidden things would be uncovered and exposed. "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Luke 12:2-3). There will be no hidden conspiracies to harm anybody. No terrorism!

Now the Christian is to let his "light so shine before men" (Matthew 5:16) -- because we live in a dark world that does not know God (Isaiah 60:2). But in God's Kingdom, none will hurt anybody else because the knowledge of the LORD will cover the earth. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). In the dawning of the new day of God's Kingdom, the Church of Christ will not just shine like little lights on earth -- but as the rising sun! "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43).

## **Rule of Iron Ends Terrorism**

In an unstable society, strict laws and strong authority must certainly prevail. When Jesus with his "Bride" the Church rule the earth, will their power be abusive or inadequate? "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation 2:26-27). It will not be an abusive rule. The word for "rule" actually means "to tend as a shepherd" (Strong's Concordance #4165). Although justice will be strict, it will be administered by a Shepherd caring for his flock. There will be no propaganda. No spin. There will be no secret conspiracies or plots to hurt anyone. "And I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the level; Then hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, And the waters shall overflow the secret place" (Isaiah 28:17 NAS).

Furthermore, although Israel seems to be the center of trouble and terrorism in the world today -- in God's Kingdom Israel will be the Capital and center for world peace. Yes, Jerusalem shall be an "international city" (but not the way the world might be planning for it now). "Thus saith the LORD of hosts: Behold I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people... I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heath, O house of Judah, and house of Israel, so will I save you and you shall be a blessing...And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another say, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts...Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem...In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:7-23).

Many say, "Peace," but there is no peace. What is the reality? Only God's Kingdom will eradicate terror and bring real peace.

Want to know more? Send for the free booklet about God's Kingdom.

## **November 2005**

### **Hurricane Tragedies**

*The Katrina and Rita Calamities Challenge Our Thinking  
Slighting Israel at the expense of Katrina's victims.*

Despite Katrina's massive devastation, conniving diplomacy was the order of the day. US Officials acknowledged that Israel was one of the first countries to offer aid. But they said the administration, which has highlighted offers of aid from Islamic governments as well as American Arab and Muslim groups, asked Israel to postpone sending aid until a later stage.

The United States tried to avoid any mention of Israeli participation in the international aid. "At one point, the administration signaled that it would accept Israeli help, but preferred that it be as part of a mission organized by the American Jewish community," an official said. (WORLD TRIBUNE.COM)

#### **Glimmers of God's Image remains.**

Calamities reveal the best and worst in man -- the good and the evil. A six-year old girl told how a rescuer, hanging from a helicopter line, chopped through roof and whisked her away. Will never see her hero again? There were thousands of heroes, many without a personal relationship with Christ. This raises the question. Where will these sacrificing, concerned, unbelieving heroes spend eternity?

#### **Adamic sin.**

Then there was evil. The heavens declare the glory of God, but the streets reveal the wickedness of man. There was violence, theft, rape and murder -- even some police looting. Calamities bring out the worst in man. The main problem in the world is not Mother Nature, but human nature. Remove law enforcement, and are real self is revealed. We are sinful to the core.

All were born with a "me-first mentality." You don't have to teach your children to argue. They don't have to be trained to demand their way. You don't have to show them how to stomp their feet and pout, it is their nature... indeed the "me-first mentality" is the natural disposition of all of us. This is why Jesus "tasted death for every man." We all need a savior to save us from our sins.

#### **Not "where was God?" But "what is wrong with man?"**

Many ask, where was God? Ridiculous! There are certain patterns of God's nature we must learn or suffer the consequences. We would never put our hand in the cage of a lion, but we continually put thousands of lives in the known path of hurricanes.



The same is true of earthquakes. Californians dwell over a huge fault area hoping an earthquake won't happen in their lifetime. When that "BIG ONE" does strike, you will hear the cry, "Where is God?" But it will be man's gamble and loss, not God's.

### **'Katrina' first struck in 1719.**

In 1719, a year after Jean-Baptiste le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, established New Orleans as the capital of the fledgling French colony of Louisiana, a hurricane wiped out the handful of palmetto huts that comprised the city. An engineer named Le Blond de la Tour begged Bienville to move New Orleans to another spot -- one that was not, say, five inches below sea level between a powerful and unruly river and a 40-mile-wide lake; but Bienville refused. Two years later, after they'd managed to build four whole blocks, another hurricane came and wiped them out.

### **'Rita' first struck in 1900.**

On September 8, 1900, a killer hurricane struck the Texas coastal city of Galveston. This hurricane would become the greatest natural disaster, by number of deaths, in United States history: 8,000 by accepted figures, perhaps as many as 12,000. Of that total, 6,000 perished in Galveston alone. The tragedy killed more Americans than any other natural disaster, indeed, more than the legendary Johnstown Flood, the San Francisco Earthquake, the 1938 New England Hurricane and the Great Chicago Fire combined.

The destructive paths of the many hurricanes that followed rendered the whole Gulf Coast vulnerable. Yet, industrial greed chose to dot the Gulf Coast from New Orleans to Galveston with 25% of the US oil refineries. True, it was convenient and economical, nevertheless, foolhardy. Not to mention damage to the oil rigs in the Gulf, 22% of the refineries were crippled. Gasoline prices rocketed. Home heating fuel this winter is expected to be astronomical. Of course, there is price gouging and many oil tycoons, including Bible-believing Christians, are padding their pockets.

### **The US refuses to learn its lessons.**

Since Bush's first inauguration in 2002, the US has opposed the efforts of world leaders to restrict air pollution in order to combat global warming. This year global warming increased the temperature of the Gulf waters three degrees. This three-degree rise was enough to upgrade a Category 2 hurricane to the killer power of a Category 4. Global warming created the unprecedented devastating force of Katrina and Rita.

It will take years of research to find economical alternative sources of energy to counter the worldwide oil shortage accentuated by Katrina and Rita. Remember the oil crunch in 1973 with the mile-long lines of cars at every gas station? President Carter had Congress enact a program to research feasible alternative sources of energy. Whatever the reasons, when Reagan became president, he terminated this research project. How unfortunate! If Carter's research project had continued unimpeded, the worldwide energy crisis of today could have been averted. (See box.)

## **Hurricane Patterns Ignored**

In Florida, more than 13 million people live in coastal counties, up from 200,000 a century ago. As a result, all four of last year's Florida hurricanes made the list of America's 10 most damaging storms ever.

For much of the 20th century, the coastal areas were dominated by the poor and working class. Wealthy and middle-class Americans did not start moving there until the long lull after Hurricane Camille in 1969, when there was a demographic explosion.

In 1960, there were 180 people per square mile in the coastal United States; by 1994, there were 275 per square mile. A U.S.A. Today study in 2000 found 1,000 year-round settlers arriving in coastal counties each day. "Insurance companies were underwriting coastal development with reckless abandon." "Developers overbuilt to their hearts' content."

Mississippi's coastal counties grow three times as fast as any other county in the state, a pattern found in many coastal states, and fighting this trend is a lonely business.

## **Why God Permits Calamities?**

To fully understand why God permits evil -- including calamities -- we must go back, back to when God dwelt alone. God desired a family, to be a parent -- a father or life-giver -- The Heavenly Father. The most loving parents are not overly protective; rather, they are willing to permit hard knocks, realizing it will cost them dearly in pain as they watch their children struggle to maturity.

