

# TOMORROW'S WORLD

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## Lest We Forget

**100 Years after World War I:  
*What Have We Learned?***

## What Do You Celebrate?

**T**he biggest holiday in the world is coming! Billions worldwide will celebrate the fictional birthday of Jesus the Christ, but discerning people question whether someone who claims to be Christian should have anything to do with it. They ask, “Why do people attempt to Christianize a day steeped in pre-Christian, pagan practices? Why do they celebrate the birth of their Savior on the birthday of an imaginary sun god?” That the celebration of Christmas originates in paganism is indisputable!

Few people are willing to buck the tide of tradition. What about you? Jesus chided the Pharisees of His day, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men” (Mark 7:6–8).

Are the holders of today’s traditions any different? Consider the facts. A little research reveals that biblical Holy Days have been replaced with futile paganism, ostensibly “in the name of Christ.” William B. Eerdman’s *Handbook to the History of Christianity* explains:

The Christian church took over many pagan ideas and images. From sun-worship, for example, came the celebration of Christ’s birth on the twenty-fifth of December, the birthday of the Sun. *Saturnalia*, the Roman winter festival of 17–21 of December, provided the merriment, gift-giving and candles typical of later Christmas holidays. Sun-worship hung on in Roman Christianity.... Some pagan customs which were later Christianized, for example the use of candles, incense and garlands, were at first avoided by the church because they symbolized paganism (pp. 131–132).

Consider carefully! How does one “Christianize” a “pagan custom”? By simply associating the name of Christ with it? Such a concept is entirely ridiculous!

### When Truth Meets Apathy

I have quoted Eerdman’s words many times, only to be disappointed by a ho-hum attitude from readers and listeners. Both Jesus and Paul quoted the prophet Isaiah, saying, “Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them” (Matthew 13:14–15).

The sad fact is that most people would rather hang on to tradition, even if it means rejecting the will of God!



In his highly respected work *Caesar and Christ*, historian Will Durant reveals the corruption inherent in what almost everyone erroneously thinks is the religion of Christ. He writes, “Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it” (p. 595). He then lists a number of heathen doctrines that

are fully embedded in traditional Christianity, before stating the obvious: “Christianity was the last great creation of the ancient pagan world” (p. 595), and “Christianity became the last and greatest of the mystery religions” (p. 600).

Statements such as these ought to inspire change within any who truly want to serve God, but in most cases, they do not! The Bible tells us why.

As I have already shown, most people are dull of hearing. They hear truth, may even rejoice in knowing the truth, but fail to act on it. They have eyes to

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see, but are blind to the need for change. This is part of the problem, but not the entire story.

To some, the truth is merely a subject for intellectual exercise. For such individuals, knowing is what matters, and action need not follow understanding. The Apostle John tells us, “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (1 John 2:3). The *New Bible Commentary Revised* explains, “For John the knowledge of God is not some mystic vision or intellectual insight. It is shown if we keep his commandments. Obedience is not a spectacular virtue, but it is at the basis of all true Christian service.”

This was true in the first century and is still true today. Many people in Jesus’ day also believed in Him, including many prominent individuals, but still denied their belief for fear of what it could cost them. “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:42–43).

### Courage over Convenience

The fact is that it is not easy to be a true Christian. Few have the courage and commitment to go against the crowd. The opinions of friends and family members often take precedence. Is this pleasing to our Maker? Jesus answers this question unequivocally in Matthew’s gospel:

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to “set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law”; and “a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it (Matthew 10:34–39; see also Luke 14:26).

It is not that Christ desired to disrupt families, but that He knew of the trouble that follows when an individual repents of sin and rejects long-held traditions. He knew that people would put their friends and relatives ahead of Him, and God will not tolerate being second to anything or anyone. As the Apostle Paul questions, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to

death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?” (Romans 6:16).

**The fact is that it is not easy to be a true Christian. Few have the courage and commitment to go against the crowd.**

It is human nature to *reason around* God’s clear commands. We are naturally hostile to His law, as Paul tells us in Romans 8:7. If God says to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, people reason that they can choose any day they want, but somehow they always end up choosing the day Emperor Constantine called the “venerable day of the sun,” rather than the day God thundered from Mount Sinai. Rather than observing the seven annual Festivals spelled out in both the Old and New Testaments, modern “Christianity” borrows from paganism, contrary to unmistakable commands not to do so.

Israel was instructed not to follow the customs of the people they were to replace. “When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way... Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it” (Deuteronomy 12:29–32).

So, what about you? Are you dull of hearing? Are you spiritually blind? Or are you willing to do whatever it takes to follow Christ?

Your answers to these questions are demonstrated by your actions, not by your words.





