

TOMORROW'S WORLD

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WILL YOU BE
**LEFT
BEHIND?**



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Searching for True Christianity

As I have written in the past, I had a fairly “ordinary” upbringing, like many of you who read this magazine. I grew up in southwest Missouri, and for 19 years was a member of a very respectable “mainstream” church. My parents graduated from a college sponsored by this major church denomination. I was, for a year or two, president of my Sunday School class. I graduated from Joplin High School and was co-captain of the track team and the star mile runner for three consecutive years. I lettered in football, and was a two-time Golden Gloves boxing champion. I became a first lieutenant in my high school’s Reserve Officer Training Corps. Later, I attended Joplin Junior College, and was elected President of the Junior College Luncheon Club—an organization devoted to discussing civic affairs and world events.

I was definitely a “regular” guy—part of “mainstream America.”

Early in high school, however, one of my best friends was killed in a wrestling match. This tragedy propelled me to search into the reality of God, and to look for real answers. I came to see that the genuine “key” to true Christianity was whether or not we would actually believe and practice what Jesus Christ and the original Apostles believed and practiced. What did they say about going to heaven or hell? What did they say about the real purpose of life? Which weekly and annual days of worship did they observe? What did they actually say about the “end of the world,” Christ’s Second Coming and what the true saints would be doing after Christ’s return? What would our “reward” actually be?

The Original Church

A vital step for understanding the puzzle of modern “Christianity,” which directly contradicts the teachings and practices of Christ and the original Apostles, is to study the way of life of the original and true Mother Church—the Church of God at Jerusalem.

Paul wrote to the mainly Gentile believers at Thessalonica, saying: “For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ

Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 2:14). Nearly all historians recognize that the earliest Headquarters Church was at Jerusalem—and that it set the pattern for the teaching and way of life practiced by true Christians.

A respected and thoroughly researched secular history of this period is Edward Gibbon’s monumental work, *Decline and Fall of the*



Roman Empire. Writing of the Apostolic and post-Apostolic Eras, Gibbon states: “The first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews; and the congregation over which they presided united the Law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ. It was natural that the primitive tradition

of a church which was founded only forty days after the death of Christ, and was governed almost as many years under the immediate inspection of his apostle, should be received as the standard of orthodoxy. The distant churches very frequently appealed to the authority of their venerable Parent” (chap. 15, sec. 1).

I should point out here that “the law” the early Christians observed was not the complete Law of Moses. What the true Christians did observe were the Ten Commandments, along with God’s statutes—all now magnified even more so in the spirit than they had been in the Old Testament. True Christians did not believe that they were required to persist in the ceremonial aspects of the Law of Moses, nor in the physical administration of civil law that God gave Israel. But because these early Christians still observed the biblical Sabbath, God’s annual Festivals, tithing and certain dietary restrictions (cf. Leviticus 11), many historians wrongly persist in saying that they followed the “Law

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of Moses”—trying to lump God’s commandments and statutes in with animal sacrifices and ritualistic washings. This is absolutely wrong, and it is deceptive!

A Little Flock

The truth is that there has always been a “little flock” (Luke 12:32) of believers, who followed the teachings and practices of Christ and the Apostles. However, since Apostolic times, they have been hounded and persecuted, and little noticed by the world at large. As the early apostates took over the existing church structures and the name “Christian,” the last remaining original Apostle was inspired to write about one of those apostate leaders: “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against

The truth is that there has always been a “little flock” (Luke 12:32)

us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church” (3 John 9–10).

So the true worshipers were “cast out” of the local congregations, and even John, Jesus’ beloved friend among the Apostles, was not certain whether he would be able to come and rectify the situation!

Centuries later, most people are still confused about the true religion of Jesus Christ. Those who profess Christianity are divided into hundreds of competing sects and denominations. But very few understand the original form of Christianity that Christ and His Apostles taught and lived! The “Christian” world has been built on shifting sand. Its moral system is impotent without the sure foundation of God’s law. Secular forces are increasingly dictating its standards of conduct, which used to be the prerogative of religious leaders.

Another Jesus!

Today, we behold the spectacle of perverts taking over more and more key posts in government, in education

and even in some of the mainline churches! We behold the horrifying statistics of millions of unborn babies having their skulls crushed and being vacuumed out of their mothers’ wombs! We behold a civilization that is truly coming apart at the seams. We are a society that will soon be directly punished by the Great God who gives life and breath to all.

Why? In no small measure because our peoples have been deceived into believing in “another Jesus”—because our peoples have truly lost contact with the true God and His revealed way of life.

Jesus said: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matthew 7:21–23).

Lawlessness?

Yes! The religion that assumed the name of Christianity adopted the pagan concepts and practices of the Babylonian Mystery Religion in direct violation of the law of God! In 2 Thessalonians 2:7, the Apostle Paul referred to this as the “mystery of lawlessness.”



This false worship system was instituted in place of the simple way of life that Jesus and the Apostles had taught. Jesus’ way of life was based on obedience to the Ten Commandments, through the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit received after repentance and baptism.

We in this Work of the living God teach and practice—to the best of our ability and with God’s help—the same basic “way of life” taught by Christ and His Apostles. One of our basic mottos is: “Restore Original Christianity!”

If you would like to learn more about this return to the “original” Christianity and all that it involves, be sure to write or call us at the Regional Office nearest you, as listed on page 4 of this magazine.

Rodney C. Meredith

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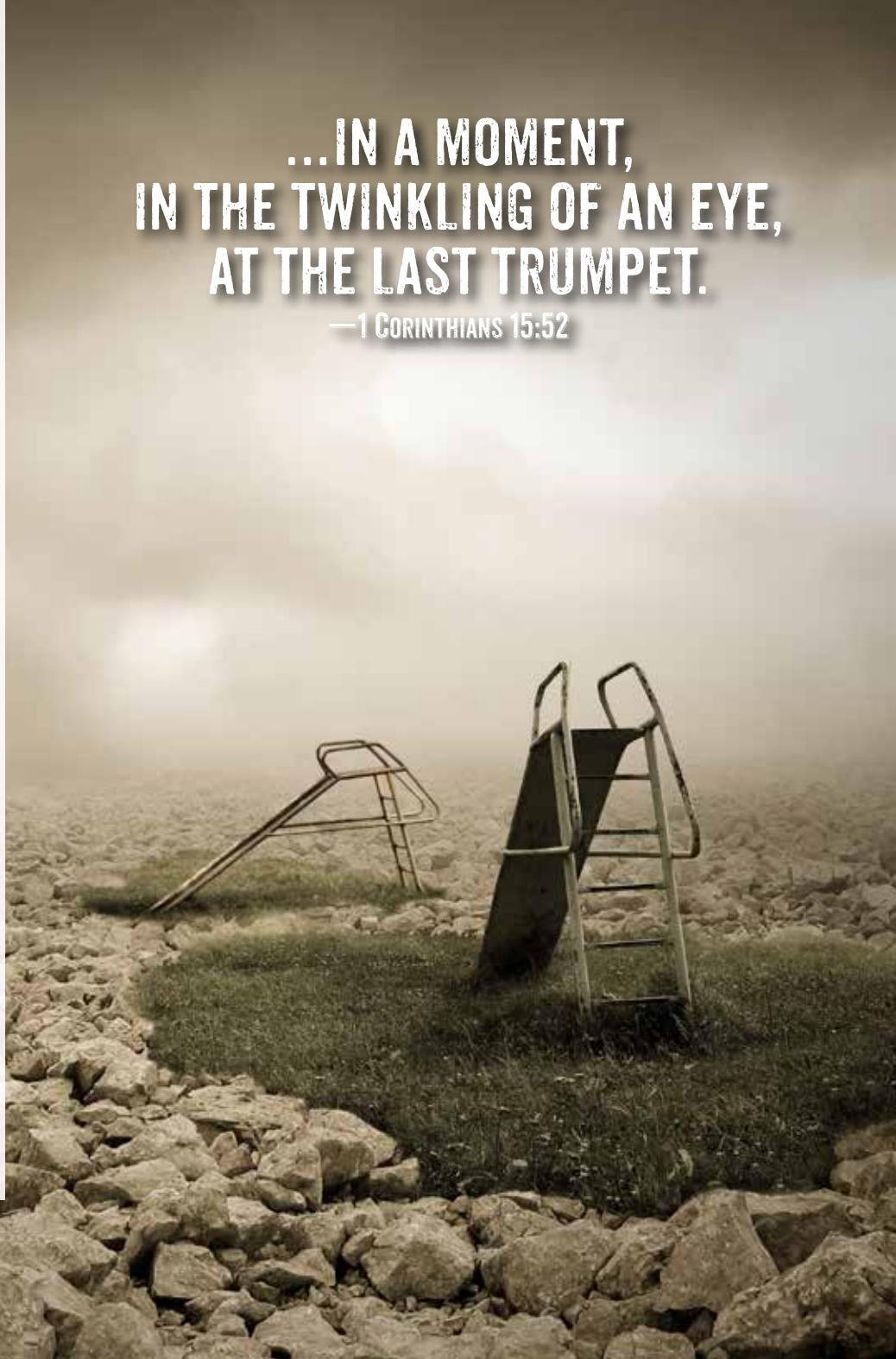
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...IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, AT THE LAST TRUMPET.

—1 CORINTHIANS 15:52



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Will You Be LEFT BEHIND?

Is the “rapture” theory biblical, or does Scripture reveal that God’s plan for end-time Christians is not what most imagine?

You need to know!

By **Roderick C. Meredith**

Will God someday “rapture” away Christian airline pilots, leaving countless “unsaved” passengers to face gruesome deaths? Will the world’s highways become deathtraps as cars lose their Christian drivers?

If you were to go to a typical Protestant church and ask a hundred people, “Will God ‘rapture’ away true Christians before Jesus Christ returns?” a majority would answer “yes.” A 2011 Pew Forum study found that 61 percent of “evangelical leaders” expect believers to be caught up in the air to be with Jesus before the prophesied end-time judgments are inflicted on planet Earth, and more than half of those surveyed—52 percent—said they expected the event to occur within their lifetimes.

Where does this idea come from? Is it biblical? Certainly it is not the Bible that has popularized this theory. Just as modern ideas about hell are largely taken from Dante’s *Inferno*, many today take for granted the popular depictions of the rapture in books such as the *Left Behind* series by author Tim LaHaye.

Yet the idea of the “rapture” is even controversial among those who consider themselves “Bible-believing” Christians. Why? Because it cannot be proved from Scripture, and was not even known to the Protestant world until recent centuries—and in fact it contradicts a number of clear biblical teachings about Christ’s Second Coming!

You have probably seen depictions of the *Left Behind* scenario. Christian airline pilots are snatched away, leaving their planes to plummet into the ocean. Major freeways turn into terrible accident zones as driverless cars plow into each other, causing injuries and deaths! Indeed, you may have seen the bumper sticker, “In case of rapture, this car will be without a driver!” To those who believe in this rapture theory, the unsaved will not just be left behind—many will go straight to hell, dying in gruesome circumstances in the absence of the “saved.”

What kind of cruel and capricious God would do that?

In his book, *Revelation Unveiled*, Tim LaHaye attempted to prove that the Bible teaches a “rapture.” LaHaye begins his “proof” by citing Revelation 4:1–2. But he quickly acknowledges: “The rapture of the church is not explicitly taught in Revelation 4” (p. 100). Amen!

So, can we find, in that passage of Scripture, any indication of a “rapture”? No! Read it for yourself: “After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.’ Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne” (Revelation 4:1–2).

This very directly describes the Apostle John being taken “in the spirit”—probably through some kind of powerful vision—to the very throne of God in the

third heaven. LaHaye somehow tries to reason that the Apostle John represents the Church—although the Bible never remotely hints of any such representation! Rather, the Bible always represents the Church as a woman—the affianced bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:1–2; Ephesians 5:22–24).

LaHaye offers another argument for the rapture theory: “The absence of any mention of the Church in the rest of Revelation indicates that it is not on the earth during the Tribulation. There are sixteen references to the Church in Revelation 1–3, whereas chapters 6–18, which cover the Tribulation, do not mention the Church once” (*Revelation Unveiled*, p. 100). This is indeed a brazen statement, for the entire chapter of Revelation 12 is talking about the Church—and Revelation 19:7–9 clearly discusses the Church’s coming marriage to Jesus Christ, as we will discuss later.

Soon, LaHaye gets to the primary biblical passage on which all proponents of the questionable rapture theory rely. He writes: “The Apostle Paul was the special writer God chose to reveal to the Church the wonderful details of the rapture, when all Christians, both the dead and the living, will be ‘caught up’ (or raptured) to heaven to be with Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17)” (p. 101).

What “wonderful details” are given in these two verses that should prove the rapture theory? Let us study the entire context of this passage: “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).

What Paul Really Said!

The Apostle Paul is here comforting the Thessalonian brethren about their fellow Christians who had recently “fallen asleep”—who had died. He said that God will bring with Him (with Christ) “those who sleep in Jesus.” He then said: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first” (v. 16). Revelation 8 and 9 clearly describe the “trumpet plagues” of God, and the awesome destruction they will cause over the entire earth. Then Revelation 11:15 tells us: “Then the seventh angel sounded: and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” So Christ does not “sneak” back to earth to secretly “rapture” His saints away to heaven. Rather, He returns at the end of the most awesome, earth-shaking events in history—events that are felt and seen by everyone!

