

Worshipping Death

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TOMORROW'S WORLD

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The Mark of the Beast

A C L E V E R C O U N T E R F E I T

Where Have All the Workers Gone?

The *Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* was a sitcom that ran on American television from 1959–1963. Its three main characters were Dobie, Zelda Gilroy, and Maynard G. Krebs. The latter was a counterculture beatnik who disdained work of any kind. Whenever the word came up in conversation, Krebs recoiled and yelped, “Work!”

Beatniks and Dobie Gillis are mercifully unknown to most people today. But Krebs’ attitude toward work has gradually taken hold—for reasons other than the sitcom—and has intensified in recent years. Although the causes vary, worker shortages are acute in the United States, Canada, China, Germany, and elsewhere.

The problem is complex, having many facets. There is the issue of aging populations. There is the issue of changing technologies that require different competencies. We see this in military forces, where brawn was once the primary—if not the only—attribute required of a soldier. Not anymore. Soldiers today must learn how to work with sophisticated equipment.

Another problem causing worker shortages, obscured by “unemployment rates,” is the number who have dropped out of the workforce. Economist Chuck Vollmer observed that Americans soon “will figure out that it is theoretically possible for the United States to have a zero rate of unemployment by simply having the unemployed quit looking for work. To be classified as unemployed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, one must be looking for work.” Vollmer notes that between 2000 and 2015, 11.6 million people entered the labor force while 26 million voluntarily dropped out—some to welfare, some to illegal ways of making a living, and some to sponging off their families (“Since Year 2000 26 Million Able-Bodied Americans Voluntarily Dropped Out of the U.S. Labor Force,” *LinkedIn.com*, December 1, 2015).

According to the Brookings Institution, “The share of prime-age men who are working or looking for work has been falling for half a century” (“Men

not at work: Why so many men aged 25 to 54 are not working,” *Brookings.edu*, August 15, 2016). This report was published in 2016, long before COVID-19, and the situation has become more acute since then for a variety of COVID-related reasons. We can hardly blame Maynard G. Krebs for all the able-bodied men who have voluntarily dropped out of the workforce, but too many who have never heard of him have chosen his attitude toward work.

According to *Brookings.edu*, “around 7 million American men between the ages of 25 and 54—mostly too old to be in school and too young to

retire—are neither working nor looking for work. That amounts to 12% of all men in those prime working ages—and that doesn’t count another 2 million who are looking for work but haven’t found it.” This same source explains that a large proportion of those not looking for work are from low-income backgrounds and are poorly educated. Too many have given up looking due to a lack of qualifications to offer an employer.

But this is far from being an exclusively American problem. Canada, Australia, Britain, and Germany have similar worker shortages. In France, riots are spawned over attempts by the government to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 to alleviate the government’s burden of pensions. Even in China, attitudes are changing. This June 2022 *NPR* headline sums it up: “Hard work is a point of pride in China. But a culture of slacking off is now in vogue.”



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Designed to Work

Belief in the theory of evolution has deceived mankind into thinking there is no existential purpose for humanity—and has left us adrift in virtually every realm of life. But we are not a product of blind chance. God created us with a purpose. He created us to be

Belief in the theory of evolution has deceived mankind into thinking there is no existential purpose for humanity—and has left us adrift in virtually every realm of life. But we are not a product of blind chance. God created us with a purpose.

productive, and being productive requires both work and rest. Furthermore, He created man and woman to fill different roles in life—something modern societies increasingly refuse to accept. A man cannot become pregnant with a child. That is pure fact! Though some choose to live in a fantasy land, the rest of us should not mindlessly join them.

Too many have forgotten that there is reward in work, no matter how humble. Jason Furman, head of the U.S. Council of Economic Advisers from 2013–2017, explained that “for many, probably most, dropping out of the work force not only means a lack of income but also a loss of the dignity that comes with not working” (*Brookings.edu*).

God created mankind to work, and when we choose *not* to work—out of laziness rather than genuine medical necessity—we invite negative consequences. As Furman points out, giving up on work is “associated with depression, with drug use, with suicide, with a range of bad outcomes.”

We have a need to work, to rightly enjoy the fruits of our labor, and to provide for our needs. Our Creator set the example at the beginning by working (Genesis 2:1–2) and He expects us to follow that example. Jesus did not come to lounge around; He declared, “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4). And Paul instructed the Church at Thessalonica, “For even when we were with you, we commanded

you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies” (2 Thessalonians 3:10–11).

Dignity in Work

Society’s ideas about marital roles have changed in the last half-century. It was once a man’s responsibility to be the provider for and protector of the family, but the feminist movement changed all of that. Too many men no longer understand what their role in the family should be, and are all too eager to sit back and let their wives assume the role of provider. This is not good for men, women, children, or nations. There are certainly reasons why a wife might need to become the provider when her husband is medically unable to work—and there is no shame in that—but that should not be the norm.

Work habits are best learned at a young age, which is why it is important for parents to set the right example and to teach their children self-discipline when it comes to work. “Laziness casts one into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger” (Proverbs 19:15), and “[h]e who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich” (Proverbs 10:4).

Proverbs also addresses the man who has a thousand excuses. “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.... The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly” (Proverbs 26:12, 16).

The excuse that a job is “beneath one’s dignity” flies in the face of biblical instruction: “*In all labor there is profit*, but idle chatter leads only to poverty” (Proverbs 14:23). In short, able-bodied men need to be working. If they think they can do better than flip burgers—great! But lounging around waiting for that better job to show up at the doorstep is *not* a good plan. There is dignity in *all* labor, and great reward—not just in money, but also in character and growth!



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Why is our civilization so *uncivilized*?

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The Mark of the Beast: A Clever Counterfeit



By **Gerald E. Weston**

Many people have heard of the Mark of the Beast, and speculations abound regarding what it is. Some in the United States once thought the Social Security Number to be that mark, and some thought the mark might be the Canadian Social Insurance Number, with its acronym “S.I.N.” The barcode and the more recent quick response (QR) code have also been tarred with that accusation. All of these are related to buying and selling, or holding a job, but none of them are the Beast’s mark, which is revealed in the book of Revelation.

Then there are speculations about computer chips implanted in the hand or the forehead. For certain, chips are being used to track dogs and cats when they stray—and even for human identification—but computer chips are *not* that mark. How can we know for sure?

In this article, I’ll discuss what that mysterious mark is, but I’ll also explain a very different mark—the mark or sign of God—for it is through this God-ordained mark that we come to understand the Mark of the Beast.

The entire subject of the Beast’s mark would be unheard of were it not for the book of Revelation; it is therefore the Bible itself that must enlighten us regarding this subject. And the fundamental point in understanding this mark is what it is called: the *Mark of the Beast*. It is the *Beast’s* mark! Any mark not arising from the Beast—whatever or whoever the Beast is—cannot be his mark. Therefore, unless the U.S., Canada, or any other country is the Beast, their Social Security or Social Insurance numbers cannot be that mark. Nor can chips implanted in one’s hand or forehead be that mark, unless originating from and enforced by the Beast.

So, who or what is this beast and his mark?

The search begins in the second chapter of the Old Testament book of Daniel. There we read that God revealed to the prophet Daniel the meaning of ancient Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar’s famous dream. In this dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw the image of a man with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and legs of iron. Of special note is that the image’s feet and toes were a mixture of iron and clay.

Daniel explained to the king that this figure of a man represented four kingdoms. The head of gold

was Nebuchadnezzar's Chaldean Empire. History shows that the three empires that followed were the Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian, and Roman Empires. All of these would arise out of the Middle East and the Mediterranean world.

So, what does this have to do with you, me, or the Mark of the Beast? *Everything*—but why?

Daniel's prophecy covers the time from Nebuchadnezzar all the way through history until the return of the Savior, Jesus Christ, and the establishment of His kingdom here on planet Earth:

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this (Daniel 2:44–45).

The Stone cut out of the mountain without hands—in other words, supernaturally—is clearly a reference to the returning Messiah as He sets up a future, everlasting kingdom. So, we see that Christ returns and destroys mankind's empires by smiting this great image on the feet and toes (v. 34).

Historians tell us that the Roman Empire died in 476 AD, but Christ did not return and set up a world-ruling kingdom at that time. So, we must wonder, did this prophecy fail? Or is there more to it? The key is found in a closer look at the iron legs of this fourth kingdom, with its strange feet and toes composed of iron and clay.

Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic

clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay (Daniel 2:41–43).

Clearly, the feet and toes make up the part of the image that will exist at Christ's return. But how can this be when Rome fell more than 1,500 years ago?

Four Beasts

The seventh chapter of Daniel elaborates further on these four worldly empires by describing them as four wild beasts. The first is described as being like a lion with eagle's wings, the second like a bear, the third like a four-headed leopard, the fourth "dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns" (Daniel 7:7).

These four kings, or kingdoms (7:17, 23), arise out of the Mediterranean (vv. 2–3) with the fourth, like the statue in Daniel 2, ending when Christ returns to set up an eternal kingdom. "But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his [the fourth beast's] dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (vv. 26–27).

A careful reading shows that it is useless to speculate about these symbols on our own, as God explains the symbols He uses in Scripture. The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream is explained as four kingdoms, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's. We are told that the four beasts of Daniel 7 represent four kings or kingdoms, and that the fourth ends with God's kingdom—so these beasts clearly represent the same four kingdoms as those mentioned in Daniel 2.

The Composite Beast

God reveals more detail about these kingdoms as time progresses. We now come to another beast, this one found in Revelation 13. We find the same characteristics seen in Daniel 7, but all combined into a single creature. This is because John recorded the visions



The Roman Empire fell in 476 AD, but in 554 AD, it was restored—“healed”—by Justinian, in league with the Roman Catholic church. To understand what happened next, we must turn to Revelation 17, where the “healed” Roman Empire continues. There we find another seven-headed beast, but only after the healing of its wounded head. But there is one significant difference between this seven-headed beast and the one we read of in Revelation 13: This beast is ridden by a woman.

given to him in the late 90s AD—at the time of the Roman Empire. The first three kingdoms had each fallen and ultimately been absorbed by Rome.

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority (Revelation 13:1–2).

But, as we read these passages today, Rome fell more than 1,500 years ago. So, how can it be in existence when Christ returns? Note that this beast has seven heads. Compare this with Daniel 7 and you will see the same number of heads when counting all four creatures. Revelation 13:3 and 5 explain that one of the heads had a deadly wound that was healed. Since the first three beasts were absorbed by Rome—making this beast a composite of the four—the only head that could be healed is that of Rome, which is exactly what we find in history.

