

TOMORROW'S WORLD

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THE DEBT BOMB!





A personal message from the Editor in Chief, Roderick C. Meredith

Where and How Should You Pray to God?

Our local newspaper, the *Charlotte Observer*, recently ran an article describing “drive-through” prayers (May 6, 2011). The ministers and church leaders involved said that they were “copying fast food restaurants and drive-through banks.”

Interesting.

In our fast moving, self-centered, hedonistic society, perhaps many feel that they can only “spare” God a very few minutes of their “busy” day. *How thoughtful!* I am sure the Great Creator of heaven and earth is impressed. But *how* is He impressed?

In a desire to reach out to the large, secular community around them, many “up-to-date” churches are incorporating all kinds of ideas and gimmicks from the corporate world, from the entertainment industry and other sources. *Sometimes*, this effort does result in more people—more warm bodies—attending their services. But does this *genuinely please* God? Are these people truly learning to “know” and to *worship* the true God and serve Him? What are they learning through this “fast-food” religion?

It is vital that you know the real God. And you will **not** know the real God if you do not worship Him—and pray to Him—in the way He has taught us to do.

The inspired word of God is *very plain* regarding these matters. Jesus Christ told a Samaritan woman—a woman of “another” religion: “You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:22–24).

Speaking of the Bible, Jesus said, “Your word is Truth” (John 17:17). So the “key” to all these questions of how and where to pray is in the clear teachings and examples *found in the Bible*. For instance, Jesus explained, “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:6). Though it is not wrong to pray with others—or to utter a “quickie” prayer in some emergency—that is certainly not recommended as the normal primary practice of prayer for a genuine Christian who sincerely wants to put God **first** in his or her life.

Also, remember that the so-called “Lord’s Prayer”—Jesus’ “model prayer” found in Matthew 6—is simply a brief outline, or an *example*, of the right approach to God and of the main things to pray about. But when Jesus Himself needed special help or deliverance, He went “all out.” Jesus prayed *all night* before choosing the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12–13). He obviously prayed *most of the night* before walking on the water (Mark 6:46–48). Just before He had to endure the agony of the crucifixion, Jesus prayed so fervently that His blood vessels apparently burst and joined His sweat glands as He agonized before God in absolutely earnest prayer (Luke 22:44).

The Apostle James was inspired to tell us, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). And Jesus stated, “Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears with them?” (Luke 18:7).

At this point, some may wonder why people in **non-Christian religions cry out** and sometimes pray for long hours over and over—yet their prayers are

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RESTORING ORIGINAL CHRISTIANITY!

By Roderick C. Meredith

The true Jesus Christ of the Bible will soon return to planet Earth—this time as King of kings (Revelation 11:15). What kind of “Christianity” will the returning Christ recognize as His true message? Do you think for one minute that Jesus Christ will recognize and approve of the some 400 or 600 different denominations and sects all using His name and calling themselves “Christian”?

Think again!

For if you actually believe the Bible, you will quickly realize that the vast majority of all humanity has been deceived. You may remember that the beloved Apostle John was inspired to write, “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and *Satan*, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation

12:9). You may not have zeroed in on how the Apostle John wrote of a coming battle between *hundreds of millions* of people influenced by the coming “Beast Power”—so deceived that they will literally **fight Jesus Christ** at His Second Coming! How *deceived* people can be!

God’s word reveals that the return of Christ will mark “the times of restoration of **all** things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19–21). The “restoration of **all things**” will involve hundreds and *thousands* of changes in the way people live and **the way they worship the Creator!** For instance, most of you readers never grew up hearing about the religious festivals commanded in your Bible. You and I were taught about Christmas and Easter, about Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. Yet your own Bible clearly reveals that *the entire world* will soon be observing the annual **Feast of Tabernacles** every September–October as a *vital* part of worshipping the Creator.

“The *Feast of What?*” That will be the first reaction of *millions!* Yet your inspired Bible reveals, “all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, **and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles**” (Zechariah 14:16). Then the prophet Zechariah continues, “And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that

do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (vv. 17–19).

So, the **real** God—the God of the Bible—will not be messing around and letting seminary graduates argue with him to say that all of His laws are “out of date” or are “done away with”! Rather, He will take punitive action to *show who God is!*

Can you admit into your mind the **fact** that this present world and its religions are indeed “deceived”—just as dozens of passages in your Bible clearly indicate? Can you fully realize that the *vast majority* of today’s “Christianity” is **un-biblical** and *just plain wrong?*

As the famous philosopher and theologian Soren Kirkegaard observed: “The Christianity of the New Testament simply does not exist... what has to be done is to throw light upon a criminal offense against Christianity prolonged through centuries, perpetrated by millions (more or less guiltily), whereby they have cunningly, under the guise of perfecting Christianity, sought little by little to cheat God out of Christianity and have succeeded in making Christianity exactly the opposite of what it is in the New Testament” (*Attack Upon Christendom*, pp. 32–33).

Also, Professor Rufus M. Jones described how “mainstream Christianity” abandoned the teachings of Jesus Christ: “If by any chance Christ Himself had been taken by His later followers as the model and pattern of the new way, and a serious attempt had been made to set up His life and teaching as the standard and norm for the Church, Christianity would have been something *vastly different* from what it became. Then ‘heresy’ would have been as it is not now, deviation from His way, His teaching, His spirit, His kingdom.... What we may properly call ‘Galilean Christianity’ had a short life, though there have been notable

attempts to revive it and make it live again, and here and there spiritual prophets have insisted that anything else other than this simple Galilean religion is ‘heresy’; but the main line of historic development has taken a different course and has marked the emphasis very differently (*The Church’s Debt to Heretics*, pp. 15–16).”

Although they do not often like to admit it to their congregations and fellow believers, *many* respected theologians and historians clearly acknowledge the above **facts**. **These facts are a major theme** of this very Work, which publishes this *Tomorrow’s World* magazine and sponsors the *Tomorrow’s World* television program—and emphasizes “the restoration of **original Christianity!**”

RESTORING ORIGINAL CHRISTIANITY

Keeping the above-mentioned facts in mind, most of you long-time readers of *Tomorrow’s World* magazine—and viewers of the *Tomorrow’s World* telecast—understand why we emphasize the theme of “restoring original Christianity.” Contrary to what some misguided theologians teach, the Apostle Paul did **not** introduce new teachings which abrogated the instructions of Jesus Christ and the original Twelve Apostles. This is why we sometimes on our telecast or in our publications talk about restoring “Apostolic” Christianity—the true Christianity taught and practiced by the Apostles.

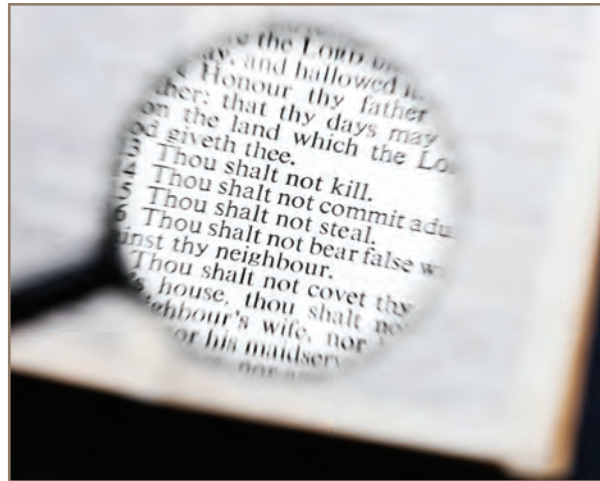
So, are we willing to let the *Bible* tell us what original Christianity was all about? Are we going to follow the ancient black-robed priests of the Middle Ages and their imaginations, or are we going to follow the example and teachings of Jesus Christ? Do we deeply realize that *Jesus Christ* is the One who

started Christianity? So He should know what Christianity is all about!

When you understand it, Satan the devil is a clever “counterfeiter”. A counterfeit hundred-dollar bill looks *very much* like the original—yet it is worth **nothing!** Much of false Christianity looks somewhat similar. Yet—when you understand it—the *entire premise* of “mainstream Christianity” is that we should follow what came down through the Middle Ages through confused men, along with a *very few* changes in doctrine and practice brought in by Martin Luther and the Reformers. It is true that the Reformation caused many to abandon false doctrines of papal supremacy and the worship of Mary. But other ideas about “going to heaven” with **no actual purpose** to accomplish, and the theory that belief in Christ is contradictory to obedience to the Ten Commandments as a *way of life*—all of this remained the *same*. Deceived “Protestant” reformers did **not** admit that they would have had to go all the way back to the **Bible** to see what “original Christianity” is all about!

When you really *study* the Bible—and especially the book of Acts—you see that the earliest Christians were *all circumcised Jews*. They *understood* and *believed* in God’s spiritual law, the Ten Commandments, and an *entire way of life* based upon the *spiritual* principles of the Old Testament—though they recognized that the *ritualistic laws* were not binding anymore. They did **not** look upon Christianity as a “new invention.” They knew that Jesus’ teachings were simply a *magnification* of the spiritual laws and *way of life* revealed throughout the Old Testament (Isaiah 42:21). The Apostle

Paul wrote Timothy, “that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). Paul was acknowledging that the Old Testament was **inspired**.



For the **only** Scripture available to Timothy from childhood was what we today call the “Old Testament.” Jesus *constantly* quoted from the Old Testament as the *inspired word of God*. Jesus taught, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word of God**” (Luke 4:4).

Yet most of today’s “mainstream Christians” are given the idea—directly or indirectly—that the main thing is to just “believe on Jesus” and to become sentimental about His *Person*. They are **not** taught to have a profound *reverence* and *awe* of God—the “fear of God” and the understanding that we are commanded to live by *every word of God in the Bible*. So today’s Christians keep many of the ancient *pagan* holidays and—because of their confusion—*refuse to keep* the Holy Days directly commanded in the Bible as we have seen earlier in Zechariah 14!

Jesus warned, “**Why** do you also transgress the commandment of God *because of your tradition?*” (Matthew 15:3). Mark’s gospel gives

us Jesus’ statement, “And in **vain** they worship **Me**, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:7). So, Jesus clearly said right there that you can actually *worship Him*, and yet be worshipping “in **vain**”! My friends, *true* Christianity is **not** to be based upon the “traditions” of men, but on the laws and the examples given in the Bible! So, it is absolutely **vital** that we look into the Bible for **God’s definition** of what true Christianity is all about!

Subtly but surely, Satan the devil has deceived most of today’s professing Christians into believing that Christianity is *cut off* from the Old Testament. In the name of “Christianity”

there are hundreds of millions who reject what Jesus Christ—the God of the Old Testament (1 Corinthians 10:1–4)—had given to the Israelites through His servant Moses.

The biblical and historical facts show plainly that *true* Christianity is a continuation—an enlargement and “magnification” of the teachings God gave through Moses—**not** something brand-new! As God inspired the Apostle Paul to explain to the Gentile Christians at Ephesus, “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:19–20). As we see, a basic part of the very “foundation” of Christianity are the writings and teachings of the Old Testament prophets—which Christ and the Apostles referred to as “Scripture” again and again!