Again, the Apostle Paul himself tells us regarding Christ’s Second Coming: “Behold, I tell you a mystery:

“AND PRAY THAT YOUR FLIGHT MAY NOT BE IN WINTER OR ON THE SABBATH....” WERE A “RAPTURE” INVOLVED, WHY WORRY ABOUT TRAVELING ON THE SABBATH OR IN WINTER?

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51–52). So please get this one key fact straight: the saints of God—living or dead—are not raised or changed until after the powerful “last trumpet” has sounded. This basic fact alone completely obliterates the entire “rapture theory”!

Jesus Christ clearly describes, in Matthew 24:3–33, the order of events preceding His Second Coming. Please read those verses very carefully! First, Jesus describes the false prophets who would arise and deceive the “many” (v. 5). Then, He describes war, famine, pestilence and earthquakes that would



“Thousands were dead in plane crashes and car pileups. Emergency crews were trying to clear expressways and runways, all the while grieving over loved ones and coworkers who had disappeared.”

—*Left Behind*, p. 29

follow. Does Jesus then tell us that His saints will escape all this? No! Rather, Jesus tells us: “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake” (v. 9). Many true Christians will be martyred before Christ returns—not “raptured” off to heaven!

Then Jesus predicts the Great Tribulation, which is so awful that “no flesh” would be saved unless God intervened (vv. 21–22). Then verse 29 tells us: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” The awesome heavenly “signs” come next, and then the glorious return of Jesus Christ at the “great sound of a trumpet” (v. 31) as the resurrected saints are gathered to Christ, their Bridegroom, and who then join Him in descending to the Mount of Olives. “Then the LORD will go forth

and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives” (Zechariah 14:3–4). Finally, Zechariah was inspired to tell us: “And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—‘The LORD is one, and His name one’” (v. 9).

By carelessly assuming that the Apostle John represents the Church, and by carefully bypassing the obvious and consistent meaning of the “last trumpet,” among other misunderstandings, LaHaye tries to construct a platform from which to launch the “rap-

ture theory.” But his approach is totally unbiblical. Where, then, did this confused theory originate?

Origin of the Rapture Theory

Virtually all scholars acknowledge that the rapture theory was basically unknown and untaught until a man named John Nelson Darby came along. Darby was founder of the Plymouth Brethren Church. He described a system of biblical interpretation called “dispensationalism.” This unusual scheme theorized that God has different rules for different groups at various times in human history. Darby taught that God had a “law” for the Jews, but “grace” for the Church.

Later, Darby’s ideas were refined and made popular by C. I. Scofield, who authored the *Scofield Reference Bible*. From this source, Protestant evangelicals became enamored with these teachings, even though they are so blatantly unscriptural.

In an effort to find earlier origins for the rapture theory, LaHaye cites a number of dubious references that go back in time many centuries before Darby. For instance, LaHaye quotes from the writings of one Pseudo-Ephrem, yet admits that it is difficult to know who this man really was or when he wrote. Here is the quote from “Pseudo-Ephrem” used in LaHaye’s book, *Revelation Unveiled*: “Why therefore do we not reject every care of earthly actions and prepare ourselves for the meeting of the Lord Christ, so that he may draw us from the confusion, which overwhelms all the world?... All the saints and elect of God are gath-

LEFT BEHIND? CONTINUES ON PAGE 26

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**Do You Believe
the True Gospel?**



and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount

Oh Canada!

Leadership in Crisis?



Does a leadership crisis loom for Canada?

Many recent headlines seem to indicate that this may be the case. Whether a local leader like Toronto mayor Rob Ford, or a federal leader like Justin Trudeau, some of Canada's more prominent officials have of late caused their supporters a great deal of grief. What do their struggles teach us about leadership?

Ancient Prophecy, Modern Example

Long ago the prophet Isaiah was inspired to record a condemnation against Israel for its proud and arrogant self-reliance in believing it could overcome adversity and chart its own course apart from God (Isaiah 9:8-11). Israel's choice proved a certain recipe for disaster, because without God's protection Israel was not strong enough to fend off all of the threats surrounding it. How did a nation like Israel, which had witnessed supernatural deliverance from God throughout its history, come to reject God's help and instruction? Isaiah answers this question in part a few verses later: "For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and those who are led by them are destroyed" (v. 16).

Does this sound like an accurate description of Canadian leadership today? A quick look at two men who have expressed a desire to become Canada's Prime Minister may be instructive. Rob Ford, the mayor of Canada's largest city, admits that his aspirations are to one day become Prime Minister, so what do his actions tell us about where he would lead the nation? Justin Trudeau, son of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and current Liberal Party leader, has revealed his clear intention to become the next Prime Minister of Cana-

da, but does he desire to be a godly leader? Do *either* of these individuals know what it means to be a godly leader? Is godliness an attribute Canadians even **seek** in their leaders?

Scandals Abound

Mayor Ford has recently been involved in a number of scandals. Perhaps the most prominent has been his admitted use of crack cocaine while sitting as the chief executive of the City of Toronto. As if to justify this dereliction of duty, he blamed his abuse of alcohol for his experimentation with the illegal substance. Defiantly, when asked if he would step down from his duties, the mayor stated, "I have no reason to resign" (*CBC News*, "Rob Ford quotes of 2013," December 30, 2013).

Some city councilors pointed out that the city could have been put at risk if an emergency had taken place while the mayor was under the mind-altering influence of these intoxicants. Whether these comments were for political gain or not, the words echo a principle found in the biblical Book of Proverbs: "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted." (Proverbs 31:4-5).

The City Council went on to strip the mayor of his emergency powers, handing them to deputy mayor Norm Kelly (*Toronto Star*, "Rob Ford stripped of power as mayor by Toronto council," November 18, 2013). Barely a month later, Toronto was hit by a major ice storm, leaving many without power and heat for several days during a period of extreme cold. Since Ford refused to step down from office, and City Council handed his emergency powers to the deputy mayor,

Toronto was left wondering who was in charge during a major emergency. As mayor, Ford still had the power to declare an emergency, but no power to manage it. The deputy mayor had emergency powers, but no power to declare an emergency.

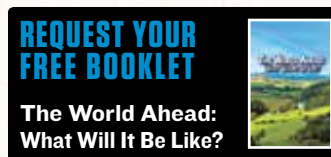
"The current arrangement is awkward," Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong told the *Toronto Star* during the crisis. "I don't think it would be unfair to say that the deputy mayor's enthusiasm to declare a state of emergency might have something to do with the fact that he wanted to be in charge,... By the same token, I think that the mayor may not have wanted to declare that state of emergency because he didn't want to hand over control to the deputy mayor" (*Toronto Star*, "Ice Storm," January 23, 2014).

This was a leadership crisis affecting the population of Toronto that came as a result of ignoring godly principles governing moderation with alcohol and condemnation of bodily abuse such as comes with the use of crack (Proverbs 23:29-35; Ephesians 5:15-18). Imagine what type of catastrophe could result for a nation suffering such a crisis in leadership. Under foreign attack or during a deadly disease outbreak, could we depend on a leader who may be in a drug-induced stupor? Mayor Ford has claimed that his use of these substances is on his own time, but does a leader have personal time during a crisis? Do emergencies only happen during business hours?



Justin Trudeau and Rob Ford have so far held on to many supporters, despite public gaffes causing Canadians to question their fitness as leaders.

On the other side of the spectrum, Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau is actively seeking the office of Prime Minister now held by Tory leader Stephen Harper. In addition to Trudeau's well-documented confidence-depleting gaffes, such as an ill attempt at humor in discussing the Russia/Ukraine situation, stated admiration for the "basic dictatorship" in China, and remarks about how budgets "balance themselves," the Liberal leader is a supporter of abortion, legalized marijuana use and same-sex marriage. These are activities condemned by God (Exodus 20:13; Romans 1:24-27). Trudeau's support of same-sex marriage and



abortion put a nation already suffering from a birth rate below that needed for population replacement at even

greater risk. Such a policy, which would further speed the demise of the Canadian people, represents a clear straying from God's standards governing family relationships (Genesis 2:15-24; Ephesians 5:22-32).

Whom Would God Choose?

What happens when leaders ignore the admonitions of God in their personal and public lives? As they do so, they unwittingly risk bringing about terrible consequences for themselves and their followers, because—while blessings are built into living a godly way of life—many troubles and hardships come with the alternative (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28).

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul wanted his followers to emulate Christ, to be godly in their conduct. They were to hold him to the same standard. Christ was a servant leader who did not lead for personal gain or influence, but in order to help and encourage those under His care (Matthew 20:25-28). Are Canada's leaders following this pattern of leadership today if they set bad examples and promote destructive and godless policies?

Tellingly, the prophet Jeremiah revealed that people often enjoy having leaders who lead them astray and "love to have it so" (Jeremiah 5:30-31). Can Canadians avert this trend? The answer is **yes**, but only if they will cry out to God for righteous leaders and willingly follow such. Faced with such a choice, what will you do in the end?

—James Ginn

Bible vs. Quran:

Where Is the Truth?

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’”
(John 14:6)

“And We sent... Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah: We gave Him the Gospel”
(Surah 5:35)

By Wyatt Ciesielka

T rue Christians recognize the Holy Bible as God’s inerrant word, perfect as given to His people. Nominal Christians have waged crusades and committed terrible atrocities in its name—sometimes fighting against other nominal Christians, and sometimes fighting against those who revere other books as holy—committing acts of violence the God of the Bible condemns as sin.

One book revered as holy by more than 1.6 billion people alive today claims that it—not the Bible—is the final, perfect and infallible source of divine revelation. That book, the Quran, has also been used over the centuries to try to justify violent acts that the Bible and true Christians also rightly recognize as sin.

Muslims and Christians alike need to understand what the Bible says about itself. And Muslims in particular might be surprised by what the Quran actually says about the Bible.

The Religion Behind the Quran

Islam is the second-largest world religion. It has its greatest concentration of believers in the Middle East and North Africa, where more than 93 percent of the 340 million-plus population is Muslim. The largest numbers of Muslims, however, are outside the Middle East, with more than a billion in South and Southeast Asia, where they make up about 25 percent of the population. Indonesia has the world’s largest Muslim population, with more than 200 million adherents. Saudi Arabia, home of the religion, has just 25 million.

Muhammad, whom Muslims consider to be the final prophet of God, reported his first revelation in 610AD—a revelation he said came from the archangel Gabriel—and he continued to report revelations over the last two decades of his life. These revelations were codified after his death into the document now known as the Quran.

The two main branches of Islam today are the Sunni and the Shi’a, who trace their different lineages to a succession dispute among Muhammad’s first followers. Shi’ite Muslims look to Muhammad’s son-in-law and cousin Ali as the religion’s first rightful caliph (religious head of state), while Sunni Muslims accept the authority of the first three rulers who led the community after Muhammad’s death: Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman. The two branches also differ in their jurisprudence, relying on different *hadith* (“sayings” of Muhammad and his companions) compiled in the tenth century AD to establish precedent in religious disputes.

Although Muslims acknowledge many distinguishing names for God, based on different divine attributes, the primary name they use is *Allah*—a word known to Arabs in pre-Islamic times, as we see from the name of Muhammad’s father, Abd-Allah, meaning “servant of God.” The Quran consists of 114 chapters, or Surah, each supposedly revealed by Allah through an angel, but only written toward the end of Muhammad’s lifetime and shortly afterward (the last text was supposedly written during the caliphate of Umar).

Several hundred years before Muhammad, the 22 Hebrew books of the Old Testament (split into 39 in Christian editions) and the 27 Greek-language books of the New Testament had been codified—canonized—as the Christian Bible. Muhammad, traveling

across the Middle East with his uncle, a trader, would inevitably have been exposed to many individuals professing belief in the Bible, with its clear message of one sovereign God a stark contrast to the many gods worshiped by the various Arabian tribes.

Whether Shi'a, Sunni or other, all Muslims revere Allah as God, Muhammad as Allah's messenger and the Quran as Allah's perfect message. In fact, despite a number of passages written in an old Arabic practically unintelligible to modern speakers, Muslim scholars consider the Quran perfect and incorruptible—indeed, most Muslims consider it pre-existent and uncreated, as eternal as Allah.

How does the Quran call for the spread of Islam? It allows Muslims to convert or kill unbelievers (Surah 9:5; 47:4). Today, Muslims hold differing opinions about the Quran's 41 references to *jihad*—an Arabic word that can be rendered into English as “struggle” or “battle.” Some interpret *jihad* as primarily an internal and spiritual process, while others take it as a command to wage literal physical war against nonbelievers. In the first decades of Islam, Muslims indeed waged war widely in the name of their faith. Consider the Zoroastrian community of Persia, which had flourished for more than a thousand years before Muhammad. Beginning around 635AD, Muslim armies increasingly encroached on Persia, and within a generation or two most Zoroastrians had either converted to Islam or had fled to India. A similar pattern would occur elsewhere across the Middle East and North Africa, until the reach of Islam eventually extended as far north as the gates of Vienna and as far west as Spain.