God knew His children could only be happy individually and collectively if each one loved and obeyed His laws for the well being of all. Therefore, God created Adam and Eve in "His own image" -- having free will and moral discernment. God could have programmed the ideal man and utopia would have been inevitable, but man would be no better than a robot, nor would he be happy. But free will has a built-in dilemma. God told Adam that if he obeyed he would live. If he disobeyed he would die -- "dying thou shalt die" (Genesis 2:17). Because of lack of experience, God knew Adam, or anyone of us, would disobey.

A parent will tell a baby not to touch the stove because it is hot. But what does a baby know about pain? Inevitably, the baby will touch the stove. A wise parent will lightly and quickly touch the child's hand where the heat is not too severe. Likewise, God is giving mankind a controlled experience with sin.

Knowing man would disobey Him, God planned for man's redemption before He even created the earth and man. First Peter 1:19-20 speaks of Jesus as "slain before the foundation of the world." God lovingly planned the best for His future human children. This meant a plan that would deeply grieve His fatherly heart as He watched man

trampled down into death by the machinations of evil while learning the consequences of sin. Also, it would cost the ultimate in fatherly suffering -- watching His "only begotten son" suffer the agony of being vilified and crucified. God's gift of Jesus was the greatest demonstration of fatherly suffering in history.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed, God withdrew His fellowship. Loneliness, stress and depression engulfed them. The latest scientific research confirms the Biblical account of man's "Fall" into sin. Loneliness, stress and depression render both the mind and the body prone to disease. Fear, hostility and aggressiveness became the norm. Exploitation, crime and violence were the inevitable consequences. The body's immunity to disease soon broke down. The dying process had begun. Yes, Adam's children, the human race, were born sinners (Psalm 51:5) worthy of death (Romans 6:23). This is "the sore travail God hath given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith" (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 3:10).

### **The Unfinished Earth and Calamities**

Since Adam and Eve disobeyed, mankind is learning by experience the bitter consequences of moral sin and evil that results in death. Additionally, they were cast out of their Edenic paradise into the unfinished earth, where the components of nature were still unbalanced. Here mankind has "toiled by the sweat of their brow" and are subjected to sporadic upheavals of nature. Perhaps these upheavals of nature are gradually preparing the earth to become the Edenic paradise in the 1000-year Kingdom of God.

Often parents, who remand a disobedient child to their room for the evening, have loving thoughts of their continued relationship. God has remanded His human children to their room -- the unfinished earth. In their affliction, He is afflicted and He has wonderful loving thoughts -- recorded in the Bible prophecies -- concerning their restoration to His favor. Yes, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:22, "as in Adam all die," but he continues, "so in Christ shall all be made alive." Why? Because Jesus died "a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6 and Hebrews. 2:9).

### **A Suffering Savior and Suffering Christians**

But before all are made alive in Christ's Kingdom, God has been training Christians -- a "little flock" (Luke 12:32), by contrast with the billions of mankind. Why? That they might reign with Christ in his Kingdom as priests and kings (Revelation 20:6). Like Christ, they are being made sympathetic priests through suffering (2 Timothy 2:11-12). The minds of men are scarred and twisted by tragedy. Christians experience the same disasters (1 Corinthians 10:13), but by the power of the holy Spirit are healed and made compassionate. Why?

They will be able to heal the minds of their fellowman when mankind comes forth from the grave (John 5:28-29, NASV) to their "judgment" (Greek Krisis, denotes future probation) trial time in the Kingdom. Mankind will have a vivid remembrance of the bitter effects of sin and evil. Then they will learn the joyful rewards of living righteously

with their fellowman and make their choice for eternity (Jeremiah 31:29-31, 34). Many scriptures reveal that the majority of mankind will share the joys of eternal life.

God's foreknowledge of His own suffering in sharing mankind's plight proves that the permission of evil is a necessary experience for man's eternal welfare. God's fatherly sorrow contains no anxiety like a human parent. With Divine serenity, He knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). All the forces of evil are overruled for man's eternal welfare (Psalm 76:10). By faith we can have this same peace of God (Philippians 4:7). The present sufferings are but a moment compared with the joys of eternity (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18).

Want to know more? Send for the free booklet, "Why Does God Permit Calamities?"

## **January/February 2006**

### **China: Sleeping Giant Awakes!**

As a military force -- and an economic engine in the 21st Century -- China may have as much impact on this new century as the United States had on the past.

Whether we shop at Wal-Mart or not -- whether we are concerned about all the labels that say, "Made in China" -- or whether we are in touch with global economics and politics, China is a growing factor in our world.

Does this all matter to us as Christians? Some possible answers:

It doesn't affect me -- I'm retired;

It's about time Third World countries had their chance to prosper;

It will affect the collapse of the "Christian West" -- once claimed to dominate by "divine right";

It doesn't matter anyway -- Christ will come and scrape the world clean.

Inter-Connected World Today

Actually, it does matter! For better or worse, the whole world is now more inter-connected and inter-dependent since the time nations emerged. Europe has dominated the "civilized" world for centuries. America owned this past century. But now China and India have awakened from the sleep of centuries. Previously, where the Judeo-Christian Bible had been dominant, the people have been generally the freest, the most enlightened, usually most educated and materially advantaged. But now we may be nearing the end of the this fast lane of prosperity. China and India -- after being excellent customers for the manufacturers of Europe and the United States -- are now generally utilizing their own labor. Not only are they utilizing their own labor, but they are flooding the US markets with their products. China's trade surplus with the United States this year is expected to approach US\$200 billion (Business Week, Nov. 14, '05).

### **Christian Missionaries & the Opium Wars**

Back in the 19th century missionaries from Christian nations were sent to "save the heathen" of China and other countries. But at the same time, Opium Wars waged by "Christian governments" weakened China. Following the Opium War of 1840-42 China declined to a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country. During this phenomenon, Western Protestantism and Catholicism were used as tools of aggressive colonial and imperial policy against China. Sadly, even a number of Western missionaries played an inglorious part in this effort. Finally, after Christianity made some inroads into China, Western

Catholicism and Protestantism manipulated and controlled Chinese churches -- not allowing self-management.

Ironically, however, with the ascent of Communism and the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Christian churches in China, forced underground, became more independent! Still, out of China's population of 1.3 billion -- only 30 million are believed to be Christians. When Jesus commissioned us, "Go and make disciples of all nations...."(Matthew 28:19) -- did he only have the Western World in mind? Has God's plan been to actually convert "all nations" of the world to Christianity before Christ would return?

### **Population Growth of China**

The population growth in China has been called "the people bomb" (MSNBC, Kari Huus). God's original commission to our parents in Eden was to populate and fill the earth.

"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.'" Genesis 1:28-2 niv

Are we nearing the point at which the earth cannot support the world's population? Even with China's legendary "One Child Policy," China grows by an estimated 14 million people each year. With about 350 million women of childbearing years, controlling growth at this point is like bringing a runaway freight train to rest. As a result, not only are China's farmland and water resources in short supply and its ecosystems imperiled, but the nation's growing consumption is measurably straining resources and environments even outside its borders. Although China had been doing remarkably well at producing large amounts of food on comparably little land, its agricultural productivity leveled off in the 1980s. Most of the country is made up of mountains or desert. Growing industrial areas too have gobbled up vast amounts of farmland. Although Beijing is alarmed, power and wealth lie in the hands of industrial leaders -- not with the farmers! Can the earth that God created feed earth's billions?

