

January-February 2002

Tomorrow's World

...For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.



**Wake Up
America!**

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A “Faithless” Generation?

Most of our regular readers know that a major theme of this Work is “Restoring Apostolic Christianity.” By that, we mean the *genuine* beliefs and practices of the original Apostolic Church under the leadership of the Apostles Peter, James, John, Paul and Barnabas. That is one reason why I wrote *Does God Heal Today?* in the previous issue (November-December 2001). For this matter of divine healing—and the *genuine* faith involved in it—is a greatly neglected part of true Apostolic Christianity!

More than ever, as the United States and other Western countries have been shaken by the reality of terrorism in their own backyards, it is vitally important that we “wake up” and understand the difference between our sentimental human “spirituality” and the *genuine faith of Jesus Christ*. Our very lives—and our future as individuals and as nations—will depend on it!

Although modern religious pollsters talk about a resurgence of “spirituality” in recent years, most acknowledge that this interest is very shallow. As *Christianity Today* magazine observed: “Gallup reports that 20 percent of born-again Christians believe in reincarnation and 26 percent in astrology. Forty-five percent of those George Barna classifies as born again believe that ‘if people are good enough they can earn a place in heaven.’ And Wade Clark Roof in *Spiritual Marketplace* writes that half of born-again baby boomers believe all religions are ‘equally good and true,’ almost half have no involvement in a conservative Protestant church, and a quarter believe in communicating with the dead!” Then they opine, “How can we explain this? Roof offers one answer: boomers tend to substitute feelings for objective reality, seeking self-centered spirituality over the structured demands of organized religion. With self-fulfillment their standard, they pick and choose, as if at

a salad bar, from any belief system that provides comfort or meaning” (“Salad-Bar Christianity,” August 7, 2000).

Amazing! What *kind* of “Christianity” is this? What *kind* of faith in God is *this*?

What *is* true faith in God? First of all, it involves knowing *who God is*—knowing that the true God is the **Creator** and **Ruler** of the entire universe, that He has *all* wisdom and *all* power and that, as Jesus said, if you have even faith as a grain of mustard seed, “**nothing** will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20).

Your Bible calls Abraham the “father” of the faithful (Romans 4:11). In this very passage of Scripture, God explains the *faithful approach* that Abraham brought to a seemingly impossible situation. Longing for a legitimate son, but knowing that he and Sarah were “too old,” Abraham focused on the *reality* and *total power* of the living God whom he served. “And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform” (Romans 4:19–21).

That is the kind of faith God wants us all to have! That focus on the *true God—the God of creation*—and our *total reliance* on God is the relationship God wants every true Christian to express.

Abraham also exemplified another often-neglected and absolutely *vital* aspect of faith. If a person genuinely loves and trusts in God, he will “know” that God is good and that God’s ways are right. Therefore, in *faith* and in *love* he will definitely **obey** God as a way of life! In Genesis 26:2–5, we read of God appearing to Isaac, reminding him

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Wake Up America!

By Roderick C. Meredith

The demise of the United States as the world's premier nation is now underway. Forces now in motion will bring this about unless there is a genuine national repentance!



How close does a raging fire have to be to get your attention? Close enough that you can personally see it? Feel it? Smell it?

Yet, as we read almost daily in the newspapers, people are burned to death by a fire that started, often quietly, in another part of the

house or building. But the people are dead just the same!

The Eternal God tells us in His Word: "If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it? Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:6–8). So the great God who determines the rise and fall of nations *will warn us* through His faithful servants of any major event due to bring national catastrophe. It is up to you, dear readers, to determine *who* God's truly faithful servants are!

As one who has served faithfully in Christ's ministry for over 49 years, I tell you in His name that—*unless we repent*—our beloved United States is in terminal trouble. We are near the very end of our ascendancy as the premier nation of this world. Along with our "sister" nations—including Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand—we are on the cusp of a

national punishment such as the world has never seen! For our peoples have increasingly turned away from the God of creation and every vestige of *true* religion. Our peoples are now vigorously pursuing the “gods” of their own making—physical wealth, hedonism and the vain ideas of New Age philosophies and secular humanism.

Yet, as we in this Work of God have shown you for decades, we are the physical descendents of the “Lost Ten Tribes” of Israel. And God speaks repeatedly of our great nations—and our future—in His Word. If you have not already done so, please write or call for your *free* copy of our eye-opening booklet, *What’s Ahead for America and Britain?* This truly powerful booklet will give you *proof* of our national origins—and of our place in Bible prophecy.

Much Has Already Happened

When I first came to Ambassador College in Pasadena, California, back in 1949, a man named Herbert W. Armstrong was already thundering to our peoples that—even though the German nation had been totally defeated and brought low—Germany would rise again and would be the dominant player in a coming United States of Europe, a “revival” of the Holy Roman Empire. He described specifically how this power would rise and become a great military and trading power. And he described how the United States, Canada and Britain would lose their national dominance if they did not turn to the true God.

In the late summer of 1954, I traveled with Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong and their elder son, Richard David, through much of Britain. Mr. Armstrong gave, in a series of meetings, a personal warning to the British people about what would happen if they did not repent. Many who heard those warnings are still alive.

Mr. Armstrong told the British people that although God had given them national greatness and control over the vital “sea gates” such as Suez, the routes around the tips of South Africa and South America, the vital Malacca Strait in Southeast Asia and other sea passages absolutely vital in controlling world trade and vital in time of war, God would begin to take these “gates” away—one by one—*unless they repented*. And the true God would humble the British-descended and American peoples and begin to **break** the “pride” of our power (Leviticus 26:19).

Only about 700 people turned out to hear Mr. Armstrong in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and even smaller crowds attended in Scotland and England. Enthusiasm was high because of Mr. Armstrong’s dynamic style, but many doubted what he was saying: that these vital sea gates would in fact be taken away.

Yet only two years later, my wife and I were sent to Britain and visibly felt the impact of some of these prophetic statements that *no one else* understood at the time! For the winter of 1956–57 was the time of the “Suez Crisis” when Britain was forced to withdraw from the Suez Canal. Then there was a terrible fuel shortage. And in the intervening years, Britain was also

pressured to give up control of the Malacca Strait, the great Simonstown Sea Base (the passage around the Cape of Good Hope). Since then, the U.S. has given up control over its only major sea gate—the Panama Canal.

Soon after its victory in World War II, Britain completely lost the British Empire and the power and respect (and wealth) that it used to enjoy as a major world power.

Still later, in the 1970s and 1980s, Mr. Armstrong began to proclaim publicly that although vast Soviet armies with awesome weaponry were apparently solidly in place in East Germany and in the nations of Eastern Europe, *they would leave!* Again, *no one else* was making these predictions—except those of us associated with Herbert W. Armstrong and helping him proclaim this message.

Did it happen?

As Paul Harvey would say: “Now you know the *rest* of the story!” In late 1989 and 1990, the nations of Eastern Europe began to break away from the Soviet bloc. Finally, the Berlin Wall came down and the “two Germanys” became one again! It all happened so quickly, it was like a line of dominoes falling over each other. Even hardened journalists and political analysts were astonished. *They had not expected this to happen!*

But the point is that a *true* minister of God, Herbert W. Armstrong, was guided by God to foresee these events and predict them to hundreds of thousands of people *ahead of time*.

God *does* have faithful ministers here on earth now, who can

tell you *what* is going to happen and *why*.

The New Threat of TERRORISM

As we were shocked to see last September 11, a new wave of horrifying, dastardly terrorism is beginning to strike the United States. Thousands have already been killed in the murderous attacks on the Twin Towers of New York City's World Trade Center, and on the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Dozens have already been exposed—as I write—to anthrax poisoning in another wave of terror. And the threat of many other types of biochemical warfare seems imminent. By the time you read this, many more events will have occurred.

But the point of this magazine, *Tomorrow's World*, is not merely to *report* the news. We want you to understand the *meaning* behind the news.

If there is a *real* God—and *there is*—*why* has God allowed these unspeakable atrocities to occur? And *why* will many, many more such events unfold over the next several years affecting especially the American and British-descended peoples? If we are professing “Christian” nations, should we expect God's *blessing*?

Much of the answer lies in that word “professing.” For though we talk about God and a good percentage of Americans go to some sort of church or worship service, their worship has **not** greatly affected their daily lives! We still have some of the highest rates of drunkenness and drug use, divorce, crime and violence of any nation on earth. Our moral toboggan slide continues to accelerate.

As reported by the *Washington Times*: “One study found that on prime-time television, references to porn were 300 percent more



As God removes His protective hand, watch for more calamities like the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York City.

common in 1999 than in 1989” (“Amoral Expectations,” June 2, 2001). Notably, in the same year, for the first time in history, fully one-third of the babies born in the United States were born out of wedlock (“Unwed mothers set a record for births,” *Washington Times*, April 18, 2001). Television and other mainstream media, and even government agencies, now openly promote homosexuality. And any who protest are vilified and ostracized.

Then there is the silent holocaust of abortion, claiming the lives of more than a million innocent victims each year in the United States alone. Where are the candlelight vigils, the outcries of sympathy and solidarity for those most helpless of people, whose lives are taken with the approval and active support of

our legal system, many of our national institutions and even many churches?

Most people refuse to even entertain the notion that AIDS, terrorist attacks and other calamities may indicate that *we need to change*, we need to **repent**. Pundits, politicians, religious leaders and other opinion makers in our society protest that God is on our side. God has indeed been with us and blessed us mightily over the past two centuries, though often denied the credit rightfully His. Yet, as we have been warned (Leviticus 26:14–39), God is slowly but surely withdrawing His protection and blessings and, as Jesus admonished the people of his generation, this will continue if we do not repent.

“There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all [other] Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but **unless you repent you will all likewise perish**. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all [other] men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but **unless you repent you will all likewise perish**’” (Luke 13:1–5).

Those who have died in terrorist attacks or other disasters were not better or worse than any other cross-section of our general population. Many of them were no doubt fine and decent people. Some were children. If our nations would only repent, God would spare us from such tragedies (Deuteronomy 28:1–14).

What Is Wrong?

Through the Apostle Paul, the Eternal God perfectly describes our time, the “Last Days.” Notice this inspired description in 2 Timothy 3:1–5: “But know this, *that in the last days perilous times will come*: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. *And from such people turn away!*”

But most Americans, Britons and Canadians do **not** “turn away” from this type of watered-down Christianity and those who purvey it! Rather, they gladly embrace a professing “Christianity” that does **not** force them to change their hedonistic lifestyles. So, again, in the above passage written by the Apostle Paul, God describes what lies ahead: “But evil men and impostors will grow *worse and worse*, deceiving and being **deceived**” (2 Timothy 3:13).

So God commands His true ministers: “Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a **trumpet**; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their **sins**” (Isaiah 58:1). People do not “like” to be told that *they are sinning*. But unless and until our peoples *repent* of the vile, hedonistic lifestyle that has begun to characterize our society, we are going to be *humbled* and *chastened* by the Creator God in the greatest national tribulation in all human history! (Matthew 24:21–22).

Almighty God warns us: “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your *iniquities* have separated you from your God; and your **sins** have hidden His face from you, so that He *will not hear*” (Isaiah 59:1–2). Yet most professing Christians have *no idea* what sin is—*because their own churches have not told them the truth on this matter!*

Yet, over and over, God specifically tells us what “sin” actually is. Near the *end* of the Apostolic Age, God inspired John—Jesus’ closest friend among the Apostles—to tell us that “sin is the transgression of the Law” (1 John 3:4, KJV). And John stated clearly that even our prayers are *much more likely* to be answered if we will *obey* God’s commandments: “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His **commandments** and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:22).

The basis of Christian character—the very love of God—John tells us, is expressed in **obeying** God’s Commandments: “For this is the love of God, that we **keep His commandments**. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). For Jesus Christ—the *Founder* of Christianity—clearly taught that the *way to eternal life* directly involves *obeying* the Ten Commandments: “If you want to enter into life, **keep the commandments**” (Matthew 19:17). In spite of these very clear scriptures and *dozens more*, *why* have most professing Christian ministers joined in the chorus who say that the Ten Commandments are no longer binding—done away

by the Apostle Paul—or that God’s Law was “nailed to the cross”?