Interestingly, it is namely “the people of the Book”—Jews and Christians who do not accept the

Quran—who are to be subjugated and if necessary killed. Muslims are instructed to “fight those of the People of the Book who do not [truly] believe in God [Allah] and the Last Day... until they pay the tax and agree to submit...” (Surah 9:29–30). This is in stark contrast to the Bible's command to Christians, who are forbidden from violence or even hatred (Matthew 5:39–44). Christians are to love their enemies (Luke 6:35) and display the fruits of the Spirit in their lives

(Galatians 5:22–23). Christians understand that Jesus' kingdom is not yet of this world (John 18:36), are to proclaim the Good News of Christ's return (Mark 16:15, Matthew 24:14), and are to await His return when He will reign as King of kings (Revelation 19:11–16).

The Inspired Scripture Debate

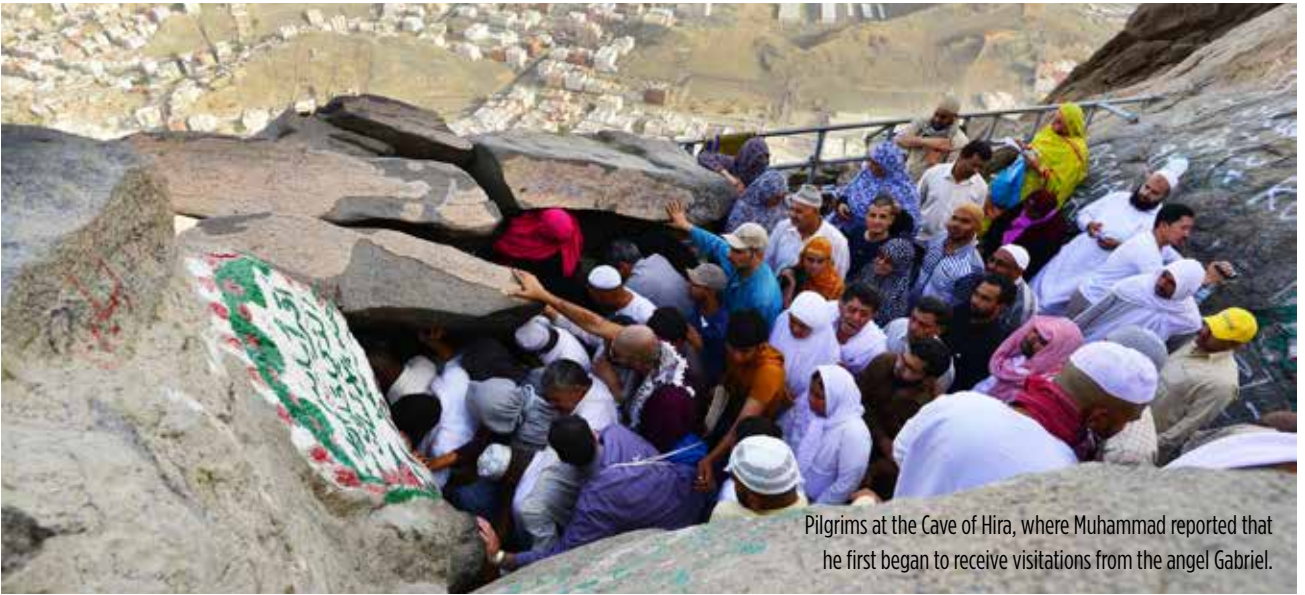
The Bible teaches that God spoke His inspired Scripture through divinely chosen men moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19–21)—that it is *theopneustos*, or “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16), true (John 17:17) and the basis for all doctrine (Matthew 4:4). The inspired canon of Scripture concludes with the sobering warning that the Bible is not to be added to or taken from (Revelation 22:18–19). It is not to be contradicted by some “further revelation” that would revise or supersede its commands.

How do Muslims deal with this? Some Muslims contend that the Bible was *originally* trustworthy, but that it had become corrupted at some point. This is simply a false and easily disprovable claim. Many Bible manuscripts date back to *hundreds* of years before Muhammad's time. Furthermore, these manuscripts were well known in Muhammad's day, and many of those same manuscripts remain to modern times. For example, the beautifully preserved *Codex Vaticanus*, *Codex Sinaiticus* (both ca. 340–350AD), the Chester Beatty Papyri (ca. 250AD), smaller fragments such as the John Ryland Fragment (ca. 117–138), the Bodmer Papyri, and hundreds of other copies of the New Testament which date from *before* the time of Muhammad survive today and attest to the inerrancy of Scripture.

These many documents, in addition to the Dead Sea Scrolls, testify to the preservation and codification of Scripture well before Muhammad's day. They also present Muslims with a dilemma. If the claimed corruption occurred *before* the time of Muhammad, then why does the Quran refer to the Bible as the word of God and insist it is to be followed (Surah 2:40–42, 75, 3:3, 71, 93, 98–99; 5:68; 6:91; 10:37, 94; 21:7; 29:45; 35:31; 46:11)? Why does the Quran instruct that Christians were to find the truth in the New Testament of Muhammad's day (Surah 10:94)? Additionally, if the New Testament is the word of God (as proclaimed in Surah 5:46, 67, 71), and if Jesus was a prophet of God (as Surah 4:171 and elsewhere assert), then Jesus' words *in the Bible* should be believed and obeyed. The Quran



Quran—who are to be subjugated and if necessary killed. Muslims are instructed to “fight those of the



Pilgrims at the Cave of Hira, where Muhammad reported that he first began to receive visitations from the angel Gabriel.

itself points to the legitimacy of the Bible that God gave to Israel (Surah 2:40–42)! Furthermore, the Quran teaches that the word of God cannot be changed, and that it must be believed and obeyed (Surah 2:136; 4:136; 6:34; 10:34; 29:46).

The Bible asserts that **it**—and **no other** text—is God’s word, recorded and codified by “holy men” (2 Peter 1:21) under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And, as has been noted, the Bible has been *faithfully preserved* through the centuries. Two of hundreds of examples of the preservation of the Bible are the *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus*. These beautiful and complete Bibles are available to view in museums today. These are two of the oldest surviving complete Bibles, assembled ca. 340AD, *more than three centuries before the Quran*. Their texts, translated, read nearly identically to any modern *NKJV* or *KJV* Bible that may be purchased today. Consider that the *Codex Sinaiticus*, written before the time of Muhammad and surviving on parchment for more than 1,670 years, contains the same text from the book of Revelation, noted above, which can be translated as plainly as what you will find in your *NKJV* today: “I testify to everyone that hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If any one add to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book, and if anyone take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life, and from the holy city, which things are written in this book” (22:18–19).

Where modern accretions have crept into later translations of the Bible, these are well known, such as the famous “Johannine comma” in 1 John 5:7, used to falsely present God as a “Trinity.” Yes, God has preserved the ancient texts that let us know the truth of His inspired word. The Bible has not been corrupted; rather, its original text has been *preserved accurately* through the centuries. Christians have faith in the veracity of these words and have faith in the hope of the resurrection and in the “tree of life and the holy city.” The Bible, the word of God, contains these words of life (cf. John 6:63). These words are true, trustworthy, final, perfect and infallible. No other Scripture is needed, nor has been given.

Salvation Available to All

The need for salvation, and the hope of life after death, are core themes in both the Quran and the Bible. Yet the two books are incompatible in their understandings of Jesus Christ. The Quran teaches that Jesus was neither God nor the Son of God but was simply a prophet. This is such an important Islamic tenet that the assertion that God “begets not” (taken from Surah 112:3) was inscribed on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem toward the end of the seventh century AD. While the Quran points to Jesus as sent from God, the Christian Bible is unique in presenting salvation as coming through *God who became flesh*.

Muhammad pointed his followers to many biblical prophecies of Jesus’ coming. Surah 3:38–48 tells of

angels informing Zechariah the priest (the father of John the Baptist) about Jesus' imminent birth. The

the wilderness, who spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai (1 Corinthians 10:4). The Bible

WHY DOES THE QURAN TELL CHRISTIANS TO FIND THE TRUTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Quran records that upon his visiting the virgin Mary, Zechariah tells her the unborn baby is sent by God and even states that He would be “the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, who will be held in honour in this world and in the next” (3:45). Interestingly, although the Quran rejects that Jesus was the Son of God—(Surah 19:35), the Quran does teach Jesus' resurrection—that Jesus said He would be “raised to life again” (Surah 19:33–34).

In the Christian Bible, by contrast, Jesus proclaimed that He was “the way, the truth and the life” and that “no one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). Furthermore, the Bible condemns the notion of salvation through any other than Jesus Christ: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Indeed, the Bible—known to Muhammad and praised in the Quran—consistently points to Jesus Christ as the hope for salvation. Job expressed his hope of being resurrected to “see God” when his Redeemer would stand “at last on the earth” (cf. Job 19:25–26). Jesus proclaimed that He would spend three days and three nights in the tomb, just as Jonah had spent three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish (Jonah 1:17; Matthew 12:39–40). Christ appeared to multitudes after His death and resurrection (Mark 16; Luke 24:36–51; Acts 1:3). The Apostles Peter and Paul proclaimed that Jesus Christ was indeed resurrected from the dead (Acts 2:22–24; 1 Corinthians 15:1–8).

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that “the Word was God,” that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” that Jesus Christ was the Word and that grace and truth came through Him (John 1:1–18). The Christian Bible declares that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament—the “Rock” whom Israel followed in


makes plain that the Word came in the flesh, born of a virgin, and any who “do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh” are labeled “a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 John 7). John records that rejection

of the Word made flesh was a deceit “already in the world” even during his time (1 John 4:3).

The Quran promises “the fire of hell as a permanent home” for those who reject Islam (Surah 9:68), even while acknowledging that Jesus was sent by God, and as such was to be believed and obeyed. And Christ's clear message—recorded in the same canonized Bible praised by Muhammad and the Quran—is that He alone, as the Son of God and the Messiah, is the only hope for all of humanity to receive salvation and eternal life. Yes, through Christ, salvation is available to **all** peoples who accept His message and obey Him (Galatians 3:28–29)!

Christians Have a Savior!

No mere prophet, Jesus was *the Christ*, fulfilling all things written in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Him (Luke 24:44–46). This understanding comes through the Christian Bible (v. 45), which explains that He suffered and was resurrected from the dead (v. 46), so that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations” (v. 47).

The Quran teaches the fear of Allah, who will send sinners to the fire of hell. Yet it offers no Savior whose atonement can do what sinning human beings cannot do for themselves. Those who obey the God of the Christian Bible, however, are profoundly thankful that God sent His Son to take away the sins of the world (1 John 2:2), that Jesus Christ died for our sins, that He was then resurrected and then ascended back to His Father in Heaven until He would “come again” (John 14:3)! We can be thankful that He *will* come again, and that a time will then come when all will be able to come to this knowledge, and ultimately every knee will bow to Christ (Philippians 2:9–10)! 

MAY WE
SUGGEST?

The Bible: Fact or Fiction? Unlike the Quran, the Bible is a source of provable truth from a loving and all-powerful God. Request a **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at TomorrowsWorld.org. PDF, ePub and Kindle are also available.





The Miracle of D-Day

The world had never seen anything quite like it! On June 6, 1944, after many months of meticulous planning, and during a narrow window of opportune weather, the military campaign to wrest the nations of Europe from Nazi control was unleashed. The logistical genius of *Operation Overlord*, the *greatest amphibious assault in history*, slowly unfurled as the American and British-led assault (with Canadian support) on the Normandy coast of Northern France began.

One for the History Books

The next few days would be pivotal; *lose* and it was doubtful whether another invasion could be planned anytime soon. Nazi divisions would be transferred to the Eastern Front, tilting the balance of power against Stalin's Russian forces. World War II would likely be prolonged, with a more uncertain outcome. If the Allies *succeeded*, the Nazi jackboot would be forcibly removed from the throat of Europe, her peoples could breathe freedom once more, and the term *D-Day* would enter the blood-soaked annals of history, with the bravery, courage and personal sacrifice of those involved remembered for all time.

During the preceding month, an aerial offensive had isolated Normandy from the bulk of German forces positioned elsewhere. Rail and electronic communications were disrupted. Bridges were destroyed. With the French Resistance playing a key role, Normandy became virtually cut off from Nazi reinforcements during the crucial hours when it really counted. Southern England became one vast armed camp of seemingly endless supplies of equipment and more than 3 million soldiers—2 million of them from the United States.

Both ends of the English Channel were blockaded to prevent German encroachment. The Allies had gained almost complete control of both sea and air. Minesweepers now led the assembled armada of 7,000 ships carrying 130,000 men through minefields to their assembly points off the French coast.

Beginning around midnight on Tuesday, June 6, 5,000 transport planes and gliders began dropping 20,000 troops to secure strategic points in the surrounding hinterland—13,600 Americans to protect the western flank of the landing beaches and over 6,000 British and Canadians to protect the eastern flank. Throughout the day the planes brought in reinforcements and supplies, including light tanks and field artillery.

Overnight, a mighty, awesome bombardment of the coastline was unleashed: from the air by thousands of bombers, and from the sea by 600 warships and rocket-carrying landing craft. The heavily defended Atlantic Wall, with its powerful artillery and machine gun emplacements, and with its beach obstacles and mines, was pulverized with varying degrees of effectiveness.

Dawn brought an astonishing sight: as far as the eye could see stretched wave after wave of landing craft packed to capacity with men and military equipment. With the coastline softened up, troops began landing at five beach areas spread across a 50-mile length of coast. In the West, 57,000 U.S. troops came ashore on *Utah* and *Omaha* beaches. Then came 25,000 British troops on *Gold* Beach, 21,500 Canadians on *Juno* beach and finally in the East, 29,000 more British on *Sword* Beach.

