

TOMORROW'S **WORLD**

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Too Big To Fail?



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

“Hiding Out” from God’s Truth?

Last December, a segment of the popular *60 Minutes* television show followed a group of monks who live by themselves on a remote Greek mountain, trying valiantly to “get closer” to Jesus Christ.

These men allow *no women* to even be on the premises. They cut themselves off—almost completely—from the world and from other people. They grow their own food, and overall have created their own “little world” so they would not need to come into much contact with outside.

They do this because they imagine that their seclusion will help them grow closer to Jesus Christ.

My friends, is that **really** how to grow closer to the real Jesus Christ of the Bible? Is that how Jesus *Himself* actually lived? Is that how His immediate apostles and disciples lived—those who were directly taught by Him and saw His example in person? Is that how you and I should live? Is that how *anyone* who is truly trying to imitate Christ should live?

Think! Jesus Christ gave one of His most powerful commands at the very start of His ministry: “Man shall not live by bread **alone**, but by **every** word of God” (Luke 4:4). God’s word reveals His mind—the way He thinks and acts, and the way He wants *us* to act. God’s word—the Bible—is the “Instruction Manual” for mankind, revealing what true Christianity is all about!

Yet, down through the ages, there have been countless thousands who have cut themselves off from humanity as a whole—living in monasteries and nunneries, abasing and humiliating themselves in various ways—in an effort to “get closer to Christ.” Most of these people were obviously *very sincere*. But is sincerity enough? The basic, pivotal point is: should we let **God Almighty** tell us how to worship Him, or should we invent our *own* version of Christianity?

The Apostle Paul encountered many who added all kinds of “do’s and don’ts” to God’s commandments—in

a sense inventing their own religion. Paul wrote, “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:3).

Have these well-intentioned Greek monks, and thousands of others like them, tried to “establish their **own** righteousness?” Consider that, throughout your Bible and in the example of Jesus Christ and His immediate apostles and followers, God clearly reveals that His servants are to “go into all the world” and “preach” the Truth—to give a warning and set an **example** that other people can see even while living in this sin-filled world (John 17:15–19).

Although Jesus went out into the wilderness to **fast** and to “seek God” at the beginning of His ministry, and although He *did fast* and *pray* throughout His life, the *vast majority* of His time was spent in constant contact with His fellow human beings—teaching them, healing them, serving them and setting a perfect **example** of the *way of life* the Eternal God wants us all to live. His disciples did the same. After they returned from an evangelistic tour—where they had been *very busy* helping and teaching hundreds of people—Jesus said to them, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” (Mark 6:31).

The biblical account shows they had been so busy helping and serving others—literally *surrounded* by others—that they had not had time to eat. So, they tried to depart to a deserted place to get their rest, as Jesus had instructed. Yet, when they came out of their boat, “multitudes saw them” and gathered around Jesus. What did He do? Did He go away from them, and insist on being “by Himself”? No! Rather, He was “moved with compassion for them” and He began to teach them about the way of God (vv. 33–34).

Continued on page 30

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INSIDE

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Why I Know There Is a REAL God!

4 Is God real to you? Have you proven for yourself that there is a Supreme Being who intervenes in world affairs—and your life—for His purposes? You can, and you should!

Too Big To Fail?

10 A hundred years ago, the famous ocean liner Titanic hit an iceberg and sank to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. What lessons can it teach us today?

The Universe and You!

16 When you look up at the stars, what do you see? Do you see your future? God has a plan for you that involves the whole universe!

Greed!

22 Some have said, "Greed is good!" Others protest "Wall Street greed." What does God's own character teach us about good business?

28 The Messiah, Misunderstood

Many fail to recognize the real Jesus.

MORE

9 Questions and Answers

13 Letters to the Editor

14 London Calling Will Britain Leave the European Union?

20 Prophecy Comes Alive The End of the Age!

26 Tomorrow's Youth Become a Great Conversationalist!

31 Television Log

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Why I Know There Is a REAL God!

By Roderick C. Meredith

Does the God of the Bible actually seem real to you, personally? He can—and He should!

When horrifying personal or national tragedies strike, do you ever find that the idea of a real God seems very nebulous or uncertain to you? Are you unsure about what will happen to you when you die? For nearly all human beings, these are certainly normal feelings. They are *nothing* to be ashamed of.

I can relate to this. As thousands of you subscribers—and hundreds of my former students and colleagues—know, I was brought up in an average middle-class family and attended a “mainstream” Protestant church for the first 19 years of my life. Quite regularly, the congregation heard that we could look forward to “going to heaven” to spend eternity—if we were “good people” and loved Jesus.

Very little was ever mentioned about what we would actually *do* when we got to heaven—or if there was any real *purpose* for our lives beyond that. And although we often heard the idea that there was a “God” up in heaven and that He loved us, it was often stated very sentimentally, but it was never proved. We all just “assumed” that it was so.

Despite all these “nice” sentiments, I began to notice that—when real tragedies occurred—most of my friends and relatives were deeply shaken. They did not seem very happy about the idea that they, or any of their loved ones, might go up to this supposedly wonderful “heavenly home” the minister talked about. Then, after the sudden death of my dear friend, Jimmy Mallette—whose neck was broken in a wrestling

match—I, too, was shaken. I began a quest to prove to myself *whether* or not a real God existed, and to discover *what* His purpose was for creating mankind, if indeed there was any purpose.

A POWERFUL VOICE

Back in 1944, in the latter days of World War II, Germany was being pulverized by British and American bombers. Around that time, I began listening to a radio preacher named Herbert W. Armstrong. Despite the apparent defeat of Germany, Mr. Armstrong pointed out from Bible prophecies that the German nation would *rise again* and become the leading power in a coming European Empire. A few years later, in the fall of 1949, I traveled to Pasadena, California, to enroll in Mr. Armstrong's Ambassador College. There, I heard much more about the coming European Empire—actually a *revival* of the ancient Holy Roman Empire—and I began to understand from the Bible exactly *why* America and Britain were such great nations, and what *would happen* to them if they did not fully repent and turn to the God of the Bible. Mr. Armstrong told us many times that the greatness of the English-speaking nations would be removed. He showed us that the British Commonwealth nations and the United States were the modern descendants of the “lost” Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. And, by understanding the Bible prophecies related to those ancient tribes, he specifically pointed out that the great “sea gates” promised to those nations in the Bible were to be taken away—places like the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, the Straits of Malacca, the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar—unless there would be national repentance.

I remember Mr. Armstrong in 1954, during a dynamic speaking

campaign in Great Britain, thundering a powerful warning about the coming demise of the British Empire, the loss of its sea gates and the growth of the European Union that was to come! *I was there*, hearing him powerfully proclaim, “If you British people do not *genuinely* repent and turn to the God of the Bible, there will be no more British Empire! Your great sea gates, such as the Suez Canal, will be taken away! And America will be brought down if we do not repent!”

This was not “his idea.” It was there in the pages of the Bible for those with eyes to see. He also pointed out that, according to Bible prophecy, the nations of Eastern Europe would have to break away from the Soviet Union, and that West Germany and East Germany would reunify. He wrote, in the April 1952 issue of his *Good News* magazine, “Russia may give East Germany back to the Germans and will be forced to relinquish her control over Hungary, Czechoslovakia and parts of Austria to complete the ten nation union. Europe will have a free hand to destroy America and Britain as prophesied” (p. 16).

At a time when most “experts” were frightened by the prospect of war between the United States and the Soviet Union, Mr. Armstrong understood from Bible prophecy that something very different would take place. He wrote: “The way is being prepared for a colossal third force in world politics—a European Federation of Nations more powerful than either Russia or the United States!... We have shown years in advance what would happen to Russia's ill-fated Empire in Eastern Europe” (*Plain Truth*, December 1956, p. 3).

What about war between the U.S. and the Soviets? Mr. Armstrong wrote: “No all-out full-scale war is prophesied between Russia and the United States. The famous prophecy of Ezek. 38 and 39 foretells a

Russian invasion of Palestine, much later, not against the North American continent” (*Plain Truth*, August 1950, p. 2).

Millions of people heard Mr. Armstrong make pronouncements like these, or read his articles proclaiming the certainty of these events prophesied in the Bible. Yet most scoffed at what they heard.

A SECULAR EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

As these *specific prophecies* began to occur, many people were astonished. As the Berlin Wall came down and the once-mighty Soviet Union collapsed, millions were caught by surprise. The “mainstream” news analysts and pundits had had no idea that these events would occur. But those familiar with Mr. Armstrong's teachings were not surprised. Indeed, note these revealing admissions by the editor of a small newspaper in Tennessee, who *did understand*. He had *no religious connection* with Mr. Armstrong whatever. But here is what he wrote after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakaway of these Eastern European nations—which Mr. Armstrong had *specifically* predicted:

“Like a great many Americans I have been watching the current political situation in East Germany with interest. While many have expressed surprise at the recent events and at East German cries for reunification of East and West Germany, I have to admit I haven't been too surprised by these events. The reason I haven't been particularly surprised is that for years I have occasionally read the publications of... the late Herbert W. Armstrong... Armstrong predicted that the Berlin Wall would some day come down and the two German states would once again reunite

into a powerful nation” (*Free Press*, December 7, 1989).

FULFILLED PROPHECY

The above is just one of several examples I could cite. Again and again, by deeply studying the Bible and then carefully watching all these *specific fulfillments* of prophecies affecting major nations and situations, I have *proved to myself* the absolute truth of many, many specific Bible prophecies about Egypt, Babylon, the revived Roman Empire, and the reason why America and the British-descended peoples have been given such great powers and blessings. Over the years, I have realized that Bible prophecy is *accurate* in describing what will happen to major cities and nations *all over this earth!* If there were not a “real” God who actually inspired and guided the writing of these prophecies, they would not have been fulfilled on so many occasions and in such miraculous detail. Except for the Holy Bible, no other book even remotely gives such *detailed* prophecies about the exact fate of peoples and nations—often *hundreds or thousands of years* in advance!

Almighty God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write: “Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,’ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it. Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, who are far from righteousness” (Isaiah 46:9–12).

If you are not already familiar with what the Bible teaches about the end-time fulfillment of prophecy

and how it relates to the former British Commonwealth nations and the United States in particular, please request your free copy of our booklets, *The Beast of Revelation* and *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*. These booklets will help you prove to yourself, from Scripture, what will soon happen as end-time prophetic fulfillments continue to speed up as never before! These booklets will make your Bible “come alive,” as you



recognize prophecy being fulfilled. They will add meaning to your reading the daily newspaper, as you see event after event fall into place just as God has prophesied!

