

The POYER of Religion

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### Which "World" Do You Live In?

t has been fascinating in my 84 years of life to observe the various "worlds" people live in. Most people are consumed by—and often limited by—the particular narrow world they inhabit. Hundreds of millions inhabit the "media" world and gush with enthusiasm over the stars of movies and television shows. Others are engrossed in the "sports" world and marvel at the baskets sunk or yards gained or runs scored by their favorite sports heroes.

And there are "worlds within worlds." A golf fanatic may have very little knowledge of or interest in football. An opera lover may be quite unfamiliar with most "rock" music, and a fan of the latest "boy band" may dislike or even disdain symphonic or choral music.

Residents of each "world" will often let their narrow interests consume nearly all of their free time, money, conversations and relationships. Rare are the individuals who will step back from their narrow interests and focus instead on the "big picture" that makes these narrow worlds small by comparison.

Sir Winston Churchill stated, "There is a great *design* and **purpose** being worked out here below." This "man of the century" was on the right track, but even he did not fully understand that great design and purpose—the **reason** we were born, the *reason* we draw breath and the purpose and **goal** for which we were created.

Do you understand?

#### My Own Little "World"

When I grew up in the mining town of Joplin in southwest Missouri, my own "world" was basically limited to my friends and family and the local communities around Joplin. That "world" broadened when, as a young adult, I had the opportunity to spend 31/2 solid months traveling in Europe. It was a real eye-opener to see thousands of basically "average" people going about their lives. In the evening, on the wide boulevards of Paris, Rome and Madrid, I would see entire families sitting at the same table while Grandpa drank his tea, a son and daughter-inlaw drank wine and the younger children drank their soda pop. They were just going about their lives, no more sinful but no more righteous than the Americans around whom I grew up.

This experience helped me understand that the "true values" we should be seeking are not those of middle-American Protestantism or European Catholicism or any man-made "world" of ideas and practices. Rather, those values are found in the **Ten Commandments**—the inspired **way** God revealed



centuries ago to our ancestors. *Any other* "standards" of conduct invented by men are inferior and limited—because our own minds and understanding are limited, far inferior to the **Creator** who made us in the first place.

> Many do not like to hear this! I will never forget the advice of my

older second cousin, a very *successful businessman*. He drew a big circle, then marked off sections to show how we should devote various parts of our lives—to education, to work, to family, etc. He only marked a very small section for "religion"—which he said could be helpful at times but *must never encroach* on the "big things" of life, such as career and family.

In effect, he was telling me to put God in a "box"! Of course, God was not calling him, and I saw right through the fallacy of his reasoning. If there were no real God, his approach might be fine. But if there is a real God of the Bible—a powerful Spirit Being who created us, created the entire universe, created our minds and has a supreme **purpose** in mind for us, then we had better **not** "put God in a box"!

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#### The Power of Religion

Today, as we see Boko Haram and ISIS capturing thousands of square miles of land, terrorizing entire cities and murdering countless opponents—all in the name of **religion**—it should be obvious that the "world of the spirit" is *a major motivator* to countless millions around the globe. We cannot ignore it and expect to survive.

What does this mean for you and for me? The inspired Word of God indicates that before Christ re-

Rare are the individuals who will step back from their narrow interests and focus instead on the "big picture" that makes their narrow worlds small by comparison.

turns, the Arab world will unite under a figure called the "King of the South" (Daniel 11:40). He will rise against a soon-coming "Beast" power that will rise in Europe, involving *hundreds of millions* of human beings who will be so totally deceived that they will literally *fight against Christ* at His Second Coming (Revelation 17:14)!

This very magazine, and the entire Work that is behind it, has been raised up at the time of the end the "latter days" of this present age, as the Bible puts it—to **warn** the nations that the Creator will soon intervene and *completely stop* the anti-God nonsense going on around us. The living Christ will soon come back as King of kings (Revelation 11:15). He will **change** civilization, putting an end to the constant competition, deception, infidelity, murder and so many other horrible practices that—sometimes even in the name of religion—go on today.

#### Act on the Truth!

What about you? *If* you are willing to **prove** to yourself that there is a real God—our Father and our Creator who made us and gives us life and breath—and if you are able to **prove** to yourself that the Bible is the *inspired revelation* from that God, then you had better **act**. You need to *study*, to meditate and to "**seek**" God with all your heart. *Anything else is foolish!* Almighty God told our ancestors what their descendants would need to do when they are finally taken into captivity at the end of this present age: "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice" (Deuteronomy 4:29–30).

Do you understand? More than any other "world" in which you can involve yourself, the world of God's Truth is the ultimate world that will affect *your entire life far* **more** than you can now imagine!

So, I challenge all of you dear readers to "go after it." The *true* God—the Creator and Governor of the universe, the One who *inspired every word of the Bible*—will give you understanding, strength and help if you truly "seek" Him as most of you readers have *never done before*.

We in this Work are here to *serve* you. We sincerely want to help you. We could gain a much bigger following by preaching "mainstream" false-

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hoods—but we want to help the few who sincerely want to learn and practice the Truth. If you have

not already done so, please order our free *Tomorrow's World Bible Study Course*. You can order it at *TWBibleCourse.org*, or you can contact the Regional Office nearest you (listed on page 4 of this magazine). I *strongly encourage* you to begin to **study** the Bible as never before. And study **all** of our free literature—*especially* the *Tomorrow's World Bible Study Course*. If you do, it will change your "world" like nothing else ever could—**if** you are willing to take the time to *study* and to **act** on the supreme *purpose* God is beginning to reveal to you through *this very Work* of your Creator and your God!

Rodera C Meelith

#### **5** The Power of Religion

Is religious fanaticism something to be found "over there"? Might your own nation fall under the sway of a strong religious leader. Your Bible reveals the answer!

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"A Europe which is capable of appreciating its religious roots... will be all the more immune to the many forms of extremism spreading in the world today." — Pope Francis

*"What remains, then, is to conquer Rome."*Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi

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#### By Roderick C. Meredith

ore than 1.5 billion people profess the religion called Islam. For vast numbers of these believers, their religion *is their life*. Rightly or wrongly, they are **passionate** about their religion! Though many Muslims are basically peaceful and mean well, the powerful influence of Islamic religious beliefs—and the extremists who capitalize on the most militant understanding of those beliefs—is causing many others to become **violent**.

Many top politicians and strategists in the West have tried to insist that *Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham* (ISIS)—the "Islamic State" now spreading across the Middle East, already ruling a land mass larger than the entire United Kingdom—is **not** about religion. But they are absolutely **wrong**! If you study carefully, you will come to see that it is "all" about religion! More than that, the "religious" orientation of these militants causes them to hunger for the death of all who oppose them as they try to hasten the end of the world as prophesied in Muslim scriptures.

How blood thirsty and genocidal have these ISIS Muslims become in the name of their religion? Consider this recent eye-opening report by Graeme Wood of *The Atlantic* magazine:

"In September, Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the Islamic State's chief spokesman, called on Muslims in Western countries such as France and Canada to find an infidel and 'smash his head with a rock,' poison him, run him over with a car, or 'destroy his crops.' To Western ears, the biblical-sounding punishments—the stoning and crop destruction—juxtaposed strangely with his more modern-sounding call to vehicular homicide. (As if to show that he could terrorize by imagery alone, Adnani also referred to Secretary of State John Kerry as an 'uncircumcised geezer.')

"But Adnani was not merely talking trash. His speech was laced with theological and legal discussion, and his exhortation to attack crops directly echoed orders from Muhammad to leave well water and crops alone—unless the armies of Islam were in a defensive position, in which case Muslims in the lands of kuffar, or infidels, should be unmerciful, and poison away.

"The reality is that the Islamic State is Islamic. Very Islamic. Yes, it has attracted psychopaths and adventure seekers, drawn largely from the disaffected populations of the Middle East and Europe. But the religion preached by its most ardent followers derives from coherent and even learned interpretations of Islam.

"Virtually every major decision and law promulgated by the Islamic State adheres to what it calls, in its press and pronouncements, and on its billboards, license plates, stationery, and

#### POWER OF RELIGION



coins, 'the Prophetic methodology,' which means following the prophecy and example of Muhammad, in punctilious detail. Muslims can reject the Islamic State; nearly all do. But pretending that it isn't actually a religious, millenarian group, with theology that must be understood to be combatted, has already led the United States to underestimate it and back foolish schemes to counter it" (*The Atlantic*, March 2015).

As this article points out in great detail and with many references, Islamic State adherents are absolutely "passionate" about their religion!

What about *you*? How passionate are you about your religion?

"Oh, no," you may say, "nothing like this could ever happen here in our 'educated' Western society." But you would be absolutely **wrong**. The inspired Word of the Creator God—the Holy Bible—very specifically makes it clear that in the "last days" of this society a very **powerful religion** will come on the scene, deceptively calling itself "Christianity." It will claim to represent Jesus Christ and it will take over vast portions of this world—its houses of worship, its businesses, and most of its *entire way of life*. Yes, most of you who are alive today will live to see a world in which a nominal form of Christianity will hold power in the West to a degree that today's ISIS militants can only envy!

#### **Religion Can Be Powerful**

For good or for ill, **religion** has been a truly *powerful force* for the most part of human history. Religion taps into an enormous urge in human nature to follow a higher power and serve something *greater than oneself*. Many evil men have taken advantage of their ability to twist this noble side of human nature. And indeed, over the next several years, the inspired prophecies of the Bible clearly indicate that there will be a "clash of religions" of monumental proportions affecting this world's society. For two great world powers, each supported by a different religious passion, will come to a time of war at the very end of this present civilization. At that point, the entire world will be shocked when a third force—the leader of what will seem "another religion"—will intervene with astonishing force to save humanity from destroying itself.

Yes, this is all in your Bible! But, *right now*, almost daily, we read about the horrible atrocities perpetuated by the "Islamic State"—vile acts that are almost incomprehensible to most people.

#### Why?

When you read in detail about the Middle East most of it under the sway of Islam—you realize that many millions have spent their whole lives hearing about how they have been "put down" by the United States and its European allies, and especially by the Jews whom they seem so happy to persecute. Indeed, it is true that the Arab nations have, in the past, been conquered by European powers, have had their national boundaries redrawn for political reasons, and have felt denigrated and victimized by persecution. In their own towns and villages, in poor rural areas and in their cities, many have absolutely longed for some kind of revenge.