Why?

By promoting “cheap grace”—by using such expressions as “just believe on Jesus Christ”—these blinded ministers have willingly or unwillingly **deceived** the vast majority of professing Christians! *Yes they have!* For they teach a “watered-down” version of Christianity that has allowed millions to think they are “Christian”—yet have virtually *no idea* of the way of life taught and practiced by Jesus Christ and the early Apostles. If you want to *understand* all of this, then call us or write us at our regional office nearest you and ask for a *free* copy of our very enlightening booklet, *Restoring Apostolic Christianity*.

Please *study* this thoroughly documented booklet, and you will truly begin to understand *why* God is allowing terrorist acts to strike our nations and how an *entire series* of punishments will bring us low, unless *we genuinely repent* and begin to seek the *true* God and obey His commandments! Otherwise, in a powerful prophecy, God graphically describes how He is going to **chasten** our rebellious and sinful peoples at the time of the end: “Make a chain, for the land is filled with crimes of blood, and the city is full of violence. Therefore I will bring the worst of the Gentiles, and they will possess their houses; I will cause the pomp of the strong to cease, and their holy places shall be defiled. Destruction comes; they will seek peace, but there shall be none. Disaster will come upon disaster, and rumor will be upon rumor. Then they will seek a vision from


a prophet; but the law will perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders” (Ezekiel 7:23–26).

The above verses are a part of a continuing prophecy God inspired Ezekiel to write *more than 100 years after ancient Israel went into captivity*. These verses were written to describe a *future* punishment and captivity for “all the House of Israel” (Ezekiel 5:4)—including the Jews and the so-called “Lost Ten Tribes” of the House of Israel. So this prophecy is *yet to be fulfilled!* And it leads right up to the

and our peoples. And, as we saw earlier in Ezekiel 7:26, God tells us: “*Disaster will come upon disaster, rumor upon rumor.*” So I challenge you to open your mind! *If* these disasters continue to occur over the next five to 15 years, and in fact **get much worse**—if continuing wars, terrorism, drought, famine, disease epidemics and earthquakes strike especially the American and British-descended peoples of the world—then you had better **listen!** And you had better *heed* the

request also our powerful booklet which gives you the vital “key” to fully understand our national identities and the end-time prophecies of the Bible. This powerful booklet is entitled, *What’s Ahead for America and Britain?* It will be sent absolutely free, with no obligation, upon your request.

The Jewish nation’s Babylonian captivity is a type of what is just ahead for our peoples. Through Jeremiah’s prophecy, decades before the



As this crisis at the close of this age begins, I urge all of you—in Jesus’ name—to begin to seek God in a way you have probably never done before. Ask God to open your mind to His Truth.

“day of the wrath of the LORD” (Ezekiel 7:19), and God’s pouring out the supernatural plagues described in Revelation 8 and 9.

What Should You DO?

Dear reader, it gives me no pleasure to have to tell you these things! For I dearly love our nations—the American and British-descended peoples—but God has put it powerfully upon my mind and heart to give you this “Ezekiel warning”: “But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman’s hand.’ So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me” (Ezekiel 33:6–7).


For the book of Ezekiel was inspired primarily for *our time*

teaching of this Work of God about His *entire way of life* based upon **living faith** and genuine **obedience** to all ten of the Ten Commandments through Christ living within us!

The inspired Apostle Paul told us: “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters” (1 Corinthians 7:19). And then he also tells us *how* we may have the spiritual strength to **obey** God’s Commandments: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20, KJV).

As this crisis at the close of this age begins, I urge all of you—in *Jesus’ name*—to begin to **seek God** in a way you have probably *never done before*. Ask God to *open your mind* to His **Truth**. Again, be sure to request our very enlightening booklet, *Restoring Apostolic Christianity*. And

Jewish people returned from captivity, God showed them the attitude and approach they should have. This vital instruction certainly applies to *all of us* today, if we really want God’s blessing, guidance and protection: “Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will **seek Me** and find Me, when you search for Me with **all your heart**. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive” (Jeremiah 29:12–14).

May God grant that each of you reading this will begin to *genuinely understand*. For truly America—along with all nations—needs to *wake up* and to *seek* the *true* God and obey what He actually tells us in His inspired Word! 

Questions & Answers

Q Exactly what does it mean to “overcome”? Is “overcoming” important in living the Christian life?

A While Jesus was instructing His disciples, He told them: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Did Jesus mean that His followers would become absolutely perfect while still human beings?

Since we have a nature that tends to sin, God knows we cannot become absolutely perfect until the resurrection when He will complete the process begun in our lives at baptism. It is then that we will be *born* of God. He will give us perfect spirit bodies with a *perfect, sinless nature* like Christ’s (1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:21).

In the meantime, God wants us to strive to “overcome” our sinful nature and *grow* in His character daily by obeying His commandments and rooting sin out of our lives (2 Peter 3:18). Thus we will be *growing toward* God’s spiritual perfection while still fallible human beings.

We are told that Jesus Christ, our supreme example of spiritual maturity, “learned obedience” (Hebrews 5:8–9). As a human, Christ learned obedience through the trials and tests of human experience (Hebrews 2:9–10). He overcame *all* the temptations of the devil, the temptations of His flesh, and the temptations of the world around him. Thus Jesus Christ became the perfect example all true Christians are to strive to imitate (Ephesians 4:13, 15), while asking for God’s forgiveness when they fall short because of sin (1 John 1:7–10).

Because Christ *overcame* during His human life, He has been given great power and authority. Notice just how great that power and authority really is: “But in these days at the end he has spoken to us by a Son—a Son whom he has appointed heir of the universe....”! (Hebrews 1:1–2, *Moffatt*)

We who have become the Spirit-begotten children of God are “joint heirs” with Christ, destined to *share* His great inheritance and responsibility

when He returns (Romans 8:16–17; Revelation 21:7). So it is extremely important that we, too, “overcome,” because the Scriptures make it very clear that it is God’s *overcomers* who will receive the opportunity to rule the earth with Christ! (Revelation 2:6–27; 3:21).

Overcoming is a life-long process. By overcoming the sinful pulls of the flesh, the world and the devil, and submitting to God and His ways, we are building the very character of God. And the more we overcome, the greater the *responsibility* Christ will give us in His government on earth.

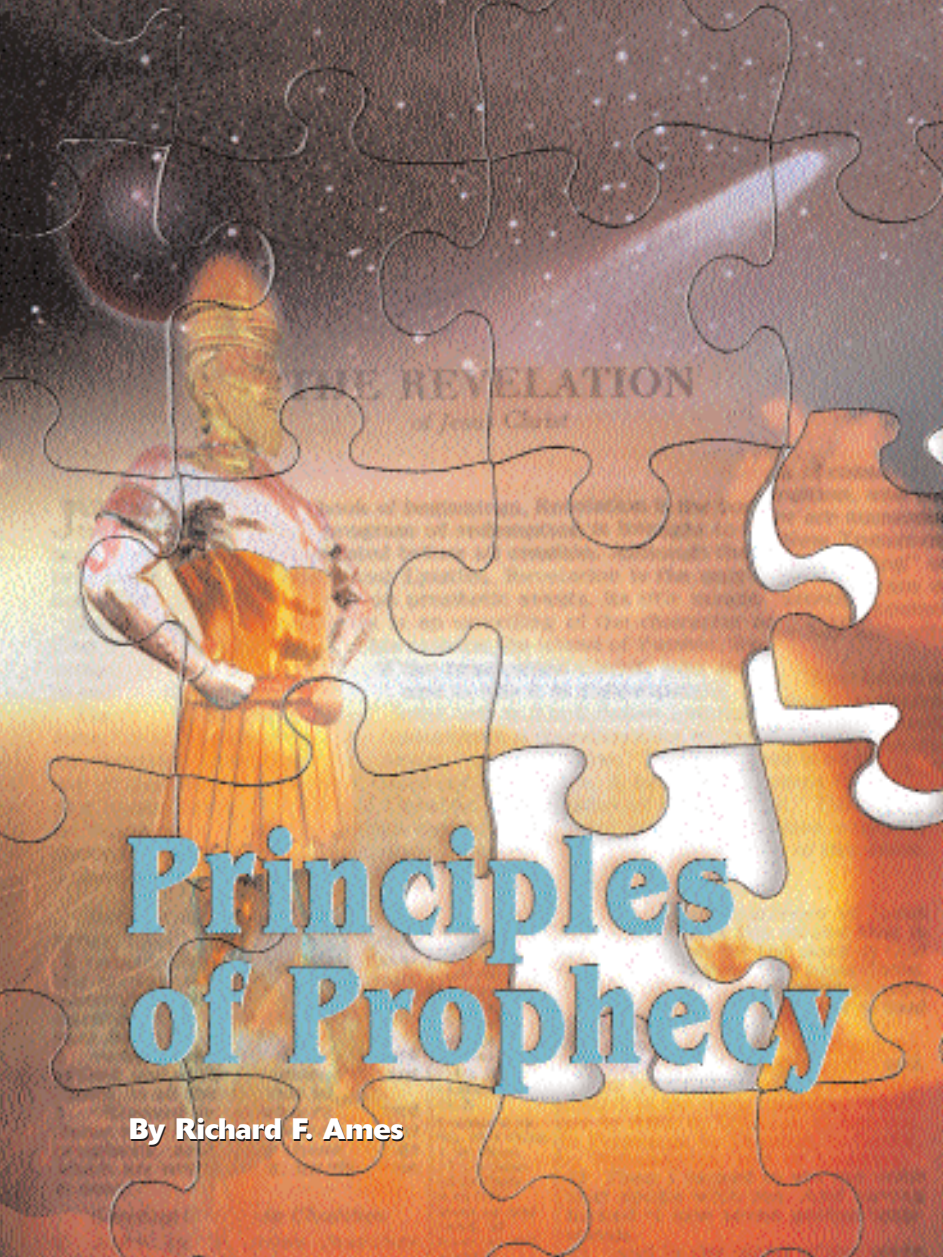
Overcoming requires putting forth effort on our part, together with the help of God’s Holy Spirit. Overcoming involves letting Christ live in us through His Spirit (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:5). As the Apostle Paul wrote, “we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

Christ is on the job as our High Priest and able to help us in times of weakness and trial because of His previous experiences as a human being, full of compassion and mercy toward humanity (Hebrews 4:14–16). Through His Spirit, Christ will help us live a life of *overcoming*—if we ask for that help (Colossians 1:27).

We cannot overcome on our own human strength. We must stay close to God through daily prayer and Bible study (Ephesians 6:17–18; 2 Timothy 2:15). The Apostle John wrote that you can be spiritually strong, and overcome because “the word of God abides in you” (1 John 2:14).

Grow spiritually by building godly character prior to being born into the family of God. It is then that we shall receive the gift of eternal life and be made inheritors and co-rulers of this earth and the universe with Jesus Christ! Only then will we be *absolutely perfect* as Jesus commanded. Christ knew that human beings cannot achieve “instant perfection,” but He made godly perfection our goal—a goal we look forward to achieving!

What a glorious and productive future God has in store for His *overcomers*!



er has caused massive property damage and loss of life through earthquakes, flooding and hurricanes. The once-proud United States has lost power and influence, and even cooperated in its own decline, as when it gave away the Panama Canal, one of the world's major sea gates.

As the 21st century unfolds, we will continue to see the trends outlined in the Olivet prophecy in your Bible. That prophecy is found in three chapters: Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. Read these, and you will see that the future of the world is clearly outlined there—as it is in the rest of your Bible! To many, Bible prophecy is a mystery, a puzzle and a matter of human interpretation. But God *unlocks* the mystery of prophecy; He plainly reveals the future to His servants.

The Apostle Peter asserted that Bible prophecy is of divine origin. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed” (2 Peter 1:19, KJV). Peter was aware of Scripture and its prophecies. He affirmed that these prophecies are certain, and that we as Christians should pay very serious attention to them.