Remember, Jesus Christ was a circumcised *Jew* (Luke 2:21–22;

Hebrews 7:14). It was His “custom” to keep the seventh-day Sabbath—right along with the other Jews (Luke 4:16). Far from abrogating God’s Sabbath, Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for “man”—not just for Jews, and that *He* was “Lord” of the Sabbath. So, the Sabbath is, in fact, the true “Lord’s Day” as far as a day of rest and worship is concerned!

Long after Christ’s death and resurrection, it was still the Apostle Paul’s “custom” to keep the seventh-day Sabbath (Acts 18:2). We also find Paul observing the annual biblical festivals—such as Pentecost (1 Corinthians 16:8), Passover and Unleavened Bread (1 Corinthians 5:7–8). Sadly, along with rejecting the biblical festivals commanded by God in the Old Testament, “mainstream Christianity” has in many quarters taken on a definite **anti-Jewish bias** that has *continued to this day!*

Yet the biblical Holy Days still matter to God! The true Church of God—*named* “Church of God” **twelve times** in the New Testament—was itself started on the Day of Pentecost, one of the seven annual Sabbaths God gave His people. At His second coming, Christ Himself will return at the “seventh trump” (Revelation 11:15)—pictured by the Feast of Trumpets, another of the biblical Holy Days. The same Jesus Christ who inspired the entire Bible inspired His servant Zechariah to explain that after Christ’s second coming the **whole world** will observe the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14). Also, note this description of life during the soon-coming Millennial reign of Jesus Christ: “‘And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one **Sabbath** to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the LORD” (Isaiah 66:23).

So, true Christians who observe the weekly and annual Sabbaths and festivals are not only following the “pattern” of original Christianity; we are “pioneering” the *way of life* that **all** nations will soon be learning in Tomorrow’s World! Through this very Work, we are beginning to **restore original Christianity**. This is a major *reason* for this Work of the living God at the end of this age. All who respond to His teachings will certainly have a “head start” in preparing to be those kings and priests Christ is now training to assist Him in **ruling** all the world in the coming Kingdom of God.

Most people in the world just go to church to be with their neighbors, to have a “good feeling” that they are “okay” and that they



are genuinely learning something worthwhile. However, *very few* of the more than two billion people who call themselves “Christians” have the concept that they are **now** “in training” to assist Christ in His soon-coming government to bring genuine *peace* and *joy* in Tomorrow’s World.

PROVE THE TRUTH FROM THE BIBLE!

As survey after survey has found, *only a very few* professing Christians truly study and understand the Bible. Most professing Christians cannot even name the four Gospels,

let alone understand what they say, or what the rest of the Bible says, or what the *one-fourth* of the entire Bible devoted to prophecy has to say. So, they do **not** understand the times we are in, or that this world is now crashing down around us and will continue to crash because of our wrong way of life until Christ returns and genuinely straightens things out *through His righteous government!*

Remember, the Apostle Paul told the Christians at Corinth: “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:2–3).

Most of you readers will recognize that the *entire approach* of these inspired words of Paul is **very different** from the idea of Christianity propounded in most of today’s churches! Overwhelmingly, most people are **not** taught that the ultimate goal of a Christian is to prepare to be a king or priest assisting Christ in ruling the world in His soon-coming Kingdom. Rather, most people in “mainstream” churches are taught that they will simply “float off to heaven” with essentially **nothing** to do! Therefore, they do **not** have a genuine reason to **obey** the Creator, to be an overcomer and to be in Christ’s coming Kingdom. This superficial approach—the entire “flavor” of mainstream Christianity—is *vastly different* from what the Bible clearly indicates! Jesus said, “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—as I also have received from My Father” (Revelation 2:26–27).

The Apostle John also wrote about the inspired “song” of the

saints, “And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, *and have made us kings and priests* to our God; and we shall *reign on the earth*’” (Revelation 5:9–10).

In God’s great Master Plan, the Creator has “made us **kings and priests** to our God and we shall *reign on the earth*.” Our rule will not be up in heaven. It will be *on this physical earth* where Jesus Christ will soon rule as King of kings.

In that coming Kingdom, the true Christ of the Bible will administer a righteous government that will teach an entire *way of life* based on the laws of God. The Ten Commandments will be the basis of its laws (Isaiah 2:1–4). God’s Sabbaths and Holy Days will be observed all over the earth—picturing God’s Plan in bringing people together in a way which honors the Creator.

People will be taught to actually **obey** the Ten Commandments—including that they should truly **fear** to kill another human being, even in war. They will be taught that adultery is not merely a physical act, but that even to **lust** after another’s spouse is, in fact, adultery (Matthew 5:27–28). Men and women will be taught to give, to help, to share and to **serve** one another in the fear of God. There will be a *peace and joy* beyond anything the world has even remotely experienced!

Describing the coming Kingdom, the world-ruling government of Jesus Christ, God *inspired* these words: “Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king’s Son. He will judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little

hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor” (Psalm 72:1–4).

In God’s coming Kingdom, there will be **righteous** judgment for every human being, and the “poor” will receive justice. Notice: “In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more” (v. 7). The incredible sense of genuine *peace and joy* that will permeate the entire world when *true Christianity* is everyone’s *way of life* is hard to

necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3–4).

Truly, we are to “contend”—be willing to **fight**—to get back to the *true faith* “which was *once for all* delivered to the saints”—even though certain men have crept in

The incredible sense of genuine peace and joy that will permeate the entire world when true Christianity is everyone’s way of life is hard to imagine! May God help all of us be willing even now to get back to that—to the true Christianity of the original Christians and of Jesus Christ Himself.

imagine! May God help all of us be willing even now to get back to that—to the *true Christianity* of the original Christians and of Jesus Christ Himself.

As Jesus’ physical brother, the Apostle Jude was inspired to write, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it

unnoticed and have virtually *done away* with that original faith.

When the *real* Jesus Christ of the Bible returns as King of kings, and looks around for those who have been willing to genuinely serve Him and *practice the original Christianity*, may God grant that you and I be among those people. It is **vital**. **Now** is the time to act! ■

RESTORING APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY



Many professing Christians today would scarcely recognize the message Jesus Christ taught His Apostles. This booklet reveals the original Christianity that most today have forgotten.

Write for our *FREE* booklet, *Restoring Apostolic Christianity*, or download it from the Booklets section of our Web site www.TomorrowsWorld.org.

Questions & Answers

Question: Christians are supposed to teach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that He rose from the dead. Why, then, does your magazine so often quote the books of the Old Testament?

Answer: The Old Testament consists of the inspired writings of God's servants who lived before Jesus Christ's birth, death and resurrection. The New Testament writings do not disparage the Old Testament; rather, they validate it. The Apostle Peter, for example, described the Old Testament as divinely inspired—and not from private interpretation or origin (2 Peter 1:20–21).

The Apostle Paul reminded the young evangelist Timothy that “from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture** is inspired by God and is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:15–16). Those “Holy Scriptures”—able to make Timothy wise for salvation—were the Old Testament books!

What did Jesus Christ Himself say? “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4). Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, and was referring to all of God's word from Genesis to Malachi—the canonized Bible of His day.

The New Testament shows that Jesus accepted Old Testament accounts as historically accurate, including those of Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:3–4), Abel (Matthew 23:35), Noah's flood (Luke 17:26–27), Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28–29) and Jonah (Matthew 12:40). Modern Bible critics often question and malign these Old Testament accounts, but Jesus Christ directly validated them with His words! Note also Jesus' reference to “Moses' writings”—which the Jews understood as the first five books of the Old Testament. Jesus admonished His critics, saying: “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (John 5:46–47). Without accepting Moses' writings, one cannot have real faith and belief in Jesus Christ!

Not only history, but also fulfilled prophecy, stands as a powerful witness to the authenticity of the Old Testament. Throughout the Old Testament there are many references that predicted Christ's first coming. These have come to pass. For us, today, the many prophecies of His second coming—following specific end-time events foretold in Scripture—are filled with inspired relevance. To disregard the Old Testament would lead one to reject much of the vital truth about Jesus Christ, His message and even God's Church, which is built on the “foundation of the apostles *and prophets*, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:19–20).

After Christ's resurrection, He spent time with His disciples to help them understand what had occurred. Notice which part of the Bible He used: “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27). This also included the Psalms (v. 44).

Was Jesus teaching His disciples to observe the ceremonial laws that His sacrifice had replaced? No! As Hebrews 10 explains, the Old Testament laws of sacrifice are not required of Christians. As Isaiah taught, the Messiah was to come to **magnify** the law (Isaiah 42:21, *KJV*). Christ said that He came to fulfill “the Law and the Prophets”—not to abolish them. He plainly taught His followers to keep the Ten Commandments (Matthew 5:17–20; Luke 18:18–20). He made this possible by giving Christians the Holy Spirit so that they could have Christ's faith living within them (Galatians 2:20).

As you see, true Christians cannot preach—and indeed cannot practice true Christianity—without teaching from the Old Testament as well as from the New Testament. The Old Testament is given by divine inspiration, validated by the Apostles and the New Testament writings, and confirmed by Jesus Christ Himself. For this reason, *Tomorrow's World* magazine strives to “declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).



By Dexter B. Wakefield

Is the world financial situation about to “go nuclear”?

The calm of the New Mexico desert was shattered on July 16, 1945 when the United States tested the first atomic bomb, code-named “Trinity.” This fission bomb released the equivalent of 18 kilotons of TNT (about 36 million pounds) and began the nuclear age. Seven years later, on November 1, 1952, technicians at the U.S. Pacific Proving Grounds detonated the first hydrogen bomb—“Ivy Mike.” Its massive fusion reaction released a blast estimated as the equal of up to 12 megatons of TNT—up to 24 billion pounds—about 600 times greater than the first fusion bomb. Its fireball alone was 3.25 miles wide. Nuclear terror indeed!

Nearly 60 years later, the U.S. has constructed another terrifying “bomb” of sorts, which may in its own way be just as explosive as these earlier instruments of destruction.

We can call it the “Debt Bomb”—and its fuse is lit; the clock is ticking.

EXPLODING DEFICITS

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the U.S. fiscal deficit in 2009—the difference between government revenues and expenditures—was \$1.416 trillion, or 10.0 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2010, the deficit was \$1.294 trillion—or 8.9 percent of GDP. These deficits, as a percentage of GDP, are the nation’s highest since World War II.

Worse, the fiscal 2011 deficit is soaring even higher! As the *CBO Monthly Budget Review* reported: “The federal government incurred a budget deficit of \$830 billion in the first six months of fiscal year 2011, CBO estimates—\$113 billion more than the shortfall recorded in the same period last year” (April 7, 2011). Estimates suggest that the total federal budget deficit in 2011 will reach \$1.6 trillion! Along with this sobering news, the International Monetary Fund projects that total U.S. debt will exceed the nation’s annual output of goods and services sometime in 2012!

Herbert Stein, a noted economist who chaired the Council of Economic Advisors under U.S. Presidents Nixon and Ford, stated the obvious with what he called “Herbert Stein’s Law.” Put simply, he said, “If something cannot go on forever, it will stop.” By that, he meant that extreme conditions that are unsustainable will cause their own demise. A good example of this would be the fiscal problems faced by the nation of Greece, which ran up huge deficits when there was easy access to money. Once creditors began to demand higher interest payments on loans, the nation was forced to attempt a severe austerity regimen in an attempt to avoid defaulting on its debt. This strained the Greek economy and led to riots and social unrest—even to deaths. To cope, the nation had to cede significant control over its fiscal policies to the European Union in exchange for a temporary bail-out.