The Beginning of the End

It was tough going, to say the least. By the end of Day One the Allies had suffered almost 10,000 casualties—either killed, wounded or missing. The resistance on some beaches was light, allowing the fulfillment of detailed battle plans, but the situation on *Omaha* beach was sheer carnage with around 3,880 casualties. Only the bravery and commitment of the troops, epitomized by the Hollywood movie *Saving Private Ryan*, carried the day, and it was not until Day 3 that all their initial objectives were fulfilled.

Fighting in the *bocage* hinterland—the patchwork of fields and woodlands with deep roadways and high hedgerows—was fierce and progress was slow. But the buildup of Allied forces was remorseless; by June 11, 327,000 troops had landed with 54,000 vehicles and 105,000 tons of supplies.

Appreciating the importance of safe harbors to land reinforcements and supplies, the British had come up with a novel solution: they would create their own. These artificial harbors, called Mulberries, were a vast undertaking and had taken seven months to construct. They were towed across to Normandy and sunk into place. Yet on June 19, a fierce storm all but destroyed the Mulberry harbor on Omaha Beach, losing 140,000 tons of equipment and setting back progress by a week.

Over the following days, key objectives were slowly fulfilled. Cherbourg with its vital port facilities was captured by June 25. Troops pressed south and west into Brittany. Saturation bombing of Caen eventually led to the city being taken by July 9, but Allied casualties were high. Following the most intense fighting, German resis-



tance began to crumble at St. Lo in late July. The main German divisions were surrounded in an area called the

It was tough going, to say the least.
By the end of Day One, the Allies
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missing or killed!

Falaise Pocket, where Allied air supremacy inflicted the most appalling slaughter. Rommel's Seventh Army was smashed and the Battle of Normandy was won! The way was now open to rapidly take the rest of France. By August 26, Paris was liberated. In

another year the war in Europe would be over.

Ultimate Victory Ahead

As the world celebrates the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings, much will be said of the personal courage and sacrifice of those who fought for freedom and liberation; of the unparalleled logistical triumph and of the remarkable feat that eventually led to a hard-fought victory. This remarkable, *even miraculous*, Allied victory made the world a better and a safer place and a free Europe has been transformed.

But there is a deeper spiritual significance to the Nazis' defeat. King George VI had asked the British nation to pray for *the liberation of Europe*. President Roosevelt prayed for God's blessing on "*a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve our republic, our religion and our civilization and to set free a suffering humanity.*" And God answered those prayers. The way D-Day came together, and what it achieved, justifies the word "*miraculous.*" The Allied victory was surely God's victory. It ended a Satan-inspired, occult-infested tyranny that imagined it would last a thousand years. It ended the genocidal slaughter of the Jews. It restored freedom and liberty to a downtrodden, despairing and desperate Europe.

But the world today is in need of a far greater victory—one that will defeat war *forever* and bring an end to the suffering and misery it continues to cause. How thankful we can be that, one day soon, God will provide that victory by removing Satan the Devil, the great instigator of wars who deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9; 20:1-3). He will send His Son Jesus Christ to establish His righteous millennial rule over the earth, bringing peace, at last, to all mankind (Isaiah 9:6-7; Revelation 11:15).

—John Meakin

You Can Understand Prophecy!

By **Richard F. Ames**

People have always wanted to know the future, but they will often seek just about every possible source *except* the Bible. Large circulation newspapers often publish a horoscope. The idea is that your birth date somehow determines your characteristics and prophetic events at certain times of the year, and this is supposedly determined by the position of constellations in the heavens.

Others pay mediums to read a crystal ball, and sometimes try to communicate with the dead. Others read Tarot cards for prophetic interpretations. Millions of people look to séances, channeling, and astrology for power and insight. They dabble in the occult and seek answers from soothsayers and mystics. They even fellowship with witches, mediums, and sorcerers. Will all these reveal God's will for you? Of course not! God calls these practices an abomination (Deuteronomy 18). There is a world of spirit deception. God tells us that Satan the Devil has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9). He has deceived billions. But God can help us see through the devices and deceptions of the devil.

Bible prophecy is exciting to many, but some Bible prophecies may seem hard to understand. The books of Daniel and Revelation feature various symbols and imagery. The famous Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse symbolize devastation and deception (Revelation 6:1–8). The Beast of Revelation 13 rising up out of the sea has seven heads and ten horns. The Beast of Revelation 17, which rises out of a bottomless pit, also has seven heads and ten horns, but that Beast is ridden by a harlot. The Apostle John writes what he sees in vision: “And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Revelation 17:5).

What other puzzling prophetic symbols do we see in the Bible? How can we understand Scripture's mysterious symbols, and the many intricacies of Bible prophecy? In this article we will briefly consider some vital principles for understanding the prophecies in your Bible.

Trust Scripture to Interpret Scripture

Where should you turn to learn the truth? Jesus, in His heartfelt prayer the night before He was crucified, prayed for His disciples: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17). God's word, the Bible, is truth. It is the written word of God. If you want to understand the future God has planned for you and all humanity, you need to go to the Bible, not to soothsayers and mediums.

The book of Revelation contains symbolic language, giving a description of the glorified Messiah, the Son of Man, standing in the midst of seven lampstands. We read: “He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength” (Revelation 1:16). What do these stars and lampstands symbolize? We do not need to guess; the Bible itself tells us the meaning! “The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches” (v. 20).

In Bible symbolism, stars are angels—and lampstands are churches. The writer of the book of Revelation, or the Apocalypse, continues in the next two chapters writing God's message and admonition to the seven churches in Asia Minor—modern-day Turkey. Of course, the Apostle John was writing this book near the end of the 1st century AD.

You are probably familiar with the account of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The prophet Daniel was called before King Nebuchadnezzar, and proceeded

to describe the great image in the king's dream. "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces" (Daniel 2:31-34).

What did this statue symbolize? Daniel said to King Nebuchadnezzar: "**you** are this head of gold" (v. 38). Daniel's prophecy revealed four historical world-ruling empires. Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian Empire would be replaced by the Medo-Persian Empire (558-330BC), represented by the chest and arms of silver. The belly and thighs of bronze represented the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great (333-31BC). The two legs of iron represented the Roman Empire (31BC-476AD). Finally, the ten toes on two feet of iron mixed with ceramic clay represent a future revival of the Roman Empire. History confirms that the predictions of these four empires did come to pass.

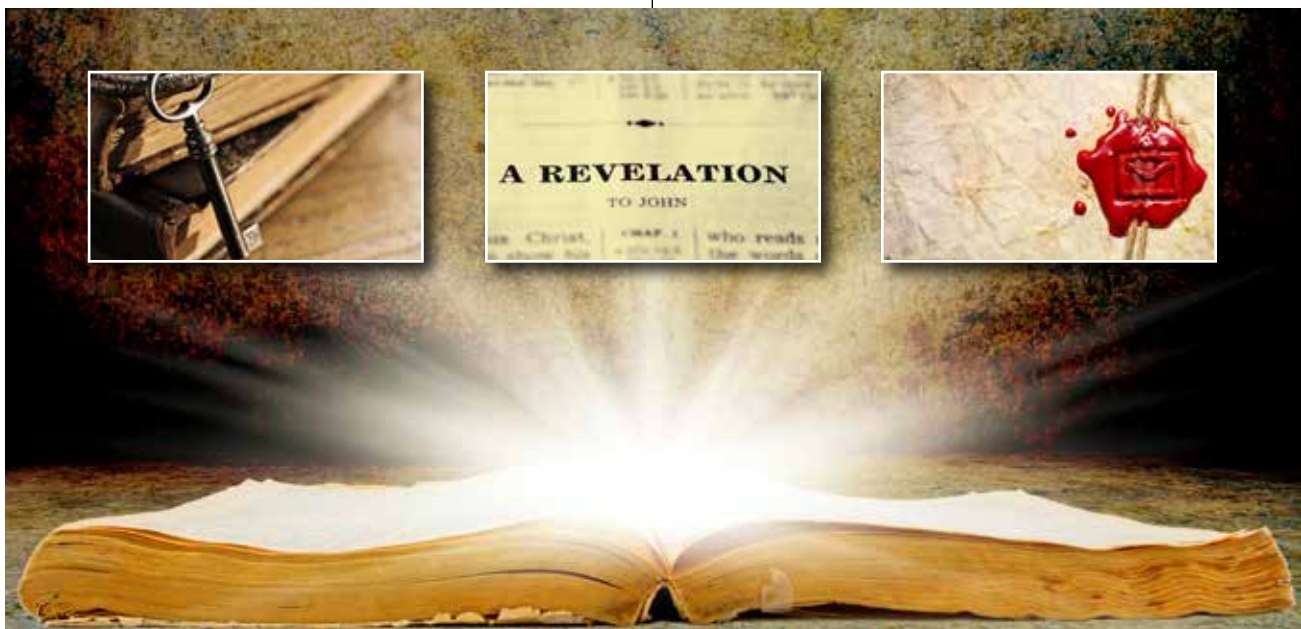
Understand Prophetic Time Gaps

The Gospel of Luke records what happened when Jesus was visiting His hometown of Nazareth and was

invited to read from the scriptures on the Sabbath. "And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.' Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing'" (Luke 4:17-21).

Jesus closed the book He was reading, right in the middle of a verse. He omitted the second part of the verse referring to the day of vengeance. Why? Because the remainder of Isaiah's prophecy applies to Jesus' second coming—when the Day of the Lord, the day of God's vengeance and wrath takes place. Yes, there is a time gap of about 2,000 years between the fulfillment of the first part of the verse and the second part of the verse.

Another aspect of prophetic time gaps is the principle of "duality." Often in the Bible we find a former fulfillment of a prophecy, and a later, more climactic fulfillment of the prophecy. The principle of duality is found throughout the Bible. For example, we read:



“And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45). Who was the last Adam? Scripture gives us the answer, “The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven” (v. 47). Yes, the second Adam was Jesus Christ.

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

Find Modern Nations in Scripture

Where is the United States mentioned in the Bible? Or under what name can we locate it? Where can we find Great Britain in Scripture? Obviously the modern names do not appear, but the ancestors of these nations are prominently named in the Bible.

The Bible does mention such nations as Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia—and it may surprise you that Assyria will eventually be one of the prominent nations in the Millennium, along with Egypt and Israel (Isaiah 19:23). But which nation today is Assyria?

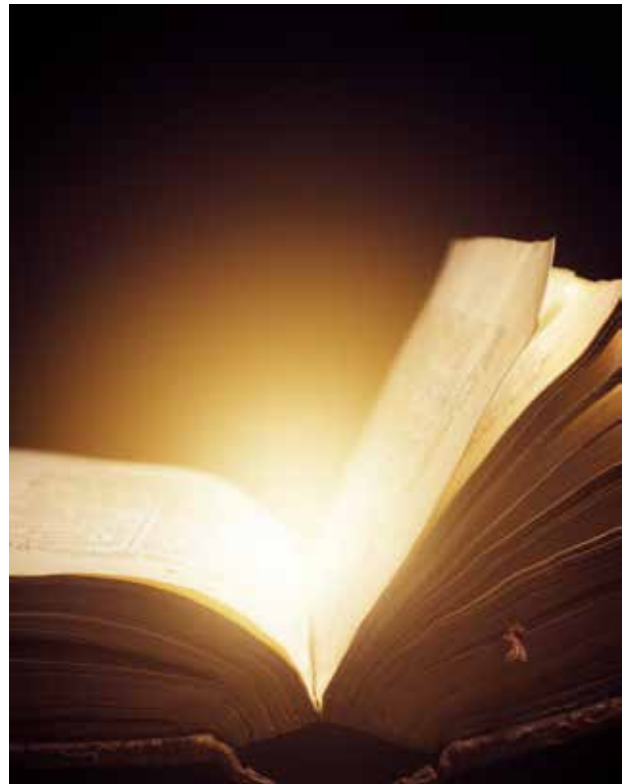
In our free reprint article, “Resurgent Germany: A Fourth Reich?,” *Tomorrow’s World* writer Douglas S. Winnail explains: “Most modern historians hesitate or fail to make any connection between the



disappearance of the Assyrians and the appearance of the Germanic tribes. But Germany’s cultural

history and national character resemble Assyria’s like no other nation.... When the Bible speaks of Assyria in the end times, it is speaking of Germany. No other modern nation fits the description so completely.” If you have not already done so, please write for your free copy of this important article.

You can begin to understand much more about end-time prophecy when you have the accurate knowledge of the modern descendants of ancient biblical nations. Our free booklet, *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*, will give you the historical and biblical information to identify these major nations in prophecy.



Know God’s Prophetic Framework

This is a major key for understanding Bible prophecy. This is a key that relatively few professing Christians know. The truth is that Christ will return to set up a literal kingdom here on earth for a literal period of a thousand years. The book of Revelation describes a period of 3½ years leading up to the return of Christ. The first five seals of Revelation, outlined in Revelation 6, cover a period of 2½ years—the Great Tribulation of which Jesus spoke in Matthew 24.

The sixth seal is the Heavenly Signs. The whole world will be put on notice when this event occurs. The Apostle John writes, “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place” (Revelation 6:12–14).