In this article, we will review five principles, or keys, that will help us better understand Bible prophecy. The *first key* is that the Bible interprets its own symbols. The book of Revelation, for example, contains symbolic language. Revelation 1 describes the glorified Messiah, the Son of Man standing in the midst of seven lampstands. Revelation 1:16 describes Him holding seven stars. What do these stars and lampstands symbolize? We need not speculate; the Bible itself tells us the meaning. “The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven *stars* are the *angels* of the seven churches, and

Between 25 and 30 percent of your Bible is prophecy. There are basic keys to understanding Bible prophecy. You need to know what they are!

As the year 2000 approached, excitement about the “new millennium” inspired many to take renewed interest in Bible prophecy. We all wanted to know: Is the end of the world about to occur? Is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ near? What will happen around the world in the next decade—or the next century?

The Bible reveals the answers to those questions. In this magazine, and on the *Tomorrow's World* telecast, we have shared with you dozens of articles and broadcasts giving you insight into the great prophesied events that lie ahead. Now events are building toward the Great Tribulation and other major milestones prophesied in the Bible.

Today, no nation is safe from war or terrorism. Terrorists have struck the United States on its own soil, and have attacked its residents abroad. We have seen violent killings in American high schools. Violent weath-

the seven *lampstands* which you saw are the seven *churches*” (Revelation 1:20).

In Bible symbolism, stars are angels, and lampstands are churches. The writer of the book of Revelation, or the Apocalypse, continues in the next two chapters writing God’s message and admonition to the seven churches in Asia Minor—modern Turkey.

Prophetic literature uses the word *mountain* as a symbol of a kingdom, empire or government. Take a look at a passage in Jeremiah, where God is declaring His punishment on the great empire of Babylon. “‘And I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion in your sight,’ says the LORD. ‘Behold, I am against you, O *destroying mountain*, who destroys all the earth,’ says the LORD. ‘And I will stretch out My hand against you, roll you down from the rocks, and make you a *burnt mountain*’” (Jeremiah 51:24–25).

Here, God uses the symbol of a mountain for a kingdom, or an empire. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a dream, which Daniel explained to him. The king dreamed of a great image. He saw a stone smash the feet of this image, representing the Kingdom of Babylon succeeded by the Persian Empire, the Greco-Macedonian Empire and finally the Roman Empire. “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great *mountain* and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35).

Daniel explained that King Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold represented in the image (v. 38). But what was this stone that became a great mountain and filled the earth? The Bible interprets the Bible. “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a *kingdom* which shall never be destroyed; and the *kingdom* shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (vv. 44–45).

What mountain or kingdom will rule the whole earth? As so many prophecies explain, that Kingdom will be the Kingdom of God ruled by the King of kings, the Messiah, Jesus Christ! He will destroy the last resurrection or revival of the end-time Roman Empire. Finally, peace will rule over all the earth under the Government and Kingdom of God.

As we have seen, God uses symbolism throughout the Bible. Stars are symbolic of angels, lampstands are symbolic of churches and a mountain can be symbolic of a kingdom or government.

A *second key* to understanding biblical prophecy is the “prophetic time gap”—the fact that some prophecies may jump in time even by thousands of years. We find one such example in the book of Luke. Jesus was visiting his hometown of Nazareth, and was invited to read from Scripture on the Sabbath. He was given the scroll of Isaiah. “So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.’ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’” (Luke 4:16–21).

Yes, the Messiah had come to preach the gospel to the poor, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD. Jesus told His listeners that this very prophecy of Isaiah was right then being fulfilled through Him. But was that *all* of the prophecy? When we look at the passage Jesus was reading in Isaiah, we discover that He closed the book right in the middle of a verse. He left out the phrase “and the day of vengeance of our God” (Isaiah 61:2). Why did He do this? Because the remainder of Isaiah’s prophecy applies to the time of Jesus’ *Second Coming*, when the day of God’s vengeance and wrath and the Day of the Lord take place. There is a *time gap* of approximately 2,000 years between the fulfillment of the first part of the verse and the second part of the verse.

A *third key* to understanding Bible prophecy is “duality.” Often in the Bible we find a former fulfillment of a prophecy and a later, more climactic, final fulfillment of the prophecy. We can find one example in 1 Corinthians. “And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45). Who was the last Adam? The Bible interprets itself: “The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven” (v. 47). The second Adam was Jesus Christ.

Even Jesus Christ’s famous “Olivet prophecy” is an example of prophetic duality. Some critics insist that Jesus was speaking only of the destruction of Jerusalem

in 70AD. *Some* of the terrible conditions Jesus described actually did take place when Jerusalem was destroyed. But that was just a “type” or forerunner of the *final* climactic fulfillment that will come at the end of this age. As Jesus said, unless He intervenes, the destructiveness of human beings would lead to total cosmocide and destruction of all life on planet Earth. “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:21–22).

Yes, prophecy is dual—and we ought to learn the lessons of history. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in 70AD was just a type of the Great Tribulation that lies yet ahead.

A *fourth key* to understanding Bible prophecy is to understand how and where today’s nations are mentioned in the Bible. Where is the United States mentioned in the Bible? Or under what name can we locate it? Where can we find Great Britain in the Bible? Obviously the modern names do not appear, but the ancestors of these nations *are* prominently named in the Bible.

The Bible mentions by name such nations as Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. Those nations will play a significant role in Middle Eastern events (Daniel 11:43). But what happened to the ancient nation of Assyria? Believe it or not, Assyria will eventually be one of the prominent nations in tomorrow’s world, along with Israel and Egypt (Isaiah 19:23–24). As Bible prophecy reveals, Assyria will once again play a pivotal role in world affairs and end-time events (cf. Isaiah 11). But who is *modern Assyria*?

Those of you who have been reading this magazine for some time may recall an earlier article explaining the identity of modern Assyria. Dr. Douglas S. Winnail wrote: “While most historians are reluctant, or fail, to make any connection between the disappearance of the Assyrians and the appearance of the Germanic tribes, the fact remains that no other nation’s history and national character resembles Germany more than does that of Assyria” (“A Fourth Reich?”, *Tomorrow’s World*, May-June 1999, p. 17).

Understanding the modern identity of the nations mentioned in the Bible gives us a clearer

understanding of Bible prophecy. And to put it plainly: “When the Bible speaks of Assyria in the end-times, it is speaking of Germany” (Ibid., p. 30).

Bible prophecy mentions many other nations. Sometimes Bible commentaries may be helpful in determining their modern descendants. And if you have not already done so, please call or write for our informative free booklet, *What’s Ahead for America and Britain?* You will learn where these great nations are mentioned in Bible prophecy—and you will learn about their startling future as well!

A *fifth key* to understanding Bible prophecy is to understand God’s prophetic framework. To understand Bible prophecy, we need an overall

framework for the future. There are many different ideas and scenarios regarding the thousand years mentioned in the book of Revelation.

Premillennialism is

the teaching that Christ will return to set up a literal kingdom here on earth for a literal period of one thousand years. This is what the Bible actually teaches as a framework for prophecy, as we will see.

Postmillennialism wrongly teaches that the world will eliminate evil by human effort, through the influence of traditional Christianity. That is just *not* going to happen—selfish human nature must *first* be changed! The *very reason* for Christ to return, is to save this earth from thermonuclear destruction and total cosmocide! *Amillennialism* is the belief that the expression of a “thousand years” in the book of Revelation is purely symbolic of a peaceful relationship with Christ. Certainly genuine Christians do have a wonderful relationship with God the Father and with their Savior Jesus Christ. But the Bible clearly teaches **Premillennialism**. Christ revealed that God’s plan of salvation will include the Kingdom of God literally ruling on this earth for a thousand years, *preceded* by His return, as we have discussed in previous articles and on the *Tomorrow’s World* telecast.

The Bible gives us an overall framework for prophecy. We need to understand that framework. For example, the book of Revelation describes a period of three-and-a-half years leading up to the return of Christ. The first five seals described in Revelation 6 cover a period leading up to and culminating in the Great Tribulation, of which Jesus spoke in Matthew

- Key 1: The Bible Interprets Its Own Symbols**
- Key 2: Prophetic Time Gaps**
- Key 3: Duality**
- Key 4: Biblical Origins of Modern Nations**
- Key 5: God’s Prophetic Framework**

24. The sixth seal is the heavenly signs. The whole world will be put on notice when this event occurs: “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’” (Revelation 6:12–17).

The seventh seal commences the famous Day of the Lord, mentioned in more than 30 prophecies in your Bible. This “day” is the *year* of God’s punishment on the nations. And it culminates with the well-known announcement of Christ’s return and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. That is the exciting *good news* of prophecy: “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” (Revelation 11:15).

This is *the* solution to the world’s problems. It is the gospel—“good news”—of the Kingdom of God. The Messiah, Jesus Christ, is now training genuine, faithful Christians to be a part of that future world-ruling kingdom on earth (cf. Revelation 5:10; 20:4–6). Yes, Jesus will return before the real Millennium begins. And *you* can have a part in the world to come and in His Kingdom, *if* you respond wholeheartedly to God’s calling—and if you *seek Him* with *all* your being (Isaiah 55:6–7).


As a final example, look at a situation that Scripture says will prevail for the three-and-a-half years preceding Christ’s return. “Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, ‘Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth’” (Revelation 11:1–3).

The “holy city”—Jerusalem—will be controlled by the Gentiles, *not by the Jews*, for 42 months. During that time, two prophets of God will witness with great power, and will contend against the revived Roman Empire which will dominate the Middle East at that time. These two witnesses will prophesy for 1,260 days—or 42 months of 30 days, in biblical terminology. This is a part of the prophetic framework that we need to understand.


Bible prophecy is not intended for hobbyists or curiosity seekers. One cannot fully understand prophecy unless he or she is willing to submit to the teachings and instructions of the Bible. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4: “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’”

And we *can* understand these prophecies, though even some who *wrote* them did not. An angel told the prophet Daniel: “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (Daniel 12:9–10).

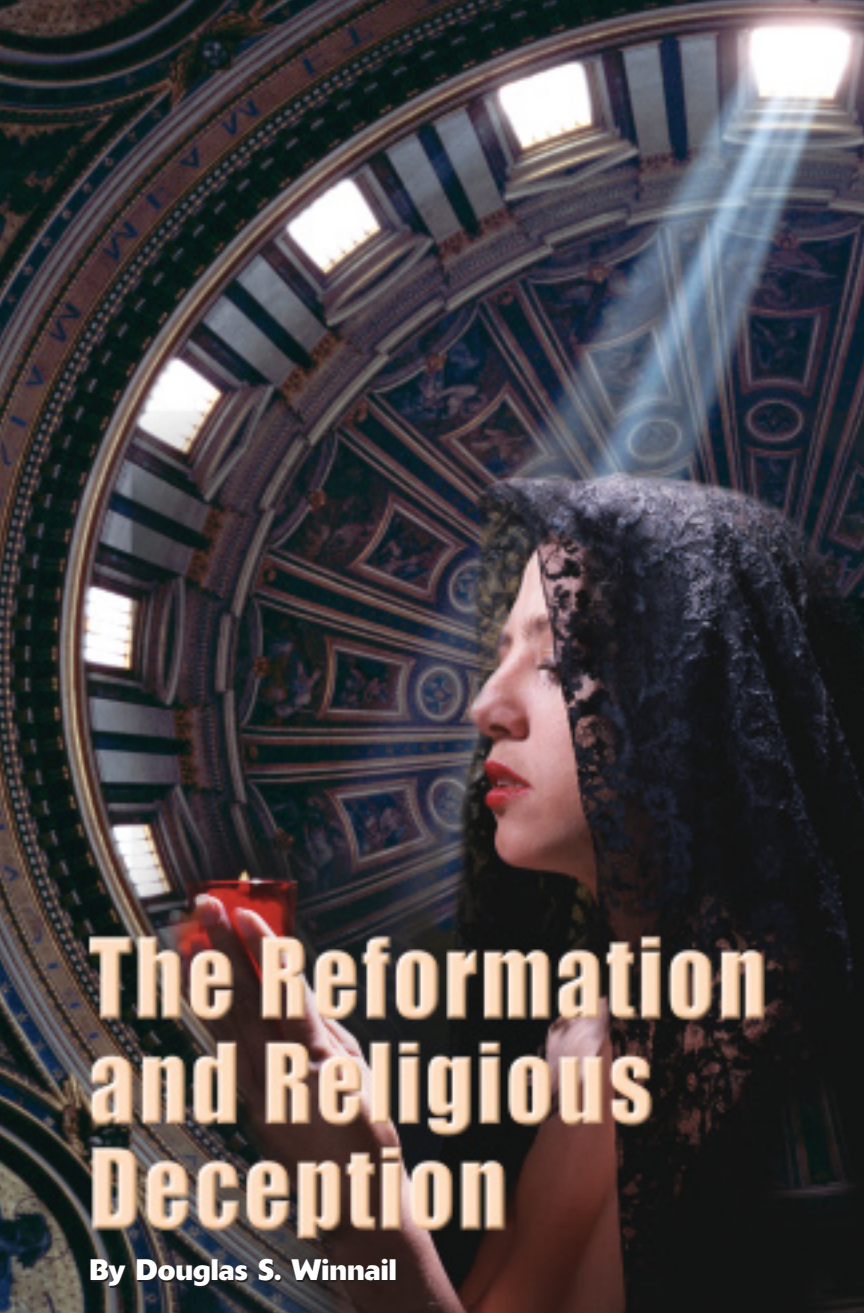
We can today understand prophecies that Daniel was not allowed to understand. God tells us that none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. God gives wisdom to those who submit to Him, who want to obey Him, and who reverence Him. As Scripture tells us “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever” (Psalm 111:10).