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 17:1–3).

In the Bible, a woman is sometimes used as a symbol of a church (Ephesians 5:31–32; Revelation 19:6–9). Here, we see a fallen woman, an *apostate* church—a mother church with harlot daughters (17:1, 5). This restored Roman Empire with seven heads is ridden by an apostate religious system. Furthermore, we learn that after its healing it would continue for “forty-two months” (13:5). Note that Scripture commonly uses the “day for a year” principle (Isaiah 34:8; Ezekiel 4:6). Considering a biblical prophetic month of 30 days, 42 months of those days gives us

1,260 days or years, depending on the context of the passage.

History reveals that the Roman Empire, now ridden by an apostate church, was restored by Justinian in 554 AD. This empire went into decline and was revived four more times. The second restoration came in 800 AD, when on “Christmas Day, as Charlemagne [King of the Franks], in the chlamys and sandals of a *patricius Romanus*, knelt before St. Peter’s altar in prayer, [Pope] Leo suddenly produced a jeweled crown, and set it upon the King’s head” (Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, 1950, p. 469).

After Charlemagne, the Empire again deteriorated, but was revived a third time under Otto I, the Great. “Like Charlemagne, Otto received his throne through the Papal claim that the Roman Church had been the only Imperial elector since the early fourth century.... The Holy Roman Empire was thus to a large extent German in its ethnic and political base, Christian in its moral justification, and Roman in its claim to legitimacy and universality” (*The Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages*, ed. Herzstein, 1966, p. viii).

Charles the Great and Napoleon constituted the fourth and fifth restorations. From the healing under Justinian in 554 to the fall of Napoleon in 1814, we have exactly 1,260 years, as foretold (Revelation 13:3, 5).

The Beast’s Mark

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, there is great interest in and a multitude of interpretations regarding the “Mark of the Beast” and “the number of his name,” which is 666. Also, as brought out, the most fundamental criterion for this mark is that it is “of the Beast”—thus the lengthy explanation to clarify who or what the Beast is, because if a mark is not of the Beast, it is not the Mark of the Beast! It is that simple—yet people get excited with every new invention that affects buying and selling. Probably the most recent candidate was the COVID-19 vaccine. Whatever anyone may think about the wisdom and safety of the vaccine, it is *not* the Mark of the Beast.

So, what do we know about this mysterious mark? To answer that question, we must look to the book of Revelation, for that is where it is introduced. First, however, we must notice that this woman who rides the Beast is mentioned as a separate beast in Revelation 13. After introducing what we have shown as the

Roman Empire in the opening verses of the chapter, we read:

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.... He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived (vv. 11–14).

Yes, this beast appears Christ-like, like a lamb, but it speaks as the devil, a dragon (Revelation 12:9). This should not surprise us, as the Apostle Paul warns that Satan has ministers who masquerade as ministers of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:13–14). This second beast—the same as the harlot of chapter 17—is clearly a religious system that performs false miracles in conjunction with the Roman system.

Now, we come to the crucial verses regarding the beast’s mark: “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:16–17).

God’s Sign of His People

Whatever else the Beast’s mark is, it is a sign of disobedience. It cannot simply be a computer chip or barcode. It is, first and foremost, the *Beast’s* mark. We also read that God’s wrath comes upon the disobedient (Romans 1:18; Colossians 3:5–6), and it is upon those who take the mark that His wrath falls (Revelation 16:2).

The devil is a great counterfeiter (2 Corinthians 11:3–4, 13–15). He has counterfeited the sign that God gave His people, so that Satan’s people are stamped with Satan’s mark. But what, then, is the sign God uses to identify His people?

God made a covenant with Israel whereby He declared the seventh-day Sabbath to be a sign between Him and His people (Exodus 31:12–17). Some wrongly

reason that Jesus changed the Sabbath to the first day of the week, but the Bible and early Church history show that Jesus, the Apostles, and the first-century Church of God continued to observe the day that God set aside thousands of years before Moses was born. It was Roman Emperor Constantine, in 321 AD, who declared “the venerable day of the sun” to be holy time (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church: Vol. II: From Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great A.D. 311–600*, 1867, p. 380).

Furthermore, God declared to ancient Israel that the Feast of Unleavened Bread—one of seven annual Festivals He gave to mankind, which Jesus and the early Church observed (1 Corinthians 5:7–8)—was to “be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD’s law may be in your mouth” (Exodus 13:9, 16).

Just as the Mark of the Beast is to be on one’s forehead and on one’s hand, so too are God’s Holy Days to be on the forehead and on the hand. The forehead symbolizes how we think, and the hand symbolizes our actions; neither symbolic sign should be understood to be stamped literally on the hand or forehead.

Daniel 7 also speaks of this apostate religious system (vv. 19–21). “He [that is, the horn ‘whose appearance was greater than his fellows,’ i.e., the woman who rides the Beast] shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law” (v. 25).

Many confuse the Mark of the Beast with the potential methods of enforcing it. Emperor Constantine enforced the mark on his subjects—and any who refused it paid a heavy price. Mainstream “Christianity” has continued to enforce it—sometimes more forcefully than at other times. Consider the so-called “blue laws,” when businesses have to be closed on Sundays.

What is clear is that this mark—an attempt to change times and law—will again be enforced. The method of enforcement may be an eye scan, facial recognition technology, or some other determiner of identity, but the method of *enforcing* Satan’s mark of disobedience to God’s laws is *not* the mark itself.


Don't Forget the Ten Toes

Daniel 2 and 7, along with Revelation 13 and 17, show a progression of four great empires from Nebuchadnezzar to the return of Christ. We read in Revelation 17, “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits [Rome sits on seven hills]. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen [“revivals” of the old Empire between 554 to 1814 AD], one is [the Axis Powers under Hitler and Mussolini], and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time” (vv. 9–10). The one to come is yet in our future.

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. 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 (vv. 12–14).

These kings, leaders, or nations will rise up in today’s Europe. Combined, they will have the military and economic strength of iron. But, as we learned from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, this short-lived, ten-toed union will not mix well—it will be as iron and clay.

When this final restoration of the Roman Empire arises, it will, once again, along with the great apostate church, enforce Constantine’s 321 AD edict of resting on “the venerable day of the sun.” It may do so in the name of strengthening families, or saving the planet, or social responsibility and public safety—but, whatever the attempt to justify it, make no mistake: Enforcement of the Mark of the Beast is coming!

For a fuller explanation of this subject and to understand the significance of the number 666, order a free copy of *The Beast of Revelation: Myth, Metaphor, or Soon-Coming Reality?* from the Regional Office nearest you (listed on page 4) or read it online at TomorrowsWorld.org. 

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SUGGEST?

The Beast of Revelation When the Beast of Revelation arrives, you won’t want to be caught off guard! Request this **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at TomorrowsWorld.org. PDF, ePub, and Kindle are also available.



Oh Canada!

A Sure Foundation



When God created planet Earth, He separated the land from the water, making a clear distinction between the two. While human beings have learned how to build boats to traverse water, most of Earth's population chooses to live on land. Not all water on Earth is the same—there is fresh and salt water—and neither is all land on Earth the same.

God has given Canada a great variety of land—rainforests, deserts, mountains, hills, valleys, and plains. He created that variety intentionally and with purpose. Ancient Israel's King David marveled, "O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions" (Psalm 104:24). God inspired Moses to record, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Canada is a country with remarkable diversity in its climate, terrain, flora, and fauna. That diversity brings challenges, but also great blessings, and has shaped the way Canadians have spread out across their nation, building a foundation for prosperity and growth.

Big Country, Small Population

Canada is the second-largest country in the world by total land and water area—9.985 million square kilometres. In land area only, it is the fourth-largest country, with 9.094 million square kilometres. There's no getting around it—Canada is huge!

Yet Canada is not so big from a population perspective, currently ranking 38th according to *WorldPopulationReview.com*, with roughly 39 million people. By simple calculation, the population density of

Canada is about four people per square kilometre—one of the lowest in the world. But this math neglects the fact that nearly half the population of Canada lives in an area of 230,000 square kilometres. (This is the Quebec City-Windsor Corridor, a mere 2.5 percent of Canada's total area, where the population density is 82 people per square kilometre.)

Why does such a large country with a relatively small population have so many citizens clustered together? The answer is not that Canadians need to huddle together to keep warm, though parts of Canada are indeed cold at certain times of the year, and some parts are cold year-round. While the primary reason is not temperature, it is an element of geography. One geographic feature in particular accounts for most of Canada's peculiar population distribution and much of its wealth.

A Rocky Plate

Heading east from the wide-open prairies of central Canada, a noticeable change in terrain begins near the eastern edge of Manitoba. There you find no more grasslands with cultivated fields and small farming communities. The land becomes rough and rocky with less vegetation. Welcome to the beautiful and rugged Laurentian Plateau—a visible portion of the Earth's crust and the world's largest mass of exposed Precambrian rock.

The Laurentian Plateau is an eight-million-square-kilometre area of igneous and metamorphic rock that forms the core of the continent of North America. It underlies five million square kilometres of Canada—50 percent of the country. From Labrador in the east, it extends westward across Canada to include most of Quebec, much of Ontario and Manitoba, the northern

third of Saskatchewan, the northeast tip of Alberta, the eastern half of the Northwest Territories, and most of Nunavut. Since most of the Laurentian Plateau is located within Canadian territory, it is understandably referred to as the Canadian Shield.

Difficult for Settlement

Productive soil on relatively flat land is essential for establishing the agricultural base to sustain a high population density. Most of planet Earth's land surface is covered by a layer of soil ranging in thickness from a few centimetres to a few metres. The soil across much of the Canadian Shield is at the very low end of that range—and what soil exists is often stony, poorly drained, and not very fertile. Furthermore, the land is full of craggy outcrops and hills of solid rock, the worn remnants of ancient mountains. The Canadian Shield contains little arable land suitable for farming or raising livestock.

The agricultural productivity of the Canadian Shield is meagre, but that is not the only reason for the sparse settlement of this region of Canada. Granite, one of the hardest substances, is the predominant rock forming the Canadian Shield. Granite may make great kitchen countertops, but building on it can be extremely difficult. Digging any significant hole or trench in the Canadian Shield requires blasting. Houses, roads, sewer lines, and other important infrastructures required to sustain large populations are costly—and challenging to construct and maintain—when working with such a hard material.