### **The Unemployed, the Poor of China -- and the World**

Although China's economic growth seems miraculous, there are apparently some serious "Fault Lines in China's Economic Terrain" ("Eight Threats to China's Economic Miracle," Charles Wolf, RAND Corporation). First, unemployment, poverty and social unrest are on the increase. Total unemployment amounts to more than 20 per cent of China's workforce. Other problems include: corruption, HIV/AIDS on the increase, pollution of water resources and the fragility of their financial system. China is also seen as a potential flashpoint for a feared global pandemic of bird flu because it has the

world's biggest poultry population and is part of three major global routes taken for migratory birds. But China is only one nation -- typical of many other countries.

According to "The State of the World's Children 2005," a UNICEF report shows that half the world's children are devastated by poverty, conflict and AIDS. Nearly half of the 3.6 million people killed in war since 1990 have been children! The impact of HIV/AIDS on children is seen most dramatically in the wave of AIDS orphans that has now actually grown to 15 million worldwide.

Four decades after a US president declared war on poverty, more than 37 million people in the world's richest country are officially classified as poor -- and their number in the US has been on the rise for years. Last year, according to government statistics, 1.1 million Americans fell below the poverty line (Common Dreams, Oct. 5, '05). The minimum wage, which rose by 15 cents to \$6.35 an hour on October 1, 2005, is not enough to keep one above the poverty line. Yet minimum wage jobs, without health insurance, are the only jobs available to millions of people.

Over two decades, the income gap has steadily increased between the richest Americans - - who own homes and stocks and can take advantage of big tax breaks -- and those at the middle and bottom of the pay scale. The growing disparity is even more pronounced in this "recovering economy." Wages are stagnant, and the middle class is shouldering a larger tax burden. Prices for health care, housing, tuition, gas and food have soared (Associated Press, Aug. 17, 04). But the Bible says that "...He will deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper" (Psalm 72:12). When will God hear the cries of the poor?

### **God will Deal with the Oppressors**

The Scriptures are clear that God is not deaf! He will not only help the poor and the needy, but he will deal with those who have oppressed them. "He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor" (Psalm 72:4). How long must the poor wait? How long must the farmers of the world wait? The Apostle James says that just as a farmer waits for his crop, so the oppressed must wait for the judgment of their oppressors:

"Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you....Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you. Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it....You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." James 5:1-8

Although there have been efforts at reform (Banking, Tariff and Anti-Trust Laws) and attempts to help the common people (Unions, Social Security, Open Public Records, etc.) -- the remedies have been insufficient and merely temporary. They are all "Band-Aid" remedies! The heart of the problem is the heart -- the selfish human heart! Even if the poor became rich, chances are they would take advantage of those yet poor. So within nations, the powerful have taken advantage of the weak. Internationally, stronger nations have often taken advantage of poorer nations. But because of "greater light," the "Christian nations" are held more responsible. -- therefore we should expect God to deal with them accordingly.

### **Gathered for Global Judgment**

The nations of earth are being gathered globally. While the newly independent Third World countries -- like China -- are achieving global significance in commerce, the masses of the people of China are not really benefiting. The World Trade Organization's purpose is to govern trade between countries. Globalization, the increasing interaction and ties among nations, can be desirable. Too frequently corporate globalization, however, seeks to continually adapt those ties on behalf of the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor and weak. Even in a "rich" nation like the US, the gap between the rich and poor is widening. Discontent is rising as the stable "middle class" is being squeezed. China's Minister for Public Security officially reported that 74,000 protests involving 3.76 million people had occurred in China in the past year (Bangkok Post, Dec. 10, '05). Could this growing discontent lead to anarchy?

Prophecy speaks of God gathering the nations for the very purpose of pouring out the "fire" of God's indignation. But the "fire" is not and cannot be literal. Why? Because God finally gives the people -- who did not know Him before -- the pure language of His Truth! "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people [who felt his wrath] a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent [shoulder to shoulder]" (Zephaniah 3:8, 9). The "fire" of anarchy will first destroy the present governments of earth -- but then the people's desperate extremity will become God's opportunity to bless.

### **"The Desire of All Nations"**

When Christ sets up his Kingdom for God, it will be global. It will be what everybody has been waiting for -- and did not know.

"And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations. He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from And it will be said in that day, 'Behold, this is our



God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation." (Isaiah 25:7-9)

They are actually waiting for the revealing of the Church who will bless the poor groaning creation. "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom 8:19).

There will be not only enough room -- but dignity -- for everybody! And plenty of food! (Psalm 145:12-16) The nations will be healed and the earth which was "cursed" (Genesis 3:17) will no longer be cursed with limited agricultural production. In the Kingdom there will be "the tree of life...for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse" (Revelation 22:2-3).

Not only will earth's unsaved billions -- China and the rest of the world -- have an opportunity to live in this new order, but also all those who have died! Buddhists, Taoists or Confucians, Hindus -- will awake from their graves. They will learn about Jesus in a Kingdom where Satan, who tricked the nations, will be bound and not able to deceive any more (Revelation 20:3). It is then that "the desire of all nations will come" (Haggai 2:6-9). This awakening will be the most important one not only for China -- but all the peoples of the earth!

Please send me a FREE copy of the video CD (mp4): "The Kingdom of God"

**May 2006**

## **Da Vinci Code: Was Jesus Human or Divine?**

This month millions of moviegoers will watch -- no doubt sitting on the edge of their seats -- as the fast-paced Daniel Brown thriller, "The Da Vinci Code," plays out on the big screen.

"I don't follow. His divinity?"

"My dear," Teabing declared, "until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet...a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal."

### **"Not the Son of God?"**

"Right," Teabing said, "Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea." [1]

Over thirty-five million copies of the astoundingly popular best seller have already been printed. In addition to being one of the most popular books of our time, it is also one of the most controversial. The controversy stems from the fact that the book portrays Jesus as being human rather than the commonly accepted idea that he was divine. In the story, Jesus marries Mary Magdalene and has a child that begins a secret blood-line -- the "true Holy Grail" -- which is carried down through the centuries.

### **Controversy Makes Us Think**

Controversy forces us to better define what we believe. Those that believe in the divinity of the man Christ Jesus find the idea of Jesus as merely human a repulsive idea. But for those that always had gnawing doubts about the validity of the Trinity, the "secret" of Jesus' humanity is appealing. Further investigation into issues raised in The Da Vinci Code may point to the true nature of Jesus -- as the "Son of the Blessed" (Mark 14:61, 62) -- but raise serious questions on the purpose and history of Jesus' life on earth.

### **The Faulty Foundation of The Da Vinci Code**

In the crucial scene quoted above, Sir Leigh Teabing, a gentlemen scholar and expert on the "Holy Grail," with the help of the book's hero, Robert Langdon, a Harvard "symbolology" professor, explains his understanding of the Holy Grail to Sophie Neveu, a Parisian police cryptographer. Teabing explains that for political reasons the first Christian Emperor "Constantine needed to strengthen the new Christian tradition [so he]... held the famous ecumenical gathering known as the Council of Nicaea [where] many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon -- the date of Easter, the role of the bishops, the administration of sacraments, and...the divinity of Jesus." [2]

In the story, after being thrown together in a harrowing chase through Paris and into the countryside, Langdon and Neveu find themselves in Teabing's estate discussing the "secrets" behind the true nature of Jesus and the Holy Grail. This is just one stop on their fast-paced scavenger hunt for codes and clues that promise to lead them to the "Holy Grail."