THE BOND MARKET DISCIPLINARIAN

In May 2011, despite austerity measures and EU controls, the “credit rating” of Greece’s debt was downgraded to “B”—which is close to a “junk bond” rating—making Greek loans more undesirable than ever for cautious investors. This has further escalated Greece’s costs for borrowing money—now exceeding 15 percent for two-year bonds—while sober creditors continue to dump Greek sovereign debt. “Beware of Greeks bearing bonds” has become an international joke.

Other EU nations have also had their ratings downgraded. Could something similar be on the horizon for the U.S. and Great Britain, long proud of their AAA ratings? The first signal that the bond markets are disciplining a profligate nation is a declining credit rating. And many careful investors will only hold debt with the highest credit rating. What will happen if the credit rating of the U.S. or Britain is downgraded? In April 2011, Standard & Poors gave the current U.S. “AAA” rating a “negative outlook”—a judgment that often precedes a downgrade. Should the U.S. lose its prized “AAA” rating, interest rates will rise suddenly as investors seek to diversify out of U.S. obligations, and the U.S. Treasury will have difficulty placing additional debt. China and Japan will be particularly affected since they are holders of huge amounts of U.S. sovereign debt in the form of Treasury bonds.

Fitch Ratings, like Standard & Poor’s and Moody’s, is one of the major bond rating agencies. David Riley, head of sovereign debt ratings at Fitch, recently commented on the U.S. situation. His employer forecasts that “the U.S. AAA debt rating will likely survive the

battle over this year’s budget and debt ceiling, but *the real test to the country’s credit-worthiness lies ahead...* Fitch projects the U.S. fiscal deficit, including state and local governments, to reach about 10 percent of gross domestic product



this year, *the largest of any AAA-rated sovereign.* The government debt load will likely reach 100 percent of GDP by 2012, also the highest burden among any AAA-rated country” (“US rating to survive budget row, real test ahead—Fitch,” *Reuters*, April 7, 2011).

More than a year ago, Moody’s issued a similar warning. The *New York Times* “Economix” blog reported, “The gold-plated credit rating of the United States—an article of faith across America and, indeed, around the world—may be at risk in coming years as the nation copes with its growing debts... Moody’s said the United States and other major Western nations, particularly Britain, have moved ‘substantially’ closer to losing their gilt-edged ratings” (“Moody’s Says U.S. Debt Could Test Triple-A Rating,” March 16, 2010).

In London, *The Telegraph* reported that Britain has also been warned. “Moody’s, the ratings agency, said Britain’s triple-A credit rating could be at risk if slower growth makes it harder for the government to rein in its budget deficit” (“Moody’s warns Britain over triple-A credit rating,” March 24, 2011).

OUT ON A LIMB WITH THE U.S.

China and Japan are nervous about the U.S. debt situation. In January 2011, China held \$1,154.7 trillion in U.S. Treasuries—up from \$889.0 billion in January 2010! Similarly, Japan held \$885.9 billion in January 2011—up from \$765.2 billion in January 2010. Generally speaking, these two countries use purchases of U.S. Treasury bonds to offset their big trade surplus with the United States.

But Japan has massive fiscal deficits of its own. As the *New York Times* reported, “Last May, Moody’s cut Japan’s AAA rating to AA2, as the market grew increasingly uneasy with Japan’s debt burden” (“Moody’s Warns on AAA Ratings,” March 15, 2010).

It keeps getting worse. The BBC reported, “In early 2011, Moody’s Investor Services changed its outlook for Japan’s credit rating to “negative” from “stable” citing concerns about debt levels... In January, rival rating agency Standard & Poor’s downgraded Japan’s credit rating from AA to AA-, also citing debt concerns (“Japan’s credit outlook is cut to negative by Moody’s,” *BBC News*, February 22, 2011). Around the same time, “Japan was overtaken by China as the world’s second-largest economy. Japan has been trying to boost its economic growth and as a result government spending and borrowing has increased. Moody’s said that the government needed to do more to cut borrowing levels. Japan currently has the highest government debt levels of any industrialised nation” (*ibid.*).

The U.S. seems unable to reverse its path down the same road.

TEA: “TAXED ENOUGH ALREADY”?

The issue of deficits has become a political football in Washington. The

Obama administration knew that the massive stimulus spending signed into law at the beginning of President Obama's term would produce record deficits. They hoped to use the deficits to force large new tax hikes and promote income redistribution. Many commentators believe that the goal of the administration was to force a *value added tax*—a type of national sales tax—that would mimic the social democracies of Europe. This alternative, a “VAT,” has been widely discussed in Washington. In effect, it was hoped that the record deficits would create a “*debt bomb*” that could only be defused by a new and far-reaching tax regime—or, at a minimum, by substantially higher effective tax rates.

But a new phenomenon appeared on the American political scene—a movement called The Tea Parties. The name refers to the “Boston Tea Party” in 1773 when colonists protested against a British tax on tea by dumping a cargo of British tea into Boston Harbor. Some Tea Party protesters carry signs using TEA as an acronym for “Taxed Enough Already.” Few people in Washington anticipated this grass roots movement and its resulting influence.

Generally speaking, Tea Party members are adamantly against new taxes and growth in government. They now have considerable influence in Washington, and their votes elected—or defeated—a number of members of Congress in the last election cycle. Those politicians beholden to them—and others who fear being defeated in the next elections—will have a very difficult time voting for any new tax. The Republicans reject new taxes, and the Democrats oppose significant cuts in social spending. The conservative Republican Party controls the House of Representatives where new tax and

spending bills can originate, but the liberal Democrats control the Senate and the presidency. The Senate must



approve any cuts in spending, and the President can veto a law he does not like. So Congress is gridlocked. Multi-trillion dollar deficits are flying on autopilot and, in effect, fuel is getting low.

THE POINT OF NO RETURN

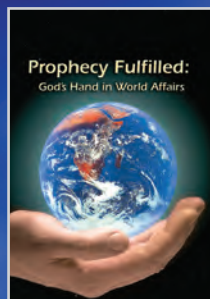
The Bank for International Settlements, BIS, is often thought of as “the central banker to central banks.” They published a sobering assessment of the rapidly developing sovereign debt problem in the U.S. and other debt-ridden countries:

“The financial crisis that erupted in mid-2008 led to an *explosion* of public debt in many advanced economies... Our projections of

public debt ratios lead us to conclude that the path pursued by fiscal authorities in a number of industrial countries is *unsustainable*. Drastic measures are necessary to check the rapid growth of current and future liabilities of governments and reduce their adverse consequences for long-term growth and monetary stability... [When] the interest rate is greater than the growth rate, *the debt ratio will explode in the absence of a sufficiently large primary surplus*... Our examination of the future of public debt leads us to several important conclusions. First, fiscal problems confronting industrial economies are bigger than suggested by official debt figures that show the implications of the financial crisis and recession for fiscal balances. As frightening as it is to consider *public* [U.S. Treasury] *debt increasing to more than 100 percent of GDP* [as will be true in the U.S. by 2012], an even greater danger arises from a rapidly aging population. The related unfunded liabilities are large and growing... [and] government revenues will be lower and expenditures higher, making consolidation even more

Continued on page 29

PROPHECY FULFILLED: GOD'S HAND IN WORLD AFFAIRS



Scripture warns of economic, social and political turmoil before the return of Jesus Christ. Do you know the signs to watch for when His return is near?

Write for our **FREE** booklet, *Prophecy Fulfilled: God's Hand in World Affairs*, or download it from the Booklets section of our Web site www.TomorrowsWorld.org.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I am rarely up at 5:00 a.m., but two weeks ago I watched your show for the first time. I just wanted to say how truly interesting it was. All I could think of was how “spot on” the man who hosted the show was. With all the natural disasters and madness that seems to have hold on this world, I just pray harder! God bless you for the work that you do, and thank you again.

B. E, La Vista, Nebraska

This is just a thank you letter for your intelligent programme, which I watch on TV after happening to stumble across it one day by accident. It is so refreshing to hear such in-depth discussion on matters of religion that is sadly lacking in the world today, and especially this part of the globe. I have enjoyed reading your booklets and will continue to order them. I embrace the assertiveness of speech from your “pulpit” of eloquence and common sense, and the well-written and well-researched articles. I have learned so much and have to agree with you about the world turning away from God and even denying His existence.

G. B., Auckland, New Zealand

What I enjoy most about your television program and magazine is the truth that you write and speak about. The prophecies of the Bible are not easy for everyone to understand. You have the ability to make it clear what the Scriptures are saying. Truth when spoken is light for the world.

R. R., Seddon, VIC, Australia

I have been receiving your magazine for quite a while now, and I am becoming more frightened the more I read. How can I protect my children without making them feel the same way as I do? The last few days I have thought of nothing else. How can God destroy innocent children as he did in Noah’s time?

None of us are perfect and we all sin, and as God said, a sin is a sin, whether it is a white lie or a murder. If this is the case, none of us can be saved. Please help, I need some answers.

L. S, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, UK

Editor’s Note: God promises to protect His most faithful people even as the time of the end approaches. What about those who have gone before, as in the days of Noah? God is not “calling” most human beings during this present age of 6,000 years of human history. Aside from a few “firstfruits” with whom God is working, most people are being given an opportunity to do things “man’s way” and by doing so to “write the lessons” from which they will learn at the Great White Throne Judgment, at which time they will have their first opportunity to accept Jesus Christ and His way. Please request our free booklet, *Is This the Only Day of Salvation?* It will answer the concerns you have expressed.

I was watching television one morning, and found your program, which reminded me of the way Mr. Herbert Armstrong taught. The speaker was not theatrical, and was not asking for money every 30 seconds. Just matter-of-fact. I saw how Mr. Armstrong’s teachings and writings changed my parents’ lives, and I want that for my family and myself. You will be hearing from me again.

C. C., Brentwood, TN

Thank you so much for all your booklets and magazines! Your article on “Space Wars?” (March-April 2011) taught me so much. The article that touched me the most in that issue was the one on “Easter or Passover: Which Is for Christians?” I had never thought about that until I read it. Now I so want to learn much more! Thank you for teaching the people of the world!

L. S., Moruga, Trinidad and Tobago

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.

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From “Brits” to BRICS

Many countries have given their people identifying names. New Zealanders call themselves “Kiwis” while the Australians like to be called “Aussies.” And the British? Well they have a stoic name for themselves. They call themselves, “Brits.” It carries a certain solid, reliable ring to it.

More and more, the place of the “Brits” on the world stage is being challenged by more lively, rising economies not so much weighed down by the burdens of social welfare costs, massive debt and aging infrastructure. These emerging nations are able to move boldly into markets that the Western world has dominated for more than a century. They compete by utilising cheap labour, and as technology and education levels rise they are well equipped to press their advantage.

On China’s Hainan Island, a meeting was held recently by the leading nations involved in this global shift of power. China, the world’s rising heavyweight contender, invited other “would-be” greats to the meetings, giving rise to a new name that you will hear more often in the future. The players are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (collectively known as BRICS).