Fabulous Resources

While the land of the Canadian Shield is unsuitable for large-scale agriculture and difficult to build on, it is not completely barren. Due to the shallow permafrost, vegetation in the northern portion of the Canadian Shield is minimal and any trees that manage to grow



Precambrian rock makes up much of the Canadian Shield.

are typically stunted. But in the central and southern portions we find vast boreal forests, the dominant ecosystem of the Canadian Shield. Conifers and deciduous trees abound—pine, spruce, fir, cedar, hemlock, poplar, aspen, birch, ash, and maple—a veritable treasure trove of soft- and hardwood lumber.

The Canadian Shield also contains a wealth of mineral ores such as gold, silver, nickel, copper, asbestos, zinc, iron, uranium, cobalt, palladium, and—discovered more recently—diamonds. Commercial mining operations began in the nineteenth century and have contributed greatly to Canada's economic development. Canada's mineral production was valued at \$55.5 billion in 2021, mostly coming from the Canadian Shield. In gold alone, the production was 223 tonnes, valued at \$13.7 billion, making Canada the fourth-largest global producer of that precious metal ("Gold Facts," Government of Canada, *Natural-Resources.Canada.ca*, February 17, 2023).

There is another natural resource of the Canadian Shield that is arguably more valuable than lumber or minerals. The Canadian Shield is a storehouse of fresh water. Tens of thousands of lakes, large and small, can be found within the area of the Canadian Shield. These lakes provide a habitat for fish, drinking water for people and wildlife, areas for recreation, and opportunities to produce hydroelectric energy.

Solid and Secure

Only about 10 percent of Canada's population lives on the Canadian Shield, as this large rocky plate undergirding half of the country is not ideal for human settlement. But while the Canadian Shield may not be the best place for a farm or a city, it is by no means empty and barren. It is filled with an incredible array of natural resources and is the solid physical foundation upon which the country's economy has been built. Truly, the Canadian Shield is a blessing from God that is "very good."

As Christians, we too must have a solid foundation, striving to be obedient to our Saviour (Luke 6:46; John 14:15). Jesus Christ told His followers to build their spiritual foundation on solid rock (Matthew 7:24–27). But unlike the difficult granite of the Canadian Shield, our Rock is Jesus Christ Himself (1 Corinthians 10:4). A strong *physical* foundation is only sustainable with a strong *spiritual* foundation built upon Christ—the only tried, precious spiritual cornerstone we are to build upon (Isaiah 28:16).

—Gary Molnar

Will You Worship Death?

By **Rod McNair**

Grotesque masks and costumes, terrifying images of movie monsters, sugar skulls and carved pumpkins, gravesite offerings for the dead—this year, millions of people around the world will observe Halloween, All Saints Day, All Souls Day, and the Day of the Dead. Will you?

Most people today know that the modern Halloween festival has its roots in ancient traditions that pre-date Jesus Christ—yet they have no qualms about taking part in a day that draws heavily on morbid pre-Christian superstitions. What should it mean to Christians today?

What did ancient Halloween celebrations involve? “The two chief characteristics of ancient Hal-low-e’en were the lighting of bonfires and the belief that of all nights in the year this is the one during which ghosts and witches are most likely to wander abroad.... Further, it was a Druidic belief that on the eve of this festival Saman, lord of death, called together the wicked souls that within the past twelve months had been condemned to inhabit the bodies of animals” (“Halloween,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 12, pp. 857–858).

So, how did professing Christians start following ancient Druidic practices? In 610 AD, Pope Boniface IV established the Feast of All Holy Martyrs, held annually on May 13. In 835, Pope Gregory IV transferred the celebration to November 1, a date he designated as “All Saints Day” in honor of Catholic martyrs for their faith.

What activities are associated with that day? Even today, in some Catholic countries, a popular folk tradition holds that people’s departed loved ones annually return to their former homes on this day, also known as the “Day of the Dead.” *The National* described a tradition of the Philippines, where “thousands of dishes will be cooked affectionately for people who cannot eat them. Every November 1, on All Saints Day, cemeteries across the country are inundated with people carrying the favourite foods of their deceased loved ones” (*TheNationalNews.com*, November 1, 2020).

The November 2 festival known as “All Souls Day” was “based on the [Roman Catholic] doctrine that the souls of the faithful which at death have not been cleansed from venial sins, or have not atoned for past transgressions, cannot attain the Beatific Vision, and that they may be helped to do so by prayer and by the sacrifice of the mass” (“All Souls Day,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed. vol. 1, p. 709). This presumes a process by which those who are alive can perform ceremonies to somehow improve the condition of the deceased.

All these “festivals of the dead” are based on the same general theme—to commune with, appease, serve, and even worship the dead. But are such practices based on the Bible? Should Christians observe them today? What does *God* say?

Where Are They Now?

Many ancient religious traditions presume that the dead are somewhere other than in the grave. Many

people *assume* that the departed dead are either in heaven, hell, or some sort of intermediate conscious state. Yet the Bible clearly tells us where the dead *actually* are.

Notice what the Apostle Peter said on the Day of Pentecost: “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.... For David did not ascend into the heavens” (Acts 2:29, 34).

King David *did not go to Heaven*. The Apostle Peter, speaking centuries after David’s death, confirmed that David was still in his grave where he had been placed at death, and was awaiting the resurrection. What a contrast Peter’s words are to the mistaken belief, so pervasive among professing Christians today, that the saints, right now, are looking down at us from Heaven!

What, then, are the dead doing? The answer is neither mysterious nor spooky. The dead are simply “sleeping” in their graves—unconscious, waiting to be called to resurrection. What will happen when Christians are resurrected? The Apostle Paul explains that “the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18).

We can gain tremendous encouragement if we understand the truth about death and resurrection as taught in the Bible. We need not distress or confuse ourselves with the fearful superstitions fostered by the “festivals of death.”

Communicating with Dead People?

If the dead are unconscious in the grave—not alert as disembodied spirits in Heaven or elsewhere—can we communicate with them? On the “Day of the Dead,” do deceased family members actually return to their living relatives, as some believe? What does the Bible say?

Solomon explained that “the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5). When righteous King David cried out to be saved from danger, he reminded God, “For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who will

give You thanks?” (Psalm 6:5). Solomon and David both understood that human beings cease from consciousness at death.

The biblical account of King Saul’s séance sometimes confuses casual readers who wonder about spirits existing after death. At first glance, one might think that a medium conjured up the spirit of Samuel at King Saul’s request (1 Samuel 28:8–15). But did the medium *really* bring Samuel back? Scripture explains that Saul “perceived” it was Samuel (v. 14). The description the medium gave him was simply of an “old man... covered with a mantle”—apparently an unclean spirit appearing in a form much like Samuel’s. Scripture shows that lying spirits do go forth to deceive, as did this one seeking to deceive Saul (cf. 1 Kings 22:22–23).

Yes, the Bible clearly shows that we cannot communicate with the dead. The dead are not aware of treats or offerings brought to their graves. They neither hear nor benefit from prayers made to them or on their behalf.

On the other hand, we *do* look forward to seeing our beloved friends and relatives in the resurrection, and it is certainly right to honor the memory of a deceased family member or friend at a funeral service, especially for the sake of the mourning relatives. We “honor the memory” of our deceased parents and grandparents—not by leaving trinkets at their graves or by hoping to welcome their spirits into our homes, but by following their edifying instruction and example, and by bringing honor to the good name they established while they lived.

Good, Clean Fun?

“But I don’t believe in all that mumbo-jumbo,” some might say. “I just like to have fun on a holiday.” Is there, in fact, anything wrong with the modern Halloween customs we commonly see? Could there be any problem with costume parties, scary stories, and the gathering of tasty treats? Should we be amused by plastic, battery-operated “goblins” glaring down at passing shoppers in a department store? After all, nobody today takes all the “scary” stuff seriously, right?

Perhaps that approach itself is part of the problem. The spirit world *should* be taken seriously. It is real, and it is *dangerous* to the unwary. Yet the dangers of the occult are often relegated to the status of a

silly game, as though we could harmlessly play along if only we would “get into the spirit.”

Certainly, millions try to do exactly that. Even home décor maven Martha Stewart offers advice on how to decorate your front lawn with flickering pumpkins to create a spooky environment for fun. She states, “The excitement of All Hallow’s Eve is in the ether, the atmosphere charged by the sights and sounds and fears belonging to the night.... What we’re after is to beat the holiday’s phosphorescent spirits at their own game, to dispel their threat using the same palette of darting amber and inky shadow they use to scare us” (*Halloween: The Best of Martha Stewart Living*, 2001, pp. 13–14).

But God does not tell us to *mock* interaction with the spirit world. He does not tell us to act out modern versions of ancient Druidic rituals. Rather, He says, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:7–8). God counsels us to be aware of the devil’s schemes so we can avoid his traps (2 Corinthians 2:11). Scripture reminds us that Christians are in a *struggle* against “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

God’s Ways or Pagan Revelries?

Halloween celebrates mischief. It is considered a time to let inhibitions loose and suspend rules. Author Hugo Slim reminds us, “Hallowe’en still keeps many of the old pre-Christian games and rituals as part of its festivities. Games involving apples, dressing up and retribution are still enjoyed by children every Hallowe’en” (*A Feast of Festivals*, 1996, p. 176). He goes on to say, “The camouflage of fancy dress and pumpkin lanterns also provided the perfect cover under which to get even with an enemy. Hallowe’en therefore became an inevitable and acceptable time to settle old scores through the ancient custom of ‘trick or treat,’ a game which is extremely popular with many children today” (pp. 177–178).

But does God approve of such festivities? The Apostle Peter explains that Christians should have given up lifestyles contrary to God’s way: “For we have


spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries” (1 Peter 4:3). Instead, “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” (Philippians 4:8). The unclean and riotous roots of Halloween are not compatible with God’s instructions for Christians.

Reject Pagan Traditions

When God was preparing the Israelites to enter the Promised Land, He gave them *specific and forceful instructions* that they should not try to honor Him by practicing the traditions of the nations around them. They were *not* to absorb the observances of the Gentiles. They were to reject such practices, and instead faithfully follow God’s commands and instructions.

Moses instructed the Israelites, “When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way” (Deuteronomy 12:29–31).

God is calling Christians today to obey and worship Him *in the way that He has chosen*, not by following man-made traditions. If Jesus Christ has called you to Himself, to understand His truth, He has called you *to be different*. In the last hours of His life, Christ prayed that His disciples would not be *of* the world, even though they live in the world: “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” (John 17:15–16).