You *can* begin to truly understand biblical prophecy, *if* you apply these five key principles, and if you choose to seek God wholeheartedly. 

To Learn More:



Your Bible reveals that the United States and British-descended nations play a prominent role in end-time events. You can understand this vital key that unlocks Bible prophecy. Please request our FREE booklet *What's Ahead for America and Britain?* or download it from the Literature section of our Web site www.tomorrowworld.org



The Reformation and Religious Deception

By Douglas S. Winnail

The Protestant Reformation of the 1500s was a crucial turning point in the history of Western civilization. This momentous event fundamentally transformed the social, political, religious and intellectual landscape of Europe that had existed for over 1,000 years. It left a lasting imprint on our modern world. Yet few understand what *really* happened during this turbulent period, or realize its *significance for us today*.

The Roman Catholic church has considered the Reformation an unwarranted rebellion which produced a tragic split in Christendom. Protestants have viewed it as the hand of God working to purify the church from the evils of corruption and paganism that had accumulated over centuries. Regrettably, *both* of

these commonly held views are misleading—and obscure what really happened.

Bible prophecy reveals that before the return of Jesus Christ, the Western world will experience *another* great religious movement which will attempt to unite diverse factions of professing Christians, and amalgamate the religious world into one body. This ecumenical movement will deceive millions. We need to understand *why* the Reformation occurred and *what actually happened*, because crucial facts and important lessons of history—which will facilitate this coming deception—have been forgotten and obscured

Causative Factors

The Reformation did not “just happen”! There were powerful *causative* factors. One fundamental reason was the well-documented and pervasive corruption in the Roman Catholic papacy and clergy. Popes in the late Middle Ages had mistresses, meddled in politics, hired armies and waged wars. Many clergymen lived lavishly in palaces, exploiting people monetarily and spiritually. Church offices often went to the highest bidder or were given out as political favors. Crusaders were recruited with the promise that killing infidels would forgive sins. Indulgences (spiritual pardons) were sold to raise money for the church. By the 1500s, many reformers saw that the church was corrupt, yet resistant to attempts at internal reform.

Another important factor was the invention of the printing press in Mainz, Germany in the 1440s. This made possible widespread circulation of books, pamphlets and tracts at prices that nearly anyone could afford. Access to knowledge and ideas was no longer limited to the elite. Translations of the Bible from Latin (which few understood) into commonly spoken tongues (German, French and English) allowed people to read the Bible for themselves. Bible readers discovered that many Roman Catholic beliefs and practices were *contrary* to Scripture! For example, the Bible plainly shows that Mary was not a perpetual virgin (Matthew 13:55–56), that Jesus alone is our Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) and that Peter, whom Roman Catholics consider

the first Pope, was married (Mark 1:30; 1 Corinthians 9:5).

A third element that contributed to the Reformation was the Renaissance—the rebirth of learning, the growth of science and the emphasis on the individual and the practical. The rise of an affluent middle class, and the expanding number of universities, gave rise to a spirit of critical inquiry that clashed with the authoritative, tradition-bound approach of the Roman Catholic church. Protestant reformers were much more in tune with these trends than were their Roman Catholic peers. Reformers correctly saw that the Pope and his clergy had assumed an intermediary position, between God and people, not supported by Scripture. Although Rome attempted to suppress these ideas, the dam finally broke. The Catholic edifice shattered because its hierarchy was on the *wrong side* of powerful historical trends.

Misleading Assumptions

Did the Reformation *really* destroy the unity of professing Christendom? The facts of history provide informative answers. The Reformation was not the first disagreement with, or challenge to, the authority claimed by the church headquartered in Rome. The Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches separated in 1054AD, with the Pope and Patriarch excommunicating each other. In 1,500 years following the ministry of Jesus Christ, there had been *numerous* conflicts over doctrine and *multiple* ruptures in the so-called body of Christ. In fact, history records the continuous existence of Christians who

never accepted doctrines that emanated from Rome.

The Jerusalem Church—not Rome—was the model for Apostolic Christians (Acts 15:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; Galatians 2:1–2). In the second century, a controversy arose over the date and manner of keeping Passover, and whether it should be replaced by Easter. Rome promoted Easter observance on Sunday, but churches in Asia refused to support this doctrine. They continued to observe the Passover on Nisan 14 (using the Hebrew calendar), declaring that they had been taught this observance by John, the last surviving Apostle. At first, this declaration settled the validity of their case, but 50 years later, those who insisted on keeping a Nisan 14 Passover were excommunicated by a Roman bishop for holding to their practice. This “Quartodeciman controversy” continued to cause divisions in the church for centuries.

The Roman hierarchy gained control over most of professing Christendom in the fourth century, in the days of Constantine. This control was extended and maintained for more than 1,000 years. It is instructive to remember how that power was used. During this time, anyone who disagreed with decisions of Popes or church councils was censored or excommunicated. At the pinnacle of the Roman church’s power, between 1000 and 1300AD, it launched Crusades against infidels and an Inquisition against heretics. The Inquisition was conducted (usually in secret) by priests who functioned as lawyer, judge and jury. Those convicted of believing or teaching contrary to Roman doctrine—Jews, Muslims, and non-conforming

professing Christians—were labeled heretics. Properties were confiscated and the “guilty” were banished, imprisoned, tortured or burned at the stake. The Inquisition was instituted *because* “Christendom” was *not united*. It was in dynamic ferment, as it had been since the first century!

A far more crucial issue was that the Roman hierarchy itself was seriously divided. During the 1300s, French and Italian bishops were locked in a power struggle for control of the church. At one point there were *two* rival Popes. A French Pope ruled from Avignon in France. An Italian Pope ruled from Rome. Each claimed to be the universal head of the church with the right to collect the revenues of “Christendom.”

Church Reforms

The Reformation sought a return to the purity of the Apostolic Church. Many *assume* that this happened, yet history reveals otherwise. In their quest to purify the church, reformers asserted the Bible alone was the ultimate authority for doctrine—as Scripture states (Isaiah 8:20). They rejected the Roman idea that church councils and traditions were equal to Scripture for establishing doctrine. The role and authority of the Pope were rejected as lacking scriptural and historical foundation. History shows that there was *no papal office* in the Apostolic Church. The bishops of Rome *assumed* that position “by elevating themselves to the head of the Western church” over a period of centuries (*History of Western Europe*, James, et al., 1903, p. 49). While Roman Catholics claim that Jesus appointed Peter as the first Pope (Matthew 16:18–19), both

Protestants and Eastern Orthodox reject this “Petrine theory.” Peter’s role in the first Church council at Jerusalem (Acts 15) hardly resembles that of a Pope. The Apostle James presided at that council and stated the final decision (Acts 15:13–21).

Reformers disagreed with Rome over the doctrine of Transubstantiation—the idea that during the Mass, the priest transforms bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus. Most of the reformers understood that these were *symbols* and not the actual flesh and blood of Christ. The reformers also rejected the ideas of purgatory, celibacy and prayers for the dead as lacking scriptural foundation. They viewed the worship of relics and statues as idolatry and a violation of the Second Commandment (Exodus 20:4). The Mass, adoration of the “Virgin Mary” and the cross and the practice of praying to dead “saints”, were also rejected as unscriptural practices borrowed from paganism. Many professing Christians may be surprised to learn that worship of a Madonna and child can be traced back to ancient pagan Babylon (*The Two Babylons*, Hyslop, pp. 19–23).

Spiritual Baggage

The Reformation eliminated much of the pomp and ritual, and many of the doctrines, which the Roman Catholic church had absorbed from paganism. However, the reformers carried with them from Rome many doctrines foreign to the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. Scripture reveals that Jesus and the Apostles kept the seventh-day Sabbath (Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2), observing the Fourth Commandment

(Exodus 20:8–11). The Bible nowhere commands Christians to observe Sunday. Roman Catholic literature acknowledges the lack of scriptural grounds for changing the Sabbath to Sunday, thus showing that Protestants who observe Sunday are following Roman Catholic tradition. The Council of Laodicea (364AD) outlawed Sabbath keeping because of anti-Jewish sentiments among professing Christians. Those who continued to observe the seventh-day Sabbath were anathematized by the Roman church and persecuted by the Roman Empire.

Jesus, the Apostles and the early Church kept the biblical Holy Days (Luke 2:41–42; 22:7–16; John 7; Acts 18:21; 1 Corinthians 5:7–8), but the reformers failed to restore the observance of these festivals. The holidays celebrated by Protestants and Catholics alike (e.g. Christmas and Easter) were originally pagan festivals, only “Christianized” by Rome in the fourth century and later. As a result, *both* Protestants and Catholics remained unaware of the plan of God and the real purpose of life (see our free booklets *The Holy Days—God’s Master Plan* and *Your Ultimate Destiny*).

For most Protestants and Roman Catholics alike, the gospel is about the person of Jesus, knowing the Lord, receiving forgiveness and going to heaven. Yet the focus of Christ’s preaching was about *repenting* of sins, keeping the commandments and looking forward to a coming kingdom of God (Mark 1:14–15) to be set up on earth (Daniel 7:27), where the saints would rule with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 5:10; 20:4–6). The Bible states that no human being—not even David—has

gone to heaven (see John 3:13; Acts 2:29–34; 13:36). Comparing the biblical gospel with the message proclaimed in Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, one finds a vastly *different* gospel (Galatians 1:6–9). While the reformers aspired to return to Apostolic purity, they actually created a *Protestant version* of Roman Catholic teachings which *differed* from the Bible and early Apostolic Christianity on numerous points of doctrine. Ironically, Calvinist reformers even succeeded in their goal of building a “Protestant Rome” in Geneva.

The Counter-Reformation

Roman Catholicism did not take lightly the Protestant challenge to its authority. Its hierarchy launched a Counter-Reformation. In scenes reminiscent of the Roman Empire’s persecution of Christians, reformers were jailed, tortured and burned at the stake. During the Middle Ages, “Christian” murdered “Christian”—in spite of the commandment “Thou shalt not kill.” Protestants, where they gained an upper hand, often treated Roman Catholics with similar brutality. The bloody struggles fanned by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation lasted for more than a century.

Important lessons emerge from these turbulent centuries. During the Middle Ages (ca. 500–1500AD), Roman Catholicism provided a framework for social stability when the Roman Empire crumbled. However, the first 500 years of the Middle Ages have also been called the “Dark Ages” because, under Rome’s dominance, ignorance

(especially of Scripture) was widespread, superstition was rampant and intellectual progress was frozen in time by tradition. The Roman Catholic church banned translation of the Bible into common tongues, effectively preventing people from reading the Bible. The widespread dissemination of Scripture that we have today was one result of the Reformation.