The “BRICS” are home to 3 billion people, 40 percent of the global population. China has already become the world’s largest exporter, by spending heavily on imported raw materials, especially oil. China’s voracious appetite for trade has also pushed Russia to become a major exporter of manufactured goods. Brazil, meanwhile, is selling unprecedented quantities of iron ore to China for use in steel mills.

GLOBAL SHIFT IN WEALTH AND POWER

A hundred years ago, China was coming to the end of its dynastic era, Russia was still ruled by the Romanovs, and India was under British rule. Brazil in 1911 was a little-known South American country and South Africa

was a place for British and American industrialists to mine gold and diamonds. Great Britain in 1911 still controlled more than 50 percent of the world’s shipping and the Royal Navy “ruled the waves.”

A century ago, the United States, fresh from adventures in the Philippines and Panama, was rising to world power status—a status that would be confirmed after World War II. By that time, Great Britain had



become the world’s largest debtor nation and the U.S. the greatest creditor nation. Britain had benefited to the tune of some \$26 billion from the U.S. Lend-Lease “arms-on-credit” scheme. In addition, Britain took the largest share of Marshall Plan aid of any European country.

But American aid came with strings attached. To receive a 1945 American loan of \$3.7 billion at 2 percent interest, Britain was forced to end the “Imperial Preference System” whereby more than 50 percent of international payments were made in pounds sterling. Henceforward, the U.S. dollar would become the world currency exchange standard.

The terms of the deal caused outrage and resentment in Parliament. The *Economist* magazine scathingly wrote, “It is aggravating to find that our reward for losing a quarter of our national wealth is to pay tribute for half a century to those who have been enriched by the war” (*Reluctant Europeans*, Gowland and Turner, pp. 14–18).

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The reluctant British accepted a loss of prestige and power to their little brother. Historian Niall Ferguson points out that American war aims were “*in many ways more overtly hostile to the British Empire than anything Hitler had ever said*” (*Empire*, p. 344). Small surprise then that, as a condition of continuing U.S. aid, the Colonial Office over the next 20 years would divest itself, often with unseemly haste, of the last vestiges of the greatest empire the world had ever known. America would never *overtly* take up the mantle of imperial greatness. Rather, it would exercise economic imperialism in the world, with giant U.S. companies dominating world trade.

All of this has arguably come to an end as the U.S. is now where Great Britain was after World War II—the world’s largest debtor nation, just as Great Britain was 65 years ago. The BRICS know it, and are eager to assume greater power over economic events. But will they? Will the U.S. receive its comeuppance, even as Britain did after World War II?

We are now experiencing a massive global power shift of seismic proportions. It is a time when a reckoning of the financial accounts of nations occurs. The grandeur of empires, or pseudo-empires, counts for nothing when their coffers are emptied. Spain lost its imperial reach when its source of gold and silver from South America was no longer available. The French were the losers once British imperialism asserted itself after the Napoleonic wars. Even in recent times, Japanese economic clout has waned while China has captured many of its markets.

WHO WILL RULE THE HEAP?

The BRICS countries see themselves as the inheritors of a new world order. But relations between the club members have not always been as rosy as they may appear, while they vie for the same scarce resources. India and China have viewed each other with jaundiced eye for many years, and in 1969 a hot flare-up between Russia and China occurred.

One world power that is watching events closely is the European Union—and, in particular, its economic engine, Germany.

Bible prophecy gives us an insight into where the world’s wealth and power will ultimately reside. Those who have been following *Tomorrow’s World’s* clear insight into the world that is coming will understand that a revitalised “Babylonian” system is forming in Europe. It is not only rising up as a contender to American hegemony, but indeed will come, for a short time, to dominate the whole world. The book of Revelation gives us a unique perspective on the years ahead.

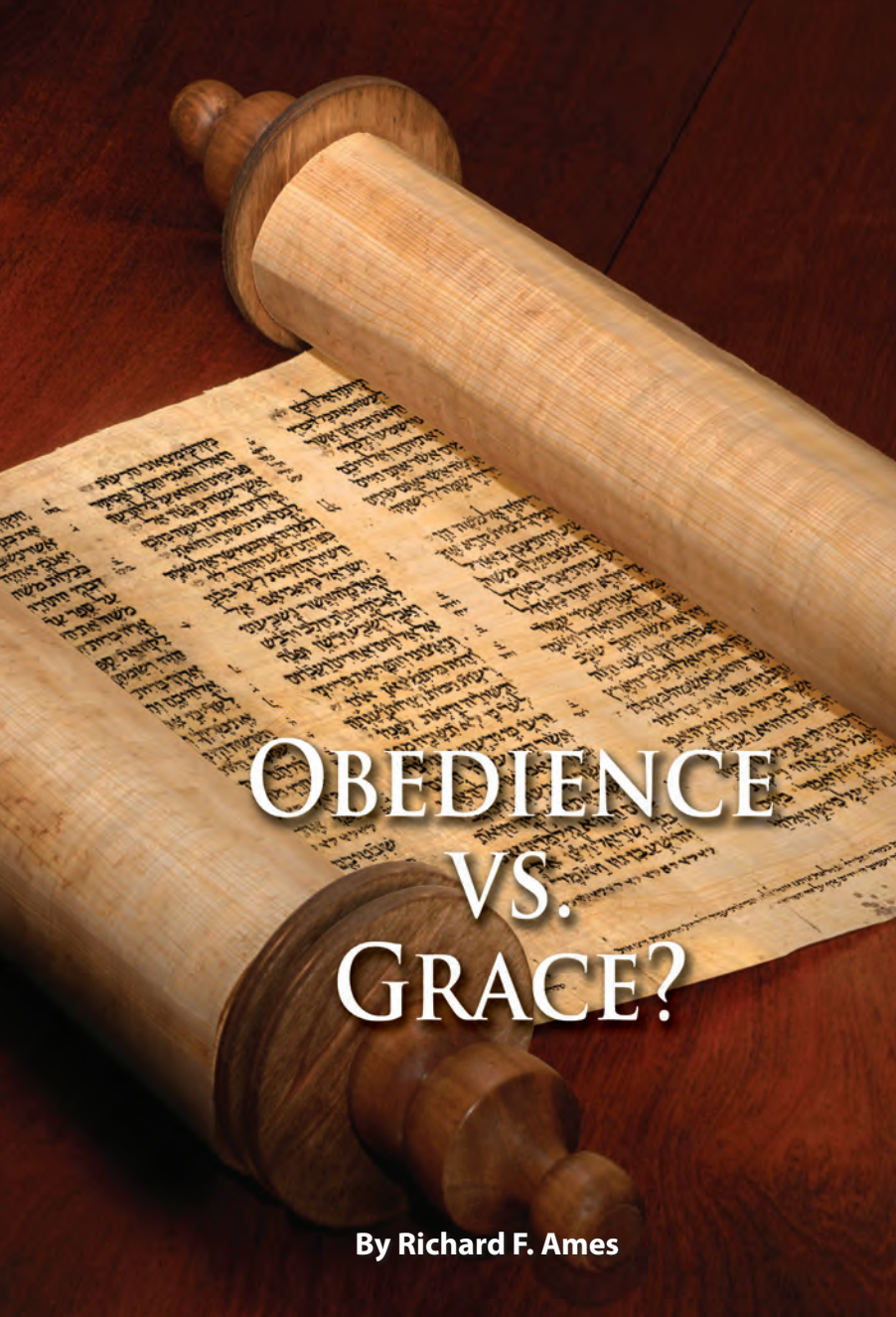
In Revelation 17 we are introduced to a woman who rides a scarlet beast. This is biblical symbolism for a church controlling a government (Our free booklet, *The Beast of Revelation*, will give you a fuller understanding of these symbols). This government can be identified with a unified Europe that will ultimately take control of the world’s monetary system and dominate international trade.

We read an account of the time when this whole European-controlled system collapses, “And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore” (Revelation 18:11). Then, completing the picture, “For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.’ Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance” (v. 17).

The picture is clear. The world’s economic order is in the process of realignment; it will **not** be controlled by the BRICS, but rather by a rising European power. After 200 years of Anglo-American domination, it will be Europe—not an Asian/South American/African bloc—that will rise and for a time take control of the world’s wealth.

The good news is that before all this is done, Jesus Christ will return as King of kings and Lord of lords to bring righteous economic order to the world. Then will the entire world share in the bounty of a fair and just system. Our modern “Babylon” will be destroyed and be replaced by the Kingdom of God.

—Rod King



OBEDIENCE VS. GRACE?

By Richard F. Ames

Some say, “Just believe, and you will be saved!” Their idea is that anything else is a false “salvation by works.” Others say that there is some set of regulations that will “earn” you a better place in the afterlife. What is the truth of the matter? The answer may surprise you!

Is obedience to God at odds with accepting His grace? After a Christian receives God’s grace, does God require anything more?

God tells us to **repent** and be **baptized**, but is that “salvation by works”? Many professing Christians greatly misunderstand the roles of grace and obedience in their lives. They do not understand what the Bible really teaches

about obedience to Jesus Christ, and what it means to salvation.

At some time in your life, someone has probably asked you the question: “Have you been saved?” How did you respond? We know that all who respond to God’s calling, and who genuinely repent and are baptized, will be forgiven of their sins, and will be given the gift of the Holy Spirit—the spiritual power enabling them to live a new life. But what does it really mean to respond to God’s calling?

On the day of Pentecost in 31AD, in the first inspired sermon of the New Testament Church, the Apostle Peter spoke in Jerusalem to several thousand people, after which they became convicted for their part in killing the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Thousands asked Peter and the other Apostles: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

Here was Peter’s opportunity to tell them that they did not need to do anything more than “believe.” Did he tell them so? No! What did he actually say? “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38).

Peter proclaimed wonderful news—that they could be forgiven of their sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For this to occur, he insisted on two points—that they **repent**, and that they be **baptized**.

If you had been listening to Peter, grieving over your part in Christ’s death and wanting to change your life and receive forgiveness, what would you have done? Would you have argued with Peter: “I won’t repent! I won’t be baptized! Those are works, and I don’t have to earn my salvation!”? If you had done so, you would have been arguing against many of God’s plain instructions, including these basic New Testament teachings.

Of course, no one can **earn** salvation. But a willful disobedience against God’s instructions is a sure sign that you have **not** really repented or become truly converted.

How did the crowd respond on this first Day of Pentecost in the New Testament Church? Scripture shares the wonderful news.

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:41–42).

On that day, 3,000 new Christians obeyed God’s instruction—they **repented** and were **baptized**. They did as Jesus had told all Christians to do: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel’” (Mark 1:14–15).

WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

Peter’s instructions were plain and simple—yet many today do not agree with his clear proclamation of God’s word. Today, we find many who emotionally desire to be “saved” but who ignore the serious matter of repentance, which must precede baptism.

Just what is repentance? The Greek word translated “repent” is *metanoeo*, which means to “think differently.” One must repent of—think differently about—one’s sin. But what is sin? “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” (1 John 3:4). The *King James Version* puts it plainly—“sin is the transgression of the law.” When you transgress one of the Ten Commandments, you have sinned. As the Apostle James wrote: “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty” (James 2:10–12).

When we repent of sin, we are deeply sorry for having transgressed God’s law. We no longer have a hostile attitude toward God and His law of liberty. We no longer have a carnal attitude that is enmity



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against the law of God (cf. Romans 8:7). After repentance, we want to be in harmony with God’s law of love—the Ten Commandments. Repentance brings a deep change in our thinking, and a commitment to live by every word of God. As Jesus said: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Luke 4:4).