For instance, be sure to “watch” (Luke 21:36) whether one or both of Britain’s only two remaining “sea gates”—Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands—are taken away within the next few years. Scripture says this will happen before the end of this age. And right now—in the prophesied “last days” of this world’s society—God is beginning to intervene powerfully in world affairs. He will soon “wipe the smirk off” the faces of the doubters and the scoffers!

As for me, after 62 years in the true Work of Almighty God, I have learned not to doubt what God says, once I have proved to myself that

the Bible *clearly predicts* something. For I know that it *will happen!* And I know that anything God tells His people to do will work out for good in the end (Romans 8:28).

GOD IS THE ULTIMATE HEALER

Another reason I know God is real is that I have proved Him to be the ultimate Healer. Of course, God expects each of us to “do our part” in maintaining good health. It is not that we should abuse our bodies for decades, and not be willing to give up the unhealthy practices that helped to make us ill, yet still demand from God an instant healing. We do have a responsibility to follow the health guidelines God has given in His word. And we should not be embarrassed about seeking a medical “check-up” if we seem to be developing an illness. Sometimes a doctor can tell us “what’s wrong,” so we can then understand what we need to do to take proper care of ourselves.

However, we should not forget that only God is our Creator and our Healer. Doctors may be able to repair injuries and slow the spread of illness, but healing comes from God. As all of you who are familiar with the Bible should know, one of the *vital aspects* of the ministry of Jesus Christ was healing. Scripture tells us: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, *and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people*” (Matthew 4:23). So, we see that Jesus continually healed many different kinds of disease and sickness. We need to understand that—when we are dealing with the real God of the Bible—there is nothing He cannot do. There is nothing that He cannot heal (Mark 3:1–6; John 9:1–7; Acts 3:1–10)!

Jesus Himself said very clearly, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Matthew 9:12). So doctors and health professionals can be of immense help at times. Yet the real God of the Bible can go *far beyond* what they are able to do! And, we should not forget that even if we want to trust in doctors and hospitals, they have their limits. As I have often pointed out, when the prophesied terrible *disease epidemics* begin to occur on a massive scale and millions are being afflicted, doctors and hospitals will be absolutely overwhelmed! Many people will not even have the option of trusting in doctors and hospitals. They will, as never before, truly need to go above and beyond what mankind can do and look to the great God who made their bodies in the first place!

One vital aspect of Jesus’ ministry is the mission He gave to His disciples. He sent them out, and “He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease” (Matthew 10:1). Divine healing is one of the proofs of the real God of the Bible. That power is still in effect today, and I have seen it for myself many times!

I personally taught and baptized one veteran of the Korean War who was a quadriplegic. For years, Howard Clark relied on a wheelchair, unable to move around on his own power. This man had *absolutely* been to the doctors! He had been to the *very best* naval hospitals in the world and had had all kinds of operations and medical procedures—all to *no avail*.

For several years, I had grown used to seeing Howard in his wheelchair, sitting at the right-hand side of our congregation’s meeting hall every week. After some time, he felt inspired to ask for prayer for healing. On the day of Pentecost,

my dear friend Richard David Armstrong—the elder son of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong—prayed for this paralyzed veteran. And right then, this former quadriplegic was supernaturally healed!

I had been in Chicago that day, conducting Pentecost services there. When I returned to Pasadena, I was met by one of the young college drivers who told me excitedly, “Mr. Meredith, have you heard that Howard Clark was healed the other day?” I exclaimed, “No! I was away and no one told me.” So, I was thrilled to hear that such a remarkable miracle had occurred. The very next day, I was able to visit with Howard personally and see him walking about. Then—several weeks later—I saw him going through a wedding reception line, carrying and jostling two of his children as he laughed and talked with others in the line. This brought tears to my eyes. It was an experience I will never forget!

For the “real” God of the Bible does heal.

Another powerful example of divine healing came while I was on a “visiting tour” of our scattered Church members back in 1951. While traveling with another Ambassador College student, we

met a lady who came to be counseled for baptism. She had brought to our meeting a friend she had known since childhood. In faith, this woman had written to Mr. Armstrong asking for an anointed cloth, according to the biblical example (Acts 19:11–12). And after receiving the cloth, this woman began to be *supernaturally healed* by Almighty God. By the time she met us young men from the college, it had been a few months after she had received the cloth. When our counseling was complete—and she had nothing to “gain” from us by telling us—she said, “Fellows, I want to show you something that may be encouraging.” She held out both her arms, and described how her right arm had been withered from childhood and she had never been able to use it in a normal way. She explained how—after receiving the anointed cloth and praying to God—the arm began to *grow right out*. Then she said, “Fellows, notice that this arm is still a little smaller than the other one. Although God healed the arm, the muscles are not fully developed yet, and God is letting me rebuild the muscles. I can now milk our cows with *both hands*!”

When she said this, it brought tears to my eyes. Yet, being from the

YOUR ULTIMATE DESTINY



God has a wonderful future planned for Christians—a future that very few today even begin to understand!

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“show me” state, Missouri, I felt the need to “check up” on her. So I asked her friend, “Did you really grow up with her and see her withered arm all of those years?” She said, “Yes I did. And it is a remarkable thing how it has grown right back again!” Yet, despite seeing what God had done to heal her friend, this other dear lady never wished to be baptized or to join God’s Church in any way. He had not opened her mind to what we believed. Yet she did believe that God healed her friend! For she saw it with her own eyes!

My friends, I know that my recounting of these instances will not necessarily convince many of you. For you do not deeply know me, and you should “check up” on all of this. But I am giving you my testimony as a servant of Jesus Christ who has been giving you the real *understanding* of the prophecies of the Bible, of God’s way of life. I hope that this will *stir you* to at least look into this matter, and come to recognize that God is real. He does intervene—not only in world affairs, but in healing His people who are willing to put their faith and trust in Him, as described in James 5:14–16 and many other places in the Bible.

God’s Way WORKS!

Another reason I know there is a real God is that He has laid out for us *a way of life* that works! It is a way that will bring us peace of mind, happiness, success—and, eventually, *eternal life*—if it is sincerely followed. We at *Tomorrow’s World* teach that way of life through our entire panorama of television programs, magazines, booklets and Web sites. If you are new to this Work, or to the Truth of the Bible, be sure and request a *free* copy of our vital booklet, *Restoring Original Christianity*.

It will tell you a great deal about the genuine *way of life* preached by Jesus Christ and His apostles—which *very few people today* understand. Also, request your *free* copy of our booklet entitled *The Ten Commandments*. Together, these booklets will truly open your eyes to a wonderful *way of life* that very few people today are aware of—even most of those who call themselves “Christians”—because Satan the Devil has blinded most of those who are alive today, as



clearly explained in your Bible (Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:3–4; Ephesians 2:2).

For more than 60 years in God’s Church, I have personally witnessed that, *to the degree* people follow God’s way of life—and genuinely *obey* the Ten Commandments through Christ living within them—they are blessed. Of course, they will have trials and tests, as God clearly indicates. All Christians do. However, they will develop a peace of mind, a great understanding and a positive faith that God is with them. They will develop the courage to do His will, and to prepare themselves for eternal life through the Spirit of God working within them.

Notice what ancient King David was inspired to tell us. “Oh, taste and

see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing” (Psalm 34:8–10).

Yes, my friends, I truly know that there is a very real God. He has guided my life, overall, for the last 62 years *to the degree* I have been willing to walk with Him, serve Him and do His will. As He promises in His Word, God will never leave me nor forsake me unless I turn away from Him: “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5).

Neither I nor anyone else in this Work want you to serve God with “blind faith.” For God is real. You can prove to yourself His prophesied intervention in world affairs and prophetic events. And, in your personal life—if you are *willing*—you can *prove to yourself* that God is the Healer and that He will intervene and *supernaturally* heal those who put their trust in Him. Yes, if you are willing to *surrender* your will, to let the real Christ of the Bible live within you (Galatians 2:20), you will find that *God’s way* works. For He has laid out for us a pattern of living that not only will produce an abundant life filled with joy, but will also help build within us the *divine nature* of God Himself (2 Peter 1:4).

This is how I know that God is real. You and I were truly put here for a *great purpose*, and we must be willing to prove these things to ourselves—and to so fulfill the purpose our Creator has in bringing full sons into His everlasting Kingdom and Family upon the soon-coming resurrection of the dead. So, prove God for yourself—and act on what you prove! ■

Questions & Answers

Question: What do colored eggs and bunny rabbits have to do with Christ's death and resurrection?

Answer: Anyone familiar with biology can quickly recognize that rabbits do not lay eggs! What do those symbols have in common? Rabbits are noted for their reproductive proclivity. Eggs are considered a symbol of fertility.

So, what does fertility have to do with Easter? Many who celebrate the holiday do not recognize that Easter is not a biblical holiday at all—it is derived from pre-Christian celebrations of springtime fertility, devoted to pagan goddesses with names such as Ishtar, Astarte and Ostara, from whom the name "Easter" is derived. Also, those who make a pun on "Son rise" and "sunrise" may not be aware that their Easter morning "sunrise" service—facing the direction of the rising sun during their worship—is directly condemned in scripture. In Ezekiel 8:14–16, we find the Israelites "weeping for Tammuz" in a sunrise worship service, a practice God states that He abhors.

"Well, we're just 'baptizing' a pagan custom and making it Christian," some will say. But what does God say about that approach? The prophet Jeremiah recorded God's very plain and straightforward command: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles" (Jeremiah 10:2). The passage in Jeremiah goes on to describe the crafting of wooden idols, making it clear that God does not want pagan worship practices imported into His own worship.

So, does God want Christians to worship Him on Easter Sunday? You may be surprised to learn that there is no biblical record of Easter Sunday worship, and no command for us to conduct such worship today! As regular readers of this magazine know, Christ died and was put in the tomb shortly before sunset on a Wednesday, just before the start of the annual Holy Day known as the First Day of Unleavened Bread (see Leviticus 23:6). We know from Scripture that Jesus was in the grave for three days and three nights—72 hours—which means that He rose right before sunset on Saturday! By the time the women came to the tomb on Sunday morning, He had already risen (Matthew 28:1–8)!