May God grant you the understanding and discernment to be different from the world, wholly follow Him, and reject the festivals of death. 

**MAY WE
SUGGEST?**

What Happens When You Die? Most of us have asked the question. Do you want to know the answer? Request this **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at TomorrowsWorld.org. PDF, ePub, and Kindle are also available.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

At baptism, each Christian commits to a glorious truth!

Question: I have heard some claim that you can be baptized on behalf of dead relatives or loved ones who were not baptized before they died. Is this what the Bible says?

Answer: A few professing Christian groups have a mistaken idea about a puzzling statement the Apostle Paul seems to make. He wrote to the Corinthian brethren, “Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?” (1 Corinthians 15:29).

This verse illustrates well the problem of translation, and the importance of understanding the context of what is written. What was Paul discussing in this chapter of 1 Corinthians? Let’s look more closely:

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?... For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:12–20).

It may seem odd to us today, but in Jesus’ day there were religious people, such as the Sadducees, who did not believe in a resurrection from the dead. The very first Christians were Jews, including some who were Sadducees. In the verses above, Paul is explaining the resurrection from the dead as the hope of true Christians.


Before we look at the language of the translation, let’s remember what baptism is. Genuine repentance is required before anyone can be legitimately baptized (Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8; Acts 2:38). As a condition of baptism, repentance should be evident—a change in how we live. We’re told that faith is required, as well (Hebrews 11:6). None of these con-

ditions can be fulfilled by a dead person—indeed, God tells us through Solomon that “the dead know nothing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

Much of the confusion involves translators’ use of the word *for*. The Greek word *huper* is used more than 160 times throughout the New Testament, and here it is used simply as “for.” But, observing how *huper* is used elsewhere, it becomes clear that the word often carries the sense of “for the hope of” or with a sense of “above” or “more than” or “exceeding” (cf. Philippians 2:13). The *God’s Word Translation* of 1 Corinthians 15:29 renders it this way: “However, people are baptized because the dead will come back to life. What will they do? If the dead can’t come back to life, why do people get baptized as if they can come back to life?”

Here we see clearly that Paul is making the point that the hope of all mankind is the resurrection. Without that hope, it is meaningless to be among God’s firstfruits, and our baptism is without purpose. The entire Work of God is focused upon the hope of resurrection—a brighter future coming not only for those called in this age, but potentially for all who have ever lived.

And, to fulfill that hope, each Christian must stand before God as an individual. None of us can qualify another human being for baptism. Embracing the hope of forgiveness and resurrection is an individual matter and cannot be done by others for us (cf. Ezekiel 18:20). For most, that hope will come at the White Throne Judgment, described in Revelation 20 as a time *after* the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. At this Judgment, the billions who lived and died without truly understanding Christ’s message—many who never even heard Christ’s name—will be resurrected. Their minds will be opened, and they will be taught God’s truth for the first time.

After genuine repentance, they, too, will be baptized and enter into a covenant with God—not for someone else, but for themselves. This is God’s awesome plan for the vast majority of mankind. To learn more about this wonderful future, request a free copy of *What Happens When You Die?* or read it online at TomorrowsWorld.org. 



“Hate Thy Neighbor”

Why does society increasingly reflect the opposite of the Bible’s famous command?

By **Wallace G. Smith**

Have you noticed the shift? Have you wondered if you have been imagining things? Studies have concluded that you haven’t: People really *are* growing to hate each other.

Of course, political differences have existed for as long as politics has existed. And it is not unusual for those political differences to become a source of anger and hurt between even the closest of family members and friends.

But it is as if something has changed—like a switch has been flipped. Those on the “other side” politically now seem like more than opponents to be defeated—they seem like enemies to be hated. And the sentiment isn’t limited to politics.

Video clips on our social media feeds document our descent into disdain and contempt for one another: an airline customer punching a gate agent; assaults in our schools—student on student and student on teacher; customers in coffee shops confronting complete strangers, angered by the slogans on their clothing; TikTok “stars” who traumatize unsuspecting victims for the sake of views and followers; waiters and waitresses treated as less than human; “road rage” on our highways, leading to dangerous confrontations and even deaths.

Most of us can see that the turn toward hatred is real—and that it is deeply troubling. But why is it happening? Why is so much of our so-called “civilization” becoming so uncivilized—dominated by a culture of hate and contempt for one’s neighbor?

Should We Blame Our Leaders?

It would be easy to blame our leaders—and, to many, expressions of hatred and contempt are, indeed, the hallmark of modern politics.

Negative campaigning has been part of American politics almost as long as there has been politics in America. But the vitriol has seemed to increase in recent years, and candidates now attack the voters, not just each other. Hatreds were revealed and inflamed when then-Senator Barack Obama, running for President in 2008, complained about “bitter” Americans who voted for his opponents, saying that they “cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them.” And when it was his successor-candidate Hillary Clinton’s turn to run for President, she outraged millions by lamenting what she called the “basket of deplorables” who supported her opponent. In turn, she lost that election to a candidate, Donald Trump, who remains the king of the schoolboy insult and public putdown, “gifted” with the ability to coin memorable and mocking phrases to demean those who would oppose him. The current U.S. President, Joe Biden, has labeled an entire swath of his nation’s population “MAGA Republicans,” publicly calling them a dangerous threat to democracy.

It’s hard to get more disdainful than claiming the other party’s supporters seek nothing less than the destruction of your nation. Yet such claims are now the norm in American politics, with those on either side of each key ideological divide treating those on the other side as traitors worthy of nothing but contempt—practically subhuman.

Even so, most of the Western nations are led by representative governments, where the leaders must gain the support—and votes—of the public to stay in office. Yes, the leaders influence their people, but they gain and keep the ability to have that influence by giving people what they want.

Arthur Brooks, former president of the American Enterprise Institute, noted this phenomenon in an interview with Judy Woodruff of the *PBS NewsHour*: “In a democratic society, in a capitalist culture, our

leaders actually are followers. They tend to be a consequence, not a cause of our actions.... [T]hey do affect us, and they do affect our culture, to be sure. But what's happening in democratic societies and with democratic elections is that leaders see a parade going down the street, and they jump out in front of it to be the leader.”

Is Brooks correct? Consider how many people complain about “attack ads” against other politicians. But then ask, *Would we be seeing so many if they didn't work?*

The situation is not helped by what Brooks calls in his book *Love Your Enemies* the “outrage industrial complex.” It is composed of modern media channels that “keep their audiences hooked on contempt by telling audiences what they want to hear, selling a narrative of conflict and painting gross caricatures of the other side. They make us feel justified in our own beliefs while affirming our worst assumptions about those who disagree with us—namely that they are, in fact, stupid, evil, and not worth giving the time of day” (p. 29).

Of course, hatred would not be such good business for media moguls or preening politicians if it didn't feel so good to us—and it *does* feel good to so many. But *why?*

What is it in our culture that has brought us to a point where so many of us find such satisfaction in viewing those who disagree with or inconvenience us as objects of disdain, less than human—or, at least, less human than we are?

Jesus Christ points to an answer few expect to hear and few researchers will bother to investigate.

Such Times Were Foreseen

In His famous—but generally misunderstood—Olivet Prophecy, Christ directly connected our world's hateful, contemptuous atmosphere to *the lack of God's law*. Pointing His disciples to the future, prophesying the conditions that would abound in the days leading to His Second Coming, Jesus stated plainly that “because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12).

Christ was not speaking of disobedience to the laws of men and civil governments. He made His pronouncement immediately after speaking of false prophets, who will “deceive many” and will lead most

of society away from the true faith (v. 11). He was noting a profound reality: As mankind's trajectory of self-rule continues to take us further and further away from the laws and commandments of our Creator, we also sink deeper and deeper into an environment in which even our most natural affections grow colder and colder—as our hatred for one another burns hotter and hotter.

Throughout your Bible, many passages offer a warning similar to Christ's, foretelling an end-time environment of hatred and contempt and revealing that our civilization will descend still further into lawless evil—so much so that we would destroy ourselves if not for Christ's eventual, inevitable return (vv. 21–22).

The prophet Isaiah, writing in the eighth century BC, described a future time of stifling oppression, in which the heights of our civilization would begin to decay into ruin. But the burden of oppression is not so much from the rulers—selfish and incompetent as they are (Isaiah 3:1–4). Rather, “[t]he people will be oppressed, *every one by another and every one by his neighbor*; the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable” (v. 5).

Neighbor against neighbor. The child against the elder.

The prophet Micah adds insight into the condition such a society can reach—an environment in which even your most intimate of companions is a potential enemy. “Do not trust in a friend; do not put your confidence in a companion; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom. For son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household” (Micah 7:5–6). Jesus Christ quoted this very passage in His discussion of the days to come (Matthew 10:34–36).

Lack of Humanity?

The Apostle Paul prophetically described the “last days” of this age, highlighting that people will be “unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, [and] brutal” (2 Timothy 3:1–4). His words parallel the description he gives in the book of Romans, where he says people will be “violent, proud, boasters, ...unloving, unforgiving, [and] unmerciful” (Romans 1:30–31).

Such descriptions call to mind the days of Noah before the Flood, concerning which we are told that "the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11). And it is worth noting that Christ warned of the days preceding His return having much in common with the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37).

Those who think that such times are impossible in a "civilized," modern world such as ours fail to re-

those who kill such faithful followers among their neighbors will believe that they are serving God by their murders (John 16:2).

A Radically Different Approach

On the largest scale, a mindset of dehumanizing hatred will ultimately destroy the very foundations of a society and civilization. A people cannot remain a

people when the individuals comprising that people detest one another. Eventually, the bonds holding that society together are ripped asunder, and its self-destruction is inevitable.

On the most intimate scale, dehumanizing hatred will corrode our individual character and spirit. Such hatred represents the very opposite of the approach to life and relationships that Jesus Christ

THOSE WHO THINK THAT SUCH TIMES ARE IMPOSSIBLE IN A "CIVILIZED," MODERN WORLD SUCH AS OURS FAIL TO RECALL THAT IN THE YEARS BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST, LESS THAN A CENTURY AGO, GERMANY WAS CALLED ONE OF THE MOST CIVILIZED NATIONS IN HUMAN HISTORY.

call that in the years before the Holocaust, less than a century ago, Germany was considered one of the most civilized nations in human history—a global center of art, philosophy, science, and culture. But once the power of hatred was unleashed, that civilization became the global center for the industrialized slaughter of human beings deemed subhuman.