Repentance is more than an intellectual awareness of sin. Genuine repentance brings deep sorrow for our sins. Think of the woman who washed Jesus’ feet with her tears (cf. Luke 7:38). This is deep repentance.

We should be aware that there is also a worldly sorrow that is **not** genuine repentance. Notice Paul acknowledging the Corinthians’ repentance: “Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death” (2 Corinthians 7:9–10).

Some criminals express worldly sorrow, saying that they are sorry for their crimes (or sins), when in fact

they are saying, deep down: “I’m sorry for getting caught” or “I’m sorry for the guilt I’m feeling, or for suffering the penalty for my crime. But if I get a chance to commit another crime, I will.” It is not only criminals who have this worldly sorrow. Many who become addicted to oppressive and unhealthy habits—sexual sins, drug abuse or misuse of alcohol—may feel a kind of sorrow, regretting the consequences that come with their behavior. However, without a genuine change of heart, and without a change of behavior, their continual sinning will lead to death! The sorrow of the world leads to death!

Godly sorrow—true repentance—brings different, better fruit. Notice its characteristics, as described in Scripture: “For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2 Corinthians 7:11).

THINK AND ACT DIFFERENTLY!

Those who have genuinely repented both think differently and behave differently. They are serious in their commitment to change their lives! Such individuals will actually make dramatic changes in response to the grace they have received. Remember what John the Baptist said to the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism? “Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore

bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Matthew 3:5–8).

If we continue to practice sin with no change in our attitude or life, there is no genuine repentance. Psalm 51 is David’s acknowledgement of his sin. Read that Psalm and it will help you understand more deeply. Notice that David did not ask for “justice”! Justice for David would have meant the death penalty. “The wages of sin is death” for us all (Romans 6:23)! So, in his repentant attitude, David asked for mercy. “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (Psalm 51:1–2).

David acknowledged his sin! He prayed earnestly for God to cleanse him. Have you ever prayed that way? “For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight; that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge” (vv. 3–4).

How did David sin “only” against God? David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. He sent Bathsheba’s soldier-husband Uriah to the front lines to be killed. Certainly David “sinned” against them. But God commanded: “You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:13–14). David sinned against the Lawgiver, and came under God’s death penalty.

David’s repentance sets an example for all of us. We all need that humble and contrite attitude! “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart; these, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

A LICENSE TO SIN?

After we come to the point of repentance, as David did, and we obey Christ’s instruction to be baptized, we are forgiven of all our past sins and we begin to walk in newness of life. How, then, should we continue to respond to the unmerited pardon and grace that God has given us? Notice: “What shall we say then?



Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (Romans 6:1–2). Should a newly begotten Christian, whom God has forgiven and granted grace (unmerited forgiveness and pardon), continue to transgress God’s law and disobey God? Paul says plainly: “Certainly not!” The biblical evidence is overwhelming. We cannot continue to disobey God willfully and be given the gift of salvation! Paul was dealing with false Christians who were trying—as do many today—to use grace as a license to sin!

The Apostle Jude also condemned this unbiblical approach to grace. “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men,

turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 4, KJV). The *New Revised Standard Version* states that these “intruders... pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness.” The *New International Version* words it this way: “They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality.”

How many professing Christians are doing just that today? Those who pervert the grace of God are saying by their conduct: “We are free to transgress the Ten Commandments; we don’t need to obey God and keep His commandments!” That is wrong! That form of rebellion is carnality, not conversion! Converted Christians recognize that keeping God’s commandments is an expression of love. The first four commandments show us how to love God, and the last six commandments show us how to love our neighbors. As the Apostle John wrote: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3)—or “not grievous” as the KJV has it.

So, as the Apostle Paul strongly stated, we cannot continue to live under grace if we are practicing sin at the same time. No truly repentant Christian would want to practice sin while claiming grace. The true Christian has “died to self” at baptism, as Paul explains: “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3–4). That “burial” is symbolized by

the repentant sinner's complete immersion in water.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We cannot grow spiritually without God's Spirit. God gives a repentant sinner the gift of the Holy Spirit after baptism.

God expects us to exercise active faith. He expects that we will trust Him to the point that we will actually do what He tells us to do. Jesus warned His followers, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). We need to do as He did! Remember, even Jesus Himself set the example of being baptized in obedience to God's instructions!

Notice that this gift of God's Spirit is given by the laying on of hands by God's true servants. The Apostles "laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17). The Holy Spirit is the spiritual power from God that begets us as His children and empowers us to grow spiritually.

We need the Holy Spirit to overcome the downward pull of human nature. Paul described his struggles with human nature: "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:25).

Notice Paul's attitude of obedience. Will God give the Holy Spirit to those who have an attitude of disobedience? No, He will not! As Peter plainly stated, "And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32). God will not give the gift of the Holy Spirit to those in an attitude of disobedience.

Peter and the Apostles continually demonstrated an attitude of obedience to God. Notice Peter's boldness in speaking to the Jews' Sanhedrin. This council had commanded the Apostles

not to preach in the name of Jesus. What was their response? "But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men'" (Acts 5:29).

One of the themes of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is that obedience to God brings blessings, and disobedience to God brings curses. You can receive God's grace—His wonderful blessings and His gift

which we could never earn. Most Bible students are familiar with one of the fundamental scriptures on the subject: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8–9). Notice that God's grace is a gift, but faith for salvation is also a gift of God! Verse 10 is often overlooked by those who turn grace into a license to sin: "For

Will God give the Holy Spirit to those who have an attitude of disobedience? No, He will not! As Peter plainly stated, "And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32). God will not give the gift of the Holy Spirit to those in an attitude of disobedience.

of eternal life—through Jesus Christ our Lord. Remember, though, that God will only give His free gift of salvation to those who are willing to repent, to believe and to obey Him. As Peter wrote: "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now 'If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?'" (1 Peter 4:17–18).

Your Bible reveals God's awesome plan of salvation. Salvation is a free gift,

we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Our response to God's grace produces good works, and we walk in them; that is, we continually produce good works. We must bear the fruit of true Christianity in our lives.

Jesus Christ is our living Savior. We shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:10)! I hope that you will receive God's grace, obey His will, and participate in His wonderful plan of salvation! ■

DO YOU BELIEVE THE TRUE GOSPEL?



Jesus Christ proclaimed a coming Kingdom of God, and taught His disciples how to prepare for their roles as kings and priests in that kingdom. Are you ready to rule?

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PROPHECY Co

Forgetfulness, Disobedience and Sudden Demise!

Few today understand *why* Great Britain became the world's first superpower and gained an empire that spanned the globe, or why America rose to dominate the world stage. Fewer still grasp what the future holds for these Anglo-Saxon cousins! However, Bible prophecies hold surprising information about the true origins of British and American dominance and the sobering fate of two peoples who have *forgotten* their unique origins and the *obligations* that came with blessings and power. Many of these remarkable prophecies have been *fulfilled*, and many more are *coming alive today!*

UNIQUE ORIGINS AND PROMISES

The Bible provides an important overview of world history, revealing the central role that God has played in determining the course of major events. The book of Genesis records that God called a man named Abram [Abraham] and made promises to him and his descendants that were conditioned on obedience to God and His laws. Abraham was promised that if he obeyed God's instructions, his descendants would multiply and become great, would spread abroad as a colonizing people and bring blessings to the peoples of the world, and eventually possess the gates of their enemies (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:16-18; 28:13-15). The Jewish people have not completed the fulfillment of these prophecies, but several other nations have! Scripture clearly indicates that these promises would find their ultimate fulfillment through other tribes of Israel—the sons of Joseph: Ephraim and Manasseh. The prophecies state that the descendants of Manasseh would become a great nation and the descendants of Ephraim would become a great “company” or commonwealth of nations. The real reason that little England gained a world-girdling empire and America became the most powerful nation in the world is due to the fact that these peoples are the descendants

of Abraham—the man who obeyed God and kept His commandments (Genesis 26:4-5)! No other nations on earth come close to fulfilling these prophetic promises. You can learn more about this fascinating subject by reading our booklet *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*.



CONDITIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Moses records in the book of Deuteronomy that God called the Israelite nation His “chosen people”—not because they were better than everyone else—but because He gave them His laws so they could be an example to other nations and a light to the world—if they followed the laws of God (Deuteronomy 4:1-10; 7:6-11). However, God repeatedly warned His chosen people, “Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you... 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” (Deuteronomy 4:23; 8:11). The ancient Israelites (composed of twelve tribes descended from the twelve sons of Jacob—the great grandson of Abraham) were also reminded that if they *obeyed* the laws of God they would be blessed, but if they *disobeyed* the laws of God and turned away from Him, they would reap serious consequences (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28). Regrettably, the ancient nations of Israel and Judah failed to heed these warnings from God and suffered military invasions and defeats and national captivities at the hands of the Assyrians (for Israel) and the Babylonians (for Judah) as a consequence of their forgetfulness and disobedience. These tragic examples are recorded as lessons for us today (1 Corinthians 10:11)!

However, Moses also recorded prophecies for the Israelite-descended peoples that looked far into the future. Before he died, Moses warned, “I know that

MES ALIVE



after my death you will become *utterly corrupt*, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you *in the latter days*, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands” (Deuteronomy 31:29). Moses also warned that the Israelite peoples would “*perish quickly*” because of the wickedness of their ways (Deuteronomy 28:20). This same theme of a *sudden catastrophic demise* linked with forgetfulness and disobedience is echoed by several other prophets. Isaiah warned “Woe to the rebellious children... who will not hear the law of the LORD... whose breaking comes *suddenly, in an instant*” (Isaiah 30:1, 9, 13). Jeremiah warned, “You have forsaken Me... I will cause anguish and terror to fall on them *suddenly*” (Jeremiah 15:6–8; see also 6:26; 18:22). The prophet Hosea warned, “Israel has *forgotten* his Maker... I will send fire upon his cities... because of your great wickedness. *At dawn* the king of Israel shall be cut off utterly” (Hosea 8:14; 10:15).

Why would God utter such dire prophecies against America and the British-descended peoples, who claim to live in “Christian” nations? A simple look at news events tells a sobering story! In recent years, “Christian” religious instruction and prayers in the name of Jesus Christ have been banished from public schools, yet students can in many cases learn about pagan religions and even recite prayers to other gods. Courts in professing Christian nations have ordered displays of the Ten Commandments removed from public buildings—often due to lawsuits launched by a single atheist! Western so-called Christian nations lead the world in cohabitation and divorce, even though the Bible states that God *hates* divorce and rails against fornication (Malachi 2:16; 1 Corinthians 6:18). We are currently witnessing one of the most remarkable reversals of moral values in recorded history as churches, theologians, educators and government officials in the western world have begun to promote homosexuality and same-sex marriage as

normal—even within the ministry and the priesthood—even though the Bible condemns such behaviors as abominations and perversions (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:23–28).

MELTDOWN UNDERWAY?