When the Scribes and Pharisees demanded to see a sign of Christ's Messiahship, He said He would give them "the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Matthew 12:39; John 2:19). Indeed, He said that it would be the only sign He would give. Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, and Christ would be in the grave for that same length of time. Note that this also exposes the later "Good Friday" custom as an unbiblical fiction, since a Friday burial would require Christ to have been in the grave until Monday evening, though Scripture clearly shows the grave was already empty when the women arrived on Sunday morning.

So, if Easter Sunday is a false custom, and Christians are not to imitate the ways of the pagan cultures around them, how should Christians memorialize Christ's sacrifice? Again, Scripture reveals the answer. The Apostle Paul told Christians in Corinth: "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). During His final Passover meal with His disciples, Christ instituted new symbols of bread and wine, symbolizing His body and His blood, (Matthew 26:26–28). Paul reminded the Corinthians that the Passover celebration is the annual memorial of Christ's sacrifice. "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

Christ's body was broken for our physical healing (Isaiah 53:5), and His blood was shed for the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:28). So, Christians should not be celebrating a non-Christian holiday using bunnies and eggs and other symbols of fertility taken from pagan rites. They should be observing the Passover, as commanded by Christ and the Apostles, as the true memorial of His sacrifice.

An underwater photograph of the Titanic wreck, showing the rusted metal structure of the ship's hull and debris on the ocean floor. The scene is dimly lit, with a blue-green tint.

Too Big To Fail?

By Rod McNair

As the 100th anniversary of the Titanic disaster nears, what does the future hold for the English-speaking nations? Is there smooth sailing ahead, or looming disaster? You need to know!

When the RMS *Titanic* was built, it was a marvel of engineering. Its massive hull was, during its construction, reported to be the largest movable man-made structure in the world. Because of its state-of-the-art design, *Shipbuilder* magazine heralded it as “practically unsinkable.” And yet, on April 15, 1912, the mighty *Titanic* struck an iceberg and sank two miles to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, only five days into its maiden voyage, killing more than 1,500 of its passengers. Instead of being forever praised for its mastery of the waves, the name *Titanic* became synonymous with complete and utter disaster.

A hundred years later, the United States, Great Britain, and other Western nations are at a dangerous juncture in their collective voyage.

Some observers have compared our mounting economic and social ills to the gash the *Titanic* sustained on that horrible night in 1912. Is this comparison valid? Will the U.S. regain its prosperity and its international stature? Will millions of unemployed Americans and Britons find new jobs despite failing economies? Or, will the massive pressure from our national sins finally overwhelm and sink our nations?

What about you? How are you preparing your family for tough times ahead? When the *Titanic* headed for New York a century ago from Southampton, England, it was considered the largest and most luxurious ship in the world. It appeared safe and secure. However, though it complied fully with maritime regulations of its day, there were serious problems. For example, the *Titanic* did not have enough lifeboats on board to carry all passengers at once. Its 16 boats and four “collapsibles” could accommodate only 1,178 people—while the ship could carry more than 3,300. And its crew members were not trained to take seriously the new Marconi wireless radio onboard. Though the crew of the *Titanic* received warnings from other ships in the darkness of that April night, they failed to take seriously what they were hearing. When the crew finally sighted the iceberg and took evasive action, it was too late.

Are we taking seriously the warnings we are hearing? Whose warnings should we be heeding? To what degree are you willing to risk your future, based on the words of today’s so-called economic and financial “experts”? How much can you depend on your job or employer to be around when the times grow tough? What about your nation’s government—

PHOTO: AP/WIDEWORLD

can you count on it to provide your needs as a safety net, when many nations **themselves** are *going broke*? Where *can* you turn in the coming tough times?

TAKING ON WATER

The problems our nations face today are legion—and are accelerating every day. Our political systems are dysfunctional and full of hypocrisy. The U.S. exports degrading entertainment around the world, which brings shame to those who profess to believe in God. Traditional marriage and family are collapsing. Millions have debilitating moral problems. Pornography is epidemic. Our cities are dangerous. Many children are growing up with no direction or guidance, and feel hopeless and helpless. Practices once outlawed as perversion are now protected by law and even encouraged. Our society accepts and even praises unbridled greed and focus on the self. Global military commitments sap national strength. *When will it all end? Where is our ship headed?*

Many are shocked to hear experts predict the *collapse of the once-mighty United States*. Warning of the danger of a double-dip recession, economist Mortimer Zuckerman wrote: “The prognosis for America is especially discouraging. We have relied too heavily on surplus savings from abroad on top of running massive current account deficits. Until recent times, we ran deficits of this order only when we were engaged in a titanic war... But now we are running annual deficits of \$1.4 trillion, about 10 percent of the total economy... American exceptionalism endures. But we must confront our dysfunctional and profligate government. America was founded on the principle of creating a better life for our children and grandchildren. We can do it. We aren’t doing it” (“The Danger of

a Global Double-Dip Recession Is Real,” *USNews.com*, November 29, 2010). The warnings are serious, and the danger is real. But is anyone listening? Is anyone steering us away from the iceberg?

Niall Ferguson, professor of history at Harvard, recently warned that a financial downturn can turn catastrophic once it erodes faith in the financial system. “The numbers... cannot erode U.S. strength on their own, but they can work to weaken a long-assumed faith in the United States’ ability to weather any crisis. For now, the world still expects the United States to muddle through... But one day, a seemingly random piece of bad news—perhaps a negative report by a rating agency—will make the headlines... Suddenly, it will be not just a few policy wonks who worry about the sustainability of U.S. fiscal policy but also the public at large, not to mention investors abroad. **It is this shift that is crucial: a complex adaptive system is in big trouble when its component parts lose faith in its viability**” (“Complexity and Collapse: Empires on the Edge of Chaos,” *Foreign Affairs*, March-April 2010).

What these experts are saying is that, while the good-ship luxury liner *America* appears to be upright and sea-worthy, it is actually **sinking**. And capsizing can come suddenly, seemingly without warning. Speaking of the nation of Israel, the prophet Isaiah warned: “Therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall, a bulge in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant” (Isaiah 30:13). Relative calm can *deceive* us of the real danger—which can appear suddenly. Now is no time to be lax at the helm.

In 2000, Igor Panarin, a former KGB analyst and dean of the Russian Foreign Ministry’s Academy for

diplomats, predicted the U.S. would collapse within ten years. For most of the last decade, he was scoffed at and dismissed. But once the financial chaos of 2008 occurred, people started taking notice. Panarin suggested that by June 2010, mass immigration, economic decline, and moral degradation would trigger a civil war and the collapse of the dollar. He predicted that the U.S. would break into six separate pieces.

Of course, the U.S. is still together. Panarin was at least wrong about the timing. Does that mean that his prediction of decline is wrong? Or is it that his timing is off, but the *conditions* are still ripe for a collapse like the one he predicted?

The wise King Solomon recorded, “A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished” (Proverbs 22:3). God wants us to be warned of the icebergs ahead and to prepare ourselves against calamity! Jesus Christ reiterated this principle when He said, “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly” (Luke 21:34). Our Savior counsels us not to be entangled with sin, destructive habits, and worthless pursuits. He challenges us to be ready for *big events just ahead of us*. He explains as we read further: “For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. **Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man**” (Luke 21:35–36).

ABOUT TO SINK?

Few today realize that the Bible **explains** the meteoric rise of the United States and Great Britain in the last 200 years—and **foretells** a calamitous fall

unless there is national repentance. The key to this understanding is that the U.S. and Great Britain—as well as the other British-descended nations—are modern-day descendants of the ancient tribe of Joseph, son of Jacob/Israel.

What did God foretell would happen to Joseph's progeny in the last days? "Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall" (Genesis 49:22). Great Britain and the U.S. were to be blessed with enormous economic prosperity, which would be so abundant that its fruitful blessings would spill over to other nations around the world.

And that is exactly what has happened, with God as the Source of those blessings: By "the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers" (vv. 25–26). Furthermore, these nations would have military superiority (Genesis 49:23–24) and possess the gates of their enemies (Genesis 24:60).

So, were these blessings predicted to last forever? *No!* Our great "luxury liner" of wealth and prosperity is heading for disaster. Because of national sins, the modern descendants of Joseph will become

the main sufferers of the prophesied time of tribulation. "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to



observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country.

Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl" (Deuteronomy 28:15–17).

God prophesied that the modern descendants of ancient Israel will face intractable problems in every corner—in the city, in the countryside, everywhere! Crops will fail. Rain will become erratic. Diseases will become more and more rampant. Drought and fires will be followed by too much rain and flooding (v. 22).

Climatologists in the United States reported that 2011 was the worst year on record for extreme weather, with a dozen weather "events" costing at least \$1 billion each in the U.S. alone ("Will 2012 top 2011 for record weather disasters?," *Reuters*, December 27, 2011). But how long will it be before Americans and Britons admit that *God is trying to get our attention?* Even now, with extreme weather, we are the most richly blessed people on earth. Today we measure our calamities in dollars and property damage—not yet in the

tens of thousands of people killed, as in other countries where disasters have struck. How long will it be before God lets us sink as a result of mounting national and personal sins?

THE BAND PLAYED ON...

As our ship begins to "take on water," what are many people doing? Millions of Americans, Britons, Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders, and South Africans are locked in ongoing self-focused addictions, such as to pornography. The U.S. produces by far the largest share of the world's Internet pornography—estimates go as high as 89 percent. What a shameful statistic for a so-called "Christian" country! How long before the Almighty God stops the rot by letting the ship capsize?

How many modern Israelites, despite hard economic straits, are lost in a headlong rush to consumerism? As water *figuratively rushes* into our listing vessel, are we wasting our time and life obsessed with things and the getting of them? Are we spending ever more time absorbed by an endless string of electronic media? Christ warned against thinking this way, saying: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15). The wealthiest passenger on the *Titanic*—amidst many wealthy and influential figures—was John Jacob Astor IV. But he and others among the rich and prominent perished aboard the ill-fated ship. Their riches did not save them. *And neither will our possessions save us!*

God warns that these curses "shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever. Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and

Continued on page 29



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A cursory look over at the religious situation of the world reveals the powerful hold Satan and demonic powers have upon blinded unbelievers who are in the Christ-dishonouring religions and false cults. True Christians are a relatively small percentage of the world's population. I'm glad you are there, and your powerful publications will always be a guiding light. Please continue sending me your *Tomorrow's World* magazine and your other literatures.