Countless Arab Muslims have been fed an ideological diet by their imams and other leaders suggesting that a coming "Mahdi" or super-religio-political leader will come at the end of this age to deliver them from oppression and make them proud of themselves again. *Right now*, many in the group calling itself Islamic State are perpetuating and magnifying these concepts and ideas and are trying to produce a "Caliphate"—a full-blown empire of Islam through which supporters can band together to throw off the shackles imposed by the European and American peoples. The Arab masses are clearly upset, and extremist religious leaders are increasingly egging on their desires for revenge through old Muslim prophecies as a way to "get even" and enable them to "hold up their heads once again."

Notice the inspired prophecy found in Daniel 11. In this prophecy, the Creator God is describing a final revival of the ancient Roman Empire in Europe-obviously north of the Arab states. The setting is described as clearly the "time of the end"-the final years of this world's present civilization (v. 40). At this point, the "King of the South"—a powerful leader over the Arab nations-attacks (or, as some biblical scholars translate it, "provokes") this powerful leader of the final revived Roman Empire. Having technologically superior weapons, the coming leader of this European power-called the "Beast" in biblical prophecy-will come swooping down "like a whirlwind" to overwhelm this Muslim power. At that point, the Beast and his armies will enter the "glorious land" and take over much of the Middle East.

Daniel's prophecy clearly indicates, "the land of Egypt shall not escape" (v. 42). Here, however, scripture also indicates the arrival of a great army from the east, coming to fight the Beast and stop him from taking over the whole world (v. 44).

At this point, humanity will be right on the verge of cosmocide—utterly annihilating itself. Only then, your Bible indicates, will the final and greatest "Religious Leader" of all time intervene and **stop** these human wars altogether. That Leader? His name is Jesus Christ!

#### Who Is This "King of the North?"

Many religious scholars and students of prophecy have come to understand that the "King of the North"

described here is a coming "Hitler"—described as the "Beast" in your Bible. In the relatively near future, he will be in charge of the *world's top superpower* having the greatest military and industrial might the world has ever seen.

Who is he? If you will study carefully and with an open mind, you will easily prove to yourself that this coming "Beast" is in fact the leader of the revived Roman Empire. Your Bible states: "Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to

#### REQUEST YOUR FREE LITERATURE The Beast of Revelation

perdition. The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive

authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast" (Revelation 17:9–13).

Even now, many European nations are peacefully giving over their power to one of the leading nations of Europe. Eventually, the final leader of this system called the "Beast" in your Bible—will have *ten kings* or kingdoms allied with him, and power extending far beyond those kingdoms. John tells us "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury" (Revelation 18:3). But Christians must not succumb to its temptations. John was inspired to warn us: "And **POWER OF RELIGION** CONTINUES ON PAGE 30



## Humboldt's Humble Swamp





**On the rolling Saskatchewan prairie**, about 70 miles east of the city of Saskatoon, sits the pleasant community of Humboldt, population: 6,000. It was here that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a remarkable scientist conducted an equally remarkable experiment,

the results of which have impacted many communities around the world.

Smaller communities such as Humboldt—whether in Canada or just about anywhere on the planet—are faced with the constant challenge of safely disposing of sewage. This may not be a pleasant topic to contemplate, but sewage disposal is a major role of civic and provincial governments anywhere. Sewage treatment that will render effluent harmless to the environment is actually very expensive. In many places the cost is so prohibitive that effluent is simply dumped in rivers, lakes or seas.

Dr. G. Lakshman, a researcher at the Saskatchewan Research Council in Saskatoon, and recent arrival from India, was acutely aware of the problem. In a series of studies funded by the Government of Saskatchewan and Ducks Unlimited, Lakshman's team came up with some stunning discoveries that have since been applied around the world, greatly improving the quality of life for many.

The study, "A Demonstration Project at Humboldt to Provide Tertiary Treatment to Municipal Effluent Using Aquatic Plants," (Lakshman, G: Saskatchewan Research Council. Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Research Council, 1983. SRC technical report, no. 151), details the remarkable capacity of two very humble plants: the cattail and the bulrush.

#### **Build Plants or Grow Plants?**

Humboldt needed a new treatment facility that it could not afford. Lakshman was given permission to develop two very small and very shallow lagoons outside of the community. In their carefully designed 8-inch deep trenches, workers planted thousands of cattails or bulrushes. Lakshman believed that marsh plants in general, and cattails in particular, had insatiable appetites for sewage, and were perhaps the root of the solution for waste treatment in such areas. He reasoned such plants normally exist at the bottom of drainage basins, and are at the receiving end of all the material that eventually gets washed into low areas by rain and gravity.

Lakshman's report explains that the reed's capacity for neutralizing harmful effects of pollutants like nitrates and phosphates borders on the miraculous. Any other plants absorb only the nutrients they require, but cattails take in as much as they can get. The Research Council's report reveals how effectively the reeds handle waste. It identifies, for instance, the special antibiotic secretions released by the cattail that neutralize bacteria, including e-coli and coliform. The absorption and neutralization of dangerous chemicals was noted. They trapped toxic materials in their tissue, and rendered the toxins generally harmless. The report explains that the plants can even process heavy metals such as mercury, phenols, cyanide and zinc, and break down hydrogen sulfide. They were observed even to detoxify runoff containing pesticides and herbicides.

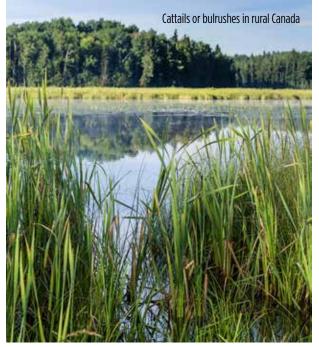
The speed at which the plants work was astounding. The little lagoons could process twelve months of sewage in six months. The actual neutralizing cycle took only 21 days, after which the released water was found to be comparable with the water in some of Saskatchewan's cleanest lakes.

It was also noted that with modern sewage treatment plants there was still the problem with odour, yet in the Humboldt study it was noted that the effluent quickly became free of foul smell. The mechanism that causes this is not yet known. When we think of swamps we often think of mosquitos, but the study also shows the cattails secrete a larvicide from their root that kills mosquito larvae.

#### **Wonderful Wetlands; Marvelous Marshes**

As a result of this study, the Saskatchewan government began to recommend feedlots and farm operations leave wetlands undeveloped, and plant cattails in dugouts, ditches and in zones of low gradient drainage to render runoff harmless. Even more amazing is that, by the end of the growing season, the reeds, despite their rather obnoxious diet, are safe to harvest and use for animal feed.

A Canadian Water Resources Journal report reinforces the findings: "Marshes also function as natural sediment traps by trapping sediment with emergent vegetation, slowing flows and allowing soil particles to fall out of suspension. If retained or developed, they not only help reduce erosion, but improve water quality as well. In fact, wetlands have their own built-in water



treatment 'plants' such as cattail and bulrush which are such efficient water purification sites that studies



suggest wetlands may well be the waste-water treatment site of the future for many rural communities" ("Wet-

lands and Water Management," January 2013).

The report goes on to describe extensive research into the ability of these remarkable plants to improve water quality, explaining the specific biological processes that reduce overall levels of toxins, microbes and other contaminants from the filthiest of polluted water sources—and documenting how they do so in some impressively short periods of time.

In another Saskatchewan community, that of Vonda, a similar project has been operating since 1983. The Mayor, Dan Sembalerus states: "The system has been trouble-free, requiring no changes or modifications" (R. Lyseng, "Are wetlands Mother Nature's outhouse, or do they deserve more respect?" *The Western Producer*, January 8, 2015).

#### **Design or Chance?**

In our rushed world, with its fixation on modern technology, we so easily overlook the design that is crafted into the planet on which we live. It is truly folly to write off everything that exists as the work of chance, when it in fact is the work of a Creator whose genius is reflected in the cycles that surround us in nature. The mechanisms to deal with toxins and waste were not overlooked when the miraculous chemical digesters we know as the cattail and the bulrush were created. They labour free of charge, do excellent work and never go on strike. When we take a moment to stop and reflect on aspects of how the earth functions, the fact that there is a great God who, with incredible wisdom, has lovingly put together the ecosystems, is unmistakable.

There will soon come a time when God will establish a true, righteous government on Earth, ruled by His son Jesus Christ, and man will be informed of all aspects of how the world was intended to work and become beautiful and safe.

At that time the humble cattail and the lowly swamp, in which it lives and works, will be recognized for the brilliant creations they really are.

-Stuart Wachowicz





Not long ago, the United States was the unchallenged world superpower. Will the U.S. remain on top, or will it fall as so many others have before, while other nations rise? Have we learned the lessons of history?

#### By Richard F. Ames

an any nation or empire long endure? For more than 200 years, the United States has been a great power on the world scene. But in the years since the fall of the Soviet Union, and in the wake of the global war on terror, we have seen the U.S. declining, while other powerful nations or alliances—such as China and the European Union—exercise ever more political, economic and military power. Can the U.S. remain a leading nation for much longer?

The world-ruling empires of the past no longer exist. The great Babylonian Empire, for example, conquered many nations, including the kingdom of Judah in the Middle East. The historian Herodotus wrote, "In addition to its enormous size, Babylon surpasses in splendour any city of the known world" (*The Histories*, Book One, section 178).

What happened to that powerful empire? Babylon's depravity led to God's judgment. Will God soon judge the United States?

#### **Empires Past and Present**

The prophet Daniel, in the pages of your Bible, foretold the rise and fall of other vast empires. He predicted the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. What happened to the ancient Roman Empire? That mighty empire lasted for more than 500 years on the heels of the Roman Republic, but finally came to its end in 476AD. Historian Edward Gibbon summarized the causes of the empire's fall. "After a diligent inquiry, I can discern four principal causes for the ruin of Rome, which continued to operate in a period of more than a thousand years. I. The injuries of time and nature. II. The hostile attacks of the barbarians and Christians. III. The use and abuse of materials. And IV. The domestic quarrels of the Romans" (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 71).