## 5 Are We a Thankful Nation?

As many families in the United States prepare to gather for Thanksgiving Day, all of us should ask the question: Is our nation a thankful one?

## 10 Dismissing Our History

There is much debate today about whether official monuments to flawed historical figures should be maintained. Could there be any unforeseen cost of their removal?

## 12 Why Christmas?

For many, it is the most wonderful time of the year. Yet how many celebrate Christmas without really understanding why they do so? It's time to find out.

## 18 Lest We Forget

A century has now passed since the conclusion of World War I. Time is erasing our civilization's memories of the "war to end all wars." What lessons must we learn?

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For all of Europe's current difficulties, Bible prophecy makes plain that the continent has a final, earth-shaking revival to come.

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# Why do people keep Christmas, anyway?

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# Are We a Thankful Nation?

**Does your nation appreciate the blessings that God has provided? Does it recognize that blessings come from God—as does national purpose? More importantly, do *you* recognize these things? God’s word makes plain the need to be thankful!**

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By **Richard F. Ames**

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**I**n the United States, millions gather with their families and friends on Thanksgiving Day to enjoy good food, fellowship, and the blessings of living in a prosperous nation. Americans enjoy the blessings of freedom and opportunity. But do they thank God for their blessings? Do they understand why their nation has been blessed? In particular, do those who live in the United States and other British-descended nations understand why they have received blessings unparalleled in the history of mankind?

Whether it is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November as in the U.S., the second Monday of October as in Canada, or one of the many other days set aside by the different countries of the world, a national day of thanksgiving is a time when people are supposed to count their blessings. The citizens of some of these nations have received *unprecedented* blessings. In the 20th century, the U.S. and British

Commonwealth became the richest and most powerful nation and group of nations in the world. But that national power and prestige has greatly declined. The U.S. was once an economic powerhouse, and nations around the world eagerly bought its exports and borrowed its money. Today, however, America is the world’s largest *debtor*, with a national debt in excess of \$21 trillion and growing—more than \$65,000 for each American man, woman and child.

How did the U.S. and other English-speaking nations gain so many blessings? Recall the development of the North American continent. There were the pioneering settlements by the British in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607; the Dutch established what is now Albany, N.Y. around 1614; and the Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. After a severe and disastrous winter, they gave thanks to God for their harvest in 1621, in what historians label as the first Thanksgiving!

Over the course of just 70 years, from 1783 to 1853, the young nation acquired enough land to extend

its continental reach “from sea to shining sea.” The greatest land expansion took place in 1803, under President Thomas Jefferson, when France sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States for only \$15 million dollars—just five cents per acre! French emperor Napoleon is said to have remarked, “This accession of territory affirms forever the power of the United States.”

The U.S. continued to develop economically and militarily over the years. After the conclusion of World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, speaking before the House of Commons, commented on the status of the U.S., “I must turn to the United States, with whom our fortunes and interests are in-

Notice that Abraham’s descendants were to control the “gate of their enemies.” Throughout much of the 20th century, America and Britain actually controlled most of the world’s sea gates. However, because of our national sins, God has begun to take that control away.

What does that ancient covenant have to do with us today? God renewed His covenant with Abraham’s son, Isaac, and later with Isaac’s son Jacob—whose name was changed to Israel. Israel had twelve sons, including Judah and Joseph. Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Scripture records that Jacob passed this blessing to his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh: “The Angel

who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; let my name [Israel] be named upon them [Ephraim and Manasseh], and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of

## WHAT REALLY IS THE SOURCE OF THESE NATIONAL BLESSINGS? THE ANSWER BEGINS WITH THE HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM.

tertwined... The Americans... have become today the greatest state and power in the world, speaking our own language, cherishing our common law, and pursuing... the same ideals” (October 28, 1947).

### The True Source of America’s Blessings!

Is there a biblical and historical reason for this power? What really is the source of these national blessings? The answer reveals our national purpose! And you may be surprised to learn that the answer begins with the history of the patriarch Abraham. God made a covenant with Abraham, and it is because of Abraham’s faith that we have been blessed.

God tested Abraham, telling him to sacrifice Isaac, his son. Abraham obeyed in faith, and God preserved Isaac’s life! What did God say to Abraham as a result? “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (Genesis 22:16–18).

the earth” (Genesis 48:16).

These blessings are called the *birthright promises*. These prophetic promises, which included wealth, abundance, military power, and international dominance, were to be fulfilled in the descendants of Joseph. It may be surprising to many of you, but those divine blessings given to Manasseh and Ephraim have been fulfilled in the U.S. and British-descended nations. Long-time readers of this magazine are already familiar with this amazing biblical truth. If you have not already proved this truth to yourself, please write for your free copy of our informative booklet, *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*, or read it online at [TomorrowsWorld.org](http://TomorrowsWorld.org).