E. L., Kalookan City, Metro Manila, Philippines

I wish to commend you all for the wonderful work you've done in allowing many to learn the truth about God's Word. It's a true blessing and I want to say many thanks to you and your team for the awesome booklets which you provide for free. Also, the *Tomorrow's World Bible Study Course* is amazing. It's very challenging yet rewarding as one gets to learn the Word of God. However, I wish you would write a book on "The devil: does he exist?" This is a question I'd love to be answered in a booklet.

K. K., Kingston, Jamaica

Editor's Note: Even many who recognize the reality of Satan do not realize just how widespread his influence is over the people of the world today. You may want to request our free booklet, *Satan's Counterfeit Christianity*, to learn more about this vital topic.

Thank you so very much for the publications that you have sent to me. They have helped me so much. I read your books over and over again. I believe in God and pray always and He has brought me through many difficult times. It is nice to know that there are people like you out there as so many people now are so uncaring. May God bless each and every one of you!

P. M., Deloraine, TAS, Australia

I have enjoyed the magazines you have sent me. They seem to speak to my heart. So many scriptural truths

are being taught. I want to thank you for the love and work you are doing. Your teachings are in accord with the word of God. Thank you for not watering down your teachings and teaching so many. May you be blessed in your efforts always to teach the truth of the Bible.

L. H., London, KY

I thank God every time I receive my publication of *Tomorrow's World*. Everything is described and explained so clearly and in line with scripture that it's refreshing to be refreshed with our Lord's word. I like the booklets also. I pray hard daily for this world to change, but it is what it is. Thanks again for your generous God-driven work.

R. V., Bellevue, MI

Thank you so much for sending me an anointed cloth a few weeks ago. I may have a type of muscular dystrophy that runs rampant in my family. Anyway, this condition makes my muscles quiver and feel weak. Since receiving the anointed cloth, I have not had any fine tremors in my hands, and my penmanship has returned to normal. I have more energy and I have not felt weary. Thank you so much for taking the time to pray for me. I know it was not the cloth itself, but your prayers and our dear Savior's grace. To Him be the glory.

J. D., Greenfield, WI

Many years ago, I subscribed to the *Plain Truth* magazine, under the guidance of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. I greatly admired his plain teaching of the truth. Then I heard that he died, and that someone named "Tzchak" (?) had taken over. Suddenly there was no more *Plain Truth*. I lost all contact with his organization. Then, one day, I found a *Tomorrow's World* magazine in a waiting room. I asked the receptionist if I could take it home. I read it, and was grateful to see that someone had taken up the banner of truth again.

D. L., Girrawheen, WA, Australia

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

LONDON CA

Will Britain Leave the European Union?

Is Great Britain about to leave the European Union (EU)? Most pundits would say that it is unlikely. However, in the wake of recent events, it could happen—*with or without* Britain's initiation.

Why?

Because there are fundamental differences in the way many British people see their place in Europe compared to their continental neighbours. And, those differences seem to be growing more clearly defined, as the French- and German-led EU makes more and more decisions that Britons feel are against their interests.

"Euro-sceptics" (as are called those who are wary of Britain's EU membership) are still not well represented within the ruling coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. When Parliament last October voted on granting a referendum that would have allowed Britons to call for their country's withdrawal from the EU, the result was 483 against and 111 for. Clearly, the majority of British politicians want to stay within the European Union. The "Europhiles" will often say: "Our destiny lies with Europe."

But what do the British people think?

According to a poll conducted by the *Guardian* newspaper on October 24, 2011—the same day on which Parliament voted—their views are quite different. Seventy percent of those polled wanted a referendum for the whole of the United Kingdom to decide whether to leave the union or remain. Only 23 percent said they did not want the plebiscite. Of those asked, 49 percent said that they would vote for Britain to depart, while 40 percent would vote to stay.

Despite this divergence of opinion between politicians and the public, if the percentage of Britons seeking withdrawal from the EU were to rise much

above 50 percent, it would be hard for any major party to ignore the fact. So, are there provisions within the Treaty of Lisbon for a member state to exit? Yes, there are. The treaty, which was adopted by EU member states in 2008, makes some interesting provisions for any country seeking to withdraw from the union.

Under "Final Provisions" of the Treaty on European Union, (Title VI, Article 50, paragraph 1 of the Treaty), we read: "Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements."

However, paragraph 2 adds: "In the light of the guidelines provided by the European Council, the Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with that State, setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal, taking account of the framework for its future relationship with the Union."

Considering this provision, some commentators have pointed out that the Council could make the terms for departure so draconian and costly to any member state wishing to depart that it would be better to stay within the union. It could be just too costly for Britain to leave.

In 1975 the British public cast a similar vote, and 67 percent chose to stay within the European Economic Community (EEC)—the forerunner of the European Union. Nearly 40 years later, the UK public is not as convinced as it was then about the benefits of being tied to the European Union.

BRITAIN SAYS, "Non!"

At a recent meeting of EU leaders in Brussels, David Cameron vetoed a plan to impose a transaction tax on EU financial institutions. The British view the tax as an effort by the German- and French-led EU to hobble



David Cameron

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London as a world financial centre and grab a slice of the proceeds. They fear that such a move would lead to huge UK job and tax losses, whilst driving this global business outside the EU altogether to somewhere more competitive.

Britain's relationship with Europe has long been tenuous. Many still recall how French President Charles de Gaulle snubbed the British in a speech on May 16, 1967. He said, "We understand for what reason Britain—who is not continental, remains, because of the Commonwealth and because she is an island, committed far beyond the seas, who is tied to the United States by all kinds of special agreements—did not merge into a Community with set dimensions and strict rules." His whole speech has become known as "Le Grand 'Non'" (in English: "The Big 'No'").

Rivalry between Britain and France is nothing new. It is important to remember that Great Britain gained control over valuable French territories at key moments in world history. With the Treaty of Paris in 1763, following the Seven Years War, France ceded to England virtually all of its North American land possessions east of the Mississippi River. French explorer Jean-François Laperouse arrived in Australia's Botany Bay in 1788, just 5 days after the British colonising First Fleet had landed there. The capture of Cape Town during the Napoleonic Wars denied France a toehold in Southern Africa.

Why did these events occur? Britain's rise was foretold in Bible prophecy! If you have not already done so, please request your free copy of our booklet, *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*. You may order it online at TomorrowsWorld.org or request a copy from the Regional Office nearest you (listed on page 30 of this magazine).

So, will Great Britain exit the European Union? For many decades, the *Tomorrow's World* magazine and its predecessors in this Work have proclaimed that Britain will not be among the final "ten nations" that will give "their power to the beast." Revelation 17:12–13 tells us, "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." The "beast" is the biblical name for the leader of a powerful end-time political combine that will dominate Europe and ultimately the whole world.

As of today, these "ten kings have received no kingdom as yet." This suggests that, for the final end-time prophecies to occur, there may have to be a radically different map of Europe than the one with which we are now familiar. Might some national boundaries shift? Might there be some reinstitution of the old royal families of Europe? We do not yet see these details clearly. However, we can state with clarity from Bible prophecy: Britain will not be one part of these ten kingdoms.

Why?

One answer is that the ten kings "are of one mind" (v. 13). In general, Europe is traditionally Roman Catholic in its thinking. Britain, on the other hand, is shaped by its Protestant background. Britain has been a champion of free thought, parliamentary democracy and liberal economic principles. By contrast, much of Europe has been ruled by totalitarian governments under which labour and business are under the control of a powerful leader. Prophecy shows that, once again—as in the days of the Holy Roman Empire—Church and State will rule the continent, supported by ten powerful "kings" who will give their power to the beast.

Will Britain leave the European Union? It may very well not have a choice. It may find itself excluded by a new European power that is yet to be established.

Throughout 2012 and beyond, students of Bible prophecy need to watch developments in Europe. Decisions made by European leaders will affect you, wherever you live. Watch closely what happens to Great Britain as it is attacked and even ignored, more and more, by its European "partners." Britain may not leave the European Union right away. But it will not be amongst the final ten kings who will give their power to the beast.

—Rod King



The Universe And You!

By Richard F. Ames

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Images from space reveal awesome galaxies and nebulae. What do they have to do with your future?

Human beings are very limited by time and space, yet we have a desire to explore our universe. That innate drive led to the Apollo space exploration program in the 1960s. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin, Jr. walked on the moon. They spent 21 hours there, and returned to earth with 46 pounds of lunar rock. In December 1972, Apollo 17 landed on the moon. Astronauts Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt became the last of 12 Americans to set foot on its mysterious surface.

Since then, no one has been back.

On April 15, 2010, U.S. President Barack Obama gave a major speech at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, announcing a change in U.S. space policy. He proclaimed: “Early in the next decade, a set of crewed flights will test and prove the systems required for

exploration beyond low Earth orbit. And by 2025, we expect new spacecraft designed for long journeys to allow us to begin the first-ever crewed missions beyond the Moon into deep space. So we’ll start—we’ll start by sending astronauts to an asteroid for the first time in history. By the mid-2030s, I believe we can send humans to orbit Mars and return them safely to Earth. And a landing on Mars will follow. And I expect to be around to see it.”

Other nations are also pursuing space exploration. China is quickly catching up to the U.S. and Russia. In October 2003, the People’s Republic of China launched its first “taikonaut” into space. Only Russia and the U.S. had previously launched a man into space. In 2007, two Chinese astronauts completed a series of “extravehicular activities”—commonly called “spacewalks.” Last December,

Chinese scientists celebrated their first successful docking between an orbiting platform, Tiangong-1, and a spacecraft, Shenzhou-8. China next plans to build a 60-ton manned space station that by 2016 will allow scientists to carry out research projects in space.

WHAT IS MAN?

Human beings have a fascination with the universe, and we should. We are a part of God's great creation. Ancient King David marveled at his place in the cosmos; as a young shepherd, he saw the glory of the heavens night after night. He wrote: "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalm 8:3-4). Have you considered *your* place in the universe—now, and in the future?

As incredible as it may seem, the Bible indicates that the earth and the universe were created for mankind! In fact, King David went on to write: "For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion [authority or rulership] over the works of Your hands; You have put *all things* under his feet, all sheep and oxen—even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:5-9).