Modern empires, too, have come and gone. In the 20th century, the German "Third Reich" attacked with military blitzkrieg and extended its rule over much of Europe and North Africa. Adolf Hitler's ambitions included the conquest of the Soviet Union, but he failed. Allied armies vanquished the Third Reich. The Soviet Union, or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, consisted of 15 republics spanning 11,000 miles from east to west. This great superpower reveled in its communist ideology. It fought for the hearts of nations and peoples all over the world—and ultimately, it failed.

Now, that once-mighty power has shattered into 15 struggling nation-states, with twelve tied together in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Who could have predicted the demise of such a great superpower? You might be surprised to learn that a small group of biblically based Christians understood all along that Eastern Europe would eventually escape the iron grip of the Soviet Union.

How did they know? Bible prophecy predicted the rise of another great superpower, called the Beast in the book of Revelation. More than 50 years ago, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote that East Germany would be rejoined to West Germany, and that Russia "will be forced to relinquish her control over Hungary, Czechoslovakia and parts of Austria" (*Plain Truth*, April 1952, p. 16).

Shortly after Russia's 1956 invasion of Hungary, when many "experts" believed that the "Iron Curtain" had fallen forever on the nations of Eastern Europe, the *Plain Truth* magazine made this amazing statement: "The way is being prepared for a colossal third force in world politics—a European Federation of Nations more powerful than either Russia or the United States!... We have shown years in advance what would happen to Russia's ill-fated Empire in Eastern Europe" (*Plain Truth*, December 1956, p. 3).

Will today's Western nations follow the same pattern of decline and fall as the nations that have gone before them? Will Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand decline and fall? Will the United States continue to experience more Katrina-like hurricanes, earthquakes, and other natural disasters? Will we continue to experience terrorist attacks? History and the Bible have demonstrated over and over, that when nations reject the God of creation, they will be judged. Will the Western world continue its rejection of biblical truth? The philosopher Georg Hegel observed: "What experience and history teach is this—that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it" (*The Philosophy of History*).

The history of the world is the story of nations and empires that prospered and later turned to dust. Will we learn the lessons of history? Some empires declined slowly before their demise. Others were destroyed or captured suddenly. The great empires of the past are now little more than artifacts in museums, or broken-down monuments where they once thrived. Britain once commanded the world's largest empire. By 1921, it covered about 15 million square miles-one-third of the world's total land area-and held about one-quarter of the world's population. It was said that "the sun never sets on the British Empire." After a final burst of expansion right after World War II, a process of "decolonization" began, and by 1960 the British had given up the lands that today comprise India, Pakistan, Burma, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Ghana, Nigeria, Somalia and much of sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the Palestinian Mandate and parts of Egypt and Sudan. Over the last 40 years, Britain has given up most of its overseas possessions, most recently returning Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. The sun set on the British Empire long ago.



So, will the superpower United States face a similar decline? Every nation—every empire—of the past has fallen, just like Greece and Rome. You can know what nations or empires will rise and fall in the 21st century. Bible prophecy reveals the future of the Western nations, if you know the key to finding the modern descendants of ancient biblical nations.

Does this surprise you? Remember, there is a God in heaven who is working out a great plan here on earth. He is giving rebellious human beings thousands of years to experiment with their own manmade religion, science, government, business, education, and social institutions. God allows people to go their own carnal way of selfishness, war, and violence, but He has a plan—and, as we see from history and Scripture, He does intervene in world events to help humanity learn lasting lessons of life and death.

#### **Lessons Learned?**

Have we learned the lessons of history? The renowned philosopher George Santayana, in his famous treatise *Reason in Common Sense*, wrote: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Will we in the Western world learn the lessons of history? Or will we follow the pattern of all great kingdoms and empires that have come and gone before us—that rose to the heights of power and dominance, and then fell into decadence and oblivion?

The Babylonian king Belshazzar was one great ruler who should have learned the lessons of history. Yet he insisted on his own godless way of life, and led others into debauchery. His empire paid the penalty. That profound lesson is recorded in the pages of history—and in the pages of your Bible. The prophet Daniel was in the city of Babylon the night the Persian army conquered it. Through Daniel, God let king Belshazzar know what was going to happen to him and his empire. This amazing sequence of events is recorded in chapter 5 of the book of Daniel, in the

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famous story of the "handwriting on the wall." King Belshazzar prepared a feast—a great party—for his no-

bles. They drank wine out of golden vessels plundered from God's temple in Jerusalem. "In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other" (Daniel 5:5–6).

The king called upon Daniel to interpret this saying. What had the mysterious hand written? "And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:25–28). Then: "That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old" (vv. 30–31).



The United States, buoyed by its ability to project power around the globe, spent most of the 20th century as the world's most powerful nation.

Today, the handwriting is on the wall for the United States and Great Britain. The warning signs are all around us, as our nations become more decadent and immoral. Yet there is still time for us to repent, nationally and individually. Will we listen to God's warnings?

In the past few years, the United States has experienced shocking disasters. On September 11, 2001, terrorists flew hijacked airliners into New York's World Trade Center and into the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Thousands were killed in the attacks. In September 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the southern coast of the United States. The city of New Orleans

### GOD HAS NUMBERED YOUR KINGDOM, AND FINISHED IT... YOU HAVE BEEN WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES, AND FOUND WANTING... Your Kingdom has been divided...

was flooded. Katrina has been called the worst natural disaster in U.S. history.

These disasters demonstrated how vulnerable and how unprepared we are. Can any nation afford to sustain hundreds of billions of dollars in financial loss? What lessons should we learn from these catastrophes? Are they simply an expected part of the cycle of history and nature? Or is God powerfully intervening to wake us up from our moral and spiritual decline? If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that our nations have strayed far from the God of the Bible and His Son Jesus Christ! If we in the Western world continue to ignore, despise, and reject the Ten Commandments, and the word of God, the Bible, we will face more disasters-until we realize, and act on the realization, that we need to seek God with our whole heart! The prophet Isaiah gives us this exhortation, encouragement and promise. "Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7).

We must take spiritual action now! Of course, some hardheads will remain skeptical. But those who seek God through His word can have understanding and peace of mind.

#### **An Ancient Lesson**

We have seen that great empires do not last forever. They rise, decline and fall. Will the Western nations learn the lessons of history? King Belshazzar ignored the lessons he should have learned from his ancestor, King Nebuchadnezzar, who had ruled over the Babylonian empire. Daniel reminded Belshazzar of the lessons he should have learned from this

> previous king. "O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father [ancestor] a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished,

he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses" (Daniel 5:18–21).

Nebuchadnezzar learned a profound lesson. He tried to rule without acknowledging God, and he suffered terribly for it! Must we also learn lessons the hard way, or will we pay attention to God, and to His word, the Bible?

When Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that none of his advisors could reveal to him, the prophet Daniel not only told the king what his dream was, but he also gave its interpretation: "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" (Daniel 2:31–33).

The prophet Daniel told the king the dream's meaning. "You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold" (vv. 37–38).

Here, God was revealing the power and authority that He, the Creator of the universe, was giving the "head of gold"—Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom. The dream, however, foretold the end of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, and the establishment of others after his: "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others" (vv. 39–40).

Which empires did this dream describe? Reputable Bible scholars today agree on their identity and fulfillment. The head of gold represented the Babylonian Empire from 625BC to 539BC. This empire was replaced by the Medo-Persian Empire from 558BC to 330BC, represented by the chest and arms of silver. The belly and thighs of bronze signify the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great from 333BC to 31BC. The two legs of iron indicate the Roman Empire from 31BC to 476AD. Finally, the ten toes, on two feet of iron mixed with ceramic clay, represent a future revival of the Roman Empire.

The dream revealed one last important detail. The four worldly kingdoms represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream will all come to an end. They will be replaced by what we can call a fifth Kingdom—the coming Kingdom of God.

"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. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (vv. 34–35).



Lion from Nebuchadnezzar's "Ishtar's Gate" (British Museum).

What is the stone that struck the image? Daniel described its meaning: "And in the days of these kings [symbolized by the ten toes] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (v. 44).

Yes, the Kingdom of God will come to this earth soon! Only God can bring us lasting peace.

#### Will We Repent?

Throughout the history of the world, it has been extremely rare to find any society that would turn from its evil ways. Ninevah, the capital city of ancient Assyria, along the Tigris River, was one of these fewand actually delayed God's judgment. The prophet Jonah came to the citizens of Ninevah with God's warning: "And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"" (Jonah 3:4). How did the Ninevites respond? Did they ignore God's prophet Jonah? No! "So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes" (vv. 5-6). Can you imagine any world leader today humbling himself in that way before God?

The Assyrians responded to Jonah's warning. They repented of their evil ways, and God spared them. This happened in the eighth century BC. God spared Ninevah for many years, and even used the nation to punish ancient Israel and bring its people into captivity. After Assyria captured the "Northern Kingdom"—Israel—that kingdom was lost to history and its peoples became known as the "lost ten tribes."

The prophet Isaiah records God's purpose in using Assyria to punish Israel. Isaiah quotes God as saying, "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation. I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Yet he does not mean so, nor does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off not a few nations" (Isaiah 10:5–7).

God had warned the Kingdom of Israel to repent, but its people refused to reform. So, the Assyrians conquered the ten-tribed House of Israel, and moved the captives far to the east in Assyria. Israel's final captivity took place around 721BC.

Eventually, however, Assyria returned to its carnal ways, and in 612BC God allowed the Medes to destroy Ninevah.

God had also sent His warnings to the Kingdom of Judah, but that nation also persisted in its sins. So, God used the kingdom of Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar to punish the House of Judah. A majority



Hunting relief from Palace of Ashurbanipal in Ninevah (British Museum).

of Jews were deported to Babylon over a period of two decades, ending with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586BC. As a young man, Daniel and three of his friends were taken captive and trained in the culture and literature of Babylon. Those young men persisted in the godly values they had been taught in Judah, and God was able to use Daniel to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream—and to give the good news of a coming great Kingdom that will stand forever!

Yes, the Kingdom of God will stand forever! You can count on it! That is the good news we strive to share with you in this magazine! Even if your nation does not heed God's word, you will be blessed individually if you believe and act on God's revealed truth! And that truth reveals the future of the nations descended from the "lost" ten tribes-including the U.S., Great Britain and the British-descended nations, and many of the peoples of northwest Europe. If you do not already have one, please write or call to request a free copy of our informative booklet, The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy. It reveals the biblical origins of our Western nations. Bible prophecy reveals what historians, world leaders and political analysts do not know! But you, as a faithful student of your Bible, can understand.