In a society where leaders stir up anger to rouse their political base, and where an angered populace in turn supports ever-angrier leadership, we should not be surprised when whole groups of people are dehumanized in their enemies' rhetoric. After all, in an atmosphere of violent hatred, it is so much easier to kill a dangerous "animal" than to reason with a human opponent.

And the Bible makes it clear that this violent atmosphere will only grow worse. In the years just before Jesus Christ returns, this interpersonal hatred and spirit of violence will find a laser-like focus on one group detested more than all others: those who defy conventional religion—and even a counterfeit "Christianity"—by remaining true to Christ's biblical teachings, despite persecution by those falsely claiming His name for themselves. In fact, the Apostle John records Jesus' own prophecy that

came to exemplify for us—and the opposite, as well, of the way of life He will teach the entire world after His return. In fact, He will do far more than merely teach it—He will empower the world to make His loving approach an everyday reality.

Many are familiar with Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39)—a command He quotes from the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18) as a fundamental principle of God's law.

But the fullness of the love He commands of us is not often fully appreciated. And perhaps some of us, in our toxic modern environment, would challenge Him just as one of His listeners did, asking, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29).

Jesus responded with the famous parable in which a man traveling from Jerusalem was attacked by thieves and left "half dead." This man was not aided by any passersby until a Samaritan man took compassion on him and helped him. The popularity of that parable is why, in English, those who sacrifice of themselves and show compassion to others are called "Good Samaritans."

Christ's choice of a Samaritan as the hero of the parable was boldly instructive. The Jews and Samaritans of Jesus' day had no love for each other. They were

bitter enemies, each despising the others’ religion and conduct. Christ’s parable wasn’t meant to endorse the Samaritans’ religion, doctrine, or practices—which He explicitly disagreed with and strongly repudiated (John 4:19–22). But He would not hate or “dehumanize” them for it, even when they turned their hatred and prejudice toward Him (Luke 9:51–56).

Christ wasn’t asking His audience to pretend that there were no disagreements between Jews and Samaritans—nor that the Samaritans were not utterly wrong and twisted in their faith, which was a perversion of the true faith God had given Israel. Pretending that profound differences don’t really exist is not a path to creating reconciliation, finding solutions, or establishing truth. Rather, loving each of our fellow human beings as someone who is, like us, made in the image of our Creator, *despite* those differences, is the foundation of that path.

In fact, loving your *neighbor* is not even the most radical aspect of Jesus’ teaching in this regard. The Son of God commands all who would follow Him to raise the bar even higher:

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:43–45).

Transformation from Within

When we can barely find the strength and courage to love our neighbors, how can we expect to love our enemies? That transformation can only come from within, but unless the world around us supports us in that change, it can be almost impossible. This is why our world so desperately needs Jesus Christ to return, bringing the Kingdom of God with Him.

When Jesus Christ returns from Heaven, as He promised He will do, He will return as King of kings and Lord of lords. His way of life, and God’s laws that outline and support that way, will spread to all corners of planet Earth during a time commonly referred

to as the Millennium—a thousand-year span that will precede the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20). That Judgment will be a time when those who lived and died without truly recognizing His message will be resurrected for their opportunity to recognize and accept Him as Savior. There will be no human being who lived and died without an opportunity for salvation.

Yet that salvation is more than obedience to laws and rules. The returned Jesus Christ will be King, but He will do much more than teach and enforce God’s laws. Laws and rules of behavior aren’t enough if the human heart itself is not fundamentally transformed. One reason why our modern world has descended into the depths of interpersonal hatred is that, fundamentally, we remain flesh-and-blood human beings who routinely fail to transcend our own selfishness. The enduring lesson we learn from ancient Israel is that laws alone—even divine laws—are not enough.

If ever a set of laws could be sufficient to breathe life into a society and transform its citizens so that they might reflect the love and selflessness of God, it would be the set of laws given to Israel about 3,500 years ago (Galatians 3:21; cf. Psalm 19:7). But while God’s law communicates His high standard and is holy and good (Romans 7:12), it alone cannot change the sinful, carnal, human heart. In fact, the inspired words of Scripture assure us that “the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Romans 8:7).

This is why the Eternal God has ensured that the history of ancient Israel was recorded in Scripture to teach us that lesson. The Israelites were given the greatest set of laws human beings could ever hope to possess, yet those laws were not enough to prevent the nation’s eventual descent into selfish depravity, to the point where some even sacrificed their own children to heathen gods (Ezekiel 23:37)—much as our modern world sacrifices children to the popular “god” of personal convenience in abortion clinics around the world.

Changing the heart is beyond the reach of even the most powerful human ruler. But the reigning Jesus Christ will be no mere mortal president or prime minister. He will accomplish what no political system, false religion, or human-invented moral philosophy ever could achieve: the transformation of each individual human being, from the inside out.



The Spirit of God

Jesus Christ will not only bring to our world His just, caring, and compassionate laws; He will also make available the Spirit of God to dwell inside all who will accept His rule in their lives (cf. John 7:37–39). And, as the laws and righteous ways of living found only in Him spread to cover the entire world during His Millennial reign (Isaiah 11:9), so too will the outpouring of His Spirit on a repentant humanity allow men and women everywhere to become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). And those who surrender to Him *today*—His firstfruits—will be there with Him, serving as teachers. “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:21). Yes, we who overcome in this age will be there to help *others* overcome after Christ returns.

Human beings need the love of God within them if they are to learn to practice His way—to truly love their fellow man and live the laws of love our Creator provides. And it is by His Spirit that His love is poured into the hearts of men (Romans 5:5). When that spirit is poured out upon a repentant humanity during the reign of Christ, the result will be a world in which the idea of hating one’s neighbor will become as foreign as the idea of hating one’s own flesh. Even nations with longstanding historical hostilities

will enjoy peace with each other (cf. Isaiah 19:23–25) as people of all languages and cultures recognize the good things pouring forth into the world from Jerusalem—and want those blessings for themselves (Zechariah 8:20–23).

With Satan bound for a thousand years upon Christ’s return (Revelation 20:1–3), the King of kings will make hatred a thing of the dark and distant past. And in its place will be a new practice, fully embraced by a world that has finally learned how to do so: loving your neighbor as yourself.

You Can Seek That Love Today

That promised world of love—a global society that has been transformed beyond carnal partisanship, division, and hatred—need not remain merely a future hope for you. While the nations of the world will choose their own course, as their date with destiny hastens, your own course is for you to choose. The “powers of the age to come” can be tasted now in our individual lives (Hebrews 6:5) if we are willing to turn those lives over to the only One who can truly transform them.

Yes, our present world is filled with hate—and the full measure of hatred that will be unleashed before Christ’s return is not yet met. But you and I need not partake of that awful brew. We can instead partake of something so much better. The love of God—and the joy and peace of mind that come with it—is available now, for all who are willing to repent of their sins, utterly give every aspect of their lives over to Jesus Christ’s righteous reign, and embrace the way of life He offers. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).

If you have allowed yourself to be touched by hate—hate for someone whose politics, ideology, race, ethnicity, nationality, or religion differs from yours—you must repent. And you *can*. You can change. God can help.

Tomorrow’s world, in which every man, woman, and child learns to truly love their neighbors, will be built by those who learn to love their enemies today. TM

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SUGGEST?**

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Marks of Regret

By **Phil Sena**

I remember witnessing a baffling phenomenon when I was a teen in the mid-1970s. Gary Dahl, an enterprising California advertising man, marketed and sold what he called “the perfect pet”—the Pet Rock. Packaged in a small cardboard carton perforated with “breathing holes,” an ordinary rock was nestled in straw. Each came with a “birth certificate” for the rock, as well a training manual—*The Care and Training of Your Pet Rock*—containing instructions for teaching the rock to “stay” or “roll over” or “play dead.” Pet Rocks became wildly popular in the latter months of 1975, making Gary Dahl a millionaire, but the craze had run its course by early 1976, when sales dramatically fell off.

Such is the pattern of a fad, which *Merriam-Webster.com* defines as “a practice or interest followed for a time with exaggerated zeal.” This definition accurately describes many other practices that ride a wave of popularity, but eventually lose their momentum. The truth is, fads occur all the time. As hard as it is to believe, there are currently popular entertainment artists, fashion trends, and television shows that will all soon be out of style. At the time Pet Rocks were selling, I was wearing four-inch platform shoes and a polyester leisure suit with a gold chain around my neck—and I can assure you that I no longer wear such clothing!

Another truth about fads is that some, such as Pet Rocks and leisure suits, have no lasting negative consequences overall. Sadly, however, some fads *do* have long-term effects that can stay with us for the rest of

our lives, even bringing lasting regret to those who followed the crowd.

Consider the modern surge of interest in the ancient practice of tattooing. For many years, tattoos carried a negative stigma, as they were commonly associated with sailors, bikers, and gang members. More recently, however, according to a 2021 survey, more than one in four adults in the United States (26 percent) have at least one tattoo, and 17 percent have *multiple* tattoos. That is a sharp increase from the 14 percent who reported having a tattoo in 2008 (*Statista.com*, September 2021; *The Harris Poll*, February 23, 2012).

“Inking” has become so commonplace that it is not uncommon to see grandmothers sporting tattoos! And instead of subtle, easily hidden markings, many today make multiple trips to the parlor to cover large portions of their bodies with intricate and complex “body art.” Tellingly, there is even a growing industry dedicated to tattoo removal, with revenues of more than \$4 billion in 2021. That should make us think before we ink!

Making Your Mark?

Marking the skin has been practiced across many different civilizations, going back at least as far as 3000 BC. People’s reasons for getting tattoos appear to be as varied as their cultures, as ways “to place protective or therapeutic symbols upon the body, then as a means of marking people out into appropriate social, political or religious groups, or simply as a form of self-expression or fashion statement” (“Tattoos: The Ancient and Mysterious History,” *Smithsonian.com*, January 1, 2007).

According to a November 2020 article from *AuthorityTattoo.com*, many today get tattoos to commemorate events or people in their lives, to express individuality, “because they look cool,” or as an act of rebellion. Indeed, there remains an element of cultural defiance associated with tattoos. The same article states, “People often get tattoos to defy cultural norms, family expectations, or push the envelope in professional settings,” and admits that “rebellious tattoos can often become regretful, sometimes months or years after the initial inking.”

True Christians are identified by the eternal Spirit of God dwelling in them, allowing the obedient, faithful life of Jesus Christ to be carried out in their everyday

conduct and choices. Even religious tattoos are not the marks of Christianity. Rather, it is the obedient faith of Jesus Christ that identifies a true Christian.