The whole world will be shocked and terrified. Humanity will realize that the time of God’s judgment

UNDERSTAND PROPHECY CONTINUES ON PAGE 23

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Paradise, punctuation and a future hope!

Question: Jesus promised one of the thieves crucified with Him: “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). What and where is “Paradise”—and did the thief really go there with Jesus that day?

Answer: The Bible shows that the dead are in the grave, awaiting the resurrection; they are not in heaven. The Apostle Peter said: “For David did not ascend into the heavens” (Acts 2:34). Christ said: “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven” (John 3:13).

Does this mean that the thief is in a special place called “Paradise” that is not “heaven”? No. The Bible clearly shows where Paradise is located. The Apostle Paul tells of a man who was taken in a vision to God’s throne—“how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Corinthians 12:1–4). Paradise is located in the presence of God’s throne.

What is Paradise? Paradise means a “garden, pleasure ground: grove, park”—“a grand enclosure or preserve... shady and well watered... enclosed by walls” (*Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

The Bible describes what Paradise is like. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7). Now notice Revelation 22:1–2: “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

These verses refer to “the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (Revelation 21:2). The New Jerusalem, which will

come out of heaven after the earth is made into a “new earth” (2 Peter 3:10–13; Revelation 21:1), will contain the Tree of Life. The Paradise of God, near or in the presence of His throne, is a park or garden that will ultimately be found on the new earth! But it was not yet available to human beings when Christ made His statement to the thief!

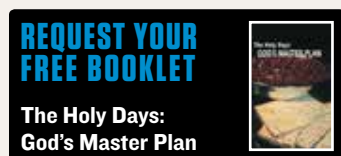
So, did the thief go there with Jesus on the day of his death? Note that Jesus Himself did not go to Paradise, or heaven, on the day He died. As Paul wrote: “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). Christ was sealed in the tomb for three full days and three full nights. Notice what He told Mary when she came to the tomb, after He had risen: “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet

Note that Jesus Himself did not go to Paradise, or heaven, on the day He died.

ascended to My Father... and your Father, and to My God and your God” (John 20:17).

What did Christ really say to the thief? Many readers are misled by improper punctuation in the English-language translation of the inspired Greek text. Most English-language translations wrongly place a comma between “you” and “today.” As one commentary explains: “The interpretation of this verse depends entirely on punctuation, which rests wholly on human authority, the Greek manuscripts having no punctuation of any kind till the ninth century, and then it is only a dot (middle of the line) separating each word” (*Companion Bible*, Appendix §173).

Punctuated correctly in English, this verse should read: “Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.” In Luke 23:43, Jesus was not making a promise that He failed to keep; He was stressing that when Paradise comes to the earth, the thief will be there with Him!



street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its



PROPHECY COMES ALIVE

Why Is Germany Rising?

Few today realize that the God of the Bible is *real*, or that He has a *plan*, and that He actually guides the course of history (Daniel 4:17, 25, 35). Fewer still know that Bible prophecies reveal the future of specific nations—that God “makes nations great, and destroys them; He enlarges nations, and [shrinks or disperses] them” (Job 12:23; Daniel 2:21). However, the recent rise of Germany to a position of dominance in Europe was *predicted* thousands of years ago in Bible prophecies that are *coming alive today!* Those ancient prophecies explain the *real significance* of Germany’s rise to prominence and *why you* need to understand what will happen in the not-too-distant future.

Germany’s Remarkable Transformation

The transformation of Germany in the last 60 years is an amazing feat of going from rags to riches! In 1945, at the close of World War II, Germany was a heap of smoldering ruins, defeated and dependent upon foreign aid. However, the Germans became eager pupils of democracy and adamant pacifists. Due to wise planning, hard work and thrifty living, Germany has emerged from the ashes of defeat as the wealthiest nation with the strongest economy to become the dominant power in Europe. Germany’s strong economy and high-value exports have given the Germans increasing economic clout in Europe—lending money to other European nations struggling with overwhelming debts. The European financial crisis was the trigger that pushed Germany to be more assertive and pursue a more significant role in Europe and on the world stage (*Christian Science Monitor*, January 30, 2012).

Although appearing reluctant to lead, Germany is being urged to “take responsibility” for the future of Europe—which is also a remarkable development. The European Union was designed to tie Germany into Europe to harness its aggressive tendencies and curb its desire to dominate. However, the EU is no longer a cage for Germany, but the avenue that has allowed Germany to emerge as the dominant player in the “great game” in Europe. German loans prop up ailing European nations. German bureaucrats in Brussels outnumber those from France and Britain, and Germany largely determines EU policy (*Sunday Times*, November 24, 2013). British writer, Peter Hitchens has stated, “the EU is the new German Empire.” The financial crisis and Germany’s reluctant response to bail out other European countries gave Germany the “empire” that it has long desired. As one source observed, “Germany has achieved by stealth [or by accident] what it failed to achieve by force of arms” (*Stratfor*, March 16, 2010).

Ominous Signs

As Germany assumes more “responsibility” for Europe by providing funds to floundering neighbor economies, the Germans appear ready to be the “schoolmasters” for Europe—telling other European nations how to manage their budgets and run their countries (*German Europe*, Beck, p. 63). As German influence grows in Brussels, other nations in Europe recognize when Brussels seeks to exercise more power, it is actually Berlin that is calling the shots. Europe is witnessing a major power shift—from Brussels to Berlin and from France to Germany—which will have important consequences.

The European Union started as an attempt to draw the nations of Europe together as equals—to prevent future wars. However, the European financial crisis advanced and concealed Germany's rise, and German dominance has created a hierarchy in Europe instead of equal participation. If a crisis develops over the euro or a potential fracture of the EU, European leaders could suspend agreed-upon rules and allow Germany to act on its own in an attempt to be the "savior" of Europe. German sociologist Ulrich Beck warns that actions spurred by impending crises could have "unintended consequences" and "result in the birth of a *political monster*" (Beck, pp. 28, 50).

German leaders are also attempting to point Germany in a new direction—away from its pacifist



The rising sun shines through Brandenburg Gate in Berlin

past—towards assuming responsibility for military operations on a broader scale. Germany's experience in Afghanistan gave German soldiers combat training and confidence (*spiegel.de/international*, October 15, 2013). German leaders are now suggesting that since Germany took the lead in addressing the financial crisis, Germany should lead the way in military cooperation for the defense of Europe (*Geopolitical Weekly*, February 4, 2014; *The Times*, February 9, 2014).

Prophecies Come Alive

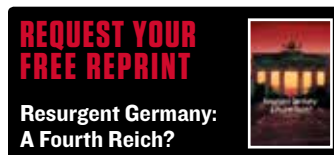
But what is the real significance of Germany's rise to dominance? What does it mean for the future of Europe and the world? Bible prophecies have long foretold that just before the return of Jesus Christ, a "beast" power with links to ancient Rome will emerge in Europe (Daniel 2:40-44). This European power of "iron and clay" will be powerful, but fragile, and only last a short time (three and a half years; Revelation 13:5; 17:10). It is referred to as "the King of the North" and will invade the Middle East—possibly on a peacekeeping mission (Daniel 11:40-43). The leader of this end-time Euro-

pean power is also referred to as "the beast," and his emergence and military capabilities will surprise the world (Revelation 13:1-4). Other prophecies (Isaiah 10:5-11) indicate this European beast power will be led by Assyria—modern-day Germany—and that ten nations will surrender sovereignty to this centrally organized power (Revelation 17:12-13).

In light of these prophecies, Germany's rise to power in Europe has been sobering to watch. Ulrich Beck states, "nobody intended this to happen... Germany's rise... is not the consequence of a secret master plan... it was the involuntary and unplanned product of the financial crisis and its anticipation of disaster" that "catapulted" Germany into its dominant position (*German Europe*, pp. vii, 3, 54). Beck also notes that "Europe builders" could use the fear of an impending crisis—collapse of the euro or breakup of the EU—to urge European nation states to surrender more sovereignty in a push for a political union and a federal Europe (*ibid*, pp. 28-29). Italian Renaissance writer Niccolò Machiavelli noted that "impending catastrophes throw up opportunities" that can be seized by a person with a desire for power (Beck, p. 46). An imminent crisis in Europe could bring the prophesied "beast" to power.

It is hardly a coincidence that German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwille has also formed a Berlin Group of about ten other nations to discuss the future of Europe (*presseurope.eu*, June 20, 2012), when prophecies in Revelation 17:12-13 and Daniel 2:43-44 indicate that *ten kings* will join the beast to form the core of an end-time beast power in Europe. American professor Walter Russell Mead has "urged Germany to lead a Holy Roman Empire [in Europe] rather than a Prussian conquest" (*thelocal.de*, October 8, 2013)—without realizing this revived European beast power will be a rival to America and be used by God to punish godless Israelite nations (Isaiah 10:5-7). Perceptive observers recognize something significant is happening in Germany and Europe. Yet, few today realize that God is guiding the course of events as He works out His plan on earth. The question is, *do you* recognize what is behind the end-time rise of Germany, and will you be ready when Christ returns?

—Douglas S. Winnail



HAVE YOU CAUGHT THE FIRE?

Do you hunger for righteousness, or for something far less lasting?

“Happy Hunger Games!” is the greeting from Suzanne Collin’s blockbuster sensation *Hunger Games*. Last November, *Catching Fire*—the second in what is now planned as a four-part *Hunger Games* movie series—blasted to box office success, gaining the sixth-highest opening weekend revenue in history. Six months after its release—long after most movies have run their course and gone to DVD—*Catching Fire* was still being shown in a few theaters.

Fans who flocked to the film often wished each other “Happy Hunger Games!” via texts, tweets and social media messages, as they made the pilgrimage to theaters. Now, millions are awaiting the November 2014 release of the third movie in the series, *Mockingjay—Part 1*. The series seems to have developed an avid cult following.

Even some Christian parents are among the movies’ fans, attending along with their children. They appreciate the action-packed plot, and its engaging heroine who is beautiful, powerful and intelligent, cheating death while outsmarting and leading the weaker-minded and less resilient men around her. And they enjoy rooting for the underdog. But is this movie series something Christians should really be “happy” about?

Set in a futuristic world, *Hunger Games* depicts a two-caste system where a wealthy, hedonistic ruling class suppresses the masses, exploiting them for their

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own pleasure. In the movie, *Hunger Games* is a futuristic reality show modeled after the Roman gladiatorial games. Male and female representatives (ages 12–18) from twelve working-class districts fight to the death, while the sadistic elite—foolish, arrogant, voyeurs, excited by blood and brutality—watch their every move with eager anticipation. Intrigue, lust, vanity and brutality permeate the movies.

The sad but obvious irony is that while *Hunger Games* asks viewers to look down condescendingly on the self-centered and bloodthirsty elite the movies portray, it is moviegoers themselves who are fulfilling a shockingly parallel role, finding thrills in the depic-

tion of blood, violence, intrigue and the overthrow of a subjugating government.

So how should true Christians view a movie series like this one? The answer can be found in the pages of your Bible!

The book of Isaiah contains God’s warning to the ancient nation of Judah. He directed Judah to change its pagan and violent ways, lest He be forced to destroy them—a warning that is also applicable to us today. God clearly tells His people: “He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly... who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil,” will be blessed by Him (Isaiah 33:15).

If we revel in movie violence, are we really stopping our ears from hearing of bloodshed and our eyes

As society catches the fire of the Hunger Games, Christians must instead be “on fire” for God’s Way

from seeing evil? We are commanded not to “see” or even “think” evil (Ezekiel 20:7; Zechariah 8:17). Movies, and other entertainment such as video games, which motivate us to tolerate bloodshed and cheer for others’ brutal deaths, affect our minds and hearts and can damage our Christian character.

Satan tries his best to deceive and desensitize us. “It’s not that bad!” or “There are just three or four ‘bad parts’ in it!” But true Christians who love God and seek to obey Him will not seek excuses to tolerate evil. Rather, they will keep their eyes, ears, and minds far from it (Psalm 97:10). They will “love good” (Amos 5:15) and seek to fill their lives with things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8). Those who are striving to live as Christians must raise the bar of morality and act in ways that do not contradict their words, becoming a “pattern of good works” (Deuteronomy 6:6–8; Titus 2:7–8).

As society catches the fire of the *Hunger Games*, Christians must instead be “on fire” for God’s Way, developing His perfect, holy and righteous character.

—Scott D. Winnail

has come! The Heavenly Signs introduce the one-year prophetic time period known as the Day of the Lord, which is mentioned in some 30 prophecies in your Bible. The Day of the Lord, in end-time prophecy—the time preceding Christ’s second coming—is a period of one year (Isaiah 34:8; 63:4), following the Great Tribulation and the Heavenly Signs. This is the year of

kingdoms, were delivered to the people of God to comfort them, by revealing to them the fate of their enemies” (*Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, p. 892).

Understand that Bible prophecy also warns people and nations to repent so they can avoid punishment. John the Baptist was baptizing massive crowds of people who were moved by his preaching. The Gospel

writer Matthew describes what happened. “In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’” (Matthew 3:1–2). Jesus Christ, of course, later preached that same mes-

THE BIBLE CLEARLY OUTLINES THE JUDGMENT THAT WILL BE UPON WESTERN NATIONS THAT PERSIST IN IMMORAL, ANTI-GOD LIFESTYLES.