This moral meltdown and widespread rejection of biblical religious values is occurring at the same time that the American and British-descended peoples are sinking in a sea of debt as they borrow money from foreign lenders and sell off national assets—forgetting the fact that God foresaw this and warned long ago that the borrower will become the servant to the lender (Deuteronomy 28:43–45; Proverbs 22:7). It is no coincidence that major lenders who have invested heavily in U.S. government bonds are now moving their money to other locations, anticipating the fall of the American dollar! Due to budgetary shortfalls, Britain is making deep cuts in its armed forces that will severely limit its capacity to project power—at a time when the world is becoming more chaotic and other nations are building up their fighting capabilities. This does not bode well for the future of America and the British-descended peoples!

In light of these sobering financial and social realities, it is not surprising to hear British-born Harvard professor Niall Ferguson warning world leaders “about the increasing prospect of the American ‘empire’ *suddenly collapsing* due to the country’s rising debt level... [since] economic debt can lead to a *sudden loss* of military power and global respect” (*Aspen Daily News*, July 6, 2010). According to Bible prophecies that are *coming alive today*, forgetfulness and disobedience to the laws of God—the Achilles’ heel of American and British-descended peoples—will result in their *sudden demise*—unless they repent and return to the God who gave them their blessings and power!

—Douglas S. Winnail



Niall Ferguson

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BOUNCE BACK!

By Rod McNair

You can turn life's setbacks into a springboard for spiritual success!

Running down the court, my feet became tangled and I felt myself falling. The concrete basketball court, littered with loose bits of gravel and dirt, seemed to rise to meet me. For a moment, time hung suspended while other players careened past me. But I was falling, and braced for the inevitable crash landing!

And then with a flash I remembered the coach's cautionary words for such a moment: "*Tuck and roll*"! He had instructed us to not try to break a fall, but just "tuck" the elbow and shoulder, and roll through it.

I followed the coach's advice, rolled through the fall, and I was surprised how quickly I was right-side up and back on my feet. I had saved myself

from an ugly concrete burn and avoided nasty gravel cuts on my arms and elbows. I may have prevented a broken wrist. It was a powerful lesson that day on the basketball court. There is a "right" way to fall, and a "wrong" way. The right way saves one from unnecessary cuts, bruises and even serious injury.

In the arena of life, all of us will have setbacks and disappointments. Everyone will fail—or fall—in something eventually! "Failure," according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, springs from an original French root meaning "to fall." It refers to omission of occurrence or performance, lack of success or a falling short.

We all stumble sometimes. But, when we do, how do we deal with it? How do we handle setbacks in life without letting them crush our spirit?

FAILURE: SPRINGBOARD TO SUCCESS

Anyone who attempts anything will make mistakes. This is part of the learning process. Michael Jordan, the famous American basketball player, is reported to have said: "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed" (*Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh*, p. 49).

Political and military leaders also have recognized the importance of dealing with failure with a positive attitude. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill once said, "Success is never final. Failure is never fatal. It is courage that counts." And United States General George S. Patton was known to say that it is not how far you fall that matters, "it's how high you bounce when you hit bottom!"

God wants us to have the same attitude. No, He does not wink at sin. He does not always exempt us from the consequences of our mistakes. But He does teach us to deal with problems positively. How can we make sure trials do not destroy us? How can we turn failure into a springboard to success?

WAS PETER A FAILURE?

The last Passover of Jesus Christ in 31AD was a life-changing event for all His disciples, including Peter. Confident in his abilities, Peter had been sure he would protect Jesus Christ from any mishap that would befall Him. He assured Jesus of that, during the last Passover, when he told Jesus, “I will lay down my life for Your sake” (John 13:37). To this, the Messiah replied, “Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times” (John 13:37–38).

This statement must have jolted the self-assured Peter. He had no intention of turning his back on the Messiah! He would fight to the death! But it was not long before Peter ate his words, and did precisely as the Lord predicted. Jesus and His disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane, where they often walked and talked. It was there where Judas Iscariot betrayed Him to the chief priests. As Peter attempted to intervene physically, Jesus stopped him and told him to put away his sword. To Peter’s shock, Jesus allowed Himself to be bound, arrested, and led away.

Jesus Christ was led before the High Priest, interrogated, humiliated, slapped and beaten. Peter slipped into the courtyard of the High Priest to see what would happen next, but to his dismay he was recognized. Just as Christ had predicted, Peter denied knowing Jesus three separate times (Luke 22:56–60). Just as the rooster crowed, “...the Lord turned and looked at Peter” (Luke 22:61).

The realization of what he had done came crashing down in one awful second. From overflowing confidence, Peter’s expectations were dashed. *He had failed.* He fled in bitterness, overcome with grief (verse 62).

YOUR CHOICE

Every time we fall down and make a mistake, we have to make a decision. We are forced to choose how we will react. Whether setbacks are small or large, insignificant or life-changing, we have a choice. Which path do we take?

In those bitter hours and days following his denial of Christ, Peter did some hard thinking. It became a critical juncture in his life. He came face to face

Every time we fall down and make a mistake, we have to make a decision. We are forced to choose how we will react. Whether setbacks are small or large, insignificant or life-changing, we have a choice. Which path do we take?

with his own human weakness. He was horrified to discover how vulnerable and fearful he could be. This strong dose of reality shook him to his very foundation. But Peter made the right choice, and we read of it today in the Bible. Generations have been inspired to read how Peter rebounded from an unspeakable setback to be a powerful tool in God’s Church. In the words of the apostle Paul, he sorrowed “in a godly manner... For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death” (2 Corinthians 7:9–10).

Peter’s choice led him to deep repentance, powerful zeal and a strong desire to overcome his human frailties (verse 11). It enabled God to use him as a dynamic leader in the fledgling Church. It changed his life forever. As we face trials and difficulties in life, what can we learn from Peter’s example? How can we learn to *bounce back better*?

PROBLEMS: PART OF LIFE

Jesus Christ gave some powerful and encouraging instructions just before His death, that would inspire

Peter and all the apostles their whole lives. As He had predicted that they would all desert Him, He also said: “You will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:31–33).

The Bible shows that trials are part of life—even for those striving to obey God! Some, admittedly, we

bring on ourselves. Some are caused by our own weakness or pride, or even our own stupidity! Other times difficulties are not our fault, but involve circumstances beyond our control. We will have problems.

The same Peter that denied Christ also wrote, years later, “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy” (1 Peter 4:12–13). And yet, how many times do we get flustered because bad things happen? How often do we think, “This isn’t supposed to happen to me!”

Jesus told us not to be despondent when we face setbacks. “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble... Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:1, 31–33). Admitting we have problems does not take them away. But it does help us deal with them instead of denying them or running away from them.

Good parents will teach their children how to deal with setbacks

and difficulties. They will help them understand that “life involves many frustrations, and it’s only through experience with frustration that we develop a tolerance for it. This enables us to turn adversity into challenge and persevere in the face of it. Perseverance, that all-important ‘if at first you don’t succeed’ attitude, is the primary quality in every success story” (“How to Raise Happy Kids,” *Reader’s Digest*, John Rosemond). We are God’s children. Is He also teaching us to persevere under stress? If we do not face our problems squarely and courageously, they can spawn other new, unrelated problems. Frustration erodes our faith, because we are not facing reality. And running from our problems does not make them go away! But admitting them and confessing our mistakes (1 John 1:9) is the first step to successful bouncing back.

PRUNING IS NOT REJECTION

Jesus explained during His final conversation with His disciples why Christians suffer problems at all: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:1–2). God is in the process of helping His people grow! And growth sometimes means cutting away damaged or unproductive branches in our life. That is why we sometimes suffer pain and difficulties.

But do not confuse “pruning” with being rejected. Anyone who grows fruit trees knows the joy of planting and working with them year after year. It is exciting to see them healthy and strong, yielding good fruit. Do not assume that just because God allows you to suffer emotional, mental, or physical pain

that He has deserted you! In reality, God will not reject anyone who is truly conquered and surrendered to Him. He allows us to suffer as a part of our **growth** process, and He promises us the help we need.



HELP IS COMING

On the last night that He was alive, Jesus Christ encouraged His disciples by telling them they would never be alone. Even after He would leave them, He would send His Spirit to guide and help them. He said, “I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever” (John 14:16).

The Holy Spirit, the very power of God, would be the vehicle through which God and Christ would live in the disciples. Jesus went on to describe “the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:16–18).

The Holy Spirit would come, and through it Christ would literally live His life in His true followers (Galatians 2:20). Jesus promised that

His Holy Spirit would be sent—as it was on the Day of Pentecost—to be His presence in them. He promised that this Spirit would “teach [them] all things” and “bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26). The disciples would be able to remember, with understanding, everything Jesus had taught them during His ministry. It would guide them “into all truth” (John 16:13).

If we are really seeking and crying out to God for His understanding, He will give it to us as well. Notice what Christ also said, earlier in His ministry: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13).

Peter remembered the promise of the Spirit, and that encouraged him during the worst days of his life. When the Holy Spirit was sent, God used Peter powerfully as a leader among the disciples on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4). When we stumble and have problems, we need to remember God can help us. If we cry out to our Father, in humble obedience to Him, willing to forsake our own will for His, He will guide us. And if we are truly repentant and obedient, He will put His Spirit in us (Acts 2:38; 5:32).

GOD HAS BIG PLANS FOR US

When we are young, we often have “big plans” for a lifetime of impressive achievements. As we grow, we learn not only which goals are worthy of our pursuit, but also what it takes to achieve those goals. Those whose ambitions are greater than their efforts may become discouraged, and find their lofty ambitions to be counterproductive. Writer Sue Shellenbarger observed, “Even when students cling to lofty ambitions, they often set themselves

up for failure by not aligning their behavior with their goals, says Dominique Morisano, an assistant professor of clinical psychology at Columbia University... ‘They might say, “I want to be a pediatrician,” but they’re not attending school, they’re using drugs, they’re not taking care of themselves,’ says Dr. Morisano... ‘The result is often hopelessness. A belief in one’s ability to achieve goals is important to building a hopeful attitude’” (“Making Kids Work on Goals,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 9, 2011).

Adults, too, sometimes set unrealistic goals. Peter set one when he thought he could with his sword defend Christ against the might of the Roman army. When he failed, he was crushed. We, too, will be disappointed if on our own we try and fail to really change and grow. However, if we submit to God’s rule over our lives, genuine overcoming becomes possible (Matthew 19:26). When we are troubled with seemingly endless trials, we need to remember why God created us. He wants us to grow and be in His eternal Family forever! This is not “pie-in-the-sky” religious sentiment; it is a rock-solid promise from the great Creator God!

Just before His death, Jesus gave His disciples tremendous encouragement. He told them of His coming Kingdom. In doing so, He was not referring to something abstract “in our hearts.” Nor was He describing an organization of carnal human beings vying for worldly power. No! He was foretelling the establishment of a literal Kingdom on earth! He went on to say: “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:1–2).

Some mistakenly believe that Christ’s reference to “mansions”

has something to do with going to Heaven. In fact, Jesus was describing that each would have a particular place within the “household” of God. These places are not dwellings;



rather, they are positions of authority and responsibility within the very Kingdom of God upon the return of Jesus Christ.

This is what was on Jesus’ mind during His last night before His crucifixion. Think about it! In practically the same breath that He told Peter he would deny Him, He turned around to tell the disciples of their inspiring

destiny! He spoke about the future. He was not just focusing on the suffering He would endure, or on the discouragement they would feel upon His leaving. No, He focused on the vision of what was coming. He fixed their eyes on His Kingdom—and the part He wanted them to play when it is set up on planet Earth!