These findings lead to an important personal question for those who are thinking of going under the needle: “What is my motivation?” People are great at rationalizing their desires, and they offer many reasons for wanting tattoos. But are their desires really their own, or are they giving in to peer pressure to “fit in” with the crowd or “be cool” by wearing a tattoo?

Tattoo artist Song Jiayin of Beijing gets right to the point in explaining why people around the world have tattoos: “When you choose to get tattooed and choose a different image to put on your body, you are actually

taking action to say, ‘I control my body, my body is different from other people’” (“‘I control my body’: Tattoos as an act of empowerment in China,” *South China Morning Post*, YouTube.com, March 3, 2023).

Yes, tattoos are a powerful personal statement, and they proclaim a “me first” attitude that does not mind getting “in your face” to show off for all to see one’s pride in his or her own body. Yet for those who follow God, the approach of “pleasing myself first”


is the exact opposite of the outflowing concern for other people that defines God’s love. The Apostle Paul wrote that “love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own” (1 Corinthians 13:4–5). That kind of love is not exhibited by a tattoo.

And this is not just a New Testament perspective. Long ago, God commanded His people, “You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:28). As the designer of the human body, God proclaimed it as “very good” after creating man and woman—without tattoos (Genesis 1:31).

More Than Skin Deep

Years ago, a man came to me in tears as he described his regret about the tattoos that covered both of his arms. He was wearing a long-sleeved shirt, ashamed to show me what he called the “evil” markings he had once thought were “awesome.” He had been considerably younger when he had received his tattoos, and had recently had a change of heart. He had investigated tattoo removal services, but the cost would be thousands of dollars and not completely effective. This dilemma was the reason for his tears.

Many who get tattoos when they are young find out later that they cannot find a good job as easily, since many employers still do not want to hire employees with obvious tattoos. Some people can afford the cost and the pain of tattoo removal, but others have no choice but to live with the visible evidence of a decision they have come to regret. Either way, they come to wish that they had considered the consequences more carefully.

Many of you who are reading this article may already be tattooed, and this is certainly not an attempt to shame you—none of us can change our past, and if you do have tattoos, it is not essential for you to have them removed. God is merciful and forgiving, and will not hold any of your tattoos against you if you sincerely ask for His forgiveness and simply make the right decisions going forward. Whether you regret your ink or have never had any, you can avoid future remorse by looking past the present popularity of a fad and keeping the future in mind. “A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished” (Proverbs 22:3). 

SACRIFICE AND JOY

One leads to the other.

My first stint as a camp counselor was at a Living Church of God preteen camp, and it provoked me to deep thought. As I drove home, the events of the previous week soaked in—all the laughter and pleasant fellowship, the fun and sometimes challenging activities, the bright faces of the kids, and so much more. It was unforgettable.

What impressed me most was the joy that came from serving as counselor. Some may ask, “Why?” Being a counselor is a challenging task, requiring much personal sacrifice. Each day, I was one of the first up and last to go to bed. Eight hours of sleep was not an option. At times, I was physically and even mentally exhausted.

Towards the camp’s end, I could sense that my patience was growing a little thin, so I did my best to remain positive and focus my attention on the campers: “Don’t play with that dead turtle!” “Where did you put your towel?” “No wrestling on the top bunk!” All of this was more than worth the end result: seeing my campers having a good time, challenged to improve old skills and learn new ones, doing things the right way—with some prodding—to produce positive results. The whole experience was greatly rewarding.

As I reflected on my experiences—especially how much sacrifice is required from a camp counselor, and why some people choose to be counselors year after year despite the hard work—they appeared paradoxical. On a human, physical level, giving so much of one’s time and energy with no tangible return seems nonsensical.

Are camp counselors inherently crazy? Or do they simply understand the joy of willing service and sacrifice?

Because He First Loved Us

With this thought, my focus shifted gears. I began to think of all the sacrifices God has made for us, His children. I thought of the very greatest sacrifice, that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and of how much love God really has for us to send His Son to die for our sins.

I thought of the joy I felt when I saw the campers having fun the right way. I thought of the joy God must feel when He sees us living abundant lives, the way He always intended (John 10:10). This is a mystery to the world, but not to God’s people. As the Apostle John wrote, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 4).

Perhaps the greatest reward of camp, for me, came when I found an unexpected “thank you” message on my phone, left by one of the campers. He thanked me sincerely for being his “coach” and listed various other things he was thankful for. His simple “thank you” was more than enough for me.

Not everybody may have the opportunity to be a counselor or a mentor to young people. Nevertheless, we are all meant to serve in some capacity—to sacrifice our time and energy to help one another.

How pleased God must be when He sees us living a way of life that produces blessings, and when we give Him thanks for all He has done. I remembered a saying regarding how much God wants us to succeed: “God is our biggest cheerleader.” Amen to that!

Have you counted the blessings God has given you personally, especially His offer of grace through our repentance, baptism, and obedient acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice? I would encourage you to do so—and to think of God’s joy when we thank Him and obey Him.

Not everybody may have the opportunity to serve as a counselor or a mentor to young people. Nevertheless, we are all meant to serve in some capacity—to sacrifice our time and energy to help one another. This giving way of life is a mystery to much of the world. But it is a way of life that works—and it brings great joy!

Whenever you are able to do so, work to strengthen the lives of those around you, young or old. You will thank yourself in the end.

—Jonathan Bueno



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THE HOLY DAYS

God's Master Plan





Your Child's "Hedgehog"

Seventy years ago, historian Isaiah Berlin published an essay titled "The Hedgehog and the Fox," expanding on a saying coined by the ancient Greek poet Archilochus, that "the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." In his 2001 book *Good to Great*, business analyst Jim Collins used this concept to explain why some businesses are great while others are merely good.

Collins found that truly great companies found one concept around which they organized—what he termed a "hedgehog" concept. A business would know that it had discovered its hedgehog concept when leaders could give the same answer to three questions: What are you deeply passionate about? What can you be best in the world at? What drives your economic engine (makes you money)?

Collins also realized that his three questions could apply to our personal lives—if we personalize these questions, they can give us personal direction. What Collins might not have realized is that his questions are supported by biblical principles. And with two of my sons approaching adulthood, these "hedgehog" questions have helped guide their preparation for the future.

As we help our children consider what paths to take as they leave our care, these three questions can give guidance. This can be especially important when they are graduating from high school and considering the next steps to take in life.

Three Questions to Assess the Future

The first question, personalized, asks us to focus on personal inclinations. What school subjects does your child like or dislike? Scripture exhorts us, "Whatever

your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). This is true regardless of the task, but it is made easier when we enjoy the work. When I was in school, math and history were two of my better subjects. However, I never really enjoyed math to the same degree that I did history. I appreciated math because I was decent at it and understood how it worked, but I never found myself wanting to learn more about it than was required. History, on the other hand, was something I found myself endlessly engrossed in—I could take multiple classes and enjoy learning more. When I decided to become a teacher, it was an easy choice to follow my passion. For your child, creating a list of subjects and activities they like can be helpful in answering this first question.

The second question focuses on talent. What have your children proven to be good at? Just as important, what do they struggle with? We read, "Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men" (Proverbs 22:29). It is rewarding to do a job that we can do well. Academic subjects can again be a good starting point for this question. I struggle with foreign languages and feel my blood pressure rise when I see someone bleed—being a translator or a doctor would not be good choices for me. And beyond academics, there are other areas of talent that should be considered. Does your child have a talent for hands-on work? Those who have talents for the trades can often find well-paying jobs that do not require them to take on student loan debt. Talent can also include artistic and athletic skills. As your children create a list of talents, hopefully some items will be the same as their answers to the first

question. These can be very helpful to determine what they both like and are good at.

Finally, what can your children do that will help them earn money? While the Bible warns strongly against developing a love of money, men should be motivated to provide for their own household (1 Timothy 6:10; 5:8). Christian men who fail to do so harm not just their own reputations, but that of Christians in general. This third question helps “the rubber meet the road” in case your child offers some implausible answers to the first two questions. How many teenagers think they have both a passion and a talent for playing video games? Even if this is true, it is very rare to be able to make a living by doing so. Instead, young men should be encouraged to find jobs that provide steady income to support themselves and their families. (For more on how to teach our children to embrace the roles God designed for them, you can read our January 2021 article “Teaching Kids True Masculinity and Femininity,” available at *TomorrowsWorld.org*.) The range of jobs that *can* provide an income is quite extensive, so it might be best simply to review your child’s first two lists and see if this question eliminates any candidates.

By answering these questions, your children should be able to narrow down a short list of enjoyable occupations at which they could excel and earn a reliable income. Answers to these questions may change over time, so revisiting them can be especially useful as high school graduation approaches. After completing twelfth grade, young people are usually faced with



the options of entering the workforce, going to a trade school, or attending a college or university. By reflecting on how they have answered the “hedgehog” questions, they can make a better choice.

One All-Important Consideration

There certainly are other elements to consider. The workforce continues to change, with more and more jobs becoming automated or obsolete. This can mean that young people should focus on skills that easily transfer from one job to another. These skills can be as simple as being able to get along with others (having good “people skills”), staying focused on tasks, and following instructions. Simply being open to correction is a huge advantage in the workplace. Ideally, young people will also target occupations that will not soon be automated or phased out. This once again reiterates how valuable trade schools can be for young people with those talents!

But the most crucial consideration is that the job should not encourage them to break God’s commandments. They might have found work that they like, they are good at, and will make them money—but will cause them to break a commandment of God. While most jobs are not looking for employees who murder or steal, some employers will demand that their employees break the Fourth Commandment by working on the seventh-day Sabbath. This can be a serious challenge for those who are already employed and want to start keeping the commandments. Young people, however, have the opportunity to aim for careers where they can keep all of God’s commandments—including the command to rest on the Sabbath day. (For more information on the Christian Sabbath, you can request a free copy of *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*, or read it at *TomorrowsWorld.org*.)

All good parents want their children to be successful as adults. I certainly hope to help my children find careers they find fulfilling that allow them to support themselves while keeping God’s commandments. Collins’ “hedgehog concept” can be a useful tool to help young people focus on careers in which they would find success. Our children may have a variety of passions and talents, but as parents, we can work with them so that their answers to these “hedgehog” questions can help them find success as they mature.

—Mark Sandor

China's Push into Africa

For the better part of a century, Britain brought roads, bridges, railroads, and infrastructure development to Africa—but it also took from the land and its people. In the early 1960s, Britain granted multiple African nations independence and pulled out. However, within a decade, China began to take its place (*The Telegraph*, May 31, 2023). With their Belt and Road initiative, China has built roads, ports, factories, jobs, and infrastructure in many African nations. Yet China is following in the footsteps of Britain and the other colonial powers in other ways, as well.