As regular readers of *Tomorrow's World* know, much of Bible prophecy is "dual"—there is an endtime fulfillment parallel to an ancient fulfillment. Indeed, prophecy shows that the end-time descendants of Assyria will once again punish the end-time descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. Will you be ready when this happens? Do you know the signs to watch for? Keep reading *Tomorrow's World* and studying your Bible, and you will learn how to understand world events in the light of Bible prophecy.

Whether or not the Western nations learn the lessons of history, and whatever our nation, you and I can repent individually—and we must. The day of God's judgment against humanity's failed ways is approaching fast. Those nations and individuals who turn to God will be blessed. What should you do? Do not wait for your nation to change. Now is the time for you to seek God with all your heart. <sup>Tw</sup>



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## 層London CALLING

## Waterloo and the Rise of an Empire



une 18, 2015 marks the bicentennial of the Battle of Waterloo, a battle that 200 years ago halted abruptly the second Hundred Years' War between Britain and France. As historian Jeremy Black asserts, "Waterloo was an iconic battle for the British, a triumph of endurance that ensured a nineteenth-century world in which Britain played the key role" (*Waterloo*, p. *xi*). Waterloo was a crucial victory—not only for British ascendancy, but also in fulfilling ancient promises recorded in Scripture. So, how did these promises impact the outcome of Waterloo and beckon the rise of the British Empire?

#### The Stage Is Set

In 1805, France's Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, initiated a volley of victories, trudging undefeated until he grasped nearly all of Western Europe. Even the Russian army capitulated; however, Napoleon and his troops failed to weather the brutality of the Russian winter and were driven back.

By 1814, allied forces had apprehended Napoleon, reinstated the French monarchy, and banished the disempowered Emperor to the small Mediterranean isle of Elba. The allied nations of Europe assumed Napoleon was *impuissant*, powerless, yet they underestimated his resolute ambition.

He escaped Elba, returning to Paris on March 20, 1815. Meanwhile, Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia rallied to form the Seventh Coalition. Its goal was to combat, not primarily the renewed threat of French military action, but rather, Napoleon's desires for world domination. Leading around 68,000 troops (*ibid.*, p. 93) was Arthur Wellesley, a future 1st Duke of Wellington. Joining him was the seasoned Count Gebhard von Blücher, a seventy-two year old field marshal who, in time, would bring some 30,000 Prussian troops to Waterloo (*History.com*, "Battle of Waterloo."). Napoleon, who was the unequivocal master of the attack, commanding 72,000 troops (Black, p. 97), marched north into Belgium bringing the fight to the Allies. He would clash sabres with Wellington, the definitive master of the defence.

#### **Stacking the Deck**

Apart from Napoleon's poor health, initially the odds seemed to be in his favour; however, the deck turned out to be stacked against him. First, word was sent to Wellington of a French buildup southwest of Charleroi. This news devastated Napoleon's hope for a surprise attack. Additionally, the defection to the Allies of General Count Louis Bourmont, who according to one source "revealed Napoleon's plans to Blücher's officers" (Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Vol. 11, p. 744), and according to another, did so "at 5 a.m. on 15 June, causing confusion" in the French camp, leveraged Allied preparedness (Black, p. 77).

Furthermore, an unseasonable, unremitting rainstorm impeded the Emperor's attack, saturating the ground. He delayed his planned 9:00 a.m. assault until 11:30 a.m., hoping to improve maneuverability of artillery. This delay, joined with miserable, muddy ground conditions, favoured the Allies.

French writer Victor Hugo (1802–85) asserted that, "If it had not rained in the night between the 17th and the 18th of June, 1815, the fate of Europe would have been different... All that Providence required in order to make Waterloo the end... was a little more rain, and a cloud traversing the sky out of season..." (*Les Miserables*, Vol. 2, Book First, Ch. 3, p. 525).

Lastly, the Prussians dramatically shifted the balance of the battle. Wellington had communicated to Blücher that he "would give battle on a ridge of Mont St. Jean (the Waterloo battlefield) if Blücher sent at least one corps to his assistance" (Black, p. 87). In response, Blücher vowed to deploy his entire army!

Wellington's defensive plan was to wait for the arrival of Blücher. He moved his men to the ridge's reverse slopes, a tactical stroke of genius, which saved his men from cannon fire as well as cavalry attack.

The French Marshal, Michel Ney, misread Wellington's troop movement as retreat, and at 4:00 p.m. launched the single greatest cavalry charge ever, hurling somewhere between 9,000 and 10,000 French horsemen toward unbroken squares of British infantry. It proved a futile endeavor, though, as the squares, while battered, remained unbroken.

The battles of Trafalgar in 1805, securing Britain's sea primacy, and Waterloo in 1815, solidifying its command on land, paved the way for the rise of an empire. Moreover, Blücher did not disappoint. As promised, his whole host arrived to the aid of Wellington (*ibid.*, pp. 113-14). The British and Prussian troops, many lying in wait behind the ridge of Mont St. Jean, rose up to form a three-mile line, and with repeated musket volleys levelled the

French army. The Allies, at last, had defeated Napoleon and achieved a hard-won victory!

#### From Victory to Prosperity

Before Waterloo, Britain had developed great agricultural wealth and was enjoying the foundation of its industrial revolution. After Waterloo, despite ongoing internal problems and challenges, Britain would revel in its meteoric ascent to international grandeur. It seized around "20 per cent of world trade" and "about half the trade in manufactured goods" (*Oxford Popular History of Britain*, p. 475). Change was in the air and a "reversal in the positions of Britain and France" took place due not only to the end of French hostilities at Waterloo, but Britain's "consistent industrial development and the take-over of important markets" as well (*ibid*.). Steadily growing over the next 100 years, Britain became the world superpower of its day.

#### **Promises to Abraham Kept**

Was Allied victory at Waterloo a result of the mere might of men?

Victor Hugo wrote, "It is the day of destiny. The force which is mightier than man produced that day" (*Les Miserables*, Vol. 2, Book First, Ch. 13, p. 577). Even Wellington is quoted after the battle saying, "The hand of Almighty God has been upon me this day." Daniel 2:21 reveals that God "removes kings and raises up kings." God had stacked the deck for British triumph at Waterloo!

Regular readers of this magazine recognise Ephraim was to become a company of nations, namely Great Britain and its Empire. God's promised birthright blessings originally made to Abraham, and passed down to Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, made this possible (Genesis 17:6; 26:3–5; 28:3–4; 1 Chronicles 5:1–2; Genesis 48:5, 17–19).

Assyria took ancient Israel captive in 721BC. At that time, God punished Israel, delaying receipt of the promised national blessings for seven prophetic times, or 2,520 years. By adding 2,520 years to 721BC we arrive at 1800AD (note that there is no year 0). The battles

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**Great Britain in Prophecy** 



of Trafalgar in 1805, securing Britain's sea primacy, and Waterloo in 1815, solidifying its command on land,

paved the way for the rise of an empire.

Britain's Waterloo victory, which rescued Europe from Napoleon's grip, turning the tide and altering its future forever, was orchestrated by God's mighty hand. It was a major catalyst in the ascent and expansion of the British Empire, and key in fulfilling God's long-agopromised blessings to Abraham.

Sadly, 200 years on, Britain's prosperity is waning due to individual and national sins. Tough times are on the horizon. Our fascinating booklet, *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*, will help you understand God's intervention in Britain's history, as well as what challenges are yet ahead.

—Adam West



## **Artificial Intelligence:** Promise or Peril?

Will science find a way to externalize and even surpass human intelligence through mechanical means, leading to ever-increasing prosperity and leisure? Or will scientific progress quickly lead to human doom?

#### By Wallace G. Smith

hen God made Adam and Eve, the first two human beings, He made them with great potential. Unlike all the other creatures of the world, only *humans* did He make in His own image (Genesis 1:26–27), gifting them with amazing talents, capabilities, intelligence and creativity.

Sadly, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden chose to rebel against their Creator. They chose to eat of the forbidden Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In doing so, they chose to decide for themselves what was right and what was wrong.

Ever since, each human being has followed in their footsteps, and the human experience has been just that: a mixture of right and wrong, good and evil. With seemingly every discovery or technological innovation, people have used their God-given intelligence to find ways to apply it for both good *and* evil—to help *and* to harm.

This paradox of human intelligence holds true even as mankind strives to understand intelligence itself. As human intelligence applies itself to the creation of artificial intelligence (often simply called "AI" for short), in one of the most advanced and ambitious fields of research human beings have ever pursued, what can we expect? Can we look forward to millennia of peace and prosperity under the care of benign and wise super-intelligent computers? Or will we continue the pattern of the last few thousand years, finding an evil use to match every good one? You may be surprised to learn that your Bible reveals the answer!

#### "Thinking" Machines

In the early and middle years of the 20th century, as mankind made strides in the brand new field of computer science, researchers began to wonder if they could create a machine with human-like intelligence—a mechanical brain to rival or even surpass biological brain-power.

Early work was promising, and computers were soon playing chess and checkers against human opponents. But the successes were short-lived, as scientists found that beyond simple pattern-matching as in a game of tic-tac-toe or chess, the mysteries of human intelligence and thinking were far too complicated to replicate directly in a computer program. The attempt to **duplicate** human intelligence—to make a computer emulate the unique human spirit that sets mankind apart from the animal world (Job 32:8)—has proved to be far more complex than was first imagined.

But there has been a renaissance in the realm of artificial intelligence in the 21st century, even as researchers have given up trying to model human intelligence and its approach to problem solving as a means of achieving artificial intelligence. Instead, they are harnessing the power of data processing and statistical probabilities. The result has been the creation of machines that not only take in vast amounts of data, but that also *learn* from the data, inferring connections among bits of information by finding patterns and relationships of cause and effect.

The consequence has been that, while machines do not yet replicate actual human thought processes, they can—in ways all their own—produce very "intelligent" results. This has led to such a wide range of technical and commercial advances that, if you live in the developed world, AI is probably not some abstract concept far distant from you. When you read your e-mail or use your car's navigation system or change the filter in your refrigerator—or in so many other ways—AI is probably *already* a part of your daily life!