God’s punishment on the nations. And it culminates with the announcement of Christ’s return and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

That is the exciting good news of prophecy! “Then the seventh angel sounded: and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” (Revelation 11:15).


We should all look forward to the return of Christ. And we need to be spiritually preparing for that soon-coming event. As you can see, the Bible gives us an overall framework for prophecy. You need to understand that framework!

Learn the Purpose of Bible Prophecy

There are many religious hobbyists who create wild ideas and misinterpretations of prophecy. What are the purposes of prophecy? *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* gives this warning. “Prophecy is not intended to open the future to idle curiosity, but for the higher purpose of furnishing light to those whose faith needs confirming.” Does your faith need confirming? “The revelation of future events may be needful in times of discouragement to awaken or sustain hope, to inspire confidence in the midst of general backsliding, and to warn of evil threatening the faithful. The predictions against Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, Nineveh, and other

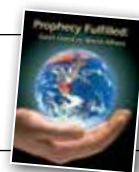
sage (Mark 1:14–15). What was the response to John’s preaching? “Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matthew 3:5).

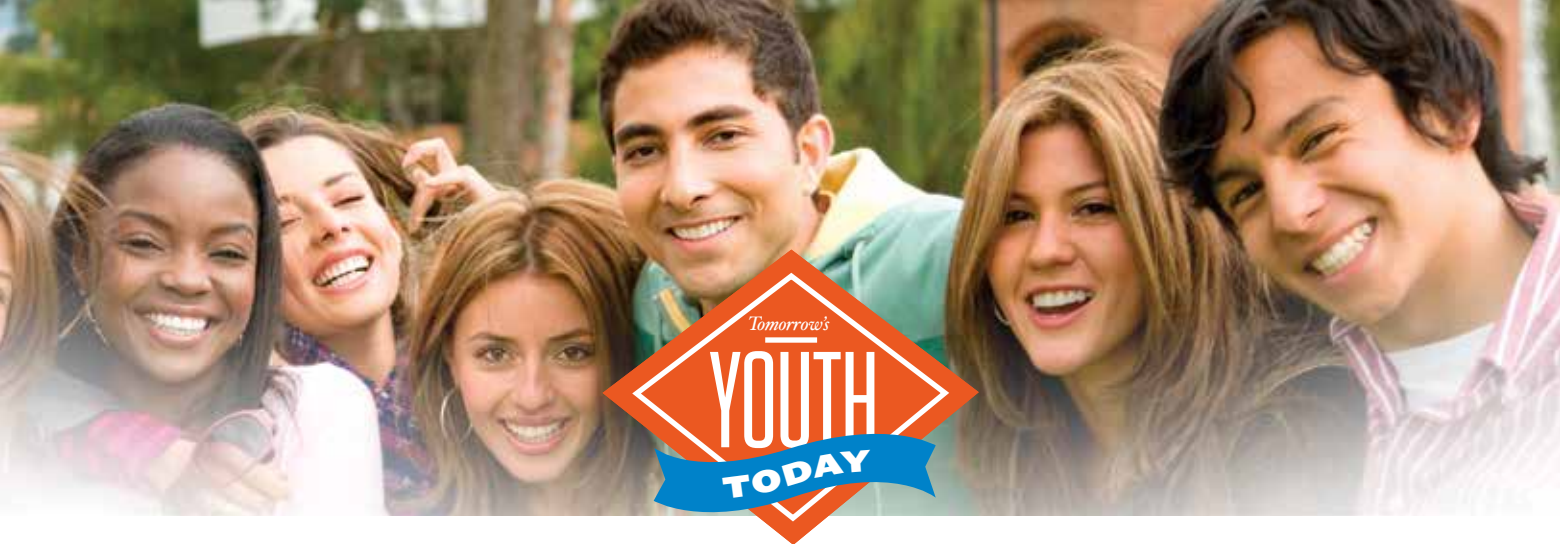
Are you preparing for the Second Coming of Christ? Understanding the reality of Bible prophecy will help you prepare! On the day of Pentecost, in 31AD, the Apostle Peter exhorted the thousands in his audience to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). Peter motivated the crowd to change their lives. He said, “Be saved from this perverse generation.’ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (Acts 2:40–41). If God has brought you to the point of repentance and you understand the commitment of baptism, please do not hesitate to contact one of our representatives at the Regional Office nearest you, listed on page 4 of this magazine.

The Bible clearly outlines the judgment that will be upon the Western nations if we persist in our immoral, anti-God lifestyles. But if you understand Bible prophecy, you can be spared great suffering, and can experience God’s blessings individually, even if your nation undergoes God’s judgment. Prophecy reveals sobering end-time events just ahead, but it also reveals the good news of God’s soon-coming kingdom. God speed that wonderful day! 

MAY WE SUGGEST?

Prophecy Fulfilled: God’s Hand in World Affairs. Are you “watching” end-time events as Christ commanded? You need to know what it says! Request our **free** booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at TomorrowsWorld.org. PDF, ePub and Kindle are also available.





Old Can Be Good

Most young people are interested in *new*: new styles, new trends, new music, new technology. In those realms, “old” is rarely if ever “cool.” But what about people? Are any “old people” an important part of your life? If not, why not? And how can the “old” benefit the young?

The Glorification of Youth

Our modern Western culture glorifies youth. Have you ever noticed the age of the most popular entertainers? Would a 45-year-old Justin Bieber attract thousands of screaming fans to a concert? If Miley Cyrus were 36, would she gain so much attention? We crave fresh faces and young bodies on our screens and stages.

And this is not a problem created by the young. In her book, *Selling the Fountain of Youth*, author Arlene Weintraub writes that anti-aging medicine has become an \$88 billion-a-year industry over the last decade. She contends that anti-aging doctors have created a new industry by persuading baby-boomers that they can slow down the process of aging, tapping the deep-seated aversion to growing old in the American culture. “For the nation’s 77 million baby boomers who are quickly racing toward the Social Security rolls,” writes Weintraub, “the idea of being elderly is repugnant. They are the perfect audience for the message that simple, safe substances might cure aging.”

Happily, for those who can look past the advertising-driven knee-jerk attitude, older people can be a hidden resource to enrich a young person’s life. Consider some ways in which they can help:

Understanding

Job said, “Wisdom is with aged men, and with length of days, understanding” (Job 12:12). Within our midst, we have individuals who have spent decades learning to apply God’s instructions. This act of applying knowledge in the daily battleground of life is what produces wisdom and understanding. As we see them now, it may be hard to grasp the fact that God has been working with some older men and women from the time they were the same age as you are today. In Psalm 71, David wrote, “O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come” (vv. 17–18). An older man or woman who has learned God’s way and can boldly teach it to the next generation is a powerful tool in the hands of God. Also, their thorough understanding of God’s instruction is a gold-mine ready to be tapped by younger Christians.

Perspective

If we can learn to see things from another person’s perspective, we can expand our horizons—and also prevent a lot of arguments! How often have we had a disagreement with a friend, only to realize that we are looking at the issue from different angles, **both** of which are only part of the picture? If we take a moment to consider the breadth of perspective that an older person may have, especially in our quickly changing world, we open a door to understanding a world that was quite different from ours. Listening to an older person talk about what it was like to function without

computers or cellphones can be enlightening. But to talk with an elderly man who served as a soldier in Europe in World War II, or an elderly woman who grew up during the Great Depression—this opens our mind up to a world that is hard to imagine. And they were there! King Solomon spoke of childhood and youth as “vanity” in Ecclesiastes 11:10. Here, “vanity” does not mean “pride”—it just means “brief,” as in a breath. While we are young, our life-experience is yet rather brief, so older people can give us perspective that we by ourselves lack.

There are other reasons that “old is good.” Age can often bring patience, and grandparents are known for tolerating just a little bit more mischief in a grandchild.



An ability to savor time seems to go hand in glove with age. It would be hard to find a “twenty-something” slowing down to sit in a rocking chair on a front porch, watching the world go by. But age can temper the urge to keep up the frantic pace of our world.

How can this added appreciation for “older people” be put into practical use? Here are some thoughts.

Give Honor and Respect

Exodus 20:12 tells us to “honor your father and your mother.” In other words, there is something to be learned, and taught, about deference to parents. We learn that this principle applies to those older than us in general from the specific example He inspired to be recorded in Leviticus 19:32. Here, we are commanded

to “rise up before the gray headed, and honor the presence of an old man....” God is concerned enough about implementing this principle of deference that He commanded us to stand when an older person approaches

us! We see another specific example of deference for older people in Job 32:4, where we read that Elihu, as the youngest of Job’s companions, waited to speak until after Job and the others. “Now because they [were] years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job.” This is another good example of how to give honor and respect. When an older person approaches, do you stand up, look them in the eye and greet them, or just ignore them? Do you interrupt their conversation and speak to them as if they were a peer? This shows disrespect. By acting with respect, we learn to respect. And if we learn to respect, we will be more receptive to the wisdom, understanding and perspective that older people can share with us.

A Godly Life Just Gets Better

Wise King Solomon wrote, “Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment” (Ecclesiastes 11:9). In other words, God intended for the early years of our life to be years of learning, exploring and experiencing life, without the cares that can accumulate with the added responsibility that later years bring. But a wise young person will value older people, learning from them, listening to them and enjoying their company. They can help plant biblical values in the hearts of young people whom God is calling, until the time comes for today’s young people to mentor the next generation. As the Psalmist wrote, “Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing” (Psalm 92:13-14).

Do not be fooled by the pop singer who longs for the high school days, those glory days, the “best days of life.” Youth is a great time. But a life lived according to true values, with the help of wise older mentors, will just get better!

—Jonathan McNair

ered together before the tribulation, which is to come, and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins” (p. 110).

Please note that this allegedly ancient quote mentions no biblical reference to validate these ideas, and certainly does not mention the word “rapture.” Another vague and even earlier quote LaHaye employs (p. 111) is from Victorinus, a Roman Catholic bishop, as early as 270AD. In a commentary on Revelation, Victorinus was discussing how God’s people might be delivered from the plagues brought on by the two witnesses, described in Revelation 11. LaHaye states: “In his commentary on Revelation, he compared the plagues of that period with the plagues of Leviticus and then said, ‘These shall be in the last time, when the church shall have gone out of the midst.’ Obviously Bishop Victorinus of Petau, a brilliant Bible scholar living in the third century, saw the church departing before the plagues during the time of God’s wrath, which from his commentary on Revelation 11 he took to be seven years. ‘(They) shall have gone out of the midst’ was his way of describing the Rapture of the Church.”

What does this quote from an ancient writer tell us about the rapture theory?

Nothing.

This quote says absolutely nothing about a “rapture.” It only surmises that God’s people—somehow, some way—would have gone out of the “midst” of this dangerous situation. By assuming that this ancient writer was referring to the rapture, LaHaye manages to put words into the mouth of Bishop Victorinus!

But is there a genuine way of escape for God’s people during the coming Great Tribulation? What does the Bible itself clearly teach?

A Place of Safety

The Bible plainly teaches that God will provide a Place of Safety—“a place prepared by God” (Revelation 12:6)—for His people during the coming Great Tribulation. But this will not involve a secret “rapture,” and the faithful saints of God will not go off to heaven. Rather, God will supernaturally protect them in a place right here on this earth.

Describing the traumatic events taking place just before the Great Tribulation, Jesus told His follow-

ers: “And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:20–21). Jesus never spoke of a rapture, but rather



of the “flight” of His people. Note that we should pray that this flight to safety would not occur on God’s

Sabbath, for this coming flight will involve a degree of physical effort and stress—as did ancient Israel’s flight from Egypt. If a supernatural “rapture” were involved, there would be no concern about the Sabbath or about the danger of traveling during the winter. That should be very clear.

Later, Christ inspired the Apostle John to write in detail about the true Church being taken to a Place of Safety here on earth. Please study Revelation 12 carefully so that no one will be able to confuse you about this matter! In Revelation 12, Jesus reveals to John a vision of a “woman”—Israel—who brought forth the Messiah (vv. 1–2). Then Satan appears as a dragon, ready to “devour her Child as soon as it was born” (v. 4). Christ, the “male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron” (v. 5) is then caught up to God’s throne in this powerful vision.

Next (v. 6) the “woman”—now, clearly, the New Testament Church of God—has to flee to the “wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God.” You can easily prove to yourself that heaven is never called a “wilderness”! Rather, this passage of scripture is de-



Scripture may or may not indicate the Place of Safety by name; if it does, many believe it could be Petra, in Jordan.

scribing the flight of God’s true Church from the centralized areas of the Roman Empire—and from the persecutions of the great false church—to the “wilderness” area of the Italian and Swiss Alps from 554 until 1814AD! For, in the “day for a year” understanding of biblical prophecy (see Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34) this would involve a 1,260-year period extending from the rise of the Roman Emperor Justinian in 554 to the removal of the final Holy Roman Emperor,

lowed up the flood which the dragon [Satan, v. 9] had spewed out of his mouth” (v. 16).

Seeing the truly zealous Christians being taken to a Place of Safety where he can no longer get at them, Satan is “enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v. 17). So those weak, lukewarm Christians “left behind” at this point are horribly persecuted by Satan the Devil and his minions.