God gave mankind dominion over the physical earth and its creatures. We are supposed to be learning how to manage, govern, and serve as faithful stewards. But why did God give us such dominion over the earth? The answer is astounding, and many are afraid to believe it, even though the Bible

makes it plain. God is now giving us the opportunity to train for greater authority and stewardship in the future! God has an awesome plan for all humanity. As unbelievable as it may seem, God wants to share the universe with you! That is what your Bible reveals! The book of Hebrews quotes David's psalm: "You have made him [mankind] a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands.

You have put *all things* in subjection under his feet" (Hebrews 2:7-8).

Under God's inspiration, the author then adds a comment:

"For in that He [God] put all in subjection under him [mankind], He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him" (v. 8). It appears that nothing in the universe will be excluded from mankind's dominion. This awesome event is yet future, but it is God's promise, and is certain!

The Greek for "all" in verse 8 is *ta panta*, which literally means "the all." In the absolute sense, *ta panta* means "the universe." God not only wants to give you dominion over the earth; He wants to share with you the entire universe. But we can only do that when we inherit eternal life, when we become God's immortal children. God has an awesome purpose for us, and it will involve our future in the universe!

That purpose will expand our capacity and our understanding far beyond what we can now imagine. Do we recognize our present limitations? Do we think that we,

as air-breathing, food-eating, water-drinking creatures can travel very far into space? While the planet Mars may be within reach at a cost of billions of dollars, the *star* nearest to our solar system—Proxima Centauri—is 4.2 light years away. If we could travel at the speed of light, it would take us 4.2 years to go there. Of course, our spaceships and probes travel much more slowly; Voyager 1 would need 70,000 years to travel as far as the distance between the earth

and Proxima Centauri. We will never conquer space, much less travel very far into the universe, unless we can break through the human limitations of time and space. But there is hope

for the future! God has a plan for His children to *transcend* time and space!

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Your Bible reveals that God's purpose for every man and woman will bring us joy for all eternity. But what exactly will faithful, God-fearing, genuine Christians be doing for all eternity? Many professing Christians believe that the human soul, at death, goes either to a fiery hell or a blissful heaven, perhaps spending some time in purgatory before reaching heaven. What does the Bible actually teach? It teaches that there is a human spirit—not an immortal soul—in human beings (Job 32:8; 1 Corinthians 2:11). "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Yes, the Bible teaches that the soul can die!

Jesus stated in Matthew 10:28: "But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell



[Gehenna fire].” The Bible teaches that souls are mortal, not immortal, and can be destroyed totally in fire. Jesus said so. The incorrigibly wicked will indeed be tormented, and then burned up in a lake of fire. That is called the “second death” (Revelation 20:14–15). The second death is final; it is a death from which there is no resurrection. You certainly do not want to be thrown into a lake of fire! You need to choose life, and choose the salvation that God offers you through Jesus Christ! You need to repent and be baptized, as the Apostle Peter preached on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38).

God has a wonderful plan of salvation for all humanity. He wants *you* to be a part of His family for all eternity. Paul wrote: “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole *family* in heaven and earth is named” (Ephesians 3:14–15).

God is the Father of a family. One of the awesome activities Christians will experience, for all eternity, is fellowship with our loving family. It is a royal family (1 Peter 2:5, 9). Jesus Christ will come back as King of kings, and Lord of lords. Jesus Christ will “have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10). Yes, we will be kings and priests, serving under our Savior, Jesus Christ!

We will inherit the Kingdom of God: “But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever” (Daniel 7:18). Those saints will be in the first resurrection when Christ returns. They will rule on this earth, serve under the King of kings, and help billions of people. When Christ returns, true Christians will be resurrected, or changed, and will be given immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51–54). We “shall also bear

the image of the heavenly Man” (v. 49); we will have glory, power, immortality and a spirit body.

Remember that after Jesus’ resurrection, He ascended to heaven and had His pre-incarnate glory restored to Him, such that “His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength” (Revelation 1:16). Yet Jesus was able to manifest Himself in the flesh after His resurrection; He



appeared to His disciples and shared bread and fish with them (John 21:13). The saints also will be able to manifest themselves to the physical nations during the Millennium. As kings and priests, we will be governing and teaching. In fact, the priests in ancient Israel *were* the teachers. During the Millennium, we will be teaching God’s way of life—the way of truth, the way of the Bible, the way of living that Christ exemplified and taught. As kings and priests, we will teach the world the way to peace: “And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your *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 30:20–21).

RULERS IN GOD’S KINGDOM

In God’s Kingdom, King David will be ruling over the house of Israel

and the house of Judah, as the two nations become one (Ezekiel 37). Jesus said that the Twelve Apostles would be ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel: “So Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life’” (Matthew 19:28–29).

What other responsibilities will the saints have? In Luke 19, Jesus gave the parable of the minas (or “pounds,” *KJV*), revealing that faithful Christians would rule over cities—some managing five, some overseeing ten. Jesus also taught that those who overcome would rule over nations (Revelation 2:26). Do the cities and nations of this world need godly government? Absolutely! That is why we pray: “Your Kingdom come.” *You*, as a part of God’s glorious, immortalized family, can be a part of the solution to this world’s problems!

God’s Kingdom will rule on earth. Jerusalem will be the capital of the world. Notice this inspiring prophecy: “Thus says the LORD: ‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of *Jerusalem*. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain’” (Zechariah 8:3). Faithful Christians will serve Jesus Christ as kings and priests here on this earth—not in heaven as many wrongly teach! Here is how the Apostle John describes the resurrection that will occur when Jesus Christ returns to the earth: “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but

they shall be *priests* of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

After the thousand years, Satan the devil will be released to deceive the nations. Those who follow that deceiver will be destroyed by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9). Satan and his demons will be cast into the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41). Then the book of life will be opened for billions, for the first time, in the White Throne Judgment. This is the time of the second resurrection—the judgment period when many of your friends and relatives, who never had a real opportunity for salvation, will be given that opportunity. After the White Throne Judgment, what will happen? “Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14–15).

This is the real “hellfire” of your Bible. After the White Throne Judgment, all human beings who have ever lived will either be destroyed in the lake of fire, or will be glorified children of God, living forever in the immortalized family of God. Peter writes that the earth will be totally purged by fire: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

The earth will be renewed, and so will the heavens. Then God’s heavenly throne will come to the purified earth: “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God’” (Revelation 21:3).

THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE!

Notice that God not only gives Christians the earth (Matthew 5:5)—He also gives us the entire universe:



“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:7; Romans 8:32). God’s purpose is to prepare us to govern the universe. We will be able to travel instantly to far-off galaxies. We will not be limited by time and space. God wants us to liberate the creation from its decay and corruption. As Paul wrote, “the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21).

God has an amazing destiny in store for His faithful children. We

will be active, fulfilled and gloriously happy for all eternity. Foretelling the coming of the Messiah, and His eternal kingdom, the prophet Isaiah wrote: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end” (Isaiah 9:6–7).

Do you want to be a part of the glorious future God has planned for you? Do you look forward to the day when God’s throne of grace will come to the earth? Only then, finally, will there be no more pain, suffering and death. John writes of our inspiring ultimate destiny: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4). This is the eternity God has planned for you. May God help you to understand His great love and purpose for you, and to prepare for your awesome eternal destiny! ■

THE REAL GOD: PROOFS AND PROMISES



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PROPHECY Co

The End of the Age!

Do you understand the sobering significance of events that are making news headlines today? Regrettably, modern secular media outlets have no idea of the *real* meaning of events they report, because our society has been *conditioned* to ignore the only source that accurately reveals the future—the Bible! However, if you have *eyes to see*, you can recognize that our world is approaching a *major turning point* in the history of human civilization—a time Bible prophecy calls “the end of the age” preceding the imminent return of Jesus Christ to the earth. Ancient biblical prophecies that have long foretold this climactic period are *coming alive today*!

ANCIENT BIBLE PROPHECIES

Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus promised His disciples, “I will come again” (John 14:3). Numerous prophecies in the Old Testament (Daniel 2:44–45; Zechariah 14:4, 9) and other statements by Jesus (Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27) clearly foretell His return. When asked by His disciples “what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3), Jesus listed a *series of events* that would mark the approaching end of the age and indicate that His return would be near.

The prophetic events that Jesus said would precede His return, and mark the approaching end of the age, as described in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, include widespread religious deception and the rise of militant forms of religion, wars and rumors of wars, characterized by ethnic strife and international conflicts, droughts, famines, fires, flooding, earthquakes and similar disasters, and widespread disease epidemics.

Scripture calls the time when these calamitous events will increase in frequency and severity “the beginning of sorrows”—a time that will be unlike any other recorded in human history (Matthew 24:8, 21). These disastrous events will cause widespread suffering and death—directly impacting a quarter of the world’s population (Revelation 6:8). The only reason human beings will not succeed in destroying themselves and all life on the planet will be the return of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:21–22).

CURRENT EVENTS

Many secular critics scoff at prophecies, and call the Bible a book of fables. Even many theologians suggest that biblical prophecies are only spiritual concepts that do not refer to real events. But such thinking involves turning a blind eye to reality! Today, we live in a world characterized by widespread religious deception. Hundreds of sects and denominations claim to be “Christian,” despite teaching different and even conflicting ideas. Many professing “Christians” observe holidays like Christmas and Easter, clearly of pagan origin, which Jesus and the apostles *never kept* and the Bible *condemns* (Deuteronomy 12:29–31; Jeremiah 10:2). Many who call themselves “Christian” believe their souls go to heaven when they die, waiting to be reunited with their bodies. Yet the Bible says that, other than Jesus, “no one has ascended to heaven”—not even ancient King David (John 3:13; Acts 2:29–34).

Secularists have long predicted that as society becomes more modern and scientific, religion will lose its appeal. Indeed, membership in “mainline Christian” denominations has declined precipitously in recent years. Yet, the last several decades have seen a *revival* of some forms of religion on a global scale, perhaps most



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MES ALIVE

notably the rise of militant Islam, bringing with it new dangers of interreligious conflict.

Global organizations have been established to promote world peace. The League of Nations failed at this task, and the United Nations is doing no better. Mankind's best efforts failed to prevent the 20th century from being the *bloodiest* in human history. Observers are now wondering what will provoke the next great world war. Will upheavals in the Arab world bring militant Islamic groups into power and spark another war in the Middle East, which could drag nations outside the region into the conflict? Will the financial problems of European nations generate an "economic tsunami" that could rearrange the political map of Europe and bring armed conflict to a devastated global financial system, mirroring events of the 1930s following the Great Depression? Will ethnic strife in Africa, the Balkans and the Asian subcontinent draw nations into dangerous aggression?