When we drop the ball, make mistakes or suffer from problems, does God want us to hang our heads and feel like failures? Does He want us to slink away in self-pity? No! He wants us to focus on the future. He desires that we recognize the great potential He gives to those who are willing to submit to His will and Spirit.

Jesus told His disciples, “You did not choose me, but I chose you” (John 15:16). He extended that calling to those yet unborn whom the Father would call through their testimony (John 17:20). A calling from God into His Truth and His Church is truly an awesome opportunity

God has big plans for us, if we are willing to submit to His rule in our lives—if we come to understand the purpose for problems, and grow through God’s own correction and pruning, asking Him to empower us through His Holy Spirit. ■

YOUR ULTIMATE DESTINY



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TOMORROW'S

The “Anonymous” Problem

It was the evening of February 13, 2011, and fans of teen sensation Justin Bieber were shocked. At the 2011 “Grammy Awards”—the annual honors given to artists by the American National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences—many had expected Bieber to receive the “Grammy” award for “Best New Artist.” Instead, however, the award went to singer and jazz bassist Esperanza Spalding.

That was shocking enough for many, but a greater shock occurred over the next few hours, as outraged Bieber fans expressed their anger by editing the “Esperanza Spalding” page on Wikipedia. Wikipedia bills itself as “the free encyclopedia anyone can edit”—so, the mere fact of edits was no surprise. The surprise was in the cruelty and anger revealed in so many of the edits. “JUSTIN BIEBER DESERVED IT GO DIE IN A HOLE. WHO THE HECK ARE YOU ANYWAY?” was just one of the less-offensive comments (“Bieber Fans Go On Grammy-Fueled Wikipedia Rampage,” *msnbc.com*, February 14, 2011).

Some might laugh this off as a tribute to the intensity of “True Beliebers”—but in fact it reflects an increasingly disrespectful and abusive spirit that is becoming more and more commonplace in our socially networked world.

CLOAKED IN ANONYMITY

Sports Illustrated columnist Jeff Pearlman says he has noticed a growing belligerence in his readers’ correspondence over the last 15 years. He described a recent exchange he had with a reader through the social-networking service Twitter. It started with “snide and rude” comments about one of Pearlman’s blog postings. The reader eventually punctuated his venom by deceptively linking to an extremely offensive picture,

which Pearlman opened while his 7-year-old daughter sat next to him.

Outraged, he decided to find out who was behind these attacks. After some investigation, Pearlman was able to uncover his critic’s identity, and he phoned him. The attacker turned out to be a Missouri college student who, when talking to Pearlman over the telephone, “was meek and apologetic,” saying he was “just trying to get a rise” out of the sportswriter (“Tracking Down My Online Haters,” *CNN.com*, January 21, 2011).

Pearlman observes that this reader’s “online behavior is far from an anomaly. Anyone who writes or is written about is now a potential target for abuse. Online civility—if it ever existed—has withered up and died. And it’s only getting worse” (*ibid.*).

What is it that allows someone who is “meek and apologetic” in direct personal communication to be so rude and uncivil online? Pearlman suggests that, “cloaked in the anonymity provided by the Internet,”

an attacker can feel detached from the consequences of his actions, as if anonymity granted “superhuman powers” that allow him to say (or write) whatever he feels, not having to worry about confronting the person he attacks.

Have you ever noticed that the most vicious online comments are often posted by people who do not use their real names? What would happen if people were held accountable for their words—as was the case when the popular site Facebook.com recently made a change in its commenting system? One technology site that uses a comment system similar to Facebook’s reported that, within hours of implementing the change “most of the anonymous trolls who have come to call TechCrunch comments a second home are gone” (“The Pros And Cons Of Facebook Comments,” *TechCrunch.com*, March 1, 2011).





The TechCrunch editors went on to observe that, “of course, some people don’t want to comment with their real names for good reason (they want to speak freely without fear of reprisals), but for the most part in practice anonymity was abused. It was used mostly as a shield to hide behind and throw out invective” (*ibid.*).

As with many things in life, not everything on the Internet is as it seems—and this very much applies to notions of anonymity. Many who post online assume that they can remain completely anonymous by using a pseudonymous “moniker.” Yet, as sportswriter Pearlman’s story illustrates, anyone online can eventually be tracked down. Sometimes technological tools are enough; other times it may require legal action that forces discovery of a poster’s actual identity.

Earlier this year, an Indiana judge ordered that the names of “anonymous” online comment writers on three websites be handed over in a defamation lawsuit (“Judge Orders the Handover of Names and Other Author Information Regarding Anonymous Web Comments,” *Editorsweblog.org*, March 2, 2011). Although much wrangling over pertinent legal issues will play out in the courts before a decision is final, the article warns readers to “be careful what you write when supposedly commenting under the guise of anonymity” (*ibid.*).

THE DEEPER PROBLEM

Legal issues aside, it is clear that no Web site’s comment policy—and no legal precedent—will get to the heart of the deeper problem: the human nature that excuses and abets people’s rudeness and incivility toward others. As is so often the case, your Bible reveals where the real problem lies.

Jesus Christ, sparring verbally with Pharisees trying to trap Him with their arguments, told the gathered crowd, “not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man” (Matthew 15:11). Later, He explained to His disciples that, “those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart

proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (vv. 18–19).

Our hearts reflect our thoughts. Jesus pointed to attitudes and actions that originate inside a person, including at least two that directly involve injurious words. In fact, in this context, the word “blasphemies” can be defined, according to the *Complete Word Study Bible*, as “verbal abuse against someone which denotes the very worst type of slander... wounding someone’s reputation by evil reports, evil speaking.”

This sounds a lot like the comments sportswriter Pearlman faced—or like those that tried to trash Grammy winner Spalding. Yet these are just two examples out of the countless attacks of similar tone being posted online daily.

What is inside us will ultimately be expressed by our personal communication—be it good or bad. Christ explained, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45). If the “treasure” of our heart is negative, negative communication will be the result.

Online commenters at National Public Radio’s Web site are given a piece of advice that we all would do well to consider before making an “anonymous” comment: “Before you submit a comment, ask yourself this question: If I had to put my real name with this, would I hit ‘publish?’ If the answer is no, the better move might be to hit ‘delete’” (“Why Have Many Comments About the Attack on Lara Logan Been Removed?,” *NPR.org*, February 16, 2011).

This is right in line with the plain instruction of God’s word. “The heart of a righteous person carefully considers how to answer, but the mouths of wicked people pour out a flood of evil things” (Proverbs 15:28, *God’s Word Translation*).

So, the next time you are tempted to respond rashly, be sure to heed God’s counsel. Consider how to answer. Anonymous or not—and you are probably not as anonymous as you think—your words are a reflection of who and what you are.

—Phil Sena

“WELCOME TO HELL, BIN LADEN”

Osama bin Laden—reported dead last May after a United States Navy SEAL team raided his headquarters in Abbottabad, Pakistan—lived by the sword, and he died by the sword (cf. Matthew 26:52). Upon learning of his death, many in the U.S. expressed joy that the wrath bin Laden stored up in his acts of mass murder had finally been delivered back to him.

Amid the hoopla, one forceful comment stood out: “Welcome to Hell, bin Laden,” wrote Mike Huckabee, former Arkansas governor and 2008 presidential candidate. Is Huckabee right? Is Osama bin Laden now in Hell? After all, this is the “mainstream Christian” belief concerning the fate of unbelievers. And surely, if anyone deserves such a fate, bin Laden does, right?

But have you ever really thought about the common belief in Hell? Is it true that Osama bin Laden is now in his first months of infinite billions of years of terrifying anguish and despair, with indescribable pain, and suffering, and horrifying screams of torment, never to slow, never to end? Is it true that God, who upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3), maintains what amounts to the cruelest concentration camp in the cosmos?

Furthermore, if “eternal Hell” is the home of all the “unsaved” who have died, then would we find, suffering alongside bin Laden, countless people who simply died without knowing of Jesus Christ? Would a man who claimed credit for the deaths of 3,000 people on September 11, 2001 be tortured alongside others who—regardless of how selflessly they may have lived their lives—simply happened to be born in a country never reached by Christian missionaries? Remember, God’s perfect word tells us that Jesus Christ is the *only name* given under Heaven by which we may be saved (Acts 4:12). Should these people share the same fate as the blood-stained butcher from al-Qaeda?

The Bible tells us that the God of Heaven is not a “respector of persons,” and that He does not show partiality among peoples and nationalities (Acts 10:34; Ephesians 6:8–9). It reveals that God takes “no

pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11), and that He “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). God also says He can achieve the purposes of His heart (e.g., Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 24:14, 46:11; Ephesians 1:11) and that with Him all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). So, are we to believe that the vast majority of the people He has created are now suffering indescribable torment for all eternity?

Well, if the Bible says so, then it says so. Simple as that. Right?

But what if it does not say so? Many casual Bible students are shocked to discover that the Bible nowhere teaches that people who die without having heard the true Gospel will suffer eternally in Hell. The “Hell” where bin Laden now resides is called *Hades* in the Greek—meaning simply “the grave.” Bin Laden is now in the grave, conscious of nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5). If his mind was not opened to the true Gospel while he was alive, he will be raised at the Great White Throne Judgment and will then—if he repents—have



his first and only opportunity to accept Jesus Christ and His way.

Yes, in God’s time, all will stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, having had a *genuine opportunity* to learn His truth and to repent of their evil ways (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Osama bin Laden will face God’s future judgment. “‘Vengeance is Mine; I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Hebrews 10:30). Some evil people who refuse God’s grace will perish forever in a lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). But God is not some cruel tyrant who will condemn spiritually blinded people to Hell simply because of a blindness He did not remove (2 Corinthians 4:4)!

To learn more about this amazing and encouraging truth, please read our free booklet, *Is This the Only Day of Salvation?* When you do, you will also discover God’s incredible plan for humanity. God’s plan for all human beings is both just and merciful, far more than almost anyone today understands!

—Wallace G. Smith

The Debt Bomb!

Continued from page 12

difficult. But, unless action is taken to place fiscal policy on a sustainable footing, *these costs could easily rise sharply and suddenly*” (*BIS Working Papers 300, The Future of Public Debt: Prospects and Implications*, Stephen G. Cecchetti, M. S. Mohanty and Fabrizio Zampolli, March 2010).

The BIS economists warn that the U.S. could be approaching a “tipping point” in which interest on debt exceeds economic growth, forcing a spiral of more borrowing and deficits. This occurs around the point where government debt exceeds the gross domestic product—exactly where the U.S. is today. The BIS also warned that on the downside of the tipping point, interest rates can spike “sharply and suddenly,” exacerbating the problem and accelerating the downward slide. This could be triggered by a downgrading of U.S. sovereign debt.

THE LEHMAN BROTHERS EFFECT

Lehman Brothers was one of the largest of the Wall Street investment firms and had invested heavily in subprime mortgages. They had an investment-grade, “A” credit rating right up to their bankruptcy filing on September 15, 2008. When the ability of Lehman’s subprime portfolio to repay its debt came into doubt, Lehman’s credit rating was reduced by the rating agencies. As a result, their lenders quickly withdrew their lines of credit. Lehman immediately became insolvent, and they had to seek the protection of Chapter 11 bankruptcy. It happened *very quickly*.