### A Land of Beauty and Bounty

Consider America’s blessings with this promise to ancient Israel in mind: “For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper” (Deuteronomy 8:7–9).



America's national heritage includes great natural beauty, fertile agricultural soil and rich mineral deposits for industrial development. But have the citizens of the United States recognized—and honored—the source of those blessings? Will our Western nations last much longer? Consider God's warning: "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today" (Deuteronomy 8:10–11).

Have we heeded that warning, individually and nationally? National sins produce national penalties, as President Abraham Lincoln recognized. Proclaiming a National Fast Day for April 30, 1863, Lincoln stated, "It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God... and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

Lincoln acknowledged that God is the true source of blessings, nationally and individually. ***The national purpose of the United States must include acknowledgment of its Creator and Benefactor!*** Does your nation acknowledge the sovereignty of God? Or is it so secular and unthankful that it has turned its back on God? Do you personally thank Almighty God for all the benefits we so often take for granted? Notice what the Apostle James wrote: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Whatever you enjoy in life that is genuinely good comes from God, the giver of every good and perfect gift. Abraham Lincoln reminded the American people to recognize that fact as a nation!

### The Need for National Purpose

What happens when a country lacks a national purpose? The late U.S. Senator John McCain often spoke of national purpose. Addressing his party's national convention in 2000, he warned, "Unless we restore the people's sovereignty over government, renew their pride in public service, reform our public institutions to meet the challenges of a new day and reinvigorate our ***national purpose***, then America's best days will be behind us."

Fifty-seven years ago, Senator James Fulbright observed that America was losing its direction. He warned, "Bigger cars, bigger parking lots, bigger corporate structures, bigger farms, bigger drug stores, bigger supermarkets, bigger motion-picture screens. The tangible and the functional expand, while the intangible and the beautiful shrink. Left to wither is the ***national purpose***... The national dialogue is gradually being lost in a froth of misleading self-congratulation and cliché. National needs and interests are slowly being submerged by the national preoccupation with the irrelevant."

All Americans should ask themselves: Have we reinvigorated or restored our national purpose, or have we allowed it to wither? Do we have a purpose larger than ourselves? If so, do we understand what that purpose is? Is our national purpose to be the world's most powerful and prosperous nation? We have already seen that the U.S. is the world's *greatest debtor nation*. Is it our national purpose to extend freedom and democracy to every nation on earth? We need to understand that all nations can experience *genuine freedom* when they obey the Truth of the Bible. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the *truth* shall make you *free*" (John 8:32). Referring to the Creator of all nations, Jesus prayed, "Your word ***is*** truth" (John 17:17). Have we let our light shine by living that Truth? Are we doing our part in making that Truth available to the world?

Are our nations preoccupied with the irrelevant, or do we acknowledge the Source of our purpose—and of our many blessings? As those of us in the United States observe Thanksgiving, we need to ask, "To *whom* do we give thanks?" To Almighty God and Jesus Christ? Or do we worship the dollar—or the pound, the euro, the peso, and the yen? U.S. coins and currency declare, "In God We Trust." If our nation fails to live up to that motto, it will not prevail. But you and I must exemplify that motto and biblical precept *in our own lives!*

The Western nations are known for their materialism and focus on money, and consumer spending drives our economies. The Apostle Paul foretold that these characteristics—and others we will recognize—would be prominent at the end of this present age: "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to

parents, **unthankful**, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3:2–5).

Any godly civilization should promote the true values of life, not the false values of materialism, vanity and pride. These cultural flaws, along with ingratitude, will eventually destroy any society that fails to overcome them.

God warns us against trusting in our prosperity and possessions. Rather than think that we have gained our wealth by our own efforts, we should understand that it is God who gives the power to gain wealth (Deuteronomy 8:17–18). He warns us: “Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God” (vv. 19–20).

That is a very sobering warning about the future of any country that has been blessed by God. At Thanksgiving, we give thanks to God for the beauty and abundance with which He has blessed our countries. But at the same time, we should be deeply concerned as our national character becomes more and more blemished with immorality. Will our Western nations continue to disobey the Ten Commandments and increasingly *reject* the biblical truths that once led to their prosperity—and that lead to *true* life, liberty and happiness?

### Are We Truly Thankful?

Most of those who will be observing a Thanksgiving Day this year are among the most materially blessed people on Earth. Even the poorest Americans and Canadians enjoy levels of plenty, comfort and convenience that much of the world’s population can barely imagine. Yet we still find much to complain about.



What is the antidote for such complaining? The antidote for complaining is thanksgiving! Are you thankful that you live in a relatively prosperous nation? That you have the freedom to worship according to your conscience? That you have many opportunities to grow in education and human potential? That you have family, friends and perhaps a good job? We should even be thankful for the sunshine and fresh air around us, and for the food and beverages we are able to enjoy.