All of this is no surprise to those who see that today's world conditions clearly echo end-time prophecies of Jesus. Modern "me generation" cultural shifts also feed into the attitudes that will fuel prophesied end-time conflict. As the Apostle Paul wrote: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy... slanderers... brutal... despisers of good... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:1–7)—which accurately describes our modern age!

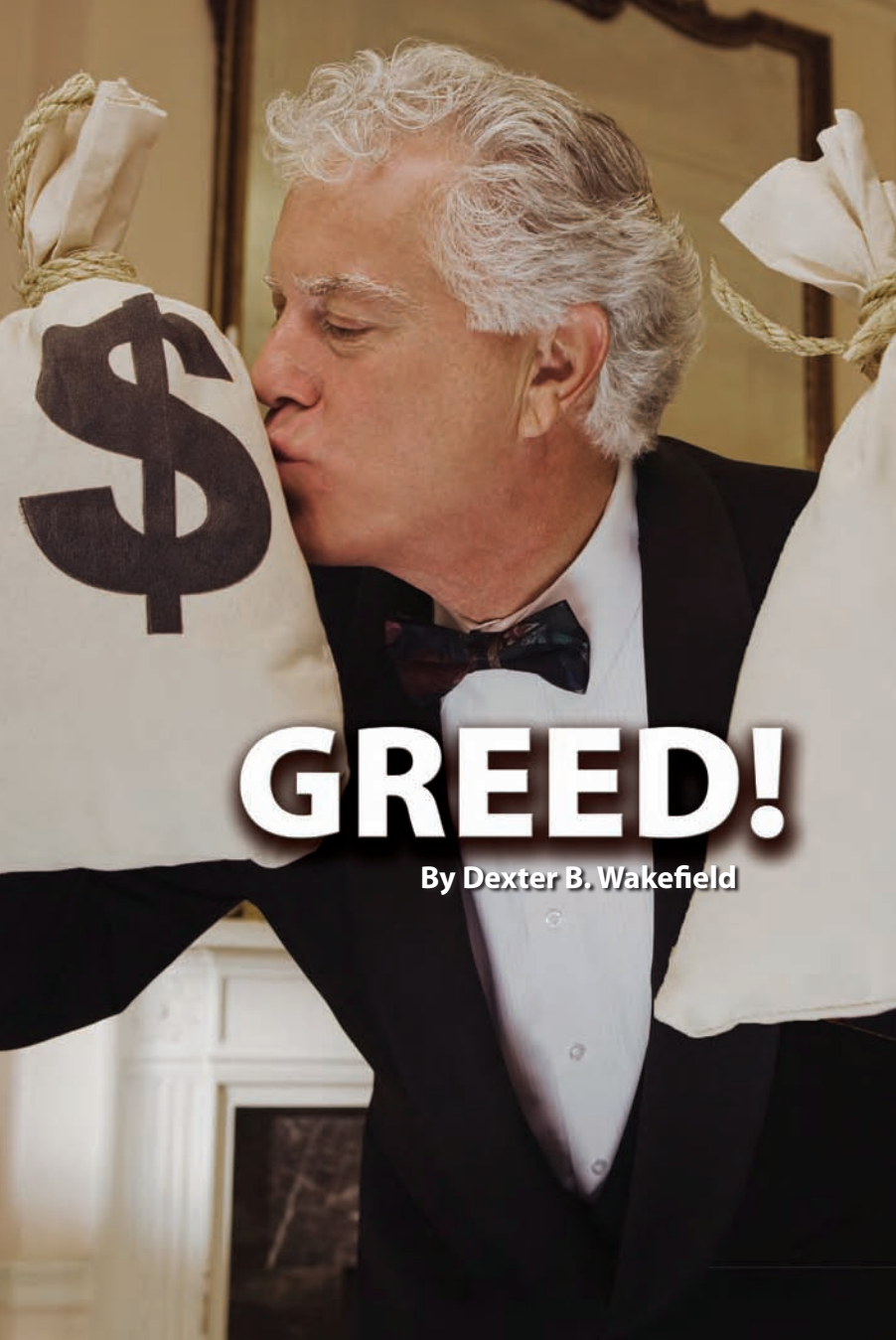
As part of the end-time scenario, Jesus described droughts, famines, fires, floods, earthquakes and other disasters on a *global scale*—events we have seen regularly in recent years. These warnings are reflected in the tsunamis that destroyed coastal areas around the Indian Ocean and devastated a city and nuclear power plant in Japan, volcanic eruptions in Indonesia, record droughts and floods in Australia, South Africa and the American southwest, deadly earthquakes in Turkey and China, devastating hurricanes and tornadoes in Missouri and other parts of the world, rampaging fires in Australia and Texas—and the

list goes on. Many of these disasters are reported to be the *worst in a century* or the *worst on record!* Nuclear scientists in the United States recently reset their symbolic Doomsday Clock closer to midnight, while others warn that "the world is doomed to a warmer climate, harsher weather, droughts, famine, water scarcity, rising sea levels, loss of island nations and increasing ocean acidification." Their ominous forecast matches prophecies about the long-predicted "end of the age" recorded in the Bible.

Christ also warned of the increasing threat of deadly diseases. Indeed, HIV-AIDS has afflicted millions of men, women and children around the world, and we are seeing the rise of drug-resistant strains of infectious diseases such as malaria, cholera and tuberculosis. Add to this the growing plague of cancer, heart disease, diabetes and other "diseases of civilization," and the growing addictions to alcohol and drugs. In addition, crowded, unsanitary urban living conditions and international jet travel have created vectors for the spread of disease germs around the globe in a matter of hours—providing a mechanism for epidemics on a proportion described in Scripture's end-time prophecies!

God, who inspired and preserved the Bible, tells us that He alone can predict the future and bring it to pass (Isaiah 46:8–10). That same God has commissioned His servants to explain Bible prophecies revealing the sobering significance of events that are making news headlines today (Amos 3:7; 2 Peter 1:19–20). Jesus warned that the world at large will be oblivious to the real meaning of end-time events, but He instructed His disciples, "when you see these things happening, *know* that the kingdom of God is near... *take heed... Watch... and pray always* that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:31–36). End-time events are coming to pass as never before. To learn more about this vital topic, request your free copy of our booklet, *Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ's Return*. You may order it online at TomorrowsWorld.org, or request a copy from the Regional Office nearest you (listed on page 30 of this magazine).

—Douglas S. Winnail



GREED!

By Dexter B. Wakefield

What does God's own character teach us about good business?

“Greed is good!” This famous phrase, spoken by movie character Gordon Gekko in the Academy Award-winning 1987 movie *Wall Street*, epitomized an era when conspicuous consumption was seen as a virtue. Though director Oliver Stone intended Gekko as an anti-hero, many took his words to heart as a positive statement of their values and priorities.

Today, a quarter-century later, things have changed. Real-life Gordon Gekkos have caused

havoc in the world financial markets, sending economic shock waves across the United States and around the world. “Wall Street greed” has become a by-word in the media, and has even spawned a political movement, “Occupy Wall Street.”

Gekko's famous line actually came in the context of a larger speech. He said, “The point is, ladies and gentleman, that greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right, greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed, in all of its forms; greed for life, money, love, knowledge, has marked the upward surge of mankind.”

Certainly this captures well the world's mindset of “get” rather than “give.” Over the years, many have conducted their lives by maxims such as Gekko's. However, this mindset is in sharp contrast to a point of view presented in Scripture, by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Put simply, “God is love” (1 John 4:16), and His love is focused on giving.

The Bible contains many principles that can change our economic behavior for the better. Understanding those principles can improve our lives—individually and nationally. The Apostle Paul said, “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35). Gordon Gekko would have been baffled by Jesus' statement, but it holds the key to understanding God's very nature and character—and what He intends for His creation.

THE WALL STREET MELTDOWN

The physical “Wall Street” is an eight-block-long stretch of road in the Lower Manhattan section of New York City. Because the New York Stock Exchange and some major financial institutions are based there, the term “Wall Street” has come to represent the financial sector of the U.S. economy, even though most of institutional Wall Street does not physically reside on that New York City boulevard.

How did Wall Street firms get themselves into so much trouble? Consider Lehman Brothers, for decades one of the nation's largest and most respected investment banking and financial services firms. Alongside its core businesses, one Lehman Brothers division found a way to earn huge profits by using low-rate loans from other banks to purchase high-yielding subprime mortgages. Initially, Lehman had held the highest possible credit rating ("AAA"), which let the firm profit from the spread between its low cost of borrowing and the high yields from subprime mortgages. However, as the housing market declined, subprime mortgages became riskier and more prone to default. This caused Lehman's credit rating to decline, and its lenders to demand paydowns of their loans. As losses mounted, the firm began selling its profitable investment banking and financial services divisions to cover the losses, but this was not enough to stanch the financial hemorrhaging, and the firm had to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

The shock waves from Lehman's failure—and similar large implosions at other firms, such as American International Group (AIG)—reverberated through the economy. Government "bailouts" kept AIG and some other firms out of bankruptcy, but their stock prices plummeted and their finances were devastated.

Wall Street firms still conduct profitable investment banking activities that play a vital role in the U.S. and world economies. However, their excesses and dramatic fall from riches have made "Wall Street greed" an idea that is prominent in the public's mind—and that will likely be a key issue in the upcoming U.S. presidential election.

A VERY DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW

Wall Street has risen and fallen on the basis of economic principles. But what about the broader moral principles that guide society? When God established the ancient nation of Israel, He gave its people everything they needed, including wise statutes and judgments based on the Ten Commandments. *Unger's Bible Dictionary* describes the Ten Commandments this way: "The foundation and source of the moral law is God's character. 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery' is the way the Ten Commandments are introduced. The Heb. name here used (Everlasting Eternal Almighty) intimates that the principles of law have their standing in the character of God. 'I am...thou shall.' That is the connection. And that is what makes the moral law so [awesome] in its unchangeable majesty. It is law because God is. It cannot be changed without changing [God's] character... Right is what it is, because God is what He is, and therefore it is as unchangeable as God" (p. 1256, "Ten Commandments").