#### Artificial Intelligence: Almost Inescapable

Consider that when you check your e-mail, your inbox is probably protected from the 70 percent of e-mail that is "spam"—junk mail we did not ask for by artificial intelligence programs that sort through incoming mail to take the junk out.

Unimaginable just a few years ago, if you own a

popular knowledge-based game show *Jeopardy*! in January 2011. The computer defeated two opponents who had distinguished themselves among the show's most expert human champions. Despite the wealth of human knowledge it was up against, Watson displayed an extraordinary ability to understand and answer questions posed in natural human language, beyond what most viewers had ever before seen in a computer.

Watson's creators, however, had loftier hopes for

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the technology. The AI that won a game show is now being used to improve successful patient diagnosis rates

in hospitals. *Forbes* magazine reported in 2013 that nurses who use Watson as a resource now take the AI program's advice 90 percent of the time.

And Watson is not alone in the field of life-saving artificial intelligence. Researchers at Stanford University have developed an AI system that within

### **ROBOTS** ARE NO LONGER RESERVED FOR SCIENCE FICTION MOVIES; THEY ARE IN THE HOME

 hours of a premature baby's birth can determine the child's risk of life-threatening complications. At the
University of Tokyo,

"smartphone" you probably have access to a weather app with a speech interface. Ask "What will the weather be like tomorrow?" and Apple's Siri or Microsoft's Cortana will give you an audible reply, such as "It doesn't look so good tomorrow. Down to 45°F and raining."

Robots are no longer reserved for science fiction movies; they are in the home. The American company iRobot has sold more than 10 million robots for personal use, including its popular "Roomba" which uses some very basic computerized algorithmic intelligence to vacuum your household floor.

If you have used a GPS to navigate in your car, purchased a book recommended to you by a vendor such as Amazon or Barnes & Noble, or watched a movie suggested to you by a Web site such as Netflix or Hulu, you have interacted with artificial intelligence!

#### **Saving Lives and Solving Murders**

Many television viewers were introduced to AI when an IBM computer named "Watson" competed on the researchers are developing AI systems to identify subtle clues in swimmers' body movements to warn lifeguards when even one swimmer in a large crowd is about to drown.

AI systems are even being used to solve murders. In the Netherlands, an artificial intelligence system called Bonaparte solved a 13-year-old murder case by sifting through DNA evidence and familial connections to identify the killer, who later confessed to the crime.

Indeed, we are increasingly surrounded by artificial intelligence systems, which are having a say in larger and larger parts of our lives, making decisions for us—and about us—behind the scenes.

#### **Can AI Be Controlled?**

The growing role of AI has many concerned. As Douglas Heaven asked in a *New Scientist* article: "The danger is that we give up asking questions. Could we get so used to choices being made for us **AI** CONTINUES ON PAGE 24

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

#### Must those with the Holy Spirit avoid alcoholic spirits?

**Question:** Does the Bible forbid or discourage Christians from drinking alcoholic beverages?

Answer: When Jesus performed His very first public miracle at Cana and "manifested His glory," did He merely make grape juice (John 2:11)? If the wedding at Cana was conducted according to Jewish custom, the guests were certainly drinking fermented wine at the wedding feast. When the guests ran out of wine in their time of rejoicing, Jesus helped them by turning water into what Scripture calls "wine." If Jesus had made grape juice for the guests, they never would have said to the bridegroom what is reported in Scripture: "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the quests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" (John 2:10).

The Greek word John used for wine is oinos, and it always means the fermented juice of the grape. The Bible lists 13 Hebrew and Greek words for "wine." By comparing usage, we can find the Scriptural meaning of wine. The word wine is first used in the Old Testament in Genesis 9:21. Noah "drank of the wine and was drunk." The Hebrew word used is yayin. This wine caused Noah to get drunk. Yayin always means fermented wine. God Himself gave wine to Abraham-the father of the faithful, "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine [yayin]; he was the priest of God Most High (Genesis 14:18). We should note that Melchizedek is the same Spirit being who was later born of the Holy Spirit and Mary to become Jesus, the Christthe God of the Old Testament. If you are not familiar with Melchizedek's identity, please write to the regional office nearest you (listed on page 4 of this magazine) to request, absolutely free, our reprint article, Who Was the God of the Old Testament?

The phrase "fruit of the vine" is only used three times in the Bible—Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25 and Luke 22:18—in reference to the Passover service Jesus instituted on the night before He died. Passover was held in the spring, long before the annual grape harvest, so any "fruit of the vine" consumed on that evening would have had to be fermented, as grape juice would long since have spoiled in the containers used for storage in Jesus' day. Some ludicrously claim that the item consumed was "molasses"—another way of preserving grapes without making wine. This does not make sense, if we remember that this

was a meal, and Jesus and His disciples would not have been drinking molasses with their meal.

The same Greek word oinos used in John 2:3-10 is also used in Ephesians 5:18: "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation." Grape juice does not cause "dissipation." Note also this description of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost: "Others mocking said, 'They are full of new wine [oinos]" (Acts 2:13): Furthermore: "It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine [oinos] nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak" (Romans 14:21). Paul wrote to Timothy: "A bishop then must be... not given to wine [oinos], not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quar-

relsome, not covetous" (1 Timothy 3:2–3). Were we to substitute "grape juice" into these contexts, the verses would make no sense.

When Paul explained to Timothy the medicinal value of wine, he wrote: "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23). Once again, the Greek word used is *oinos*—fermented wine, not grape juice. As you can see, while the Bible con-

demns drunkenness, Scripture also teaches that it is acceptable to drink alcohol in moderation.

## COMES ALIVE

## **Coming End-Time Conflicts**

any modern scholars conclude that "the only available guide" to political scientists is human logic and patterns of human behavior that can be discerned over time (The Improbable War, Christopher Coker, pp. 1-2). However, this secular academic approach overlooks a source that has and does predict the future in the dynamic field of international relations. The God of the Bible boldly claims that He alone can predict the future and bring it to pass (Isaiah 41:21-24; 46:8-11) and that "He removes kings and raises up kings" (Daniel 2:20-21; 4:35). Contrary to what modern scholars assert, the Bible has long foretold that specific nations will be involved in major end-time conflicts just before Jesus Christ returns to this earth—and those prophecies are coming alive today!

#### **Ancient Bible Prophecies**

When His disciples asked Jesus, "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" He told them to *watch* for a specific series of events that will include wide-spread religious deception, wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters and disease epidemics—the "Four Horsemen" of the Apocalypse—that He said would be the "beginning of sorrows"—*signposts* that the end of the age is near (Matthew 24:3-8; Revelation 6:1-8). The Scriptures state that "wars and rumors of wars" and other calamities will culminate in a great tribulation that will threaten the future existence of human civilization unless Jesus Christ returns to intervene and save mankind from utter destruction (Matthew 24:21-22).

Prophecies in the book of Daniel add more details to this end-time scenario. About 550BC, Daniel recorded, "At the time of the end" the king of the South will attack the king of the North, but the king of the North will retaliate and move his forces into the Middle East to occupy Jerusalem and overrun Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. The king of the North will then be disturbed by "news from the east and the north" (Daniel 11:40-45). Prophecies in Daniel 2 and 7 indicate this king of the North will have historical links to the ancient Roman Empire. Prophecies about two beasts in Revelation 13 reveal that the king of the North (the beast from the sea) will be motivated by Satan and aided by a prominent religious figure (the beast from the land) who will work miracles. Revelation 17 pictures this religious figure "riding" the beast-promoting and influencing the policies of the king of the North. Ten kings or nations will give their power to the king of the North for a short period to establish a trading network with the merchants of the earth, before eventually turning on the religious leader (Revelation 17:12-13, 16).

The king of the South mentioned in Daniel 11:40 appears to be an Arab-Muslim confederation that will arise at the end of the age (Psalm 83:1–8) to challenge the traditionally "Christian" powers of Western Europe that have dominated the Arab world for centuries. The news out of the east and north that disturbs the European king of the North appears to come from China and Russia. Prophecies in Daniel 11:44 and Revelation 9:1–12 indicate the king of the North will launch an attack toward nations in the east. Revelation 9:13–18 and 16:12 indicate that "the kings of the east" will then counterattack with a large army from east of the Euphrates River and move into the Middle East to face the king of the North. However, these combined armies will be confronted and defeated by the returning Jesus Christ (Revelation 17:14; 11:15). This is the detailed end-time scenario recorded in ancient Bible prophecies.

#### **Prophetic Trends in the Modern World**

Current events appear to be moving in the direction outlined in the Scriptures. Today, European nations are striving to form a joint defense force in the face of threats from Islamic extremists and growing numbers of unassimilated Moslem immigrants. Europe is also threatened by Russia's attempts to reclaim influence and control of territory in Eastern Europe. The rise of ISIS and its attempt to establish a caliphate by violence and brutality is bringing together fractious Arab-Moslem countries who are seeking to establish a united front against this rising power ("A Pan-Arab Military Remains Elusive," Stratfor, February 24, 2015). This reaction to ISIS could foster the appearance of the biblical king of the South.

In Europe, Germany is emerging as the economic and political leader of the troubled European Union (German Europe, Ulrich Beck). Calls are also being heard for Germany to play a bigger military role to counter Russia's aggressive moves (see "Bring back the Panzers to bolster NATO," The Times, February 20, 2015). Gathered around Germany, representatives of ten European nations have formed a Berlin Club to discuss



("ISIS")

President of Ukraine



As for the "kings of the east," recent decades have witnessed the rise of China-a nation with memories of centuries of humiliation and exploitation at the

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hands of the West and a strong desire to take its rightful place on the world stage as the leading nation

in Asia (see "Is This China's Century?," Tomorrow's World, September-October 2013). The fact that China and Russia have conducted joint military maneuvers and Chinese military leaders have stated that it is "absolutely necessary that we quietly nurse our sense of vengeance... We must conceal our abilities and bide our time," indicates the kings of the East will be ready when the time comes to fulfill ancient biblical prophecies (Bernstein and Monro, The Coming Conflict with China, p. 3).