Some ministers attempt to apply verse 17 to the Jewish people. But this entire chapter is clearly talking about the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16)—ancient Israel at first (Revelation 12:1–4), and then the faithful New Testament Church of God—which during the Dark Ages was led by God to flee from the Holy Roman Empire during many persecutions, including the Inquisition (v. 6). Beloved as they are, the Jews do not have and do not follow the “testimony” of Jesus Christ (v. 17). So this final “flight” to safety absolutely applies to God’s true Church!

Near the end of His ministry, Jesus Christ gave this vital instruction to His people: “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36). Very few professing Christians are obeying this commandment from the Son of God! For most people attend churches where biblical prophecy is seldom discussed and certainly not understood. They do not know what to “watch” for—and may have no interest in doing so. Frankly, most churchgoers today do not know how to pray. And they certainly do not “cry out day and night” to God as Jesus said His “elect” would do (Luke 18:7). Rather, the majority of God’s own people are influenced—in this final, Laodicean age of the Church—to be “lukewarm.” And the living Jesus Christ speaks powerfully to this attitude: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:15–16). Apparently, lukewarm, professing Christians will be cast right into the middle of the Great Tribulation! (vv. 17–19). They have not been willing to present their bodies as a living sac-

GOD WILL GUIDE HIS FAITHFUL CHURCH TO KNOW WHEN AND WHERE TO FLEE BEFORE THE GREAT TRIBULATION BEGINS, TO BE PROTECTED HERE ON EARTH.

Napoleon, in 1814. It was during this 1,260-year period that true, Bible-believing Christians were in the greatest physical danger from this foul system which God calls “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Revelation 17:5).

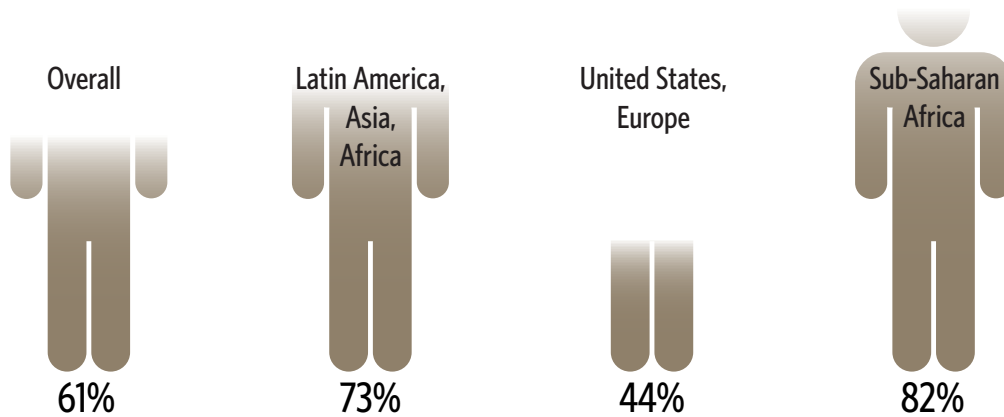
The Great Tribulation Begins

Then, at the very time of the end, a spiritual war breaks out between Satan and his demons and the angels of God. This awesome spiritual war will probably take place within the next several years! Satan is defeated and is “cast to the earth... having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time” (Revelation 12:9–12). Suddenly, inexplicably, an evil spirit will descend upon the area of the Beast Power in Europe and upon the leaders of the false church. Shortly, they will begin in earnest to plan the destruction of the United States, Canada and Britain! And they will swiftly begin to crack down on anyone who dares to preach the real Truth of the Bible. Such will be the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

At this point, John writes that Satan “persecuted the woman”—now, clearly, the faithful New Testament Church of God (vv. 13–16). As in the typical fulfillment described in verse 6, the Church once again is guided by God to flee to a Place of Safety here on earth. For “the earth helped the woman... and swal-

Up, Up and Away?

Percentage of professing Christian leaders who expect an end-time Rapture



rifice (Romans 12:1) and fully surrender to let Jesus Christ live His obedient life in them, so—as the Great Tribulation begins—God will not protect them and they will finally be forced to choose between total surrender to God or everlasting death in the Lake of Fire.

Protection for the Faithful

God will, however, protect His most faithful servants! He will do so, supernaturally, in a place here on earth. Who exactly will be protected? God describes the way of life of His most faithful people: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). Just as His true Church is described in Revelation 12:17 as a commandment-keeping Church,

So, if you wish the divine protection of Almighty God in the traumatic months and years just ahead, be assured that it does not lie in being suddenly “raptured” off to heaven at any moment. Rather, as Scripture makes clear, our Creator will guide His most faithful people to know when and where to flee just before the Great Tribulation begins. They will be supernaturally protected in a place of God’s choosing here on earth. Then, after the Great Tribulation, the “last trumpet” will sound, “and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17).

There will be no “secret rapture” of the saints. The powerful trumpet blast of God will shake the earth before the saints of God arise! May God help you and your loved ones understand and be willing to surrender to the living Jesus Christ so that He may live His obedient life in you through the power of the Holy Spirit. As the Apostle Paul was inspired to tell us: “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*).

Through Christ in you, may you truly learn to walk with God and have the genuine protection that Almighty God clearly promises for His true saints. TM

FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS WILL FLEE TO THE “WILDERNESS”—AND HEAVEN IS NEVER CALLED A “WILDERNESS”!

so God’s individual saints obey the Ten Commandments as a way of life—and they do not succumb to the siren song of so many ministers that God’s spiritual law was “done away” or “nailed to the cross.” The Bible is extremely clear about this!

MAY WE SUGGEST?

Do You Believe the True Gospel? You need to know what Jesus Christ really taught. Request a **free** printed copy of this booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at TomorrowsWorld.org. PDF, ePub and Kindle are also available.



“Little Things Mean a Lot” was a very popular hit song that made it to the number one spot on the charts in the USA and the UK in 1954. Subsequently, many other recording artists have released their versions of this song. While it has nice lyrics and a lovely tune, the title says it all. In life, we often look for the big events or the very significant occurrences that make a big splash or great impact. And yet, it is the little things that we do daily that cement and enhance relationships both physically and spiritually. The little kindnesses, the thoughtful acts, the courtesies and consideration shown to others without expecting anything in return reveal people’s true character and their love of others.

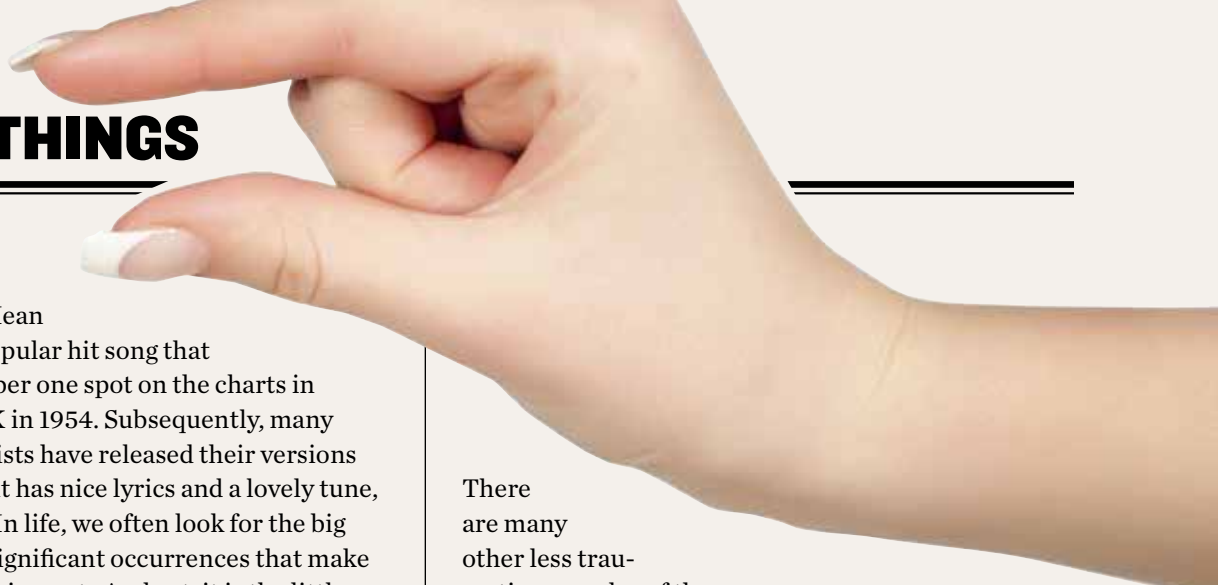
It is the same in spiritual matters as well. In the Bible we find detailed instructions for living, all of which are very important. It is very plain that our Heavenly Father expects us to be faithful in little

...I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all of those who have given to the treasury

things as well as the “weightier matters” found in Scripture. Being careful to do the little things demonstrates to Him that we really do “fear” Him, meaning to have deep respect and awe for His Way of life.

The Bible gives a number of examples of the importance of obeying God even in the little things. One example is the story of Uzza in 1 Chronicles 13:7–10. As the Israelites were transporting the Ark of the Covenant, a very important symbol of the nation’s relationship with God, the oxen pulling the cart carrying the Ark stumbled. Instinctively, Uzza reached out to steady the Ark to prevent it from shifting or falling. He was instantly struck dead by God. While this may seem cruel to us today, God had given detailed, specific instructions on how to transport this important symbol. Uzza knew this and did not follow the instructions, which cost him his life.

Happily, Uzza will have the opportunity to repent and live out his life obeying God in the resurrection.



There are many other less traumatic examples of the importance of little things in Scripture. A very illustrative one is found in Mark 12:42–44, “Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.’”

Notice that Jesus did not tell His disciples to take the two mites, a very small amount of money, and give it back to the poor widow. That would have been an insult to her, when, in fact, her little offering was the basis for a great lesson for all of us. In our lives, there are little things that need to be monitored and controlled. James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote in his book of the New Testament, “Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity... But no man can tame the tongue” (James 3:2–8).

With God’s help one can tame the tongue, but it requires constant vigilance to accomplish. Is it important for us to be diligent in following God’s instructions in our daily lives? The example of Uzza shows that it can be a very serious matter. Also, the wonderful example of the widow who was devoted to God and His Work with her meager offering shows that little things are noticed by God. In fact Jesus made a promise based on this premise when He said in Luke 19:17: “Well done, good servant: because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.” As you live your life each day, remember that—physically and spiritually—little things mean a lot!

—J. Davy Crockett, III

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

Tomorrow's World is published six times a year by the Living Church of God, which also produces the *Tomorrow's World* telecast and a number of Web sites including *TomorrowsWorld.org*.

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without requesting it, or if you decide at any time that you would like to cancel your subscription, you can do so by contacting the Regional Office nearest you (listed on page 4 of this magazine), or by going online to ***www.TomorrowsWorld.org/cancel***.

We hope, though, that you will continue to enjoy and benefit from this magazine. We hope you will learn and grow, as we cover important topics in end-time prophecy and Christian living that will help you experience in your life, today, a foretaste of the prophesied future time when Jesus Christ will return to rule the nations in the coming Kingdom of God.

We at *Tomorrow's World* strive to take seriously Christ’s commission to preach the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to the whole world as a witness (Matthew 24:14). We know that the true Church of God is not a huge group of believers spanning a third or more of the world’s population; rather, it is a “little flock” (Luke 12:32). Yet that little flock, to whom God has given the Holy Spirit, has been given a big commission. So we strive with all our might—and with the help of God the Father and Jesus Christ—to carry out that commission (Matthew 28:19–20). We hope you will appreciate what you find in this magazine, whether or not God is calling you to join us in supporting this Work of carrying out that commission in the few remaining years before Jesus Christ returns. Welcome to *Tomorrow's World*!

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P. 28 Up, Up and Away?

SOURCE: “Global Survey of Evangelical Protestant Leaders,” Pew Research Center, June 22, 2011.

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TOMORROW'S WORLD

TELEVISION LOG



AUSTRALIA

Nationwide 7Two SU 7:00 a.m.

BARBADOS

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

JAMAICA

Kingston TVJ SU 7:00 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND

Nationwide Prime TV SU 8:30 a.m.

SOUTH AFRICA

Nationwide CTV/SA SU 11:00 a.m.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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

UK & NW EUROPE

Believe-TV Sky TV 593 SU 10:00 p.m.
 Faith World Sky TV 591 TU 8:00 p.m.
 Gospel Sky TV 588 MO 7:00 p.m.
 WORD (TWN) Sky TV 590 WE 6:00 a.m.
 Sky TV 590 MO 12:30 a.m.
 Sky TV 590 SA 12:00 a.m.

CANADA

Nationwide Networks (All times Eastern)

Vision SU 4:00 a.m.
 SU 5:30 p.m.
 MO 1:30 a.m.
 TU 4:30 a.m.
 MO-FR 3:00 a.m.

CHCH SU 8:30 a.m.

UNITED STATES

Nationwide Networks (All times Eastern)

Angel One SU 8:00 p.m.
 SU 10:00 p.m.
 WE 7:00 p.m.
 TH 9:00 a.m.

BET WE 7:30 a.m.

CW Plus SU 8:00 a.m.
 MO 2:00 a.m.

IMPACT SU 11:00 p.m.

WGN America SU 8:30 a.m.

WORD Network SU 7:30 a.m.
 WE 1:00 a.m.
 FR 7:00 p.m.