Charity is the antithesis of greed, and the God of Israel is a God of love and outgoing concern for others. Here is an example of a statute in ancient Israel that was designed not only to help the poor, but to help the prosperous as well: "When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall

not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow" (Deuteronomy 24:19–21).

From an economic point of view, the function of this statute is especially interesting. A landowner who gleans his own field must go back after it has been harvested and expend a lot of labor to try to take every last grape, olive and stalk of grain. Yet the cost of the labor to complete this task thoroughly will eventually outweigh the profitability of collecting every bit of the harvest. But the landless poor had plenty of time available, and it made economic sense for them to spend it gleaning to obtain the food they needed.

It is obvious to see how this law helped the poor. By requiring them to exert labor to obtain the gleanings, it gave them food while also preserving their dignity. But, how did this statute benefit landowners? It prevented them from being so focused on gain that they would wring every last bit of production out of their fields and vineyards, denying it to others who could benefit the most from it. God's law kept the landowners from greed, since they were required to "leave something on the table" for others.

In today's business world, people often have a policy of "don't leave anything on the table, not even the varnish!" They remind us of these words from Isaiah: "Yes, they are greedy dogs which never have enough. And they are shepherds who cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain, from his own territory" (Isaiah 56:11). Such aggressive businesspeople think they have not succeeded until the other party suffers. Their approach is to take as much as they can from others in every situation. Thankfully, this approach was discouraged—and so was the avaricious character it develops—by the legal system God set up for ancient Israel. Fairness

and honesty—not greed—were built into the law God gave the Israelites.

AN HONEST EPHAH?

The Eighth Commandment states, “You shall not steal” (Exodus 20:15). In addition to forbidding theft, this commandment acknowledges that people may own private property. Yet Scripture also counsels respect for others’ property, and points out the wrong motives that can produce theft, covetousness and greed. The Apostle James wrote, “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have” (James 4:1–3).

To combat the wrong impulses of human nature, God built honesty and integrity into His statutes. Here is a good example: “You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:35–36).

In ancient Israel, an ephah was a dry measure of about a bushel, often used to measure grains. A hin was a liquid measure of about two gallons. Applying the principle today would go beyond simply measuring out quantities of groceries or gasoline. One modern application of the just or unjust ephah can involve how we measure out our labor. If we are on the job for eight hours, do we give our employers the eight hours of work they are paying for—not six hours’ worth? God’s way teaches us to give people the full value we have promised them. This is godly and good business!

God plainly forbids the personal corruption that greed will foster. He did this because greed is alien to His

character. However, He does not forbid His people from bargaining for a fair price or making a profit. There is no biblical admonition against working for gain or engaging in productive enterprise to create wealth. In fact, there are dozens of biblical admonitions—in both the Old Testament and New Testament—about how to gain wealth and to



conduct commercial relationships in ways that help people become better employees and businessmen. Remember, having God’s blessing is crucial to any enterprise. “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:18).

Many people mistakenly think that the Bible calls money “the root of all evil”—but that is not in Scripture. Rather, it is the *love of money* that is the problem. Consider the actual scripture that the Apostle Paul wrote to the evangelist Timothy: “For the *love of money* is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). God wants us to prosper and to enjoy life in the right way. The Apostle John wished good things for his congregations. “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (3 John 2).

Sadly, for many, the pursuit of wealth brings evil rather than good, and stress rather than enjoyment. Greed is insatiable—there is always a hunger for more—and it makes the greedy into slaves of their wealth, rather than masters. “He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

By contrast, those who work hard and prosper in their labor in a *right and balanced way* can be blessed in doing so. “As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God” (Ecclesiastes 5:19). As a good Father, God wants blessings for His children, and those blessings do not exclude prosperity.

GIVE VS. GET

Oxford Dictionaries Online defines greed as an “intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth, power, or food.” Greed is an *inordinate desire* for gain that is motivated by covetousness—a violation of the Tenth Commandment—and, as such, it is sin. The Apostle Paul wrote that no covetous person will inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10). The reason is that a covetous person is focused on self and “get” whereas God is love and outgoing concern for others. “Give” is inherent in God’s character, and it will be so in the children of God in His Kingdom.

Jesus warned us against covetousness. “And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses’” (Luke 12:15). Similarly, the Apostle Paul taught that covetousness—greed—should

not be found in a Christian. “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints” (Ephesians 5:3). He explained that a covetous, greedy person will not be in the Kingdom of God (v. 5). Greed is not to be found in those ordained to Christian service; Paul wrote to Timothy that elders and deacons must be “not greedy for money” (1 Timothy 3:3, 8).

We are currently seeing the phenomenon of extremely wealthy people making arrangements to “give something back.” Billionaires such as Microsoft’s Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffet of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc. are pledging hundreds of millions of dollars for charitable purposes. It seems that in the end, people’s sense of self-worth is determined by what they gave in life, not by what they got. Mankind’s way is get. God’s way is give. “Give” is better!

AN ANSWER TO GORDON GEKKO

In the movie *Wall Street*, Gordon Gekko went to jail because greed fueled his desire to take excessive risks and ultimately to break the law. Although Gekko was a fictional character, he was based on a real-life financier, Ivan Boesky, with a similar history. Boesky was convicted in 1986 for insider trading—some of it brazen and blatant, such as buying large blocks of stock in a company only days before its corporate takeover was announced. He was fined \$100 million and sent to federal prison.

Just months before he confessed to his greed-fueled misdeeds, Boesky gave a commencement speech to

MBA students at the University of California, Berkeley. He told them: “Greed is alright, by the way. I want you to know that. I think greed is healthy. You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself.”

The jails hold many greedy, covetous people, and the mighty have often fallen because of their greed. On a positive note, after his prison term, Boesky was reported to have embraced the religion of his upbringing and focused on living a more moral life than before.


Although there are many who have not learned the lesson, successful businessmen recognize that greed is not “good” or “healthy,” and that it does not make you “feel good about yourself.” Rather, greed makes you incompetent!

An excessive desire for gain causes a person to take unreasonable risks for the available rewards. As a result, greedy people are often unbalanced in business, and they tend to make bad decisions, motivated by a desire to get rich quickly, without exerting the effort required for honest gain. “The desire of the lazy man kills

him, for his hands refuse to labor. He covets greedily all day long, but the righteous gives and does not spare” (Proverbs 21:25–26).

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The Bible states, “Buy the truth, and do not sell it” (Proverbs 23:23). Following that admonition, the *Tomorrow’s World* magazine, the *TomorrowsWorld.org* Web site, our telecast and our literature are all offered free to the public—they are not sold. You will never be asked to pay for the materials. They are made possible by the tithes and offerings of those who have voluntarily chosen to become donors and co-workers in proclaiming to all nations Christ’s true Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God.

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TOMORROW'S

Become a Great Conversationalist!

Have you ever had a conversation with someone you just met, and after your chat it seemed as though you had known the person your whole life?

Perhaps you could not believe how easy it was to share your thoughts and ideas with this person, and he or she seemed genuinely interested in what you said. Was it a fluke? Or did something happen that caused your encounter to go so smoothly?

It may surprise you to learn that your wonderful conversation was certainly not a fluke. For it to have gone so well, you must have been employing—even without realizing it—some of the keys to being a great conversationalist.

The truth is that almost anyone—no matter your age—can learn these keys, so you can enjoy more of your conversations, and can interact enjoyably with a wide variety of people. Here are a few of the most important keys.



WHERE IT BEGINS

Perhaps the most important key to being a great conversationalist is not so much a technique as it is an attitude or an approach. If you want to enjoy your conversations with people, you must *genuinely* care about them. We have all experienced what it is like to talk to people who make it clear through their body language and their attitude that they do not really care for us, or for what we want to say to them. Not only are such encounters frustrating, they tend to make us want to avoid future conversations with such people.

On the other hand, we naturally enjoy talking with people who clearly have a genuine interest in us and in what we have to say. Being around people who care about our ideas and our thoughts helps us to feel valued. It encourages us

to feel that our words matter. This fosters feelings of mutual respect, which encourage the free flow of conversation.

Dale Carnegie, a famous writer and lecturer in the first half of the 20th century, once said: "It's much easier to become interested in others than it is to convince them to be interested in you." If people are not interested in you, one of the best ways to gain their interest is for you to take a genuine interest in them. To do this effectively requires humility, and a respect for personal differences. It requires us to come out of our "shells" and our own private world, and to develop a genuine desire to understand other people and "what makes them tick." Because human nature is generally selfish, it requires a conscious decision on our part to

reach out to others. But if we can develop the determination to do so, it can significantly enrich our lives.

DRAW THEM OUT

Every conversation must start somewhere. Learning some basic "ice-breaker" comments or questions, to help draw the other person out, can go a long way in helping our conversations start well.

Often, the circumstances around us will help us find topics of mutual interest. For example, imagine asking someone in chemistry class, "Have you ever blown anything up?" The use of humor is often an excellent way to start a conversation, as long as your attempted humor is not insulting or negative. Another approach may be to ask someone his or her opinion about a topic currently in the news.

Questions are not just for the start of conversations. They can be asked at any time, to keep an exchange flowing. And you should not be shy about asking for clarification if you do not understand someone's answer. When people



know you are genuinely interested in them, they are usually quite happy to clear up your misunderstanding.

Continued questioning can help keep the conversation lively, and will encourage the other person that you are taking an interest in what he or she has to say. And do not lose sight of the fact that you are not just giving the other person an opportunity to feel valued; *you* are also gaining by getting to know the other person. By understanding other people better—finding out what they think, what matters to them—you are essentially learning who they are. Asking questions is more than just a conversational technique; it should be one important way in which you are growing to know and appreciate other people more than you did before.

LISTEN CAREFULLY

We all like to talk to people who pay attention to what we say. They make us feel that what we are talking about is worth something. You can be known as a great listener—someone people enjoy talking to. Here are three strategies to help you become a better listener:

- **Maintain eye contact.** According to one old saying, “the eyes are the windows of the soul.” You can discover much about a person’s attitude and emotional state by looking at his or her eyes. Eyes tell the story behind the words. In some cultures, eye contact is discouraged, but in most Western settings people expect to make eye contact during a conversation, and may feel irritated or even disrespected if you are looking elsewhere while they are talking to you.
- **Concentrate.** Listening can be hard work. Distractions will fight for your attention. Try to focus on what you are hearing. Even if you think you are not personally interested in the subject, you will find it more interesting if you concentrate on what is being said.
- **Be patient.** Many overeager talkers squelch conversations by cutting people off before they are finished talking. Not only is this rude, you can draw the wrong conclusion if you have not heard everything

the other person was trying to say. King Solomon of ancient Israel observed, “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him” (Proverbs 18:13). Let the other person finish what he or she is saying, then add your own comments.