Roman Catholic persecution slowed the progress of the Reformation, and re-established

Rome's control, especially in southern Europe—Italy, Spain, Portugal, parts of France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. As a result, many fled to North America in search of religious freedom. It is no accident of history that America was founded largely by Protestants who considered freedom of religion a basic right. Many early American colonists had experienced firsthand that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts

absolutely. Areas of the globe where Roman Catholicism gained predominance found themselves stagnating, while the Protestant countries of England, Holland and America became driving forces of progress that shaped our modern world—a fact of history which should not be forgotten.

The True Church

These two conflicting claims—that the Roman Catholic church is

Heretics of the Middle Ages? The Saga of the Waldenses

The Waldenses have been regarded as “the most ancient and most evangelical of the medieval sects” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed.). From their refuge in the Alpine valleys of Northern Italy, ministers (called *barba*) traveled throughout Europe. Most accounts trace the Waldenses to the preaching of Peter Waldo, a merchant from Lyon, in the 1100s. We are told that Waldo sought to reform the Roman Catholic church from within, and had few differences with Roman Catholic theology. He and his followers (Waldensians) were labeled heretics and excommunicated for preaching without permission.

Other early accounts, however, state that the name Waldenses (Vaudois, Valdes, Vallenses, Wallenses—valley dwellers) was derived from the valleys in Northern Italy where Christians fled during the persecutions of Diocletian (300AD). Many authors assert the attempt to link the origin of the Waldenses to Waldo was a *fraud* perpetrated by Catholic persecutors to deliberately obscure the antiquity of these people's beliefs (see *Some Remarks upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Piedmont*, Allix, 1689, chap. 7).

The challenge of reconstructing the history and doctrines of “heretics” is compounded because most surviving accounts are from Roman Catholic persecutors. Raynerus, an Inquisitor from the 1300s, stated that the heresy of the Vaudois “was of great antiquity... some say it has been continued down ever since the time of Pope Sylvester [314–335AD], and others, ever since that of the Apostles” (Allix, pp. 176–178). According to Raynerus, the Vaudois had *major differences* with Roman Catholicism. He lists 33 beliefs that he considered “errors”, including: their claim to be the true Church of Christ and the Apostles' successors, their belief that the Roman Catholic church is the harlot of Revelation and their rejection of Roman Catholic feast days, purgatory, transubstantiation and prayers for the dead (Allix, p. 188). Accounts from the 1100s assert that the Waldenses (Vaudois) shared the same beliefs as Albigenses and Cathars. One account of Cathar beliefs states that they kept the Law of Moses, the Sabbath, circumcision and rejected the Trinity and the whole Roman Catholic church (Allix, p. 154). To provoke revulsion against them, opponents deliberately attributed bizarre doctrines to the Cathars.

A recent comprehensive study of the Waldenses describes different factions within the movement (see *Waldenses—Rejection of the Holy Church in Medieval Europe*, Cameron, 2000). During the Inquisition, those holding Roman Catholic sympathies (or seeking to save their lives) *deserted* the Waldenses “when the chance of papal rehabilitation and recognition beckoned” (Ibid., p. 68). Tradition holds that in the 1500s the Alpine Waldenses met with Geneva Protestants and merged, based on common convictions. Contemporary accounts, however, say that this occurred only after “much discussion.” Recent research suggests that the “merger” may actually have been more of a “takeover, a suppression of old ways by new ones and of old preachers by new ministers” (Ibid., p. 7). Today the Waldensian church is part of the Protestant community—united with Methodists in Italy and Presbyterians in North Carolina.

the one true church, and that the Reformation restored Christianity to its original Apostolic purity—*obscure* what happened to the Church established by Jesus and the Apostles. The Church of God (see 1 Corinthians 1:2) existed down through the Middle Ages, yet few recognized it as such. But the Bible contains keys that reveal the Church's identity. Jesus said that His Church would not die but would continue to exist (Matthew 16:18). The true Church never became a prominent worldly institution, but was prophesied to be a little, persecuted flock (Matthew 10:16–24; Luke 12:32). Scripture shows that the Church would flee into the wilderness, opposed by a much more dominant and wealthy church (see Revelation 12 & 17). The true Church of God continued to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, the biblical Holy Days and the biblical dietary laws (cf. Leviticus 11). That Church preached the gospel of the coming kingdom of God and the reign of the saints with Christ on this earth. It emphasized the need for repentance, the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of sins and obedience to the commandments. The true Church did not believe in a Trinity, an immortal soul or purgatory. It did not promote clerical celibacy, indulgences, infant baptism, prayers to the dead or the use of idols and images. It did not use the Mass as a form of worship.

Using biblical criteria, one can identify—among groups classified as *heretics* by Catholics and *dissenters* by Protestants—groups of believers who followed the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. Remnants of the true Church can be found among Paulicians in Armenia in the 600s–800s, Bogomils in the Balkans in the 900s, Cathars (Puritans) and

Albigenses of Southern France around 1000–1200AD, Waldenses in northern Italy in the 1200–1400s, and Lollards in England in the 1300s. Not everyone given these labels was part of the true Church, but it appears that members of the Church of God are found among these groups. Some groups retained the truth for a period of time, then compromised and lost that precious truth. Down through the centuries, the true Church of God has not embraced pagan ideas promoted by Roman Catholicism under a “Christian” label, nor has it followed doctrines Protestants carried out of their “mother church.”

The Deception Ahead

What does religious history have to do with us today? Simply this—lessons of the past can *warn us* about the future. Bible prophecy indicates that, before the return of Jesus Christ, the world will again see a great religious movement. An influential religious leader will appear on the world scene, doing miracles and deceiving multitudes (2 Thessalonians 2:3–9). People will be *deluded* into believing lies because they *do not know the truth* (2:10–11). Many today have lost the capacity to discern between what is true and what is false—especially in religious matters. Many simply do not know Scripture, as in the Middle Ages! Many do not know the difference between Protestant and Roman Catholic teaching. Most have forgotten why the Reformation occurred, and what happened during that dynamic period. This will prove to be a costly mistake for millions!

An influential religious leader termed “the false prophet”

(Revelation 20:10) will lead a great church that Scripture personifies as a fallen woman. Leaders of this church are pictured, in 2,000-year-old biblical prophecies, as wearing vestments of purple and scarlet, studded with jewels and precious stones (Revelation 17:1–6). Over the centuries, this church has meddled in politics, persecuted true saints of God and spread false religious doctrines throughout society. This church and its leader will associate with, and promote, a political leader of global stature who will gain power as a humanitarian but will turn into a military dictator, labeled a “beast” by the Bible (Revelation 13:1–10).

Once in power, that great false church will use methods of *social control* to prevent those who do not accept its teachings from holding a job or participating in the economy (Revelation 13:11–17). Dissenters will be persecuted and killed. While this sounds unbelievable to our modern ears, we need to remember that this church has used similar methods in the past—before, during and just after the Reformation! The Bible also indicates that this great church—called a “*mother of harlots*”—will mount a concerted effort to lure her estranged children back into her fold. The prophet Isaiah writes of a church called “the Lady of Kingdoms” who makes the audacious claim: “I am, and *there is no one else besides me* [I am the one true church]; I shall not sit as a widow, *nor shall I know the loss of children*” (Isaiah 47:5–8). This ecumenical movement is under way today! Professing Christians who lack knowledge of doctrinal truth, and do not understand religious history, will be deceived. *Pray that this does not include you!* ^[TM]

Letters to the Editor

BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Yesterday I received my first *Bible Study Course*. I completed it immediately, and loved my journey through the scriptures. Thank you! God bless you and your staff. The world needs more people like you who stick to God's Word as it is written.

F. D., Decatur, GA

I am putting in a whole new life for myself. I am doing your *Bible Study Course* and I am finding answers after a lot of years of "I wonder." I am 71 years old, so I am getting a late start. Since I have received booklets from you, I can understand a lot of questions I have had, but I still have a long way to go.

G. D., Jackson, MI

TOMORROW'S WORLD

I would like to send you our sincere condolences for the tragic disaster in New York and Washington. I was educated in an "American" school in Singapore. During my early school days, we used to sing "God Bless America" and the "Star Spangled Banner." So when those events happened on September 11, suddenly I was transported back to those early days. I thank God for opening my eyes recently, as I have been reading your magazine sincerely, praying hard and keeping Christ's Sabbath. Thank you for your good articles, to bring anyone to repentance. Please continue to give us more good news, so that everybody can be more committed to God.

D. D., Taman Daya, Malaysia

Thanks so very much for the best study material we have ever had! My husband and I really use it. We pray for you and all your co-workers. The magazines and other free materials are wonderful!

M. M., Monticello, MS

I enjoy your magazine *Tomorrow's World*. It is plain and to the point, the way the Bible should be explained. I also enjoy your television program.

C. B., Nashville, TN

I want to thank you for your programs. I look forward to watching them every week. I love the insights you give from the Bible. I thank God that we have people like you here for us to help us understand God and the Bible and the world.

K. M., O'Fallon, MO

BOOKLETS

I want to thank you most sincerely for all of the copies of *Tomorrow's World* you have sent me. Also, thank you for the booklets *Restoring Apostolic Christianity* and *Twelve Keys to Answered Prayer*.

M. W., Kilbrinish, Ireland

I am writing to you from a penitentiary in Oklahoma. As I lay in bed one night, I caught your show on television. I was so blessed by your words and knowledge of the Bible. I am a babe in Christ but desire the sincere milk thereof. Thank you for your love, guidance, prayers and teachings to the lost world and to myself. I anxiously await receiving the booklet, *Restoring Apostolic Christianity*.

E. C., Cushing, OK

I was very touched by your booklet, *Your Ultimate Destiny*, so that I broke down and repented of my sins and gave my life to Christ. It really opened my eyes. I had never heard about all the things that you talked about in the booklet. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

L. T., Hillsboro, OH

We encourage you to share with us your reactions to *Tomorrow's World*. Please direct your correspondence to "Letters to the Editor" at our United States address, or send e-mail to letters@tomorrowsworld.org. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Remember to include your name, address and daytime phone number.



The Coming Food Crisis

By Mark Mendiola

For decades, the amber waves of grain in the United States, Canada and Australia have provided wheat, barley and other crops needed to sustain populations. Prodigious volumes of grain exports from these countries have kept large portions of the world from succumbing to mass starvation.

Yet widespread major drought this past year has sharply reduced the bushels of grain harvested in the “breadbasket of the world” as American, Canadian and Australian farmers struggle to survive and their stockpiles dwindle. Bible prophecy shockingly shows that their agricultural production will take a dramatic turn for the worse in the years ahead.

All is not well down on the farm, and the farmer’s plight bodes ill for countries depending on them for daily sustenance. Dramatic shifts in the balance of international economic power loom. The Bible shows that prior to the return of Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth, massive food shortages will be rampant throughout the world.

The Book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible, describes four symbolic horses in its sixth chapter. One of the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse” is a rider on a black horse symbolizing global famine. “When He [Jesus Christ] opened the

third seal, I heard the third living creature say, ‘Come and see.’ And I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine’” (Revelation 6:5–6).

A denarius was about a day’s wage for a worker in Palestine 2,000 years ago. Carefully measuring and paying that much money for only a small amount of grain shows food in extremely short supply and prices spiraling as a result. Jesus Christ warned that famines would be among the signs of His Second Coming and the end of the age (Matthew 24:3, 7; Mark 13:8, Luke 21:11).

Famines can be caused by wars or natural disasters, which Christ also said would presage His Second Coming. These conditions have been extant in Africa, Asia and Latin America for decades, but Bible prophecy shows even the U.S., Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa will experience a major crisis in feeding their own people. That seems unthinkable today, but trends definitely, inexorably point in that direction.

Global grain supplies are sharply tightening, while worldwide consumption continues to increase.

Total international stockpiles of wheat and coarse grains have dropped from 363 million tons in 1998 to an estimated 257 million tons in 2001—a drop of 106 million tons in three years!