Surprisingly absent from this end-time prophetic scenario is the current global superpower-the United States—along with its long-time ally Great Britain. However, Bible prophecies reveal that Israelitedescended nations will be in deep trouble in the last days because they have turned away from God (Deuteronomy 32:29; Jeremiah 3:21; 30:7). Numerous prophecies indicate their allies will turn against them (Jeremiah 30:14; Ezekiel 16:37; 23:4-10) and their downfall will come suddenly (Isaiah 9:14; 29:5; 30:13). Another terrorist attack in the U.S. or a coming clash in the Western Pacific with China (which sees America's satellites and Internet coordination of its battle groups as its Achilles' heel; see Asia's Cauldron, p. 26) could hasten that demise and lead to the fulfillment of ancient Bible prophecies that have long predicted these coming end-time conflicts. As these prophetic events come together, we need to prepare for Christ's return! —Douglas S. Winnail that we stop noticing? The stakes are higher now that intelligent machines are beginning to make inscrutable decisions about mortgage applications, medical diagnoses and even whether you are guilty of a crime" ("Not like us: Artificial minds we can't understand," August 2013).

Researchers are increasingly asking these questions based on the realization that modern artificial intelligence, unlike *human* intelligence, relies on the processing and comparison of vast amounts of data in volumes no human being could ever absorb. So, if an AI were to misidentify an innocent person as the perpetrator of a crime, would human beings even begin to have the capacity to find the flaw in its artificial "reasoning"? In a world where artificial intelligence is being used to make more and more complex decisions, this is an important question. Indeed, it is becoming a matter of life and death—potentially on a worldwide scale.

For instance, artificial intelligence is increasingly

Defense Force has argued, "If the goal of international humanitarian law is to reduce noncombatant suffering in wartime, then using sharpshooting robots would be more than appropriate, it would be a moral imperative... Battlefield robots might yet be a great advance for international humanitarian law" (Erik Schechter, *Wall Street Journal*, July 10, 2014).

And, as *The Economist* suggested, "Given the propensity for human error in such circumstances, mechanised grunts might make such calls better than flesh-and-blood officers. The day of the people's—or, rather, the robots'—army, then, may soon be at hand" ("No command, and control," November 25, 2010).

#### An "AI Apocalypse"?

Still others see more concern than promise. The international organization "Campaign to Stop Killer Robots"—which would have sounded comical and ludicrous only a few years ago—has focused since early 2013 on attempting to ban "lethal autonomous weap-

### "THE DEVELOPMENT OF FULL ARTIFICIAL Intelligence could spell the end of the Human Race." —Stephen Hawking

ons systems" before they come into broad acceptance and use. As the organization declares on its Web site, "Giving machines the power to decide who lives and dies on the battlefield is an unacceptable application of technology. Human control of

being considered a necessary ingredient on the battlefields of war. Many naval warships already carry Phalanx CIWS (Close-In Weapon Systems) that both identify and *engage* threatening targets—such as enemy drones or missiles—automatically, based on artificial intelligence programing. Similarly, unmanned planes are being programmed with autonomous decision-making ability, increasingly removed from the involvement of a human controller.

Some believe self-controlled, artificially intelligent robotic weapons systems—programmed to kill enemy combatants automatically without first seeking permission from a human being—will actually save lives, removing human soldiers from the frontlines of battle and operating with greater-than-human accuracy. As one former member of the Israeli any combat robot is essential to ensuring both humanitarian protection and effective legal control."

Even famed physicist Stephen Hawking has weighed in on the debate. In December 2014, he told a British Broadcasting Corporation interviewer, "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race. It would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever-increasing rate... Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete, and would be superseded" (December 2, 2014).

Oxford University's Global Challenges Foundation considered the threat serious enough that artificial intelligence received mention in its February 2015 headline-making report, *12 Risks that Threaten Human Civilisation*. The Foundation noted that the rise

_	1972	1974	1975	1976	1978	1979	1981	1982	1983	1985	1989	1991	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997

of "super-intelligent" AI systems could cause economic or civilizational collapse and even bring about the extinction of humanity.

So, will the human race descend into a nightmare scenario where our species is eradicated and replaced by super-intelligent, mechanical creations of our own design? Are we doomed to face destruction at the hands of robot overlords?

#### **Prophesied Destruction**

The short answer, according to Scripture, is: "No!"there will be no "artificial intelligence apocalypse." But do not misunderstand. When it comes to ending the world, run-of-the-mill human intelligence is more than sufficient! Bible prophecy explains that the human race will bring itself to the very brink of self-destruction.

As Jesus Christ made very plain in His prophetic teachings about our future: "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved" (Matthew 24:21-22). In other words, mankind will grow so violent in action, selfish in purpose, and deluded in vanity that we will come to the very edge of complete and utter cosmocide-the literal destruction of all life on earth! Only the coming of Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords will prevent mankind's cosmic suicide!

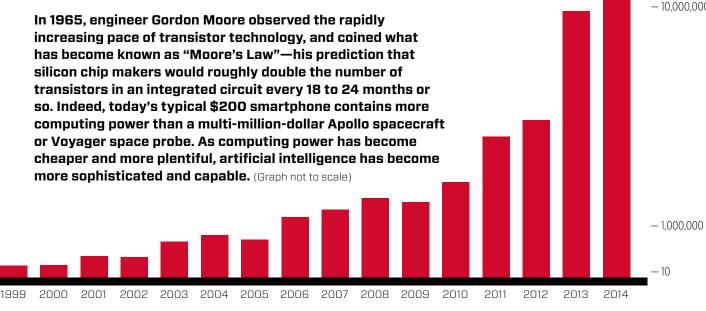
No, the Bible does not predict a war of man-versus-machine-the sort of "science fiction" conflict popularized by movies such as the Terminator or *Matrix* series. Rather, mankind will seek to tear *itself* apart, as world powers violently seek dominance over each other and independence from their own Creator who "unjustly" demands of them a way of life of love, forgiveness and outflowing concern for others.

Interestingly, however, Scripture does describe in prophetic language the terrible and devastating weapons human beings will release upon each other. It is easy to picture some of the artificially intelligent war machines being developed today as being among those terrible tools unleashed in the future. Note, for instance, the Apostle John's description of an army from the east comprising 200 million, including mysterious "horses" and "horsemen" of fantastic description, spewing "fire, smoke, and brimstone" (Revelation 9:15-18). Earlier in the chapter, something akin to "locusts... like horses prepared for battle" are mentioned, with iron breastplates and loud wings that sounded like many chariots to the ears of the Apostle

#### TRANSISTOR DENSITY

(PER MM<sup>2</sup>)

- 20,000,000 -10,000,000



ΑI

John as he witnessed the vision (vv. 7–9).

John wrote of what he saw in vision, without the language or first-century reference to describe the technology he was seeing 20 centuries yet ahead of him. His dramatic descriptions, detailing the tools of death and destruction warring armies will unleash upon each other, easily call to mind the powerful, artificially intelligent killing systems that mankind is developing as we near the end of this age.

No, we cannot place AI precisely on the end-time battlefields via John's colorful symbols and imagery. But one truth of history is hard to ignore: Whenever human beings have developed weapons, it has only been a matter of time before they have *used* them. Although human beings were designed with astonishing intelligence and creativity, akin to their Creator's, they have not developed

their Creator's wisdom or love. Rather, they chose to forge their own path. Choosing the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil meant determining for *themselves* what is wrong and what is right, apart from the guidance of a merciful and loving God.

Consequently, while mankind has applied its intelligence throughout the generations to develop technologically at an increasingly rapid rate, the moral capacity to properly and ethically *apply* what we have learned and discovered has not kept pace at all. Growing in knowledge and ability has not only meant growing in capacity to achieve good ends, but also in capacity to achieve evil ends.

#### **Rescued by Divine Intelligence**

Thousands of years ago, God saw mankind working together, all with one language, defying His com-

mand to scatter and populate the whole earth. Seeing them at work, God said of the rebellious human race, "Indeed the people

are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them" (Genesis 11:6). God

foresaw that human intelligence, left unchecked, would find **nothing** beyond its grasp—even to the point of its own self-destruction. Those who doubt that mankind could create AI so effective as to destroy life from our planet should find no comfort in God's pronouncement.

By confusing the languages of mankind, God delayed the inevitable day when human inventiveness and creativity would reach such a point that the human race could extinguish itself and "all flesh" from

the face of the earth. Yet, thankfully, God tells us very clearly that a day is coming-after the unprecedented hard times of the Great Tribulation and after the return of Jesus Christ as King of kingswhen human intelligence, unfettered by Satan and a sin-sick society, will be used in the way God intended. In a world that is "full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9), human beings will thrive under the guidance of the One who designed them, cares for them, and has planned for them a remarkable future. When that day comes, and human intelligence can be combined not with the artificial intelligence of machines but with the divine intelligence of God Himself, we can only begin to imagine what will be accomplished. God speed that day!

MAY WE SUGGEST? **The World Ahead: What Will It Be Like?** A time is soon coming when divine intelligence will guide the entire earth! 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.



### **POSITIVELY**!

#### Are you a pessimist, or a realist? Or should you simply stop worrying?

S can the news headlines or talk to your friends and neighbors, and there is little doubt that the world is filled with troubles. How can we be positive in such a negative environment? Can we find reasons to be optimistic when modern life is filled with so many troubles?

The news headlines are about international conflicts, wars, earthquakes, fires, failing debt-ridden economies, drug and gang violence, crime, murders, rapes, disease, starvation, poverty and moral decline. People struggle with bad finances, unemployment, health difficulties and family problems. These situations can put us into a negative and pessimistic frame of mind.

Researchers have found that being positive and optimistic can lower a person's risk for having a stroke. Other studies show that being positive is a secret to aging successfully, is effective treatment for those suffering depression and helps us cope with failures.

Many of us have heard admonitions from parents, teachers and coaches encouraging us to have a

#### *Excessive worrying is denying the power of Christ*

positive attitude. One well-known motivational speaker and author of success books said, "Positive thinking will let you do everything better than negative thinking will." Winston Churchill said, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

But how can we maintain a positive attitude when there is so much that is negative?

God's Word offers good advice. One step we can take is to quit holding on to the past. The Apostle Paul said, "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13–14). Forgetting the past and working toward positive goals are two important principles for positive thinking. Practicing these will not leave us much time for being negative.

Another principle is found in Matthew 6. Worrying is negative thinking, and it accomplishes nothing, so Christ gave us this perspective: "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on.... Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about



clothing?... Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven,

will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:25–34).