While the book is clearly a work of fiction, it does claim at its very beginning -- on page one, "All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate." So, while the events described in this "novel" are fictitious, the entire foundation of the book is claimed to be true. But is it?

### **How to Consolidate Power**

The Council of Nicaea was the first great ecumenical council of the early church. This unprecedented gathering was called together by the newly converted Christian Emperor, Constantine at the recommendation of a trusted envoy, Hosius of Córdoba (Spain). Indeed, the Emperor was looking for a way to consolidate his power. To do this he needed unity. Coming from a pagan background where organization and uniformity were most important[3], Constantine could not tolerate a diversity of viewpoints on the nature of Jesus.

For years, Christians had been persecuted by the state, now the state was embracing them and even inviting its leaders into its summer home! Constantine desired to use the church to unify his power. The problem was that the Church itself was not united on many fundamental issues.

### **Extreme Views on the Nature of Jesus**

How did Christians before the Council of Nicaea view the nature of Christ? Influenced by Hellenistic Gnosticism, there were those who viewed Jesus as human with no pre-human existence. One sect of Gnosticism was known as "Adoptionists" who believed Jesus was a human being like anyone else, conceived and born to natural parents -- Joseph and Mary. According to The Da Vinci Code, the "discarded gospels" showed Jesus marrying and having a child. Sir Teabing presents a mixed-up view of Jesus to Sophie Neveu. He states that the divinity of Jesus was not accepted until 325 CE, but he also states that Constantine only selected gospels for canon which showed Jesus as divine. What were the facts?

The Adoptionists taught that Jesus had no pre-human existence -- meaning that before he was born on earth he never knew God and did not exist. What made Jesus special, the Adoptionists believed, was that Jesus was more righteous than everyone else. Because Jesus is able to obtain this distinction, he is then recognized by God and adopted as his "Son." Only after his baptism by John the Baptist, God said of Jesus, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11) In the end, Jesus obtained a position at the right hand of God because of his great faithfulness to Him. Clearly, this

view was at odds with plain statements in scripture of Jesus' pre-human existence and virgin birth.

### **Docetists -- He Only Looked Human**

Then there were those who lurched to the other extreme and said he was not only divine, but God Himself. In this direction, there was another group of Gnostics who believed that Jesus was so completely divine that he could not be considered human in any sense of the word. Believers in this idea were often called docetist -- based on the Greek word dokeo which means "to appear" or "to seem". In other words, these early Christians believed that Jesus only seemed to appear human. He only appeared to have emotions, he only appeared to suffer and he only appeared to bleed.

Focusing on the word "likeness", docetists might have cited Romans 8:3 "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" or Philippians 2:7 "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

### **Apostle John's Warnings against Forms of Gnosticism**

However, Apostle John addressed this form of Gnosticism. He gave clear warnings in scripture against this view. In 1 John 4:2-3, we read, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world:" Also in 2 John 1:7 we read, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

In The Da Vinci Code, Daniel Brown's Teabing would probably have us believe that all Christians were Adoptionists. On the contrary, the majority of Christians rejected the belief that Jesus was only human. Most Christians actually believed that Jesus was both human and divine. But how could he both at the same time? It seemed pagan to admit that there was more than one God. How could Christians keep their monotheistic faith, but still hold that Jesus was divine? But then most Christians, like Gnostics, left understanding and reason to the "Mysteries" -- not needing to be explained.

### **Two Opposing Views: Arius and Athanasius**

At the time that the Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in 312 CE, there were two leading explanations of the nature of Christ. One of the leading ways of understanding this dual nature of Jesus was taught by a popular theologian from North Africa named Arius. While it is difficult to put together the pieces of Arius' life and ministry -- most surviving writings were by those that opposed him and branded him a heretic. But we do know that he was popular in Egypt and was a man of great integrity.

Arius taught that in the beginning there was only one God (Jehovah) who at some point brought his "Son" into existence. Through this Son, God created all things. (1 Corinthians 8:6 "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.") However, the Son, being created by God, was subordinate to God. (John 14:28 "I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.") The Son, or Christ, became human by being born of the Virgin Mary. (John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...") While on earth, Christ then died for the sins of the world and was raised from the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4 "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.") Because of his obedience to God, he was granted divine status to sit at the right hand of God. (Philippians 2:8-9 "He [Jesus] humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.)

Arius' understanding was popular in certain areas because it logically explained how Jesus could be first human then divine. However, the Arians were a political problem to the stability of the Roman Empire. The Emperor Constantine saw the wisdom of solidifying Christian belief as a means of solidifying his empire and called for a council in 325 CE to rule on the true nature of Jesus.

A charming, bold deacon from the Church of Alexandria named Athanasius championed the opposing view that Christ was both human and divine at that same time -- an oxymoron. Not only did Christ have a pre-human existence as Arius believed, but Athanasius advocated Christ never had a beginning! He always existed and was always divine. Pushing the distinction even further, Athanasius believed that Jesus Christ was the same essence (Greek homoousios) as God the Father.[4] Athanasius' view became the basis of what is later became known as the doctrine of the Trinity. It was not till 381 CE at the Council of Constantinople that the holy spirit was ruled in as part of trinity of a three-in-one God -- co-equal and co-eternal. These three were not three gods, but one -- made manifest in three persons. It was only a matter of time when the trinity as a basic doctrine of the Papacy was ensconced in Rome at the defeat of the Arian Ostrogoths.

### **What do the Dead Sea Scrolls Validate?**

"Fortunately for historians," Teabing said, "some of the gospels which Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive." [5] However, the Dead Sea Scrolls -- which were found in the 1947 (not in the "1950s" as Sir Teabing states) hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert -- do not contain any "gospel" narratives about Jesus. About 15,000 fragments from 500 manuscripts were found from every book of the Old Testament canon -- except Esther.

The Isaiah scroll, found relatively intact, is 1000 years older than any previously known copy of Isaiah. In fact, the scrolls are the oldest group of Old Testament manuscripts ever found. What does Isaiah prophesy about the coming Messiah who would first have to die for our transgressions before becoming the "everlasting Father" (Isaiah 9:6)? Yes, the

coming Savior of mankind would die without any children. Isaiah 53:8, "By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken" (NIV).

Truly, Isaiah's testimony discredits The Da Vinci Code's premise of Jesus having had a child before he was crucified. Sir Teabing also mentions the texts found in the Nag Hammadi Library as some of the Gospels Constantine rejected. These ancient Christian books, discovered in 1945, nowhere state that Jesus married Mary Magdalene.

### **Jesus -- First Human, then Exalted to Divinity**

So yes, Jesus was first human! He was made flesh because he sacrificed his flesh for the world! John 6:51 "...My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." He was put to death in the flesh, but then resurrected as spirit -- divine! 1 Peter 3:18-19 "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."

### **The True Marriage and Children**

Jesus' Bride is still in preparation, but soon will be ready. Revelation 19:7-8 "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Their children? Revelation 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'" Jesus and his Bride will give life to "whosoever will" to "take the water of life freely." The whole world will be given an opportunity to become their children!

For a comprehensive study of the Scriptures on the subject you have just read about please send for a FREE copy of the booklet, "The Doctrine of Christ."