This drawdown of grain stockpiles occurs as world population continues to swell. The populations of the People's Republic of China and India each exceed one billion people. Combined, they represent about a third of the entire world's 6.3 billion people. However, China also has experienced severe drought this past year that has ravaged its grain production.

The 2001 drought came on the heels of devastating weather conditions in 2000, when China suffered its most serious drought in 20 years, scorching 75.9 million acres in the main grain-producing areas of northern and northeastern China. That year, it was estimated that China's corn output was reduced by 20 percent to 103 million tons, wheat by 10 percent to 102 million tons and rice by 5 percent to 189 million tons. The total reduction was the worst since 1980.

The Population Institute reports that the world's population is growing by about 78 million each year. "Ninety-seven percent of that growth occurs in the poorest countries," the Institute reports, "countries too often torn by civil strife and social unrest and where all too many survive on the equivalent of less than one U.S. dollar a day."

It took all of recorded history for world population to reach one billion by 1830. A century later, in 1930, it stood at two billion. Only 30 years later, it crossed the three billion threshold. Fifteen years later, it reached four billion in 1975. Only 11 years later, five billion people inhabited the earth in 1986. By 1999, the six billion mark was achieved. Meanwhile, the world has lost an estimated 26 billion tons of topsoil because of rapid population growth, urbanization, marginal farming and desert expansion, the Institute reports.

A Curse on Our Stockpiles

As world population continues to burgeon and grain supplies shrink globally, the prospect of major grain producers falling dramatically behind in production is a frighteningly grim fact of life.

On Sept. 14, 2001, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that total U.S. wheat production for 2001 was expected to slip below two billion bushels for the first time since 1991 or 10 percent below the 2000 harvest. Spring wheat production was forecast to be 6 percent below the previous sea-

son. Durum wheat production was projected to be down 21 percent from 2000.

Losses for the Canadian economy and the nation's farmers were estimated in the billions of dollars—with taxpayers paying the brunt, after crop insurance companies failed to come through with compensation. The Canadian Wheat Board put Western Canada's wheat crop at 730 million bushels, down 20.8 percent from previous levels. The durum crop was projected to be at 110 million bushels, down 46 percent from 2000. Total Western Canada grain production was expected to be the lowest since 1988.

It is no coincidence that Canada, the U.S. and Australia are experiencing disastrous setbacks in crop production. There is a cause-and-effect reason for the downturn in their harvests. As U.S. President Abraham Lincoln stated in 1863: "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven." Yet Americans, Canadians, Australians and other British-descended peoples do not acknowledge their blessings originate with Almighty God. As a result of that egregious sin of ingratitude, along with other national sins, those blessings are being stripped away.

The Living God is removing His protective hand from our nations. As we continue to reject His commandments, we will increasingly suffer the consequences of disobedience (Deuteronomy 8:5–6). When we obey those commandments, we are blessed. When we repudiate them, we are cursed. Notice what God says in His inspired Word, the Holy Bible.

"For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing.... When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you" (Deuteronomy 8:7–10).

There can be no denying that nations of British descent have inherited the world's prime agricultural land, but after decades of taking it for granted, they have credited themselves with their prosperity and wealth, not the God in heaven who has bequeathed it upon them. The underlying strength of a nation's economy is primarily in its farm production.

"Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments and His statutes which I command you today, lest—when you have eaten and are full... then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my

hand have gained me this wealth.’ And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the power to get wealth.... Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish” (Deuteronomy 8:11–12, 17–19).

Not only have Canada’s grain-producing prairies been afflicted with devastating drought, the U.S. this past year, in its Pacific Northwest region, has experienced one of its worst droughts in history. It has been so bad that the region’s reservoirs, filled by spring runoff, have been drawn down to dangerously low levels. If a substantial snow pack is not received this winter, the Pacific Northwest could be completely depleted of water, leaving irrigators unable to grow their crops this next growing season.

The U.S. and other English-speaking nations have been reeling from a relentless barrage of national setbacks hammering their economic, military and political power, shattering their prestige in the eyes of other nations. Conditions are going to become much worse unless they repent of breaking God’s Ten Commandments and wholeheartedly return to the God who gives them the power to obtain wealth. Severe agricultural problems will be at the forefront.

As we approach the end of this age, God will take an increasingly personal hand in chastising unrepentant peoples and nations. “And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit,” God warns (Leviticus 26:18–20).

Nothing will destroy a nation or empire more effectively than disastrous crop failures, which will force people to spend more of their income to feed themselves at escalating costs. In Deuteronomy 28, God shows that if we do not obey His voice and carefully observe His commandments and statutes, curses will overtake our lands, not the least of which are agriculture catastrophes.

“Cursed shall you be in the country. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be... the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks,” God again warns (Deuteronomy 28:16–18).

“And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. The LORD will change the rain of your land to

powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed” (vv. 23–24).

“Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue them” (v. 31).

Some market analysts project U.S. corn stockpiles for 2001–02 will be at or below 1,000 million bushels—the smallest total since 1996–97—because of extreme heat and dryness in the Midwest. That is down from ending stocks of 2,003 million bushels in August 2000.

The U.S. spring wheat crop in September was estimated at 508.5 million bushels—42.4 million bushels below the previous year’s record crop. U.S. grain stockpiles projected to be at 648 million bushels, were down 225 million bushels from 2000–01, again the smallest since 1996–97.

Tougher Times Ahead

For many farmers, this will be a make-or-break year as they eat into their equity to finance their operations, and banks foreclose on their property in greater numbers. The American dollar’s high value in recent years has made it more difficult for U.S. growers to export their crops, dropping commodity prices to rock-bottom levels reminiscent of the 1920s prior to the stock market’s collapse.

Conversely, if the dollar’s erosion in value continues after the Federal Reserve’s repeated interest rate cuts, foreign nations will be better able to afford the dwindling supplies of American wheat, barley and corn. It will be tempting for farmers to export more to raise much-needed revenue while drawing down their storage bins and silos. It is a risky gamble to deplete our farm stockpiles if crops fail this next growing season.

The Bible and history show that the nations of the U.S. and British Commonwealth are modern-day descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh—two of the 12 tribes of ancient Israel (for more on this key to Bible prophecy, please write for our free booklet *What’s Ahead for America and Britain?*). Just as God has heaped tremendous abundance on those nations the past two centuries, He is removing those blessings with alarming speed as our national sins mount to heaven.

The prophet Ezekiel’s message to these modern nations of the House of Israel is sobering and frightening unless our people change course. As a symbolic sign of divine retribution on the House of Israel, God told Ezekiel to shave his head and beard, and

weigh and divide his hair (Ezekiel 5:1). “You shall burn with fire one-third in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are finished; then you shall take one-third and strike around it with the sword, and one-third you shall scatter in the wind: I will draw out a sword after them” (v. 2).

As God removes His protective hand from our nations, our arrogant disregard for His laws will bring us terrible woes. We will experience the tragic consequences of our arrogant disregard for Gods’ laws, as we begin to reap what we have sown. The English-speaking nations lead the world in creating a culture that glorifies violence, illicit sex and sick humor in entertainment, murders innocent unborn babies by the millions because they are considered inconvenient, and mocks traditional Judeo-Christian values. Other nations will be astounded at how rapidly the U.S., Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa are brought down.

“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Because you have multiplied disobedience more than the nations that are all around you and have not walked in My statutes, nor kept My judgments, nor even done according to the judgments of the nations that are all around you,’ therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

‘Indeed I, even I, am against you and will execute judgment in your midst in the sight of the nations. And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations’” (Ezekiel 5:7–9).

“One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. Thus shall My anger be spent, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them, and I will be avenged; and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it in My zeal, when I have spent My fury upon them,” God warns. (vv. 12–13).

“When I send against them the terrible arrows of famine which shall be for destruction, and which I will send to destroy you, I will increase the famine upon you and cut off your supply of bread” (v. 16).

For a third of a nation’s population to be wiped out by famine and pestilence—which ride side by side

as two of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—there must be massive crop failures brought about by natural disasters such as drought and flooding. Keep watching for continued dramatic farm production declines in the U.S., Canada and Australia.

The Bible shows that a time is coming when farmers will be ashamed and mourn because crops will fail as the land is parched and rivers dry up for lack of rain and snow. Even livestock will suffer and lament (Joel 1:10–12, 17–20; Jeremiah 14:3; Amos 5:16).

Not Too Late to Repent

Americans, British, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders and South Africans can avert widespread national disasters by returning to their God in heartfelt repentance and changing their ways. If they

refuse, calamities will intensify and ultimately lead to national captivity and slavery. Notice what King Solomon prayed:

“When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin

of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance. When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers.... whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows his own burden and his own grief, and spreads out his hands to this house: then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know” (2 Chronicles 6:24–30).

God promises: “When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:13–14). The choice is ours. TW



As bank foreclosures increase, 2002 will be a make-or-break year for many farmers, forced to eat into their equity to finance farm operations.



The Euro: Prelude to a Superstate?

January 1, 2002 is the launch date of a new common currency for the nations of Europe. Outside of Europe, few may notice. Yet Bible prophecy reveals that the shift to the euro is an important part of a bigger picture that will shock and surprise the world just before Jesus Christ returns to this earth. You need to understand the *significance* of what is happening in Europe—and *where* it will lead.

Since World War II, farsighted European statesmen have been motivated by a powerful vision. Their initial goal was to create a European Community built around a Common Market. They hoped that uniting Europe would prevent conflicts that had ravaged the continent so many times in the past. A common currency was a critical step towards European Union. Europe's leaders know this grand scheme, rooted in Europe's long history, would recreate the empire of Charlemagne—crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the Pope in 800AD. Charlemagne and his successors viewed themselves as heirs of the Roman Caesars. European leaders (including the Pope) understand the power of this heritage and the emotional appeal of a crusade to reunite European "Christendom."

In 1991, through the Treaty of Maastricht, Europe's leaders agreed to a monetary union that was irrevocable and irreversible, and set target dates for a common currency and a European Central Bank. European leaders feel that the momentum toward unity must be maintained to prevent Europe from slipping back into dangerous "old ways." The euro is seen as the "foundation of a United Europe" and the "motor of European integration" (*The Principality and Power of Europe*, Hilton, 1997, pp. 113–114). It is claimed that "the euro will be a guarantor of peace, freedom, economic stability and job security" (*Europe Adrift*, Newhouse, 1997, p. 102). For some, faith in the euro and Europe has become a *secular religion*.

However, there is a dark side to this grand vision. It is no secret that the euro is a tool to restore a unit-

ed Europe to its once-held place as a major player on the world stage. The euro could "challenge the dollar's hegemony; and accelerate European integration... into an economic and political superpower to rival the U.S." (*Wall Street Journal Europe*, Sept. 10, 2001). The Maastricht Treaty was an attempt by the French to tie a newly united Germany (80 million strong) tightly to Europe. Replacing the German Federal Bank with a Central European Bank will give other nations (especially France) a chance to control Europe's money—and Germany. Money is power. Whoever controls Europe's money controls Europe, and "those who control the world's purse strings are at the helm of global destiny" (Hilton, p. 112). The plan for European monetary and political union is largely the work of France and Germany, to which the smaller nations generally concede. Yet France and Germany have conflicting goals, ambitions and fears. The real story of the euro is not about economics, it is about *power*—who will play Charlemagne in the new Europe. Events under way in Europe have been called "a dirty war for the control of Europe's money" (*The Rotten Heart of Europe*, Connolly, 1995, p. 3).

Not everyone sees the euro as a panacea. The commitment at Maastricht to an "irrevocable and irreversible" European monetary union has been termed an unwise and risky "leap into the unknown... a great mistake, a misguided goal... a project that *may end in tears*" (Newhouse, pp. 97, 101, 295). Locking Europe into one fixed interest rate could become a "sword of Damocles" that damages national economies and divides Europeans. Brian Connolly, a former senior member of the European Commission, states bluntly: "Europe built on its money would be a Europe sitting atop the fault lines of an earthquake zone" (Connolly, p. 378). Another scholar comments that Europeans "lack the degree of cultural unity required by a project so far-reaching and *full of pitfalls*. Those who don't see the



risks they have taken on have *drifted into denial*" (Newhouse, p. 298).