Over the last 20 years, China has invested nearly US\$160 billion in Africa—often in the form of loans. Since the 1970s, China has invested almost US\$3 billion in just Sierra Leone. Chinese money opens doors for the exploitation of nationally and internationally protected lands. By some accounts, armed guards protect Chinese workers encroaching into disputed or protected territory while national governments look the other way. China is effectively leveraging Africa's internal political corruption and conflicts for its own gain—not unlike colonial powers in times past. African communities with few sources of meaningful employment and lacking electricity and running water are willing to jump at any opportunity to improve con-

ditions today—disregarding long-term consequences.

China is not the only nation to behave this way. This cycle has been repeated around the world and throughout time. When powerful nations enter weaker ones, they seldom care about the peoples or the soil they occupy—their motive is profit and improving their own situation. Sadly, this cycle will not change until Jesus Christ returns to set up the Kingdom of God, where the focus will be on giving instead of getting and nations will be taught to wisely manage the earth instead of draining resources while ignoring the consequences or harm caused. Until then, nations will continue to be greedy for gain.

New “Data Bridge” Between United States and Great Britain

The United Kingdom and United States recently signed a new agreement to cooperate in the areas of “clean energy, critical minerals and artificial intelligence” (*Reuters*, June 8). According to British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's office, under the new Atlantic Declaration, “Britain and the United States will strengthen their supply chains, develop technologies of the future and invest in one another's industries.” Mr. Sunak and U.S. President Joe Biden agreed to set up a new “civil nuclear partnership” to reduce British reliance on Russian energy and agreed

to create a “data bridge” that would allow UK businesses to transfer data to the U.S. with less red tape.

Today, we are witnessing a new regionalization of national alliances. China, India, Russia, Iran, and other nations in their area of the world are growing closer. Pacific nations are also working more closely together. European nations are working toward greater cooperation and harmonization, despite routine national personality conflicts. Meanwhile, two nations separated by an ocean—the UK and the U.S.—continue to maintain their decades-long relationship and draw even closer together to share sensitive national security secrets.

Students of Bible prophecy should not be surprised. End-time prophecies focus on four major end-time world powers: The King of the North (or “beast” of Revelation), a group of European nations led by Germany that will eventually occupy the Holy Land; the King of the South, a group of Arab-Muslim nations that work against this “beast”; kings from the East, a group of nations that will likely include China, Russia, India, and other nations that earn the wrath of the “beast” (see Daniel 11:40–44); and the Israelite-descended nations—the U.S., UK, and other British-descended nations that will decline and go into some form of national captivity. Watch for prophesied conflict among these key powers.

Rise in Forced Homelessness

According to a new report from the United Nations refugee agency, last year “saw a record spike in people forcibly uprooted from their homes” (*Deutsche Welle*, June 14). In 2022, the number of displaced people around the globe rose by nearly twenty million—with many connected to the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Sudan. Tragically, poorer countries sometimes bear the burden of housing refugees.

One encouraging item in the report is that in 2022, nearly six million displaced persons were able to return to their homes—primarily in Syria, Ethiopia, and Myanmar. However, more than one hundred million people were displaced.

War, lust, and greed are major contributors to the forcible displacement of people from their homes. Yet, there is good news on the horizon. The Bible reveals that Jesus Christ is going to return to set up the Kingdom of God and put an end to war (Isaiah 2:4). Also, God will create a system where land remains in a family's possession. Even if it is lost for a time, it will be returned to the family at the end of each 50-year cycle. Home and land are important to human beings, and they are also very important to God.

A.I. Religion Ahead?

A.I. has been in use behind the scenes for years and has become so common that it is involved in everything from the online shopping recommen-

dations we receive to whether we are approved for a loan. But where is A.I. headed? With the advent of widely accessible A.I. services, such as ChatGPT, whole new realms of possibility have been opened, potentially replacing tremendous amounts of human work. Now, some are routinely using A.I. to generate original images, write original essays, and even imitate the voices of others.

In an online interview published on YouTube, popular and influential author Yuval Noah Harari has even suggested that an advanced, future A.I. could one day be used to author a new religious book to replace the Bible—allowing some to claim the book truly was generated by a superhuman intelligence: “Think about a religion whose holy book is written by an A.I. That could be a reality in a few years” (“Humanity Is Not That Simple,” June 6).

In a recent German Lutheran worship service in Bavaria, around 300 congregants

listened to a sermon, prayers, and music generated almost entirely by A.I.—with words written by ChatGPT and images and voices generated by other A.I. software (*Associated Press*, June 10). A 29-year-old University of Vienna theologian and philosopher, Jonas Simmerlein, who used A.I. to create the church service, claimed, “I conceived this service—but actually I rather accompanied it, because I would say about 98 percent comes from the machine.” Later, members of the congregation commented that the sermon was presented in a monotone manner and without emotion—but the technology is always improving.

How will true believers navigate the increasingly complex world of A.I.-informed religion that some believe is coming? People will need to know their Bibles to verify—or contradict—what the A.I. source is saying (1 Thessalonians 5:21; Isaiah 8:20). They will also need to be guided by God’s

Holy Spirit. As the Apostle Paul noted, “For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11). Artificial intelligence searches vast databases and compiles its results from those databases. However, the truth of the Bible cannot be compiled from databases, but rather requires godly discernment guided by God’s Spirit. As time moves forward, truth will become rare (Isaiah 59:14). People will need to draw nearer to God, dive deeper into their Bibles, and be led more fully by His Spirit to avoid being deceived.

Is Europe Moving Rightward?

Many European politicians have long prided themselves on being “centrists”—neither too far to the right nor too far to the left. Those toward the ends of the spectrum have often been viewed as extremists. But this appears to be changing. According to *Politico*, in a recent vote on migration, “Europe’s traditional center-right conservatives were now willing to caucus with [right-wing Italian Prime Minister Giorgia] Meloni, who leads a post-fascist party in Italy, ditching the doubts that had long kept the far-right isolated. Meanwhile, centrist and left-leaning countries like the Netherlands and Denmark had come around to Italy’s thinking—and Germany was

too splintered internally to do anything about it” (June 21).

However, this shift to the right is not limited to the issue of migration. The change in sentiment is being felt in other initiatives, as well, such as European plans for climate regulations. While traditionally left-leaning Germany, which usually gets its way in parliamentary issues, is in political turmoil, much of Europe appears to be moving to the right. “The trend will inevitably have implications for the EU,” *Politico* reports, “which will elect a new European Parliament in 2024 and then reshuffle its Brussels leadership. Already, progressives are expressing anxiety about the reshaped right, while the powerful center-right European People’s Party (EPP) is eyeing team-up possibilities with the far-right to push its agenda.”

Students of Bible prophecy should keep an eye on these political shifts in Europe. Scripture indicates that a powerful individual—referred to as a “beast”—will emerge in Europe. This person will lead Germany and other European leaders for a short period of time just before Jesus Christ returns to this earth (see Revelation 13 and 17). These national leaders will “give their power and authority” to this person for a time (Revelation 17:12–13), profoundly impacting the rest of the world—especially the United States, the British-descended nations, and the modern nation of Israel. TW



LETTERS TO TW

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK



I am writing you this short letter requesting a copy of the CD [*The Day of the Lord*]. I watch your program every Sunday evening at 6:30pm on Channel 35. I've always found that no matter who hosts the show each week, it is extremely uplifting and so true about the way the world is going.

—Viewer in Prince Edward Island

Hi, I can't get enough of your magazines. So far I see that you tell the good and the bad, where others will only tell what makes you feel good for a moment. I love the Lord with all my heart, soul, and mind, but still can't get off the cigarettes. A little bit of stress and I run for a smoke. So I'm hoping through your magazine that God will help me get off of them for good. I don't smoke in my house. I've been smoking since I was 13 years old when my sister was killed. Thank you for telling the *whole* truth of the Bible.

—Subscriber in Montana

I just want to thank you for the booklets. I have studied and read the Bible for eleven years and never got a real understanding. But with your booklets now I can go back to the Bible and get a real understanding of it more clearly.

—Subscriber in North Carolina

Thank you so much for teaching us how to worship God the right way. Now, thanks to you, we understand how Jesus was in the grave three days. I followed the Holy Days book to rid heaven for the next seven days. Wow, how incredible! After about the third day I noticed that a pain in my body, I thought I would never be

free of, was gone! I can't thank you people enough, and of course I thank the Living God and His Son.

—Reader in Queensland

Thank you so much for the free literature. I have always believed in the Bible, but your information has added even more meaning to it. I am 88 years old, but I pray that the Lord will give me the time to finish all I want to do. God bless you all in your beautiful work.

—Subscriber in Washington

Greetings in the Mighty Name of Jesus. We are doing well and hope you are also enjoying good health. I am writing this letter to inform you that the booklets you have been sending us are a good source of information, history, and teachings of the Holy Bible. We are trying to translate it to our national language (Urdu) so that it is convenient for everyone to read it. Stay blessed.

—Reader in Pakistan

I am really blessed to read your magazine *Tomorrow's World*. Thank God for revealing to us the real truth about His plan and what will happen at Jesus Christ's coming. I thank God for using your magazine to open our minds to His great mercy.

—Subscriber in Ontario

Dear *Tomorrow's World*, I want to thank you for all the free literature and magazines and the free Bible course. I've learned so much throughout the years watching you on TV and reading your lessons on the word.

—Reader in New York

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P.7 Brandon Fall

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Mail your letters to "Letters to the Editor" at one of the Regional Offices listed on page 4 of this magazine, or send email to Letters@TomorrowsWorld.org. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

TOMORROW'S WORLD

TELEVISION LOG



AUSTRALIA

Nationwide 7TWO SU 7:00 a.m.
Nationwide SC10 SU 7:30 a.m.

BARBADOS

St. Michael CBC 8 SU 2:00 p.m.

JAMAICA

Kingston TVJ SU 7:00 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND

Nationwide TVNZ2 SU 5:00 a.m.
Nationwide TVNZ2 +1 SU 6:00 a.m.

PHILIPPINES

Nationwide TV5 MO 11:30 p.m.
Nationwide TV5 TU 12:00 a.m.

SOUTH AFRICA

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

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Nationwide CNC3-TV SU 8:00 a.m.