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### **Endnotes**

Daniel Brown, The Da Vinci Code, p. 233.

Ibid., p. 233.

Richard E. Rubenstein, When Jesus Became God (New York: Harcourt, 1999), p. 85.

Bart D. Ehrman, Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code: A Historian Reveals What We Really Know About Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Constantine (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 22.

Brown, p. 324.

Please send me a FREE copy of the booklet, "The Doctrine of Christ"

**June 2006**  
**Notwithstanding The Da Vinci Code,**  
**OUR BIBLE IS The Inspired Word of God!**

Daniel Brown's The Da Vinci Code is such a cunning attack on the Christian faith in several basic areas that it requires another issue to deal with it. Our last issue of "The Bible for Our Times" refuted Brown's assault on the nature of Jesus, as the Son of God. If you have not read that May issue, we urge you to do so. This June issue deals with Brown's attempt to negate our New Testament Scriptures as the inspired Word of God.

The Apostles completed the Divinely inspired New Testament and circulated it among the churches. After their death, the devil flooded the 2nd and 3rd centuries with spurious Scripture to challenge Apostolic Scripture. But the devil failed. The Apostles' New Testament together with the Old Testament completed the inspired Word of God, the Bible.

Satan's next strategy was to destroy the Word of God. From the compilation of the New Testament until our time, an incredible history of faith and sacrifice played out. Believers raised by God to preserve the Bible carried its message of hope and salvation forward through the centuries.

The Scriptures were banned, burned or ridiculed by rulers of every age -- Roman Emperors, Popes, monarchs, despotic rulers and communist tyrants of recent times. Many who dared to read and share the Bible met appalling deaths. Yet God's Word could not be crushed. Satan and his cohorts were no match for dauntless men of God -- Apostles, faithful preachers, translators, reformers, Gospel workers, and printers dedicated to spreading the "Good News" of this Indestructible Book.

**Our "Nothing is Sacred Era"**

But the Devil is relentless. Thanks to him, we have entered what the philosophers call "The Post-Modern Age," which essentially means no moral absolutes. But it is more than a time of no moral standards. Our day could be labeled the "nothing is sacred era."

For example, today's media splash every apparent finding that contradicts the Bible across magazine covers, newspapers, airwaves, and e-waves, but ignores the numerous findings that support the Bible. The ongoing Jesus Seminar publicity, headline grabbing statements of "higher critics," the Judas manuscript of purported scripture, and "fizz out" discoveries of science spin out "media sensationalism" that continues to battle the mounting evidence that the Bible is indeed the very Word of God.

Satan is especially out to discredit the New Testament and its message of salvation through the blood of Christ. The Da Vinci Code seems to be an effective tool to that end. A week after the movie version of Brown's book, 17% of the Canadian public accepted Brown's theory that Jesus' death on the cross was fake; Jesus married Mary Magdalene

and raised a family. Presto, the greatest event in the universe -- Jesus' death on the cross - is made null and void, and the resurrection becomes a fraud. Never mind that redemption through Jesus' death is the hallmark of the New Testament. Never mind that the resurrection is the triumphant theme of the New Testament. This presents no problem for Brown. He creates his own New Testament.

### **Fiction, Fiction, Fiction**

Why does anyone take these ideas seriously? Brown's cunning methodology. Under a heading entitled "FACT," Brown claims the concepts in his novel are accurate. Many scholars have refuted his false concepts.

Brown has a way of making the novel's bizarre theories about Jesus and the history of early Christianity seem credible. After all, his theories are pontificated by the novel's two scholars -- a British Royal Historian and a Harvard professor. A reality check is necessary! These fictitious scholars have no parallels in real life history. When conjectures are put in the mouths of these fictitious scholars, an unsuspecting public comes away thinking that these theories are actually true. But they are not!

Brown has Sir Leigh Teabing, his Royal Historian, shrewdly observe that the Nag Hammidi texts represent "the earliest Christian records." These "unaltered Gospels," Teabing claims, tell the real story about Jesus and early Christianity. The New Testament Gospels, he said, are a later corrupted version of these events. The problem with Teabing's observation is that it is just as fictitious as Teabing, himself. No scholar claims the Nag Hammidi documents are "the earliest Christian records." Every book in the New Testament is dated earlier. All of the New Testament documents were written in the 1st century AD. In contrast, the dates of Nag Hammidi text range from the 2nd to the 3rd century AD.

How did the early Church decide which books to include in the New Testament and which to reject? When were these decisions made and by whom? According to Teabing, "the Bible as we know it today was collated by the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great" then submitted to and approved by the Council of Nicea in AD 325. Again the fictitious Royal Historian is wrong! This council had nothing to do with New Testament canon.

### **New Testament Rapidly Recognized As Divinely Inspired**

Contrary to Brown and the Catholic Church, it did not require centuries for the New Testament to become canon. The New Testament contains the teachings of Christ written by his Apostles and their close associates. The early Church began at Pentecost in AD 33 when 120 followers of Jesus received the holy Spirit in the upper room in Jerusalem. All the books of the New Testament were written in the 1st century. We know from Scripture that the Apostle Paul immediately circulated copies of his Epistles as soon as they were written. Colossian 4:15,16.



The Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:15,16 observed that his readers were well acquainted with "all" of Paul's Epistles. Peter also mentions "other scriptures" -- evidently referring to the four Gospels and Book of James. Probably Jude and John's three Epistles were not yet written. Of course, the Revelation of John was yet future. Following Paul and Peter's precedent, no doubt these later books were copied and immediately circulated, as soon as written, to all the churches during the 1st century.

The fact that New Testament Scripture was being copied and circulated as soon as it was written is verified by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:15-17. "All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable...that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Some feel the "scripture" mentioned here only applied to the Old Testament because the New Testament was not yet completed.

Verse 15 shows the Old Testament is included. But in no way can the Old Testament alone make the Christian perfect. Only through the blood of Christ is the Christian justified -- reckoned perfect. In no way could the Old Testament thoroughly furnish or sanctify the Christian to every good work. Only by New Testament scriptures like the four Gospels and the writings of Apostles Peter and Paul and later the remainder of the New Testament could Christians be justified and sanctified. The phrase "all scripture" would make it incumbent on the Apostles to have copies of all the books of the New Testament put into circulation as soon as they were written.

### **Why New Testament Was Accepted As Inspired?**

Each generation of Christians would inform the next generation of the twenty-seven books of the inspired New Testament. But there was an additional problem. As noted, Satan flooded the 2nd and 3rd centuries with pseudo New Testament books. With so many pseudo books circulating, how would Christians recognize the valid twenty-seven books of Scripture?

Anyone hungering for truth and righteousness would recognize Jesus in the four Gospels as the "bread of life" that would satisfy their hunger. If any were feeling after God, divine providence would bring His Word, the Bible, to their attention. Like the Thessalonians they would recognize it not as "the word of man" but as "the Word of God." 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Like the Thessalonians the "gospel" would come to them "not in word only, but in power, and in the holy spirit, and in much assurance." 1 Thessalonians 1:5. Any who had the wrong heart condition would be duped by the pseudo scriptures of Satan.

### **Church History**

William F. Albright, the dean of Biblical archaeologists, affirmed: "There is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80." Even heretics like Valentinus furnished proof that the New Testament had been written long before AD 150, and had already attained a place of authority in the Church. His heretical

Gnostic writings (about 130-150) quoted extensively from the New Testament. (F.F. Bruce, New Testament Documents, p. 19.)