The euro alone will not unite Europe. Europeans have been unable to agree on common rules to guide their financial affairs, and "it is now clear that a single currency isn't powerful enough on its own to force such a change" (*Wall Street Journal Europe*, Sept. 10, 2001). Additional help will be needed. The effort to unite Europe has been compared to building the great European cathedrals, however, "the Church of Rome sustained that kind of effort" (Newhouse, p. 293). Dr. Otto von Habsburg states that "the imperial crown of Charlemagne and of the Holy Roman Empire might well have its part to play" in eventually uniting Europe (Hilton, p. 35).

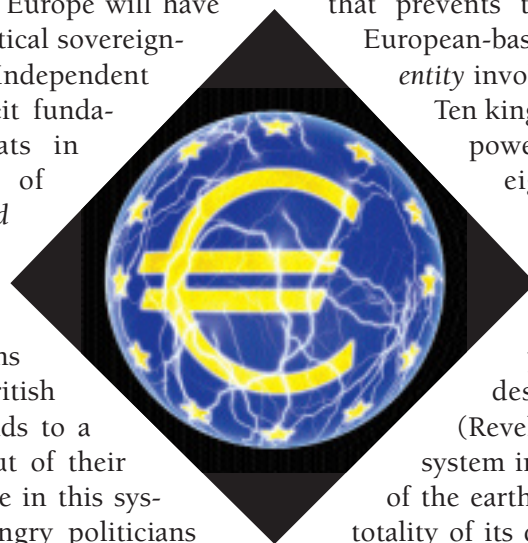
European monetary union will not work without political union. Nations of Europe will have to turn over economic and political sovereignty to a central government. Independent democracies will have to forfeit fundamental powers to bureaucrats in Brussels—where 90 percent of decisions are made by *unelected* officials (Newhouse, p. 80). Europe's leaders created a Central Bank accountable *to no one but itself*. If Britain joins the common currency, the British will turn over 80 billion pounds to a Central Bank that is totally out of their control. The potential for abuse in this system is immense—if power-hungry politicians emerge with an evil agenda. Observers warn, "Britain [and other Europeans] are *sleepwalking* into a European superstate from which there will be *no escape*" (Hilton, p. 97). This superstate will be dominated by Roman Catholic religion, and Protestants will be outnumbered three or four to one. Critics assert the European Parliament is a democratic façade, and that real power in a European superstate will be more totalitarian in nature (Hilton, pp. 82–84). One reporter commented: "Unless we wake

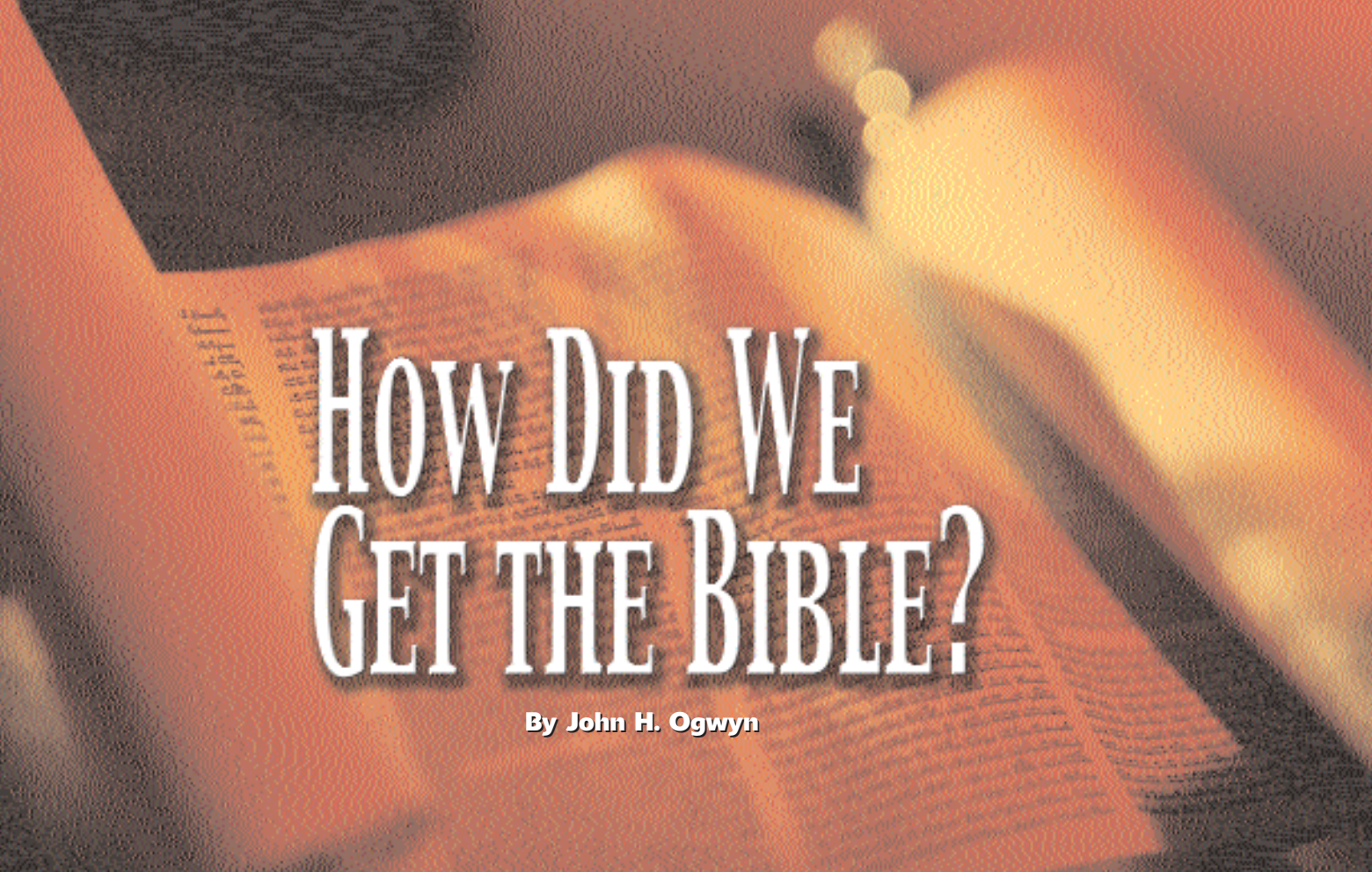
up and defend our individual and collective rights... we may find, when our eyes are open, that we no longer have any power at all" (*The London Times*, Jan. 1, 2000).

But what lies ahead? The Bible reveals that "in the latter days" we will see the *last phase* of a system whose roots go back to ancient Rome *arise again* in Europe (Daniel 2:28, 40–43). It will be a *fragile* federation—likened to a mixture of iron and clay. This 7th and final revival of the Roman Empire (Revelation 7:10–11), aided by demonic power, will *surprise* and *shock* the world (Revelation 13:1–4). This revival will be promoted by a religious leader working miracles (Revelation 13:11–18). Opponents of this new order will be persecuted and killed. Non-conformists will be marked in a way that prevents them from holding a job. This European-based system will be an *economic entity* involving global trade (Revelation 18).

Ten kings [national leaders] will give their power [money] and authority [sovereignty] to the beast (Revelation 17:12–13). This fragile federation will be short-lived (three-and-a-half years)—as was Charlemagne's empire. The political beast will turn on and destroy its religious cohort (Revelation 17:16–17). As the whole system implodes and crumbles, merchants of the earth will *weep* at the suddenness and totality of its demise (Revelation 18:9–20). The introduction of the euro to unite Europe is *significant*. It will usher in events that will climax at the return of Jesus Christ. These prophecies are a *warning* for us today. God will provide a way of escape for those who heed His admonitions (1 Corinthians 10:1–13). For more information about these sobering events, request our free booklet *The Beast of Revelation*—and keep reading *Tomorrow's World*, where *prophecy comes alive!*

—Douglas S. Winnail





HOW DID WE GET THE BIBLE?

By John H. Ogwyn

The Bible is unique. Few people have read it, but most have an opinion about it. The Bible asserts that it is God's infallible, authoritative revelation to mankind. It claims to reveal truth that can be known in no other way.

There are dozens of different translations of the Bible, with new ones coming out regularly. Some purport to be scholarly works, reflecting the words of the oldest manuscripts. Others are "trendy"—catering to modern values and special interests. Is one as good as another, or do we need to be careful of certain translations? These are all important questions that demand accurate answers for those who are considering taking the Bible seriously as a guide for life.

The portion of the Bible that we commonly call the Old Testament was completed in the

days of Ezra the Priest and Governor Nehemiah, about 420BC. Ezra was sent by King Artaxerxes of Persia to Jerusalem in 457BC with the temple scrolls and other treasures which had been kept in Babylon since the days of Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra 7:14). Ezra came back to teach Scripture to the people (v. 10) and to institute religious reform for people who were on the verge of losing their very identity and absorbing the syncretistic paganism of their neighbors. About thirteen years after Ezra's return, Nehemiah returned as governor and had the authority to insist that Ezra's reforms be carried out.

The first century Jewish historian and priest, Flavius Josephus, recorded the history of the Hebrew Scriptures and contrasted them to the Greek writings extant in his day. "For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us,

disagreeing from and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have], but only 22 books... which are justly believed to be divine..." (*Against Apion*, 1, 8). Josephus went on to state that the Jewish scriptures had been compiled in their final form in the days of King Artaxerxes, who reigned in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. He emphasized that, while many books had been composed among the Jews since that time, they were not considered to have divine authority, because there had not been a succession of prophets since the time of Malachi, a late contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah. In addition to Josephus, the book of 1 Maccabees (second century BC), writings by the first century AD philosopher Philo, and traditions preserved in *Seder Olam* and the Talmud (ancient commentaries) all testify to a fixed canon since the time of Ezra.

The 22 books mentioned by Josephus correspond to the books of our Old Testament—normally counted as 39 books in modern translations. The difference in number is because of a difference in the way the books were counted. The 12 Minor Prophets, for instance, were kept on one scroll in Hebrew, and were counted as simply one book, not as 12 separate ones. There are several other combinations as well.

How can we know that the text of the Old Testament has been accurately preserved? The Jewish community has officially preserved the Old Testament in what is called the Masoretic Text. How was this done? Note the explanation from Appendix 30 of *The Companion Bible*: “The text itself had been fixed before the Masorites were put in charge of it. . . the Masorites were authorized custodians of it. Their work was to preserve it. The Masorah is called ‘A Fence to the Scriptures,’ because it locked all words and letters in their places. . . . It records the number of times the several letters occur in the various books of the Bible; the number of words, and the middle word; the number of verses, and the middle verse. . . for the set purpose of safeguarding the Sacred Text, and preventing the loss or misplacement of a single letter or word.” This meticulous attention to detail provides a background for understanding the literal truth of Jesus’ statement in Matthew 5:18 that not one *jot* or one *tittle* would pass from the Law. The *jot* refers to the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet and the *tittle* describes a part of a letter.

The New Testament

While the Hebrew Scriptures were complete from the days of

Ezra, God’s revelation to mankind was not finished. In the aftermath of Jesus’ resurrection, accounts of His life and ministry were written. Letters to fledgling congregations were written. As the decades passed, those who were firsthand witnesses of what Jesus Christ said and did began to pass from the scene. False teachers arose who were teaching “a different gospel” (2 Corinthians 11:4). They also wrote letters, often signing the name of one of the Apostles (2 Thessalonians 2:2). In such confusion, how was an accurate account of Christ’s teachings and the teachings of His Apostles to be preserved for future generations of disciples?

Peter addresses this issue in 2 Peter, the last letter that he wrote. Written shortly before his execution, not long after Paul’s death, Peter puts things in perspective. Referring to his soon-approaching death in verse 14, Peter states: “Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease” (2 Peter 1:15). The only way that he could ensure a permanent record of what he had taught was to leave behind writings officially designated as Holy Scripture.