UK & NW EUROPE

WORD (TWN) Sky TV 590 SU 11:00 a.m.
Sky TV 590 SU 12:30 a.m.
Sky TV 590 FR 12:00 a.m.



CANADA

Nationwide Networks (All times Eastern)

Vision SA 3:30 a.m.

FAITH TV SU 5:30 p.m.
MO-FR 10:30 p.m.

TU 5:00 p.m.

CHNU MO-FR 10:00 p.m.

CTV (Maritimes) SU 7:30 a.m.

CTV (Alberta) SU 1:30 p.m.

UNITED STATES

Nationwide Networks (All times Eastern)

Binge SU 9:00 a.m.

Charge Network SU 7:30 a.m.

Circle TV SU 8:00 a.m.

COMET SU 7:30 a.m.

The CW Plus SU 8:00 a.m.

MO 2:00 a.m.

getTV SU 7:00 a.m.

Impact TV SU 11:00 p.m.

MO 10:30 p.m.

SA 11:00 p.m.

NewsNation (formerly WGN) SU 6:00 a.m.

Rewind SU 9:00 a.m.

The Word Network SU 6:00 a.m.

SU 7:30 p.m.

FR 7:00 p.m.

DISH Network* (All times Eastern)

Impact Ch. 268 SU 11:00 p.m.

MO 10:30 p.m.

DIRECTV* (All times Eastern)

Word Ch. 373 SU 6:00 a.m.

SU 7:30 p.m.

FR 7:00 p.m.

For the most up-to-date listings, please go to
TomorrowsWorld.org/tune-in

AK Anchorage KYUR SU 6:00 a.m.
Fairbanks KATN SU 7:00 a.m.
Juneau KJUD SU 6:00 a.m.

AL Dothan WTVY (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.
Huntsville WZDX SU 9:30 a.m.
Montgomery WBMM (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.
Opelika WLTX SU 7:30 a.m.

AR El Dorado KNOE SU 7:00 a.m.
Fayetteville KHOG SU 7:00 a.m.
Fort Smith KFTA SU 10:00 a.m.
Fort Smith KHBS SU 7:00 a.m.
Jonesboro KAIT SU 7:00 a.m.
Little Rock KASN SU 10:30 a.m.

AZ Tucson KMSB SU 8:30 a.m.
Yuma KEYC (CW) SU 9:00 a.m.

CA Bakersfield KGET (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.
Chico KHSL (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.
El Centro KEYC (CW) SU 9:00 a.m.
Eureka KECA-LD/KVIQ (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.
Monterey KION (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.
Palm Springs KCWQ (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.
Salinas KION (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.
San Francisco BAVC (Public Access) WE 8:00 a.m.
San Luis Obispo KSBY (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.
Santa Barbara KSBY (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.
Santa Maria KSBY (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

CO Colorado Springs KXTU SU 9:00 a.m.
Colorado Springs KXTU SU 10:30 a.m.
Grand Junction KJCT (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

CT Hartford WWLP (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

DC Washington DC WDCA SU 7:30 a.m.

DE Harrington WMDT (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

FL Ft. Lauderdale WBFS SU 6:30 a.m.

Gainesville WCJB SU 6:00 a.m.

Gainesville WCJB (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Jacksonville WCWJ SU 6:30 a.m.

Miami WBFS SU 6:30 a.m.

Panama City WJHG (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

Tallahassee WTLF SU 8:00 a.m.

Tampa Bay WTOG SU 8:00 a.m.

GA Albany WALB (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Albany WALB SU 11:00 a.m.

Atlanta WATL SU 10:00 a.m.

Augusta WAGT (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Columbus WLTX (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Macon WMAZ SU 8:00 a.m.

Savannah WSAV SU 8:00 a.m.

Thomasville WTLF (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

IA Ottumwa KWOT SU 8:00 a.m.

ID Boise KBOI SU 7:00 a.m.

Idaho Falls KIFI SU 7:00 a.m.

Twin Falls KMVT SU 7:00 a.m.

IL Chicago WJYS SU 8:00 a.m.

Chicago WJYS SU 8:30 a.m.

Peoria WHOI SU 7:00 a.m.

Quincy WGEM SU 7:00 a.m.

IN Fort Wayne WPTA SU 7:00 a.m.

Fort Wayne WPTA SU 7:30 a.m.

Lafayette WFLI SU 7:00 a.m.

KS Kansas City KCWE SU 7:30 a.m.

Topeka KTKA SU 7:00 a.m.

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

Lexington WTVQ SU 7:00 a.m.

Louisville WBNA SU 9:30 a.m.

Paducah WDKA SU 11:00 a.m.

LA Alexandria KALB SU 7:00 a.m.

Lafayette KATC SU 7:00 a.m.

Lake Charles KPLC SU 7:00 a.m.

Monroe KMCT SU 6:00 a.m.

Monroe KNOE SU 7:00 a.m.

New Orleans WNOL SU 7:00 a.m.

Shreveport KSHV SU 10:00 a.m.

West Monroe KMCT SU 6:00 a.m.

MA Springfield WWLP SU 7:00 a.m.

ME Bangor WABI SU 8:00 a.m.

Presque Isle WBPQ SU 8:00 a.m.

MI Alpena WBAE SU 8:00 a.m.
Lansing WLAJ SU 8:00 a.m.
Lansing WLAJ SU 11:00 a.m.
Calumet WBKP SU 8:00 a.m.

MN Cloquet KDHL (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Duluth KDHL SU 8:00 a.m.

Mankato KMNF/KEYC (CW) SU 9:00 a.m.

Rochester KTTC SU 7:00 a.m.

MO Columbia KOMU SU 7:00 a.m.

Joplin KFJX SU 8:30 a.m.

Kansas City KCWE SU 7:30 a.m.

St. Joseph KNPG SU 7:00 a.m.

St. Louis KPLR SU 6:30 a.m.

MS Biloxi WXXV SU 7:00 a.m.

Columbus WCBT SU 7:00 a.m.

Greenwood WBWO SU 7:00 a.m.

Hattiesburg WHLT/WXXX SU 7:00 a.m.

Meridian WTOK SU 7:00 a.m.

MT Billings KTVO SU 7:00 a.m.

Butte KBZK SU 7:00 a.m.

Butte KXLF SU 7:00 a.m.

Glendive KWZB SU 7:00 a.m.

Great Falls KRTV SU 7:00 a.m.

Helena KTVH SU 7:00 a.m.

Missoula KPAX SU 7:00 a.m.

NC Asheville WGGG SU 9:30 a.m.

Asheville WGGG SU 11:30 a.m.

Charlotte WAXN SU 9:00 a.m.

Charlotte WMYT SU 8:30 a.m.

Greenville WNCT SU 8:00 a.m.

Hickory WHKY MO 7:30 p.m.

Raleigh WRAZ SU 7:30 a.m.

Willmington WWAY SU 8:00 a.m.

ND Bismarck KXMA (CW2) SU 7:00 a.m.

Fargo KJXB (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

Williston KXMD SU 7:00 a.m.

NM Albuquerque KWBQ SU 8:00 a.m.

NV Reno KOLO SU 7:00 a.m.

NY Binghamton WBNG SU 8:00 a.m.

Brooklyn BRIC SU 7:00 p.m.

Brooklyn BRIC MO 12:30 a.m.

Elmira WENY SU 8:00 a.m.

Watertown WWTI SU 7:00 a.m.

Utica KYWKTV SU 8:00 a.m.

OH Cincinnati WSTR SU 9:00 a.m.

Cleveland WUAB SU 8:30 a.m.

Columbus WOXB/WXW/WGCT/WOIZ SU 8:00 a.m.

Toledo BBCT SU 7:30 a.m.

Zanesville WBZV SU 8:00 a.m.

OK Ada KTEN SU 7:00 a.m.

Lawton KAUZ SU 7:00 a.m.

Tulsa KCWC SU 8:00 a.m.

OR Bend KTVZ SU 8:00 a.m.

Eugene KMTR SU 8:00 a.m.

Medford KTVL SU 8:00 a.m.

PA Erie WSEE SU 8:00 a.m.

Philadelphia WPSG SU 7:30 a.m.

Pittsburgh WPCW SU 7:30 a.m.

SC Charleston WCBD SU 8:00 a.m.

Columbia WOLO SU 11:00 a.m.

Florence WWMB SU 8:00 a.m.

Greenville WYCW SU 9:30 a.m.

Greenville WGGG SU 11:30 a.m.

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Myrtle Beach WWMB SU 8:00 a.m.

Rock Hill WAXN SU 9:00 a.m.

Rock Hill WMYT SU 8:30 a.m.

SD Rapid City KCLO (ION/CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

Sioux Falls KFSY SU 7:00 a.m.

TN Jackson WBJK SU 7:00 a.m.

Knoxville WKNN SU 12:00 a.m.

Knoxville WKNN SU 7:00 a.m.

Knoxville WKNN SU 7:30 a.m.

Knoxville WKNN SU 6:00 p.m.

Memphis WLMT SU 10:00 a.m.

TX Abilene KTXS SU 7:00 a.m.

Amarillo KVIH/KVII SU 7:00 a.m.

Beaumont KFDM SU 6:30 a.m.

Beaumont KFDM SU 7:00 a.m.

Corpus Christi KRIS-DT2 SU 7:00 a.m.

Laredo KYLX SU 7:00 a.m.

Lubbock KLCW SU 7:00 a.m.

Lufkin KLTU SU 6:00 a.m.

McAllen KCWT/KNOV SU 7:00 a.m.

Midland KOSA/KCWO SU 7:00 a.m.

Odessa KOSA/KCWO SU 7:00 a.m.

San Angelo KTXE SU 7:00 a.m.

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UPCOMING TELECASTS

Seven Proven Keys to Answered Prayer

If you feel that your prayers aren't being heard, consider these strategies for a breakthrough!

August 31–September 6

What Is the Feast of Trumpets?

A little-known Holy Day that Jesus observed reveals wonderful news for your future!

September 7–13

Four Signs of a True Christian

Many call themselves Christian, but do you know how to be sure you've met one?

September 14–20

Five Myths About the Resurrection of Jesus

Millions have been duped into believing false ideas that hide the Savior's true purpose.

September 21–27

Five Bible Mysteries Revealed

Learn what most don't know about the Bible, and you'll appreciate it more than ever!

September 28–October 4

What Is the Gospel Jesus Preached?

How many people call themselves Christian but have never been taught Christ's true message?

October 5–11

Schedule subject to change

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Nationwide

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Mondays 2:00 a.m. E.T.

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