However, the Roman Catholic Church claims that it was not until the Synod of Hippo in AD 393 and the Synod of Carthage in AD 397 that the Catholic Church canonized the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. They assert that no one could know what the Divinely authorized books of the New Testament were until the Roman Catholic Church as God's spokesman issued this decree. This claim is not accurate. These synods merely stated that the twenty-seven books already recognized by the churches formed the New Testament canon.

It is absurd to think that the faithful Christians during this approximately 300 years between the death of the Apostles and the Synod of Hippo in AD 393 did not even know which New Testament was the inspired Word of God. This would mean they were not certain Jesus died for their sins. Remember the history of the developing "worldly church" which included many of the so-called Church Fathers that evolved into the Roman Catholic Church did not reflect the history of the true church during those first four centuries.

### **Our Day**

We live in a multi-religious culture -- Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, etc. Each religion has a "holy book" or bible which they believe is inspired by their God. Like the Christians of the first four centuries, we are faced with the problem -- which Bible is really the inspired Word of the true God? However, we the benefit of archaeology.

Once a skeptic, himself, Dr. William F. Albright wrote: "The excessive skepticism shown toward the Bible has been progressively discredited. Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of numerous details." (W.F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible p. 127) As an agnostic, Sir William Ramsay became an Archaeologist to discredit the New Testament. But in his extensive archaeological digs and research he found overwhelming evidence that compelled faith in the New Testament. He became its strongest defender. (Sir William Ramsay, Archaeologist and New Testament Scholar, p. 28.)

Send for the free booklet "Do We All Worship the Same God?" It contains scientific, prophetic and historic evidence that the Christian Bible is indeed the inspired Word of God. Additionally, a free folder on archaeology and a four-colored chart will be included that uses recognized criteria to prove the New Testament has greater validity of authenticity than the other ancient documents that are accepted as genuine such as Plato and Homer.

Send for the free booklet "Do We All Worship the Same God?" with the folder on archaeology and the four-color chart enclosure.

## **October 2006**

### **O God, Do Not Be Silent!**

Much interest is being focused on Psalm 83 by Bible students. It is a prophecy presently being fulfilled in the Middle East. The nations surrounding Israel are calling for her destruction. The prayer, the heart felt plea, by those of us who love Israel should be, "O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God! For behold, your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads. They lay crafty plans against your people; they consult together against your treasured ones." Psalm 83:1-3 ESV

They say, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!" (Psalm 83:4 ESV) The blatant public calls by Islamic leaders for Israel's annihilation are intensifying in frequency and belligerence. We believe such calls point to the current fulfillment of Psalm 83.

Israel will never be destroyed. Israel has not been regathered by Divine providence for the purpose of destruction, but for their ultimate role in being a blessing to all the nations of earth in Messiah's kingdom. Consider the current conditions in the Middle East:

#### **Hezbollah's Antagonistic Role**

Remember back in 1983 Hezbollah was the perpetrator of the truck bomb murder of 241 United States Marine peacekeepers while they were sleeping in their Beirut barracks. Hezbollah soon became a state within the state of Lebanon -- flexing its terrorist muscles with impunity; so much so that the UN finally passed Resolution 1559 requiring the disbanding and disarming of Hezbollah by Lebanon. Sadly, neither the UN nor Lebanon ever followed their words with actions.

In June Hezbollah initiated a terrorist raid into Israel killing members of an Israeli army patrol and kidnapped two Israeli soldiers. This was nothing new, but enough was enough. Israel demanded the return of their kidnapped soldiers alive and a withdrawal of Hezbollah's highly sophisticated military bases from southern Lebanon. Hezbollah refused.

Tired of waiting for the enforcement of UN Resolution 1559 requiring the disbanding and disarming of Hezbollah, Israel took the role of the enforcer. Israel's surgical bombing of Hezbollah's civilian-shielded bunkers began. After a week, ground troops attacked Hezbollah's strategic rocket-launching sites that were raining havoc on northern Israel. Another Israeli-Arab war had begun. Hezbollah's rockets were solely targeting the Israeli civilian population, whereas Israeli bombing targeted Hezbollah sites that were bunkered under civilian structures surrounded by civilian occupied buildings.

Hezbollah's evil policy of covering its military sites with civilian hospitals and civilian housing show their callous disregard for human life -- even the lives of their own people.

This belies their supposed motive of trying to help the Lebanese people. It appears their motivation is not humanitarianism but merely their hatred of Israel.

### **Background**

After the death of Mohammed in AD 633, Arab armies swarmed out of the Arabian Peninsula, pushing westward in North Africa to the Atlantic Ocean and eastward to India. Consequently, there are now 52 Muslim nations. But, a very special portion of land in the Middle East was spared Arab domination -- the land of Israel!

Israel had been a disobedient people. Therefore, God permitted the Roman army in AD 70 to temporarily disburse His people from their land during a "double" period (1845 years) of punishment. The land of Israel was to remain relatively sparse of population -- "desolate of man and beast." Jeremiah 16:13-18; 33:10. After the "double" ended in 1878, Jews were miraculously permitted to return to their land. The UN partition vote in 1948 finally granted them the opportunity to establish an independent state. The Arabs would have none of this. Armies of six Arab nations stormed the newborn Israeli State. Outnumbered 600 to 1, God gave the victory to Israel. Three more wars followed. Miracles happened. Israel won each war. Why?

### **Psalm 83 In Process of Fulfillment!**

Psalm 83 appears to describe an ongoing conflict between Israel and the Arabs that will climax in a final war in which Israel will win a decisive victory over the Arabs. Psalm 83 is a prayer in which Israel asked the Lord for deliverance from a group of nations that verses 3-5 show are united in a confederacy or league for one purpose -- the destruction of the nation of Israel. In 1945 an Arab League was actually formed. It united the Arab nations after 1948 for the very purpose of the destruction of Israel -- as predicted in Psalm 83.

Verse 6 mentions some of these nations. Bible scholars and historians agree that ancient Israel was never confronted by such an elaborate alliance of nations, namely, Ishmaelites, Edom, Ammon, Amalek, Hagarenes, Gebal and the Philistines. Therefore, this prophecy must have an end-time fulfillment. These Old Testament territories are in modern times the nations of Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

### **The Nations Prophetically Allied Against Israel**

Obviously the Philistines are the Palestinians. Edom, Moab, and Ammon occupied what is the modern state of Jordan. Gebal is Lebanon (Joshua 13:5, 6) Iraq was populated by the Hagarenes or Hagarites that dwelt east of Gilead in the wilderness of the River Euphrates (1 Chronicles 5:1,9,10) The Ishmaelites settled what is today Saudi Arabia and Ishmael's eldest son, Nabajoth, is identified with Syria.

Lebanon (Gebal) and Tyre play a prominent role in Psalm 83. Hezbollah is headquartered in Tyre which has been heavily attacked by Israel's army in this current war. Back in the

1970s the PLO had 6,000 Palestinian terrorists in southern Lebanon creating havoc in Galilee, northern Israel. Thousands more Palestinians were amassed in the environs of Tyre where Arafat was headquartered.