With such clear instructions, it might be said that excessive worrying is denying the power of Christ to uphold, which is of course sin (Matthew 10:33). On the other hand, researchers have found that those who believe in God worry less. So, believe in God and stop worrying!

Similar advice is found in Philippians 4:6–8: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things." Being thankful and praying to the Almighty God, and believing in His promises, will help you stay positive. —*Roger Meyer* 

## The Church and You(th)

or most young people today, church and religion has little importance in daily life. Compared to school, social media, popular entertainment, sports and other diversions, church is neither attractive nor relevant.

A Pew Research Center study, *Religion Among the Millennials*, found the following about young adults (age 30 and under):

- One in four describe their religion as "atheist," "agnostic" or "nothing in particular."
- One in five say they were raised in a religion but are now unaffiliated with any particular faith.
- Just 64 percent say they are certain of God's existence.
- Fewer than half—45 percent—say religion is very important in their lives.
- Fewer than half—48 percent—say they pray every day.
- Of those affiliated with a church, nearly three in four—74 percent—say there is more than one true way to interpret the teachings of their faith.
- Fewer than one in five—18 percent—say they attend religious services weekly.

Many assume this is a new phenomenon, unique to Generation X, Generation Y and the Millennials. Yet, this trend has in some form been observed for decades,

and efforts to stem the flow of young people leaving the churches date back more than 70 years, ever since organizations like "Young Life" and "Youth for Christ" tried to reach teens (and please their parents) with activity-oriented programs, often with food and live music. Today, the trend encompasses visual media, sound and lighting designed to rival pop-culture levels of stimulation—and it is being used to grab the attention even of older adults!

#### What To Do?

TODAY

Yet young people are still leaving the church. Why? Could it be that they are looking for the wrong things? Is there a different way to approach the problem—one that can help young people find relevance and meaning without the gimmicks designed to trick them into thinking their church is a video game or a concert?

One major difference between biblical worship and modern trends involves the role of the family. For generations, children have been sent off to "Sabbath School" or "Sunday School" while their parents went to the "real" worship service. Yet your Bible describes God's people worshiping together as families. In 2 Chronicles 20:13, we read "Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD." In Joel 2:16, we read "Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes." God commanded the Israelites to gather as families to enjoy His Feast days in Deuteronomy 12:18. And in Exodus 12:26-27, God commanded parents to explain the meaning of the Passover to the younger generation. In the next chapter, children were to learn from their parents

about the meaning of the Days of Unleavened Bread, in conjunction with assembling together with other families on these High Holy Days.

What a wonderful message for a young person! The church does not need to pander to you, or to talk down to you. You are valuable as a member of your family, right now! You are an integral part of God's plan, with a role to fill. Remember. "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39).

#### **Be Prepared to Learn**

At church it is the speaker's responsibility to hold your attention, but it is also your responsibility to pay attention. If you crave wisdom and understanding, you should be eager to learn what you can—even when the speaker is not the most exciting. In Proverbs 2:1, God urges a young person to crave wisdom and understanding. "Receive my words, and treasure my commands," He says.

Messages given in church are not just meant for the "older crowd." If you are old enough to read and understand this column, you are old enough to understand what is being taught at church. Listen and think about what is being said. Fellowship is one important part of coming together with fellow believers, but if you are busy sending text messages and checking your iPhone for Snapchat activity, it may say less about the speaker's skill than about your short attention span. Scripture does not tell us that the temple elders were super-exciting when Jesus came to learn from them, yet



He amazed them by His curiosity and intense desire to learn (Luke 2:46). So, be smart. Focus. Listen. Learn. Be curious. And ask questions. Going to church gives you a unique opportunity to learn and grow.

#### **The Value of Church Activities**

Church activities serve a purpose, but it may not be what you think. Remember Jesus' example as a servant. No activity is so "boring" that you cannot use it as an opportunity to get to know other people, and help



to meet their needs. Maybe you can serve in the kitchen, or help with the cleanup. If an activity is not "good

enough" for you, talk to the organizers and find out how you can serve to help make it better—for you and for others in the group!

This approach will also help you build strong bonds of friendship and camaraderie with others who share your Christian values—an important factor when you face challenges from the world around you. As you grow more involved with others, you mean something to them, and they mean something to you. You miss each other when you are not there.

#### **Catch the Vision**

It is easy enough to see that, for many young people today, church is not attractive. Above all, the average neighborhood church does not provide real answers to the toughest questions: Why were you born? What is your destiny? Is it something hazy and even boring, or is it filled with awe-inspiring joy and meaning? Most churches today give only shallow, superficial answers, not even drawn from Scripture. To a young person with Internet access, even the simplest search can prove that so many of the traditions of modern Christianity— Christmas, Easter, Sunday services, and more—are just that: traditions of men.

But you have access to something more. You are in touch with the true Church of God—a body of believers with a mandate to fulfill Christ's commission, and with real answers that will explain your future and give meaning to your present. Armed with this truth, and using the principles outlined above, the Church can be more relevant than ever to you(th).

—Jonathan McNair

I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues" (v. 4).

The rulers over this massive military-industrial complex—guided by their **religious leaders**—will become so arrogant that they will literally fight against Jesus Christ when He returns as King of kings. "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb



will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen,

and faithful.' Then he said to me, 'The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multi-tudes, nations, and tongues'" (Revelation 17:14–15).

The false church or "harlot" described in verse 15 sits in **religious power** over multitudes of nations and tongues! Remember, this system is called "a dwelling place of **demons**, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!" (Revelation 18:2).

When you contemplate the soon-coming **reality** of all this, it is **absolutely astonishing**. For the misused power of religion is so enormous that *hundreds of millions* of human beings will be deceived into following a religious force—a "woman" who rides on this coming Beast, symbolic of her controlling role (Revelation 17:3–7). She will cause it to **fight** Jesus Christ Himself as He returns to rule the world (Revelation 17:14)!

As many of you long-time subscribers to *Tomorrow's World* magazine already understand, these signs are completely provable from the clear verses in the Bible. However, for those of you who may be "newer" to this magazine and wish to *understand* and **prove** these vital truths, please call us or write us immediately to request your **free** copies of our eye-opening booklets on this very topic: *The Beast of Revelation* and *The Middle East in Prophecy*. For *your own good*, please read and **study** along with your own Bible the powerful information in these booklets!

#### The Final "Religious War"

Scripture reveals that, after the enormous disruptions and traumas caused by the "King of the South," and that entity's ultimate defeat by the "King of the North," a **final war** will take place such as the world has never seen. As the European-led armies of the Beast mass to do battle against 200 million soldiers coming from the East, Almighty God will intervene to **stop** the coming *cosmocide* that would otherwise take place. Yes, Christ Himself will return—intervening to prevent the *utter destruction* of all humanity! He will bring the nations of the earth down to the "Valley of Jehoshaphat" (Joel 3:12). There, with His total power, He will bring about the climax of the prophesied "Day of the Lord" in the valley of decision (v. 14). The "stars will diminish their brightness" (v. 15) "The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will **shake;** but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (v. 16).

As an enormous earthquake literally **shakes** the entire earth, Christ will return in total power to set up His Kingdom, His Government on this earth: "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). For Christ will not only return as *King of kings* but as "Lord of lords." He will return as High Priest of the one **true religion**: "'He will **teach** *us His ways*, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:1–2). Then, "all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever" (v. 5).

Furthermore: "Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' for *out of Zion shall go forth the* **law**, and the **word** *of the LORD* from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and



rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:3–4).

Unlike our present day, in which religious militants seek to kill and maim in the name of Islam and other religions, the Kingdom of God on this earth will usher in a time when human beings will **not even learn** about warring and killing and destroying each other anymore. They will be taught the **way of God**.

Yes, religion is indeed a powerful force. In the end, **true religion** will bring about a joyous utopia of love, joy and **peace** which has never been experienced in

world's history-and it will be the ultimate force for

good in the age to come! So do not underestimate the

power of religion. This all has to do with your real fu-

ture that has already begun to occur in these battles be-

tween the Europeans, the Arab nations and finally will

As the awesome events I have been describing begin to

lutely vital that you learn and practice the true religion

taught throughout the pages of your Bible! For Satan

the Devil is pictured as deceiving all the nations of this

world (Revelation 12:9). Jesus Christ taught again and

Christ even said that those who teach and practice the "least" of the commandments will be very blessed

again that the way of God involves Spirit-filled Chris-

for doing so. Sadly, today, even most who call them-

tians using the indwelling Spirit to enable them to

"keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17).

take place *all around us*, please understand that if you want to escape the terrible turmoil ahead, it is abso-

affect all the nations on the entire face of this earth.

the history of this world! So never let **anyone** tell you that religion is not important anymore. It is going to be **the** important force as a motivator for the final events of this

**True Religion and You!** 

### IN THE END, TRUE RELIGION WILL BRING A UTOPIA OF LOVE, JOY AND PEACE THAT HAS NEVER BEEN EXPERIENCED IN THE HISTORY OF THIS WORLD!

His apostles throughout the New Testament is truly powerful—and it definitely involves commandment-keeping, made possible by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Please **do not** let smooth-sounding preachers deceive

you into believing otherwise. Please keep *reading* and *studying* this magazine and the powerful booklets we send *absolutely free* to help you understand the way of God and to prepare you to be those "kings and priests" who will assist Christ in **ruling** over this world—**not** up in heaven—in the coming Kingdom or Government of God (Revelation 5:9–10).

selves Christ's followers have conjured up all kinds

God's commandments to be a true Christian! But you

know better! As you can read for yourself in the Bible,

the true faith of Christ is pictured again and again as

being based upon the way of God-the Way in which

everyone keeps the Ten Commandments as a way of

life-bringing peace to all who keep them. As God's

Word says in Revelation 14:12: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who **keep the command**-

Yes, the true religion described by Christ and

ments of God and the faith of Jesus."

of arguments saying that you do not have to keep

No doubt some of you reading this have friends who have chosen their church, maybe even their whole religion, based on how "easy" it is to drive or walk to worship services, or on who has the most active youth program, or the best choir director, or the "nicest" people. But you, as a sincere and zealous student of the Bible, should know better! You should prove for yourself who is teaching the full truth of the Bible! May God help you to check these things out and "**prove** all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21, *KJV*). May God help **you** to realize how important the **power** of true religion is, and how it will soon turn this *entire world*—and your own personal life, if you let it—"right side up"!