For the most up-to-date listings please go to: TomorrowsWorld.org/tvr-log

AK Anchorage GCI SA 10:00 p.m.
 Anchorage KIMO SU 6:00 a.m.
 Fairbanks KATN SU 6:00 a.m.
 Juneau KJUD SU 6:00 a.m.

AL Dothan WDFX SU 7:30 a.m.
 Dothan WTVY SU 7:00 a.m.

AL Montgomery WBMM SU 7:00 a.m.

AR Fayetteville KHOG SU 7:00 a.m.
 Fort Smith KHBS SU 7:00 a.m.

AZ Phoenix KASW SU 7:30 a.m.
 Phoenix KASW SA 5:30 p.m.
 Prescott Community SU 12:30 p.m.
 Prescott Community SA 11:30 p.m.
 Tucson Access SU 7:00 p.m.

CA Bakersfield KGET SU 8:00 a.m.
 Chico KHSL SU 8:00 a.m.
 Eureka KUVU-LP SU 8:00 a.m.
 Eureka Sudden Link SU 8:00 p.m.
 Fresno KFRE SU 7:30 a.m.
 Garden Grove Time Warner SU 9:30 a.m.
 Garden Grove Time Warner SU 8:00 p.m.
 Monterey KION SU 8:00 a.m.
 Orange County Time Warner MO 5:00 p.m.
 Palm Springs KCWQ SU 8:00 a.m.
 Palm Springs KCWQ-LP SU 8:00 a.m.
 Sacramento RCCTV MO 5:30 p.m.
 Salinas KION SU 8:00 a.m.
 San Diego Time SU 6:00 p.m.
 San Francisco Access WE 8:00 p.m.

CO Grand Junc. KJCT SU 7:00 a.m.

CT Naugatuck Tele-Media MO 9:30 p.m.
 New Haven WZME SU 11:00 p.m.

DC Washington WACW SU 6:30 a.m.

IA Des Moines KCWI SU 7:00 a.m.

FL Gainesville WCJB SU 8:00 a.m.
 Jacksonville WCWS SU 6:30 a.m.
 Panama City WJHG SU 8:00 a.m.

GA Albany WBSK Cable SU 8:00 a.m.
 Augusta WAGT SU 8:00 a.m.
 Macon Cox SU 5:00 p.m.
 Macon Cox TU 7:30 a.m.
 Macon Cox FR 2:00 p.m.
 Macon WBMM SU 8:00 a.m.

IA Dubuque Mediacom MO 3:30 p.m.
 Dubuque Mediacom MO 7:30 p.m.
 Dubuque Mediacom TU 10:00 a.m.*

ID Boise KNIN SU 7:00 a.m.
 Boise TTVV SU 9:30 p.m.
 Boise TTVV MO 11:30 a.m.
 Idaho Falls KPIF SU 7:00 a.m.

IL Chicago CANTV Various*
 Chicago WGN America SU 7:30 a.m.
 Moline Mediacom MO 5:00 p.m.
 Peoria WHOI SU 7:00 a.m.
 Quincy WGMG TU 5:00 a.m.
 Springfield Insight TU 1:00 p.m.
 Springfield Insight TU 10:00 p.m.

IN Fort Wayne Comcast SU 9:00 a.m.

KS Parsons TWPAP WE 7:00 p.m.
 Salina SCAT TH 5:00 p.m.
 Salina SCAT FR 5:00 p.m.
 Salina SCAT SA 9:00 a.m.

KY Bowling Green WBKO SU 7:00 a.m.
 Latonia PEG WE 5:30 p.m.
 Latonia PEG TH 12:00 a.m.
 Lexington Insight Various*

LA Alexandria KBCA SU 7:00 a.m.
 Baton Rouge WGMB SU 9:00 a.m.
 Lafayette KLWB SU 7:00 a.m.
 Monroe KNOE SU 7:00 a.m.

MA Cambridge CCTV SU 3:00 p.m.
 Cambridge CCTV WE 9:00 a.m.
 Cambridge WDFX FR 11:00 a.m.
 Cambridge ECTV TU 1:00 p.m.
 Everett ECTV SU 9:00 p.m.
 Malden Access SU 11:00 a.m.
 North Adams NBCTC WE 8:00 p.m.

MD Baltimore Community SU 9:00 a.m.
 Westminster Adelpia TH 10:00 a.m.
 Westminster Adelpia FR 10:00 a.m.

ME Bangor WABI SU 8:00 a.m.
 Brunswick TV3 SA 8:30 a.m.
 Brunswick TV3 SU 6:30 a.m.
 Presque Isle WBQP SU 8:00 a.m.

MI Alpena Charter WBAE SU 8:00 a.m.
 Detroit Comcast SU 7:30 a.m.
 Kalamazoo CACTV SU 9:30 a.m.
 Kalamazoo CACTV WE 11:30 a.m.
 Lansing WLAJ SU 8:00 a.m.
 Marquette WBKP SU 8:00 a.m.

MN Cloquet MEDCLO FR 10:00 a.m.
 Cloquet MEDCLO SA 4:00 p.m.
 Duluth KDHL SU 7:00 a.m.
 Duluth Public Access SA 11:00 a.m.
 Duluth Public Access SU 7:00 p.m.
 Minneapolis MCN SA 8:30 a.m.
 Minneapolis MCN SU 8:30 a.m.
 Minneapolis MTN TH 12:00 a.m.
 Minneapolis NW Community SA 10:30 p.m.
 Minneapolis NW Community SU 4:30 a.m.
 Minneapolis NW Community SU 10:30 a.m.*
 Rochester KTTK SU 7:00 a.m.
 Roseville CTV TU 8:00 p.m.

MO Columbia KOMU SU 7:00 a.m.
 Jefferson City KOMU SU 7:00 a.m.
 Joplin KFJX SU 8:30 a.m.
 Kansas City KCWE SU 7:30 a.m.
 Springfield KRKB SU 7:30 a.m.

MS Biloxi WBGW SU 7:00 a.m.
 Columbus WCBI SU 7:00 a.m.
 Greenwood WBWO SU 7:00 a.m.
 Hattiesburg WBH SU 7:00 a.m.
 Jackson Time Warner SU 10:00 a.m.
 Jackson Time Warner WE 4:00 p.m.
 Meridian WTOK SU 7:00 a.m.

MT Billings KTVQ SU 7:00 a.m.
 Butte KBZK SU 7:00 a.m.
 Butte KXLF SU 7:00 a.m.
 Glendive KWBZ SU 7:00 a.m.
 Great Falls KRTV SU 7:00 a.m.
 Helena KMTF SU 7:00 a.m.
 Missoula KPAX SU 7:00 a.m.

NC Charlotte WAXN SU 7:00 a.m.
 Greenville WNCN SU 8:00 a.m.
 Hickory WHKY MO 7:30 p.m.

ND Fargo WDAY SU 7:00 a.m.
 Bismarck KWMM SU 8:00 a.m.
 Minot KWMM SU 7:00 a.m.

NH Hanover CATV8 TH 7:00 p.m.
 Hanover CATV8 FR 7:00 a.m.
 Hanover CATV8 FR 1:00 a.m.
 Hanover CATV8 MO 6:00 a.m.*

NM Rio Rancho Cable 1 SA 7:00 p.m.

NV Reno KREN SU 8:00 a.m.

NY Albany WCVN SU 7:00 a.m.
 Albany-Troy Time Warner MO 3:00 p.m.
 Batavia Time Warner SU 2:00 p.m.
 Batavia Time Warner TU 5:30 p.m.
 Batavia Time Warner FR 7:30 p.m.
 Binghamton Time Warner MO 10:00 p.m.
 Binghamton Time Warner FR 8:00 p.m.
 Binghamton WBNG SU 8:00 a.m.
 Brookhaven Cablevision SU 11:00 p.m.
 Brooklyn BCAT SU 7:30 p.m.
 Canandaigua Finger Lakes SU 11:30 a.m.
 Elmira WENY SU 8:00 a.m.
 Elmira Time Warner FR 8:00 p.m.
 Glenn Falls Time Warner MO 8:00 p.m.
 Glenn Falls Time Warner TU 8:00 p.m.*
 Hauppauge Cablevision SU 11:00 p.m.
 Manhattan MNN SA 7:00 p.m.
 Oneida Access TH 2:00 p.m.
 Oneida Access TH 7:00 p.m.
 Queens Public Access MO 11:00 p.m.
 Queens Public Access TU 4:30 p.m.
 Riverhead Cablevision SA 10:30 p.m.
 Rochester Finger Lakes SU 11:30 a.m.
 Rochester RCTV SA 8:30 a.m.
 Rochester RCTV TU 10:00 a.m.*
 Rochester RCTV TH 9:30 p.m.
 Rockland Cty. WCVN SU 7:00 a.m.
 Schenectady Community SU 8:00 p.m.
 Staten Island Community TU 2:00 p.m.
 Staten Island Time Warner SU 7:30 p.m.
 Webster Cable Access SU 9:30 a.m.

OH Centerville MVCC FR 2:30 p.m.
 Cincinnati Time Warner TH 8:30 a.m.
 Cincinnati Time Warner SU 11:30 a.m.
 Cincinnati Time Warner TU 1:00 p.m.
 Fairborn CAC TU 12:00 p.m.

OR Bend KTVZ SU 8:00 a.m.
 Eugene KMTR SU 8:00 a.m.
 Medford KTVL SU 8:00 a.m.
 Oregon City Access WFTV SU 8:00 a.m.
 Oregon City Access WFTV SA 8:00 a.m.
 Portland Community SU 12:30 p.m.

PA Allentown SETV2 FR 4:30 p.m.
 Bethlehem SETV2 FR 4:30 p.m.
 Erie WBEP SU 8:00 a.m.
 Johnstown Atl. Broadband MO 10:00 p.m.
 Scranton FOX TH 5:00 a.m.
 Scranton FOX SA 5:00 a.m.

SC Charleston WCBD SU 8:00 a.m.
 Myrtle Beach WWMB SU 8:00 a.m.

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

TN Chattanooga Family Channel SU 7:00 a.m.
 Jackson WBKJ SU 7:00 a.m.
 Knoxville WBXX SU 7:30 a.m.
 La Follette Comcast-WLAF WE 6:00 p.m.
 Nashville WZTV SU 6:30 a.m.

TX Abilene KTXS SU 7:00 a.m.
 Amarillo KVIH SU 7:00 a.m.
 Austin KNVA SU 6:30 a.m.
 Beaumont KBTV SU 6:30 a.m.
 Beaumont KFDM SU 7:00 a.m.
 Corpus Christi KRIS SU 7:00 a.m.
 Dallas Community SA 1:00 p.m.
 Dallas Community SU 11:00 a.m.
 Dallas KTXD SU 8:00 a.m.
 Laredo KGNs SU 7:00 a.m.
 Lubbock KLCW SU 7:00 a.m.
 Lufkin KTRE SU 6:30 a.m.
 McAllen KSFE-LP SU 7:00 a.m.
 Midland KWWT SU 7:00 a.m.
 Odessa KWWT SU 7:00 a.m.
 Temple KPLE SU 7:30 p.m.
 Tyler KLTU SU 6:30 a.m.

VA Charlottesville Comcast Cable MO 8:00 a.m.
 Charlottesville WVVIR SU 8:00 a.m.
 Chesterfield Comcast TH 6:30 p.m.
 Fairfax Public Access MO 12:00 p.m.

VT Bennington CAT WE 9:30 a.m.
 Bennington CAT TH 9:30 p.m.
 Bennington CAT SA 8:00 a.m.*
 Burlington Access WE 2:30 a.m.
 Burlington Access TH 11:00 a.m.
 Burlington Access MO 7:00 a.m.*
 Richmond Public Access TH 10:00 p.m.
 Springfield Public Access MO 12:00 p.m.

WA Everett Comcast WE 4:30 p.m.
 Kennewick Charter SU 8:00 p.m.
 Kennewick Charter TU 8:00 p.m.
 Vancouver Community SU 8:30 a.m.
 Vancouver Community TU 10:30 a.m.
 Vancouver Community WE 12:00 p.m.

WI La Crosse WQOW SU 7:00 a.m.
 Wausau Charter TH 9:00 p.m.
 Wausau Charter FR 7:30 a.m.

WV Bluefield WVVA SU 8:00 a.m.
 Clarksburg WVFX SU 8:00 a.m.

WY Casper KGWC SU 8:00 a.m.
 Casper KTWO SU 11:00 a.m.
 Cheyenne KGWN SU 8:00 a.m.
 Cheyenne KLWY SU 7:00 a.m.
 Cheyenne KLWY SU 11:00 a.m.

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TOMORROW'S WORLD

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UPCOMING TELECASTS

God Heals!

Jesus Christ suffered so you could be healed!
May 8-14

Doomsday and Armageddon

What does your Bible say about the end of the world? You need to know!
May 15-21

Coming Soon: God's New World

The prophesied "Millennium" will soon bring peace to a troubled planet Earth!
May 22-28

The Power of the Resurrection

What will happen to you after you die? Are you ready for what God has planned?
May 29-June 4

The Prophesied Day of the Lord

End-time events will shake our world. How will they affect you?
June 5-11

Seven Prophetic Trends

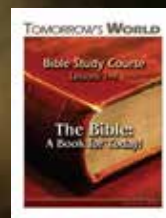
Are you following Jesus' command to watch for the signs of His return?
June 12-18

Schedule subject to change



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