But there is no bankruptcy court to protect nations. When they cannot pay, they default on

their sovereign debt; however, their lenders usually demand high rates or stop lending altogether before that happens. Declining credit ratings and rising interest rates are the signs to watch for. Could something like this happen to the U.S.? Could the U.S.’s or Britain’s triple-A rating be



reduced and its lenders back away? The small nation of Greece was bailed out by the European Union, but who can bail out the U.S. or Great Britain?

ANOTHER WARNING FROM LONG AGO

The U.S. and Great Britain have been blessed greatly by God, and in past generations, the leaders and people generally have acknowledged that their blessings have come from God. God tells us that it is He who makes our creation of wealth possible, but he warns us about it as well. “*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, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God... 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 *power to get wealth*” (Deuteronomy 8:11–14, 17–18).

A nation that is being blessed by God in creating wealth is often a lender to other nations. This was the situation with the U.S. and U.K. in the past. “Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. *You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.* And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them” (Deuteronomy 28:10–13).

But what does God say will happen when He withdraws His blessing? Among other things, debts will increase. “The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. *He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail*” (Deuteronomy 28:43–44).

Some will need to learn the hard way that “the borrower is servant to the lender” (Proverbs 22:7). *America has created a “debt bomb” that it struggles to disarm—and the fuse is burning shorter!* ■

Where and How Should You Pray to God?

Continued from page 2

still not answered. Why? Again, the Bible is very clear on this. For the Apostle John was inspired to tell us, “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).

It is so difficult for people to get this straight. God wants His children to **obey** Him—not just to “get sentimental” about Jesus. So we are told, “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who **keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus**” (Revelation 14:12). For if we have the faith “of” Jesus, we will **know** that God is there and be willing to **obey** what He commands us.

Though God will **sometimes** answer even the prayer of a *sinner*, He normally responds to those who truly obey Him and try to live by His inspired word. As the prophet Isaiah was inspired to tell 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).

As I explain in my article in this issue (“Restoring Original Christianity,” on page 4), *genuine* Christians should follow the example and teaching of Christ and the *original* Church of God and the inspired patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament. Jesus plainly said: “If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17). Do you keep the Ten Commandments? Or do you make excuses? New Testament scriptures clearly show us that we **receive answers** to our prayers when we **keep** God’s commandments!

Please be honest with yourself. It is easy to rationalize or to “reason around” this very clear scriptural teaching about obeying God’s law. But if you want real answers to your prayers, you need to **repent** of breaking the Ten Commandments. Breaking them is defined as sin (1 John 3:4, *KJV*). And you need to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior (Acts 2:38). Then—through the help of the promised Holy Spirit—you will be able to **surrender** more and more each day to let Jesus Christ live His obedient life in you! Keep in mind what the Apostle Paul declared: “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*).

So, to have consistent answers to your prayers, you need to pray to the **real** God—the God of the Bible—in a repentant attitude. You need to *put your heart* in your prayers and **cry out to Him**—preferably *alone* and in a private place, as Jesus instructed. And you need to be willing to **obey** your Creator so you will be in a right relationship with Him and He will then wish to answer the prayers of His obedient son or daughter.

“Drive-through” prayers, and popular musical entertainment—and just “going through the motions” of worshiping God—are **not enough**. For our Creator wants us to worship Him “in Truth”—meaning we need to guide our lives *and our prayers* according to His inspired word. We must learn to constantly pray to God—communing and walking with Him.

Then, as the end of this age approaches and the awesome trials and tests of the Christian life come upon you—as they surely will—you will know exactly what to do and how to do it. In fact, you will be able to follow Christ’s own footsteps. Since He had cried out to God for strength and courage, He was not afraid when His time had come to die. In fact, as Judas and an entire detachment of troops came to seize Him, Jesus calmly “went forward” and asked them: “Whom are you seeking?” (John 18:4). For Jesus had done what He always did. Earlier, in the Garden of Gethsemane, He had fallen on his face and fervently prayed, calling out: “O My Father...” (Matthew 26:39).

If you would like to learn the real details about **how** to do all of this, be sure to call or write to the Regional Office nearest you (listed at the bottom of this page), and ask for the extremely helpful and informative booklet entitled, *Twelve Keys to Answered Prayer*. It will be sent absolutely **free** upon your request. You may also read it or order a **free** printed copy online, at our Web site, www.TomorrowsWorld.org. Do not let yourself be satisfied with the world’s shallow and false approaches to prayer!



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QLD Brisbane QCTV 44 SUN 9:00 a.m.
SA Adelaide C44 SUN 9:30 a.m.
MON 11:00 p.m.

VIC Melbourne MCTC 44 SUN 11:30 p.m.
NSW Sydney TVS 44 SUN 7:00 a.m.
SAT 5:00 a.m.

WA Perth WTV 44 SUN 9:00 a.m.
FRI 12:00 p.m.

BARBADOS:

St. Michael CBC 8 SUN 9:30 a.m.

CANADA:

BC Vancouver CHNU SUN 1:30 a.m.
SUN 5:00 p.m.

BC Victoria CHEK SUN 8:00 a.m.

NS Halifax CIHF SUN 8:30 a.m.

SK Regina CFRE SUN 8:30 a.m.

SK Saskatoon CFSK SUN 8:30 a.m.

MB Winnipeg CKND SUN 8:30 a.m.

JAMAICA:

Kingston TVJ SUN 7:00 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND:

Nationwide Prime TV SUN 8:30 a.m.

SOUTH AFRICA:

Cape Town CTV SUN 11:00 a.m.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO:

Port of Spain CNC3-TV SUN 7:00 a.m.

UK & NW EUROPE:

Gospel Sky TV 590 MON 7:00 p.m.

WORD (TWN) Sky TV 591 WED 6:00 a.m.

Sky TV 591 SAT 12:00 a.m.

UNITED STATES:

AK Anchorage KIMO SUN 6:00 a.m.

Fairbanks KATN SUN 6:00 a.m.

Juneau KJUD SUN 6:00 a.m.

AL Dothan WTVY SUN 7:00 a.m.

Montgomery WBMM SUN 7:00 a.m.

AL Opelika WLGA SUN 7:00 a.m.

AR Fort Smith KHBS SUN 7:00 a.m.

Jonesboro KJOS SUN 7:00 a.m.

AZ Phoenix KASW SUN 7:30 a.m.

CA Bakersfield KGET SUN 8:00 a.m.

Chico KHSL SUN 8:00 a.m.

Eureka KUVU SUN 8:00 a.m.

Modesto KAZV SUN 8:00 a.m.

TUE 5:00 p.m.

Monterey KION SUN 8:00 a.m.

Palm Springs KESQ SUN 8:00 a.m.

Redding KHSL SUN 8:00 a.m.

CO Grand Junction KJCT SUN 7:00 a.m.

FL Gainesville WCJB SUN 8:00 a.m.

Panama City WJHG SUN 8:00 a.m.

GA Albany WBSK SUN 8:00 a.m.

Augusta WAGT SUN 8:00 a.m.

Columbus WLGA SUN 8:00 a.m.

Macon WBMN SUN 8:00 a.m.

IA Ottumwa KWOT SUN 9:00 a.m.

ID Boise KNIN SUN 9:00 a.m.

Idaho Falls KPIF SUN 7:00 a.m.

Bloomington WHOI SUN 7:00 a.m.

Chicago WGN SUN 5:00 a.m.

Peoria WHOI SUN 7:00 a.m.

Quincy WGEW SUN 7:00 a.m.

IN Fort Wayne WPTA SUN 8:00 a.m.

KY Bowling Green WBKO SUN 7:00 a.m.

LA Alexandria KBCA SUN 7:00 a.m.

Lafayette KLWB SUN 7:00 a.m.

Lake Charles WBLC SUN 7:00 a.m.

Monroe KNOE SUN 7:00 a.m.

ME Bangor WABI SUN 8:00 a.m.

Presque Isle WBPQ SUN 8:00 a.m.

MI Alpena WBAE SUN 8:00 a.m.

Lansing WLAJ SUN 8:00 a.m.

Marquette WBKP SUN 8:00 a.m.

MN Duluth KDLH SUN 7:00 a.m.

Mankato KWYE SUN 7:00 a.m.

Rochester KTTT SUN 7:00 a.m.

MO Columbia KOMU SUN 7:00 a.m.

Joplin KFJX SUN 8:30 a.m.

Kirksville KWOT SUN 7:00 a.m.

Springfield KSFX SUN 6:30 a.m.

St. Louis WRBU SUN 9:00 a.m.

MS Biloxi WBGW SUN 7:00 a.m.

Columbus WCBI SUN 7:00 a.m.

Greenwood WBWD SUN 7:00 a.m.

Hattiesburg WBH SUN 7:00 a.m.

Meridian WTOK SUN 7:00 a.m.

MT Billings KTVQ SUN 7:00 a.m.

Bozeman KXLF SUN 7:00 a.m.

Butte KBZK SUN 7:00 a.m.

Glendive KWZB SUN 7:00 a.m.

Great Falls KRTV SUN 7:00 a.m.

Helena KMTF SUN 7:00 a.m.

Missoula KPAX SUN 7:00 a.m.

NC Charlotte WAXN SUN 7:00 a.m.

Greenville WNCT SUN 8:00 a.m.

Hickory WHKY MON 7:30 p.m.

ND Bismarck KWMMK SUN 7:00 a.m.

Fargo WDAY SUN 7:00 a.m.

NE Lincoln KCWL SUN 7:00 a.m.

North Platte KWPL SUN 7:00 a.m.

NV Reno KREN SUN 8:00 a.m.

NY Albany WCWN SUN 8:00 a.m.

Binghamton WBNG SUN 8:00 a.m.

Elmira WENY SUN 8:00 a.m.

OH Lima WBOH SUN 8:00 a.m.

OK Oklahoma City KSBI SUN 7:00 a.m.

OR Bend KTVZ SUN 8:00 a.m.

Eugene KMTR SUN 8:00 a.m.

Medford KTVL SUN 8:00 a.m.

PA Erie WBEP SUN 8:00 a.m.

SC Charleston WCBD SUN 8:00 a.m.

Myrtle Beach WWMB SUN 8:00 a.m.

SD Rapid City KWBH SUN 7:00 a.m.

TN Jackson WBJK SUN 7:00 a.m.

TX Amarillo KVIH SUN 7:00 a.m.

Beaumont KFDN SUN 7:00 a.m.

Corpus Christi KRIS SUN 7:00 a.m.

Harlingen KSFE SUN 7:00 a.m.

Laredo KGNS SUN 7:00 a.m.

Lubbock KLCW SUN 7:00 a.m.

Lufkin KTRE SUN 6:30 a.m.

Midland KWWT SUN 7:00 a.m.

Tyler KLTV SUN 6:30 a.m.

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WI Eau Claire WXOW SUN 7:00 a.m.

LaCrosse WQOW SUN 7:00 a.m.

Superior KDHL SUN 7:00 a.m.

WV Bluefield WVVA SUN 8:00 a.m.

Clarksburg WVFX SUN 8:00 a.m.

Parkersburg WCWP SUN 8:00 a.m.

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Cheyenne KLWY SUN 10:00 a.m.

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