MAY WE Suggest? **Satan's Counterfeit Christianity** Has God opened your eyes to distinguish between true religion and counterfeit? Request a **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at **TomorrowsWorld.org**. PDF, ePub and Kindle are also available.



#### Can a surplus of gasoline hurt as much as a shortage?

ave you found it a lot less painful—maybe even enjoyable—to put gas in your car with the price of petroleum at recent lows—the same fuel once touted as very limited and likely to run out in a few short years?

Now we have so much gas that trucks are out-selling cars in America by the widest margin since 2005. Surging supplies and declining demand in Asia and Europe, coupled with a stronger dollar, have brought the price of crude oil well below \$50 a barrel—a 48 percent drop since 2014. Some experts predict if the price falls to \$39 a barrel it will likely fall subsequently to \$30. This dramatic drop in price has oil giant BP (British Petroleum) announcing job cuts at the company's North Sea operation this week.

Even as the regular guy or gal who drives a car to and from work is enjoying the lower cost of gas at the pump, plummeting gas prices have real potential to cause havoc reaching global proportions. According to Bloomberg and Citigroup Inc., cheaper fuel "could aggravate political tension by squeezing government revenue and social benefits, Citigroup Inc. analysts said in a Jan. 5 report" ("How \$50 Oil Changes Almost Everything," *Bloomberg.com*, January 7, 2015).

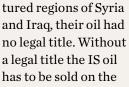
The Russian economy, if current trends prevail, will shrink by 5 percent if 2015 oil prices average \$60 a barrel. Half of Russia's state revenues come from energy exports. Further plunge will see the selloff of the Russian ruble, which already fell some 46 percent last year. This is the ruble's worst performance since 1998, when Russia defaulted on local debt. As the ruble collapses, the Central Bank of the Russian Federation has wasted no time imposing an economy-choking interest rate hike to 17 percent, which has consequently sparked big increases in consumer prices. Such a blow to its economy, if left unchecked, could cause Russia to take on the characteristics of a wounded bear.

Current President Hassan Rouhani of Iran was elected on his promise of national prosperity. This promise, however, was based on \$72-a-barrel crude—not the current \$46.25-a-barrel the market closed at on Thursday, January 15, 2015.

Falling oil prices through 2014 caused a contraction of Venezuela's economy, generating concerns the government could default on its foreign bonds. President Nicolas Maduro told his government to slash the budget even further, which will only add to current social unrest as government programs dry up and disappear. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is effectively blocking the cries of poorer members of the OPEC oil exporters to cut production and stop the free fall in global prices.

The Islamic State, without cash reserves, is likely to become hurt worse economically and militarily than established oil-reliant countries. This translates to a likely change in the focus and nature of IS's terrorist operations. Islamic State will likely turn to other long-used cash-generating methods such as extortion and organized crime to make ends meet. It is interesting to note that because its oil came from cap-

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black market at severely discounted prices.

There are likely to be further and broader negative effects if the collapse in the price of crude oil continues as predicted. The negative effects will come in the form of rising social tension and unrest, say experts, especially in countries where oil keeps economies afloat.

The good news is that the ordinary Joe driving to and from work each day is enjoying a market that is oversupplied by a million barrels of oil a day. The Bank of America estimates oil prices will fall an additional 30 percent to an unbelievable \$35 per barrel, with option trades predicting the bottom to hit somewhere around \$20.

Keep reading *Tomorrow's World* to learn more not only about global trends in religion, politics, science and health, but also about how those trends are working together to shape the fulfillment of end-time prophecies that will affect you and your loved ones. —*Richard Franz* 

### LETTERS TO TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your informative magazines. Learning of the Feasts and the true Sabbath has changed my life. God bless you all and keep this true good news coming.

C.B., Everett, WA

I wrote your ministry to request of you a copy of anything that your ministry had on the secret rapture doctrine so very popular throughout contemporary Christendom. In response to my letter you sent back to me a published article by John H. Ogwyn entitled, "The Secret Rapture-False Hope For End-Time Christians!" And what a wonderful article it is!-This note is to thank you wholeheartedly for both your gracious spirit and timely gift of biblical insight that you sent to me at but cost to yourself. I love you people! And I thank God for you too. J.C., Toledo, OH

I have enjoyed the booklets and magazines you have sent me. Also I would like to commend you for the work you've done in getting God's Word out to people. Tomorrow's World magazine has helped me understand the Bible much more clearly. Thank you for the many scriptural truths being taught and may God continue to bless your ministry.

D.S., Welland, ON, Canada

I wish to thank you all for all the letters and magazines. I read all many times and keep them all so I can read them again months and years later.

H.K., Cote Saint-Luc, QC, Canada

Just a note of thanks to let you know that studying the Bible with you has strengthened my faith even more in the apostolic doctrine.

E.T., York, ON, Canada

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I would like to request that you please send me the Tomorrow's World magazine. My mother was a member and I know that Living Church of God is the only church she trusted, as I do. I would be grateful to continue a relationship. Thank you.

S.C., Moriarty, NM

I just finished reading for the third or fourth time the booklet Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ's Return. It is so true. I have learned so much from your magazine. I've often wondered if we die and go to heaven or the other place, what's the point in the resurrection. My! How we have been misguided. Again, thank you so much for revealing the truth.

L.T., Jerseyville, IL

The articles, stories and ideas you bring up in your magazine astound me! There are many, many interesting points that are brought up that force me to go to the Bible and learn more and for that I have to thank you! Your article on "The Enigmatic Human Brain," I thoroughly enjoyed and I am excited to see what there is in store for us readers in the future.

A.S., Armena, AB, Canada

I have been following this ministry for a year now, and I thank God for your free literature. I have been in a "false" religion, thinking I was doing what the Father of Abraham wanted me to do. These false doctrines. holidays and man-made rituals made me unaware of the Bible's true message! It is only after I began to read your literature that I began to "open" my eyes. I continue to pray for God's Truth. Your invaluable article entitled: "Will God Bless You and Your Finances?" was truly an eye-opener! Bless you all!

T.H., Baltimore, MD

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AUSTRAL					NEW ZEA	LAI	ND				UK & NV	/ E	UROPE		
Nationwide 7Two		U 7:0	0 a.m.	Nationwide Prime TV					SU 8:30 a.m.	CBS Action		Freeviev		SU 8:30 a.m.	
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	ormonius (nin	SU 4:00 a.m.		Fairbanks	KATN		00 a.m.		Chicago	WGN	SA 1:30 a.m.		Minneapolis	MCN	SU 8:30 a.n
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		TU 4:30 a.m.		Montgomery	WBMM	SU 7:	00 a.m.		Quincy	WGEM	SU 7:00 a.m.		Rochester	KTTC	SU 7:00 a.m
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		WE 7:00 p.m.		Chico	KHSL		00 a.m.	KY	Bowling Gre	en WBKO	SU 7:00 a.m.		Springfield	KRBK	SU 7:30 a.n
		TH 9:00 a.m.		Eureka	KUVU-LP	SU 8:	00 a.m.		Latonia	PEG	WE 5:30 p.m.	MS	Biloxi	WBGP	SU 7:00 a.n
CW Plus	1	SU 8:00 a.m.		Eureka	Sudden Link		00 p.m.		Latonia	PEG	TH 12:00 a.m.		Columbus	WCBI	SU 7:00 a.n
		MO 2:00 a.m.		Garden Grove			30 a.m.		Lexington	Insight	Various*		Greenwood	WBWO	SU 7:00 a.n
IL ID I CT	-			Garden Grove			30 p.m.	LA	Alexandria	KBCA	SU 7:00 a.m.		Hattiesburg	WBH	SU 7:00 a.n
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Angelone	CII. 202	WE 7:00 p.m.		New Haven	Tele-Media WZME		30 p.m. 00 p.m.		North Adam		WE 8:00 p.m.	NC			
								MD	Baltimore	Community	SU 9:00 a.m.	INC	Charlotte Greenville	WAXN WNCT	SU 7:00 a.n SU 8:00 a.n
Impact	Ch. 9397	TH 9:00 a.m. SU 11:00 p.m.	DC	Washington	WACW	SU 6:	30 a.m.		Westminste		TH 10:00 a.m.		Hickory	WHKY	M0 7:30 p.n
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	Binghamton	Time Warner	M0 10:00 p.m.		La Follette	Comcast-WLAF			
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	Brookhaven	Cablevision	SU 11:00 p.m.		Amarillo	KVIH	SU 7:00 a.m.		
	Brooklyn	BCAT	SU 7:30 p.m.		Austin	KNVA	SU 6:30 a.m.		
	Canandaigua	Finger Lakes	SU 11:30 a.m.		Beaumont	KBTV	SU 6:30 a.m.		
	Elmira	WENY	SU 8:00 a.m.		Beaumont	KFDM	SU 7:00 a.m.		
	Glenn Falls	Time Warner	FR 8:00 p.m.		Bryan	KYLE	SU 7:00 a.m.		
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	Oneida	Access	TH 7:00 p.m.		Laredo	KGNS	SU 7:00 a.m.		
	Queens	Public Access	M0 11:00 p.m.		Lubbock	KLCW	SU 7:00 a.m.		
	Queens	Public Access	TU 4:30 p.m.		Lufkin	KTRE	SU 6:30 a.m.		
	Riverhead	Cablevision	SA 10:30 p.m.		McAllen	KSFE-LP	SU 7:00 a.m.		
	Rochester	Finger Lakes	SU 11:30 a.m.		Midland	KWWT	SU 7:00 a.m.		
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					Vancouver	Community	SU 8:30 a.m.		
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	Bethlehem	SETV2	FR 4:30 p.m.		Vancouver	Community	WE 12:00 p.m.		
	Erie	WBEP	SU 8:00 a.m.						
	Johnstown	Atl. Broadband		WI	La Crosse	WQOW	SU 7:00 a.m.		
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SC	Charleston	WCBD	SU 8:00 a.m.	WV	Bluefield	WVVA	SU 8:00 a.m.		
	Myrtle Beach	WWMB	SU 8:00 a.m.		Clarksburg	WVFX	SU 8:00 a.m.		
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	Jackson	WBJK	SU 7:00 a.m.	*Check local listings for additional airtimes					
	Knoxville	WBXX	SU 7:30 a.m.	. throughout the week					
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