Finally on June 6, 1982, in "Operation Peace of Galilee" the Israeli army invaded Lebanon and pushed the Palestinians back to Tyre. Israel was ready to take Arafat and the upper echelon of PLO leaders captive. But something incredible happened. Bewildered and bitterly disappointed Israel watched as the US Navy intervened and gave Arafat and his henchmen safe passage to Tunis. Meanwhile US Marines were stationed in Beirut to keep the peace. That's when Hezbollah, a new Shiite terrorist group, murdered the US marines. This caught the eye of Iran, the theological center for Shiite Moslems. Through Syria, Iran bankrolled and provided the military might for Hezbollah.

The Israeli army retreated to southern Lebanon where it maintained a buffer zone to prevent terrorist attacks on northern Israel. Syria and Iran have been transforming Hezbollah into a highly professional army with some of Russia's most sophisticated rockets, anti-tank missiles and other Russian weapons.

Hezbollah soldiers, rocket launchers and weapons are bunkered down in civilian population centers throughout southern Lebanon. If Israel becomes a threat to Iran, it is Hezbollah's job to take out Israel. As Hezbollah increased in military might, it harassed Israel's buffer zone demanding that Israel withdraw from southern Lebanon.

Four mothers who lost sons to Hezbollah started the "Four Mothers in Black" campaign for the removal of all Israeli troops from southern Lebanon. A majority of Israeli public concurred. In 2000 Labor Prime Minister Barak withdrew all Israeli troops from Lebanon, naively thinking Hezbollah would be satisfied. It was not. Hezbollah rockets continued to hit Israel. The international community did nothing to enforce UN Resolution 1559. Nothing! (By the way, those four mothers have now changed their minds.)

### **Israel's Failure In the Lebanese War**

Israel failed to achieve its purpose in the recent Lebanese war. The Arab nations' confidence has been greatly bolstered -- they are now confident they can defeat Israel in a future war of their choosing. Hezbollah's army was inspired, very well trained and heavily armed by Iran. Still, Israel could and should have won. Instead, its army suffered heavy losses. Never before was Israel's civilian population so devastated. Israel failed to knock out Hezbollah as Prime Minister Olmert at first boasted. It is doubtful that Israel will secure the release of the two kidnapped soldiers with no strings attached as demanded.

Why didn't the Lord give Israel a decisive victory as in the past? Perhaps this is the Lord's way of teaching Israel not to give up land the Lord permitted them to gain. After all, He did promise Israel most of Lebanon up to Hamath. Judges 13:1, 5, 6. Many feel the least Israel could have done was keep part of southern Lebanon for a security zone. "Most

analysts are in agreement, albeit some hesitantly, admitting that then Prime Minister Ehud Barak's unilateral retreat from the security zone in May 2000 provided Hezbollah the stage to prepare for the current war, leaving the Syrian/Iranian backed guerilla army six years to stockpile weapons and train forces for the big standoff with Israel." Arutz 7 News. August 8, 2006

The ongoing Israeli-Arab conflict could now escalate and/or will in a future war culminate in a complete victory for Israel over the Arabs. Besides another possible Hezbollah/Lebanese War and Palestinian/Hamas skirmishes, there will probably be one more war in which Israel will totally defeat a group of Arab nations. Finally, their prayer of Psalm 83 will be answered by the Lord. Israel will take back any land given up. Additionally, she will acquire parts of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and all of Gaza. Isaiah 11:14; Zephaniah 2:3-10; Zechariah 10:10; Obadiah 19-20 (NIV).

### **Assyria Symbolic of Russia**

A final comment on Psalm 83. "Assyria also is joined with them; they have helped the children of Lot." Verse 8 ASV. Assyria could refer to Iraq; however, verse 6 identified the Hagarenes as symbolizing Iraq. Assyria is used in many Israel end-time prophecies to symbolize Russia. For example, Micah 5:5, and Zechariah 10:10.

The Hebrew word for helped literally means strong arm, which could symbolize military help. When Russia was a super-power vying with the US for world supremacy it supplied the Arab nations with military hardware. Why? So the Arabs could defeat Israel, the US ally, leaving Russia the dominant force in the oil rich Middle East. It is noteworthy that literal Assyria/Iraq never supplied the other Arab nations with military equipment -- again showing the modern day fulfillment of this Psalm.

In the early 1990s, Russia on the verge of bankruptcy toppled as a world power. Economics have changed. Russia once again is aspiring to attain world supremacy. Russia is not only arming Iran but in fulfillment of Psalm 83 is once again the strong arm of other Arab nations.

### **A Final Israeli Arab War**

Many Bible students and televangelists are heralding the invasion of Gog, Ezekiel 38, as the next prophetic step in the Middle East. But the Scriptures (Isaiah 11 and Zephaniah 2 as previously noted) indicate that a decisive Israeli-Arab war must be fought before Gog's invasion. Israel will then enjoy a short period of peace and security as shown in Ezekiel 38:11. After this the battle of Ezekiel 38 will occur -- an invasion by Russia allied with a group of nations including Iran (Persia). Iran never seems to give up, but Iran will finally learn not to oppose Israel. God will fight for Israel as in the days of old with miraculous deliverance from the invading horde. The God of Israel will then be made known in the eyes of many nations. Christ's Kingdom will be established in Jerusalem and, from there, grow to encircle the globe. See Ezekiel 38, 39 and Zechariah 14. The ultimate boundaries

of the Land of Israel, as defined in Genesis 15:18, will be acquired after Christ's Kingdom is fully set up.

### **God's Mercy**

To suppose that God merely looks forward to the destruction of His relatively puny enemies is to miss the most important goal in His dealings with mankind. The stern call for punishments upon Israel's enemies, particularly in Psalm 83:13-18, has this loving motive in it, "That they [Israel's foes] may seek thy name" and that "men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." This is consistent with God's merciful plan for mankind. His punishments are designed not to be vindictive but therapeutic; to heal the fallen human race and lead them back into harmony with Him.

Send for your free copy of "Israel: Nation of Miracles" an inspiring look at the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in modern Israel. Included with each order is a color chart of prophecies past, present and future pointing to Israel's glorious role in God's kingdom.

## **November 2006**

### **Has World War III Begun?**

Many in high places and not so high -- including the President of the United States -- have referred to the "War On Terror" as World War III. The President said the ideological struggle of the 21st century is compared to the 20th century's fight against Fascism, Nazism, and Communism. (Some called it World War IV -- counting the Cold War as the Third.) Others brush off calling the Islamic conflict with Israel and the Christian West "World War III" as a mere political posturing.

The banner, "War on Terrorism," some say is misleading because, after all, terrorism is a tactic. Terror is not a nation or a people. Whether the present conflict is World War III or not, the clash is of global proportion. Iran's president Ahmadinejad asserted that the U.S. is "moving the world toward war." He added, "Nations are awakened now. They want their rights -- equal rights, and fair ones. The time for world empires has ended." Certainly the time has come: "Let the weak say, I am strong." Joel 3:10

Christians pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Just how is that going to happen?

### **Peace on Earth -- or War?**

Can man help bring this peace on earth? How is God's will to be done on earth with such a clash of civilizations? Is "Islamophobia" justified since it sees the entire religion of Islam as a problem for the world -- condemning its history as well? Five years after 9/11, U.S.-Islamic relations continue to deteriorate at a rapid pace. To examine this relationship, 300 young leaders from around the Muslim world and the U.S. came together to develop a blueprint for long-term engagement between the U.S. and the Muslim world. The summit took place in Washington, D.C., from September 8 - 10. Participants looked at how U.S.-Islamic world relations can be improved in the years to come. Will this peace prospect work?