Beginning in verse 16, Peter abruptly switched from using the first person singular to using “we,” the first person plural. Who was the “we” to whom Peter referred in verses 16–19? He defined the “we” in verse 18, when he referred to them having witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus in the Mount. This event is detailed in Matthew 17:1–13 where we learn that only Peter, James, and John accompanied Jesus to the mount and were first-hand witnesses of this event. James the brother of John was the first of the Apostles to be martyred (Acts 12:1–2) and had been dead

for decades at the time Peter was writing 2 Peter. Therefore, the “we” being referred to by Peter could only refer to him and John.

He goes on to explain in 2 Peter 1:19 that “we”—he and John—were the only ones remaining who possessed the “sure word of prophecy” (KJV). In other words, Peter was pointing out to his readers that he and John were the ones designated by Christ to leave behind an authoritative record that would guide the Christian community in generations to come, long after the death of the original disciples.

In 2 Peter 3:15–16, he referred to Paul’s writings in a way that indicated that they were complete, mentioning “all” his letters. He also referred to people distorting them as they did “the rest of the Scriptures.” Peter defined Paul’s letters as Scripture, on a par with the Old Testament, and intimated that Paul was no longer alive to respond to those who sought to twist his meaning.

There are 27 books in the New Testament, five of which are attributed to the Apostle John and believed to have been written approximately three decades after the death of Peter. This would indicate that Peter, prior to his death, put together a canon of 22 books, exactly corresponding in number to the Jewish way of reckoning the books of the Old Testament. The Apostle John then completed our New Testament canon, adding his five books—a gospel, three epistles and Revelation—for a total of 27 books in all. The 22 books of the Hebrew scriptures, added to the 27 books of the Greek scriptures, make 49 in all—seven times seven, God’s number of completion and perfection.

This account differs significantly from Roman Catholic

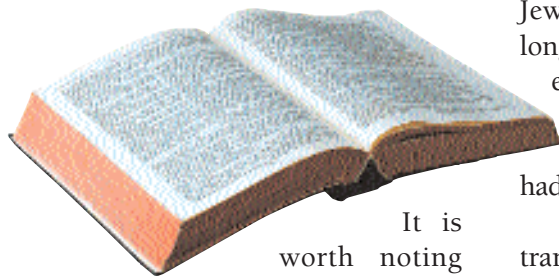
assertions, which allege that it was the Council of Carthage which fixed the New Testament canon in 397AD. How accurate is that claim? What did this particular council *really* do?

Since we do not have a bound copy of the New Testament consisting of all of the original manuscripts dating from 100AD, what proof do we have that the books we know as the New Testament were acknowledged as Scripture prior to the Council of Carthage? Among other evidence, we have the testimony of early writers dating from within a few years of the death of the Apostle John. These men—including Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius and Justin Martyr—all wrote within 50 years of John's death. They quote from various New Testament books, showing that they were known and acknowledged as inspired writings.

Why, then, did several contradictory canon lists circulate? And what can we learn from them? The Muratorian canon was in use at Rome around 200AD. It omits Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter and 3 John, and contains two spurious works—"Revelation of Peter" and "Wisdom of Solomon." Yet soon after, when Origen drew up a canon list, the uninspired nature of these two spurious works forced him to omit them altogether. Origen's list was otherwise almost identical to the Muratorian canon, except that he included 1 Peter and excluded James and 2 John and Jude. Shortly prior to the Nicene Council in 325AD, Eusebius gave a list of the books accepted as part of the New Testament by the western "orthodox" church. His list was virtually identical with Origen's.

Neither Origen nor Eusebius wished to accept Hebrews or most

of the General Epistles, but they acknowledged that these books existed and that many considered them inspired. These two men also advanced several other spurious works, such as the "Letter of Barnabas" and the "Didache," for possible inclusion. Yet although Origen and Eusebius were influential theologians, they were unable to get their way, and the canon set by John remained intact—powerful evidence of God's hand in the preservation of His inspired Word.



It is worth noting that, during debates on the canon, those writings which drew the greatest opposition by these early Roman Catholic leaders had two characteristics in common. They either contained warnings of an apostasy from the truth (2 Peter, 2 and 3 John and Jude), or they contained a strong "Jewish" flavor (James and Hebrews).

Clearly, many Roman Catholic leaders were uncomfortable with the message contained in these books—and for good reason! However, there was such an overwhelming awareness of the genuine nature of these books, particularly in Asia Minor and in Greece, that removing them from the New Testament proved impossible. The Council of Carthage, far from establishing the New Testament canon, simply represented an acknowledgment by the Roman church that the canon known and established since the end of the first century could not be altered.

Greek Translations of Scripture

Should we be concerned that some New Testament quotations from the Old Testament were taken from a Greek translation—the Septuagint—rather than from the Hebrew Masoretic Text? Greek was the most universal language at the time when the New Testament was being written. Gentile converts were unfamiliar with the Hebrew language and even most Jews outside of Palestine no longer had a good reading knowledge of Hebrew. The Septuagint was a Greek translation of the Old Testament that had been made in Egypt.

But it was not the only Greek translation of the Old Testament available in the time when the New Testament was written. There was at least one Greek translation that differed significantly from the Septuagint. It was used by Theodotion in the second century AD for his revised Greek text of the Old Testament. The book of Daniel, as preserved in Greek translation by Theodotion, matches far more closely the quotations from Daniel in the New Testament than does the Septuagint, for instance. Though none of the Greek translations of the Old Testament were totally accurate, most of their deviations from the Hebrew text were in areas that did not affect the overall sense of the message.

Extant Greek translations of the Old Testament, including the Septuagint, are quoted in the Greek New Testament where they either properly translate or paraphrase the inspired meaning of the Hebrew text. In cases where the readily available first century Greek translations were unusable,

the New Testament writers made their own direct translation or paraphrase from Hebrew into Greek.

Gleason Archer and G. C. Chirichigno in their comprehensive work, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey*, make the following points about New Testament quotations: 1) in 268 New Testament citations both the Septuagint and Masoretic Text are in complete harmony; 2) in 50 citations the New Testament agrees with the Septuagint, even though it differs slightly from the Masoretic Text (although not seriously enough to distort the meaning); 3) in 33 citations the New Testament adheres more closely to the Masoretic Text than to the Septuagint; 4) in 22 citations the New Testament adheres closely to the Septuagint even when it deviates somewhat from the Masoretic Text. The New Testament writers only made use of Septuagint quotations if those passages properly conveyed the inspired meaning of the Hebrew text. A valid meaning could be conveyed in cases even where the Septuagint offered more of a paraphrase or an interpretation than a literal translation of the Hebrew. What about surviving New Testament texts? There are literally thousands of complete or partial Greek manuscripts which survive from early times. The oldest is a fragment of John's gospel that is dated to around 130AD, only about 30 years after John's death (*Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity*, p. 93).

Most of the Greek manuscripts that have come down to us are of what scholars call the Byzantine (or Antiochan) family of texts. These manuscripts, though not the oldest, are the ones

preserved by the Greek church. Because they represent the vast majority of Greek manuscripts they are sometimes referred to as the Majority Text or the *Textus Receptus*. This is the text from which the King James translation of the New Testament was made. However, beginning in 1881, other Greek texts have been published that have been the basis for nearly all subsequent translations, including the New International Version, the New American Standard Bible, and the New English Bible. These published texts have relied heavily upon two ancient Greek manuscripts, called *Codex Vaticanus* (also known as 'B') and *Codex Sinaiticus* (also known as Aleph). Where did these manuscripts originate?

Vaticanus was "discovered" in the Vatican in 1481 and was released as the Jesuit-Rheims Bible in 1582. It differs from the *Textus Receptus* in nearly 8,000 places. The use of recent technology such as the vidicon camera, which creates a digital form of faint writing, reveals that *Vaticanus* has been altered by at least two hands, one as late as the twelfth century. Noted scholar Dr. Bruce Metzger states: "A few passages therefore remain to show the original appearance of the first hand." The corrector "omitted [things] he believed to be incorrect" (*Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*, Oxford University Press, p. 74).

The *Sinaiticus* manuscripts were discovered by Constantine von Tischendorf in a monastery in the Sinai desert in the 1850s. They differ in about 9,000 places from the traditional Byzantine Text (*Textus Receptus*). Dr. Bruce Metzger describes the carelessness of transmission that marks the *Sinaiticus* manuscripts. He declared that at least nine "correctors" had worked on the manuscripts over the centuries. "Tischendorf's edition of the manuscript enumerates some 14,800 places where some alteration has been made to the text" (p. 77). Later use of ultra-violet lamps showed multiple additional places where the original reading had been erased.

Not only do *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus* disagree with the overwhelming majority of manuscripts, but also they disagree with one another perhaps a dozen times on every page. While many of these disagreements are small and may involve merely a preposition or the spelling of a word, others omit whole verses such as the ending of Mark's gospel.

When the Apostle John put our New Testament into its final form, shortly before his death at the end of the first century, he was living in Ephesus, a Greek-speaking city located near the western coast of ancient Asia Minor (modern Turkey). This is the same city that had served as the repository of the copies of Paul's writings decades

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earlier. It is the city used in Revelation 2 to represent the entire first stage of the Church of God. The Greek manuscripts that come from this area are the ones labeled by scholars as the Byzantine type.

Scholars fleeing from the Turkish invasion in the 15th century brought copies of Byzantine texts west. Many of these Greek scholars and the manuscripts that they brought with them ended up in the area of Basel, Switzerland after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. It is from these manuscripts that printed texts of Erasmus (1516) and Stephens (1520) were primarily derived.

Stephen's printed text was known as the *Textus Receptus* and was the accepted standard of the Greek New Testament until the latter part of the 19th century.

Since the 19th century, Bible translation has undergone a further change. Dismissing the idea that the Bible was supernaturally inspired and preserved, many scholars have taken the approach that the oldest manuscripts, whatever their source, are closer to the original and therefore must be more accurate. Most 20th century Bible translations, apart from the *New King James Version*, have used these texts touted by such critics,

and relegated the readings of officially preserved texts to footnotes. While these translations can be useful for Bible study, they should be treated with caution, and not accepted to the exclusion of the more historically sound texts.

The Creator God not only inspired the writing of the Bible, He also guided the process of both canonization and preservation of the text. In spite of numerous attempts by carnal men through the centuries to suppress or distort the word of God, God has been faithful to ensure that His "instruction book" for life is still available for us today. TW

A "FAITHLESS" GENERATION? (continued from page 3)

of the awesome promises given to Abraham—and of *why* these promises were given: "Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws" (v. 5). Here we see that Abraham was blessed **not** because of some "empty faith," but because he really *trusted* God and therefore **obeyed** His Commandments.

Over and over, God's Word tells us that our prayers will be heard **if** we will obey God and *do what He says*. In Isaiah 59:1–2, God tells us: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your **sins** have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

Obviously, God will not hear those who *rebel* against His Word and *refuse* to keep His great spiritual **law**—the Ten Commandments! John, the "beloved Apostle," very clearly stated: "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4). Near the end of this powerful book, John describes *how* the true "love of God" functions. "For this IS the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

In 1 John 3:22, the inspired Apostle reveals one major reason *why* our prayers will be answered: "And

whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we **keep** His commandments and **do** those things that are pleasing in His sight." Notice the words "keep" and "do." God does **not** respond to the "empty faith" of those who claim to believe in God but will **not** obey Him. As the Apostle James was inspired to write: "**faith without works is dead**" (James 2:20).

To do *your part* in acquiring and in living by true faith, you should take several steps. First, prove to yourself the **reality** of the God of creation, the God of the Bible. Next, genuinely *study* His inspired Word, the Holy Bible. Learn to **believe** that God says what He means and *means what He says*.

The Apostle John tells us: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). If you will continually drink in of the Word of God—studying **all** of the Bible—God will become more real to you and you will grow in faith.

Finally, since faith is a "gift" of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9), get on your knees and ask God with *all your heart* for this precious gift! Then *use this gift* every day through the rest of your life, knowing that God is real, that He is near and that He will *guide* you, *bless* you and *heal* you IF you will zealously seek Him, obey Him and genuinely **believe** what He says!



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