Listening is an important, though often neglected, part of being a great conversationalist. If all parties are not listening, the conversation is incomplete. A great conversation is a two-way street.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Perhaps you consider yourself too shy, and do not believe you could ever be a great conversationalist. Maybe you have mostly kept to yourself, and not tried it. Either way, if this is you, you are missing out on one of the best ways to know people more closely and to develop friendships.

If you are unsure of yourself, try these ideas out first on someone you already know fairly well—perhaps a grandparent or a relative you would like to know better. If you are shy, try writing down and practicing your first few questions until you feel confident asking them. Then, give it your best effort. After you have become comfortable starting conversations with people you already know well, you can try it with other acquaintances at school or in your workplace.

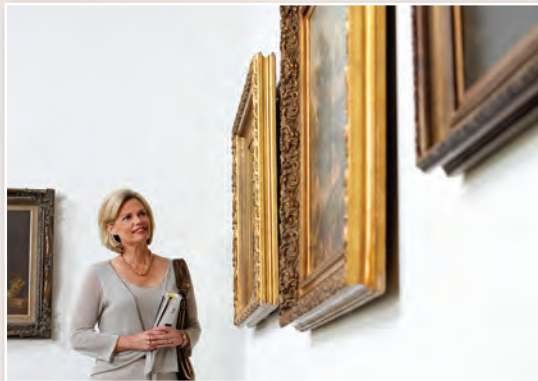
A word of caution: be careful starting conversations with strangers, especially in potentially dangerous environments or when you are alone with one other person. It is safer to strike up a conversation when other people are around, as at a restaurant or a sporting event. Use wisdom when trying these techniques.

After starting a few successful conversations, you will find it easier to have more. You will also enjoy getting to know others, and you will probably gain some friends along the way. With just a little effort, you can become a great conversationalist.

—Phil Sena

THE MESSIAH, MISUNDERSTOOD

On a recent trip to the United Kingdom, I had the opportunity to visit the National Gallery in London. This imposing complex of great buildings houses some of the finest examples of art from the Renaissance and earlier periods, along with works of art from more recent times. As I walked through the great galleries and observed the ancient paintings, large and small, I was struck by the recurring theme of most of the works, especially from the Middle Ages up through the 19th century. They were almost exclusively religious scenes, or depictions of biblical stories, biblical characters, various saints and often events in the life of Jesus Christ. Many paintings contained mythical characters such as winged cherubs shown



as infants or small children. Further, many of the subjects in the paintings had halos or some other characteristic depiction of holiness or religiosity.

I suppose this should not be unexpected, since the rich and powerful church that dominated Europe during those ages was the primary sponsor or patron of the arts. Artists producing these incredible works that have been so enduring were simply producing what the customer wanted and expected.

"What's the problem?" you might ask. The problem is that these paintings and sculptures, so beautifully done, present a false impression and depiction of the biblical accounts. Misinformation and mental images that mislead and distort the truth are among Satan's most useful tools to deceive mankind.

Scripture gives us this clear instruction, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20:4). Clearly, we should be very careful about how we depict God the Father or Jesus Christ the Messiah.

We also see that we must be very careful to be truthful. "You shall not bear false witness" (Exodus 20:16). Since much of the treasured art of antiquity portrays a false image, it does not meet the biblical standard of acceptability.

This kind of misinformation and misunderstanding is nothing new. The Apostle Paul gave stern

instruction about it: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6–9).

Strong words, to be sure, but they show the importance of clinging to the truth of the message of the Kingdom of God brought by Jesus Christ. To depict a false image of the Messiah or the biblical message, or to sing a hymn that contains error

or misunderstanding about the plan of God, causes confusion regarding the most important message ever given.

Jesus exposed the religious leaders of His day, who clung to their traditions and their power, rather than accept and embrace the message He brought. He said, "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men'" (Matthew 15:7–9).

While we can certainly appreciate the gifts, talent and accomplishment that it takes to make beautiful works of art, music and literature, we should make certain that these items do not cause the identity and the message of the Messiah to be misunderstood.

At *Tomorrow's World*, we strive to present God's Truth in plain and understandable ways as we prepare for the Messiah's return. The *Tomorrow's World Bible Study Course* is an excellent way to learn the simple and precious truths of Scripture, which for so many remain a mystery obscured by false human tradition. Sign up today, at TWBibleCourse.org—it is available, absolutely free, both online and in print!

—J. Davy Crockett, III

Too Big To Fail?

Continued from page 12

gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything” (Deuteronomy 28:46–47). It is time to wake up! The ship is going down! And our ship is sinking because, in spite of our blessings, *we have refused to give God the credit for our life, our breath, and our material success.*

Things are going to grow *even worse* before they become better. God said, through Moses, that because His people were unwilling to serve Him with gladness and joy, in plenty and blessings, “Therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you” (v. 48). Stern warning!

TO THE LIFEBOATS!

As shocking as this may sound, a time of national calamity, overthrow, and utter defeat is *coming* upon our modern Israelite nations. God predicts it. But He also gives hope and comfort amid the warnings. He foretells that, after modern Israel goes into national slavery, “From there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them” (Deuteronomy 4:29–31). In the latter days, God will *hear those who cry out with genuine repentance!*

But why wait? Why not seek Him now? For our sake, and for

our families’ sake, why not begin to really pray to God, and find out what we have been doing wrong (Revelation 21:8)? Why not humble ourselves and repent of our sins *now*?

Jesus predicted wars, famines, religious deception and persecution in the end-time, and the tribulation. But He also emphasized: “But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel [“good news”] of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:13–14).

Scripture gives us the encouraging news that there is a better world coming soon. After the dark days immediately ahead of us, a brighter day will dawn, when Christ will personally come to rule planet Earth. He will *end all rebellion and disobedience*, and reign in righteousness and equity (Isaiah 2:4) for the benefit of all humanity.

Many people scoffed and joked on the *Titanic* when the crew first gave the order to deploy the lifeboats. The ship still appeared to be seaworthy even after it had been dealt a death-blow—a 300-foot gash below the water line. In fact, the *Titanic* did not sink until several

hours later. At first, clambering into a tiny lifeboat and being lowered into the vast darkness of the ocean looked like a poor alternative to staying on the *relative* security of the ship. But in the end, it was a far safer choice.

Do not be fooled by the deceptive calm—the message that everything will continue as it always has (2 Peter 3:3–4). The truth is, there is a day of reckoning coming (Matthew 24:21–22)! Unless the modern descendants of ancient Israel turn with *deep repentance to the God who created us*, our ship is headed for oblivion.

But you do not need to be taken by surprise! Obey God’s commands. Build a relationship with Him, pray to Him and walk with Him daily. Stay close to God and focus on His words to lead you in every aspect of your life. “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6). Let Jesus Christ be the “captain” of your salvation (Hebrews 2:10) and the master of your life. And remember: *no ship is unsinkable; no nation is too big to fail.* ■

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“Hiding Out” from God’s Truth?

Continued from page 2

The apostles, too, were constantly busy preaching, teaching, helping, serving—and *surrounding themselves* with other human beings whom they could help and serve. They **rarely** kept themselves separate from other people, except for very *brief* periods of special prayer and fasting. Only when the Apostle John was put in a situation of exile, near the end of his life, did he stay apart from others consistently. Even as a civil prisoner in his own “hired house,” the Apostle Paul did **not** cut himself off from helping, serving and teaching others. Rather, “Paul... received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him” (Acts 28:30–31).

When asked about the “way to eternal life,” Jesus said, “if you want to enter into life, **keep the commandments**” (Matthew 19:17). When asked, “Which ones?” Christ began to name a number of the commandments regarding *how* to love your neighbor—and He concluded, “you shall **love** your neighbor as yourself” (v. 19).

How can you “love” your neighbors if you simply **cut yourself off** from them, and from all humanity—if you as a man forbid women to be around you, or as a woman forbid the presence of men and have practically no interaction with other human beings outside your own little group in a convent or a monastery? This obviously is “man-made” religion, which is totally **contrary** to the teachings of Christ and the Law of God! Many people do not like to hear these plain words. But it is the **truth**.

We need to remember Christ’s statement: “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I **never knew you**; **depart from Me**, you who practice **lawlessness**’” (Matthew 7:22–23).

Too many people, like these monks, simply assume that their religious leaders have taught them the whole truth. They sing a few songs and read from parts of the Bible, but they clearly do not study the whole Bible to understand God’s teachings about the entire way of life they should be living. They are happy to have the approval of those around them, to “blend in” with the people around them. This was the same problem many religious leaders of Jesus’ own day

had: “For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God,” (John 12:43) and so they did not accept Christ and follow His teaching and His way of life.

Though most monks and nuns “hiding out” in monasteries may be sincere, they are giving up many opportunities to immerse themselves among their fellow human beings who may need help. When you consider Jesus’ statement that loving your neighbor is one of the two “great commandments,” you realize that these people are actually living *contrary* to the law and intent of God by their actions. Though their self-made religion may “look good” on the surface, their monastic way of life is absolutely **not** what Almighty God intended. In fact, it is **against** the whole way of life that God planned for humanity.

Why have these monks and nuns retreated to the cloister? Notice the Apostle Paul’s inspired warning: “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). One of these “doctrines of demons” involves “forbidding to marry” (v. 3). Though God does call some Christians to remain unmarried, we need to understand that forced celibacy has caused **millions** of priests and nuns down through the centuries to toss and turn in deep frustration and anguish about their inability to express love for another human being in marriage.

May God help all of us to quit “imagining” what we *think* Jesus would want us to do! Rather, we must learn to **study** the inspired word of God, to find out what the **real Jesus Christ** of the Bible did do, and what He actually taught and believed. We need to believe what He believed, and **live** His truly inspired way of life. Then, as we do so, God will become more real to us, and His blessings will descend upon us in ways we may not now realize.

In this mixed up and deceived world, Christians must learn to “**seek Him** with **all** your heart and with **all** your soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29). Then, your Creator will “open your mind” to truly *understand* His word, and to begin to genuinely “know” Him and His purpose for your life. The Son of God stated, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3).



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