On the other hand, the Pope's controversial comments about Islam (Sept. 12) ignited an immediate firestorm of criticism in the Muslim world. Even so world leaders -- political and religious -- are divided on the issue of Islam. Some have been openly frank about what they see while others cautious to be politically correct, seem to be perpetuating myths about a noble, peaceful, dynamic religion and culture. The question is raised by Islam watchers, Will believing these myths about Islam and its goals be dangerous to the health of all other cultures and religions? Islam's goal, after all, is world dominion.

Pope Benedict XVI quoted the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel II Paleologos, "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." Benedict's comments were called by some a deliberate attempt to "revive the mentality of the Crusades."



## **Were the Crusades Christian?**

Revisiting the cause and purpose of the Crusades is essential. The Crusades were actually in response to four centuries of Muslim invasion of Christian lands in what had been over half of Christendom -- including devastation of holy places. The "last straw" was when the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 1009. Christians themselves were subjected to forced conversions -- or -- crucifixions, massacres, demands for the "infidel tax" and denial of the right to teach their religion to their own children. (WorldNetDaily.com). The first pope to commission a Crusade (with the promised reward of indulgences) to warriors who would "take up the cross" was Pope Urban II in 1095. During the next two centuries, there was a total of (according to some) eight relatively unsuccessful Crusades. Nevertheless, the Crusades are seen as a stop gap which weakened Islam when it was most dangerous to Europe.

Among the most tragic episodes in the Crusades was the burning of Jerusalem's Jews after being herded into a synagogue and the Children's Crusade of 1212-13. Thousands (one report says 30,000) of children (ages 10-18), mostly from France and Germany, left for the Holy Lands to recapture Jerusalem. A number of lesser nobles and clergy joined them on their ill-fated journey. Most of the children never reached the Holy Land. Many died crossing the Alps. Others were captured and sold as slaves. Few of these crusaders ever returned home. But during these Crusades, Christians also fought Christians and killed others on the way to the Holy Land -- sacking Constantinople twice and causing the division between the Eastern and Western Churches. Although the claim could be made that the Crusades were a noble effort -- poor planning, dreadful execution, betrayals, misguided alliances, greed, and so forth, all contributed to marking them with a stigma. The historical record of the Crusades is ugly at best.

## **The Warfare of Christian Soldiers**

Where did Christians ever get the idea that they should bear arms, go to war to regain "Christian lands"? Until the coming of Emperor Constantine, Christians were universally known to be pacifist. Before a century had passed (St.) Augustine of Hippo laid out the justification for the "just war" for Christians in his work, *The City of God* (c.400).

But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:52). Why were Christians trying to set up Christ's Kingdom when Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight..." (John 18:36) By contrast, the Koran actually teaches, "Choose martyrs... annihilate the infidels" (Sura 3:140, 141) "Strike off their heads; strike off the very tips of their fingers" (Sura 8:12, 13). (Koran, N.J. Dawood)

Apostle Paul elaborates to Christians, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds..." (2 Corinthians 10:4) What are these "strongholds"? Next verse. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing

that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ..." (2 Corinthians 10:5) The Christian's crusade is against his own flesh! "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

Christians have not been commissioned to set up God's Kingdom on earth, but to wait for Christ to return. Before any Christian would be given authority by Christ to reign, he would first have to be humbled. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:6). "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation 2:26-27). Only then God will set up His Kingdom with Christ over the nations.

### **The Wrath of Man shall Praise God**

One wonders that were it not for the Crusades, Western Europe and Christianity -- as we know it -- would not have survived (Robert Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect View of Islam*). Evidently, God overruled that Islam was held back so that the true Christians within Christendom could be protected and able to grow as Christians. (Jesus' parable of the Wheat and Tares clearly shows his intention to allow the Wheat to grow safely amid the Tares until the time of Harvest - Matthew 13). Although true Christians were often persecuted as "heretics," God was able to providentially restrain forces that would be counterproductive. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).

As precedent in Biblical history, God sometimes used godless forces -- intent on aggression -- for the execution of His own judgments. He used Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon calling him "My servant" for punishing Israel as well as the nations "round about" (the Philistines, Edom, Moab, Ammon, etc.) (Jeremiah 25:8, 20-22). Of course, then God said that after a time "I will punish the king of Babylon" (Jeremiah 25:12). So no doubt, God, allowed and overruled the Crusades for His own purposes. He can likewise overrule or use the Christian nations to subdue the false religion of Islam. But the "little flock" of true Christians themselves would not be actually fighting in such a conflict. They have a more important war to wage. "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul" (1 Peter 2:11).

### **"Make War on the Christians and Jews"**

In the meantime, the Middle East remains terribly unstable, seemingly on the verge of explosion at any moment. Although so far there have been no new terrorists attacks against the U.S., terrorist groups have struck or attempted to strike in Israel, Canada, Britain, Jordan, Spain, Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, India and Russia.

The Islamists call America the "Big Satan" and Israel "Little Satan." The Koran Chapter Sura 9:29-30 states clearly, "Make war on the Christians and the Jews...Do battle with them!" "...Slay the idolators wherever you see them. Arrest them; besiege them and lie in ambush everywhere for them. If they shall convert to Islam then let them go their way." (Koran Sura 9:5) For this you shall be rewarded with eternal paradise in Heaven with Allah, crystal clear streams, (according to tradition 72) virgins, wine without side effects, and the Garden of Eden forever. (Koran Sura 56). The Koran clearly and expressly commands all of the 1.3 billion Muslim people to engage in Holy War, Jihad, to conquer the world for Islam, for Allah. (Everyman, The Koran, Translated from the Arabic by J.M. Rodwell, J.M. Dent, Orion Publishing Group, London, 1994) Even so, Christians are not to be part of any coalition of Christian government working with the churches to suppress the threat of terror -- or even anarchy. Authorities will be claiming the ability to make peace, but it will not be possible for them. Then how will "peace on earth" ever happen?

### **"He Makes Wars to Cease"**

It is only the Judeo-Christian God who will establish an eternal paradise on earth -- when God's will is finally "done on earth as it is in heaven." Although there will not be the sensual gratification as martyrs as promised in the Koran -- all men and women will be completely satisfied with the blessings God has promised. All people will be one family. Now the whole world is actually "groaning and waiting" for something better. They don't know what they are waiting for, but when it comes, they will say, "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isaiah 25:9) The Bible promises more than anything dreamed about in the Koran. "He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces.." (Isaiah 25:8) What mankind is actually waiting for is the completion of the church, the "sons of God." "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ... For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now" (Romans 8:19, 22).

Yes, there will be a "City of God" -- but not as Augustine envisioned. It was the one father of the faithful, Abraham, looked for by which "all the families of the earth" would be blessed (Genesis 28:14). "By faith Abraham...looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8, 10).

Revelation 21:1-4 describes the holy city, the New Jerusalem, which will be for all mankind to enter. Muslims too will have an opportunity to come to this City of Christ's Kingdom to learn about "the God of Jacob" (Isaiah 2:1-4). Christ's Kingdom will have representatives in literal Jerusalem to administer the earth for the heavenly "New Jerusalem." Then there will be no terror. There will be no war. "He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. 'Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.' The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold" (Psalm 46:9-11).

Send for your free copy of "Early Christian View of War and Military Service." Also available at no charge is the booklet, "Church Union and the Antichrist."