For Christians, however, the greatest benefits are spiritual! We thank God for the sacrifice of His Son to pay for our sins. We are thankful for God’s forgiveness and grace. Remember, Jesus taught us to pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matthew 6:12). We are thankful for the gift of the Holy Spirit after repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). We are thankful not only for the sacrifice of Christ, but that He is alive as our High Priest, Savior and Intercessor! “He always lives to make intercession for [us]” (Hebrews 7:25). We are thankful that Jesus Christ is alive! Notice this amazing truth: “For if when

**THANKFUL NATION?** CONTINUES ON PAGE 32



## Should You Be Worried?

**H**ave you ever been roused out of bed by an unexpected, urgent knock at your door? Instantly, your heart races and you hurriedly react. If this has happened to you, I hope it was a minor event that you handled in stride. In this age of rampant crime, including home invasions, the security alarm business prospers as people attempt to protect themselves and their property. Sophisticated systems are now available to let you know who is at your door, even when you are not at home.

Even the words of the Bible address this subject. For example, Jesus said it this way: “When the strong man in armour guards his homestead, his property is undisturbed” (Luke 11:21, *Moffatt New Translation*). Solomon wisely gave this advice: “A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself” (Proverbs 27:12).

Most people are mindful of their exposure to physical loss and try to prevent damage or injury, or provide for coverage. An array of insurance plans and warranties is available to accomplish this goal.

### Spiritual Urgency

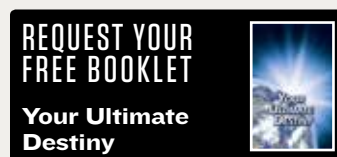
While we value physical safety and financial security, what about spiritual matters—our values, morals and relationship with God? In the press of busy, activity-filled lives, we often overlook this vital dimension entirely or allow it only a very minor place in our priorities. This is not a new phenomenon. Jesus asks us in Matthew 16:26, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” He warned that “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15).

In the marketplace, the halls of government, and our academic institutions, it seems that knowledge or discussion of the God of the Bible and Jesus Christ as the Messiah is simply off limits. Many in news media, entertainment, and business disdain any reference to the Creator.

Exceptions exist, of course, but they are few and feeble. Much of mainstream Christianity has begun to accept same-sex marriage, “fluid” gender identifications, and related concepts as morally acceptable, rejecting direct biblical prohibitions. Charges of sexual abuse and shocking admissions of

wrongdoing plague many prominent and well-known religious denominations.

There is a groundswell of concern as people see their lives and culture being adversely affected by the deviate, profligate activities all around them. “What to do?” is a very relevant question at this juncture in history. The answers are found in a book that is probably on a bookshelf in their homes. The Prophet Isaiah made it very plain; “Seek the LORD while He



may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man

his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6–7).

In dealing with the religious establishment of His day, Jesus bluntly quoted Isaiah: “Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them” (Matthew 13:14–15).

*Tomorrow’s World* speaks and explains the Bible’s eternal truths regularly on television, over the Internet, and in print. If you are reading and understanding these important subjects, then God may be opening your mind—as only He can. With hearing and understanding these truths comes a responsibility.

Jesus’ words in the Book of Revelation bring a sharp focus: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 3:20–22).

Do you hear the knock?

—J. Davy Crocket III

# h Canada!

## Dismissing Our History



***"So consumed with guilt and self-loathing are we that we are now dismantling monuments to the man without whom we would not have this country, to which millions have come and millions more wish to come" (Geoff Currier, "Removing MacDonald's Statue Imposes Modern Values on Historical Figures," Global News, August 24, 2018).***

Homeowners often purchase works of art and place them in or around their homes. They intend for these pieces to stir feelings and emotions and to prompt conversation among guests. The 150-kilo bronze statue of Sir John A. MacDonald that once stood in front of Victoria's City Hall has likely stirred far *more* conversation and emotion in the weeks since its removal was announced than it ever did in the 36 years since its installation. By deciding to remove a statue of Canada's first prime minister, the Victoria City Council has brought to the forefront of national debate the question of how we remember and judge outstanding individuals who paved the way to the world we have now.

Should we memorialize the accomplishments of people who did not live up to today's moral standards? The primary charges brought against Sir John A. MacDonald involve his role in establishing the native residential school system and his racially charged comments towards aboriginal Canadians. These charges are no small matter, and there are many who believe they are grave enough for MacDonald's name to be effectively stricken from history.

### **Historic Ignorance**

Perhaps the most disheartening fact regarding the crusade to rid the nation of any public acclaim for Sir

John A. MacDonald is that a staggering number of Canadians don't even know who he was. A recently updated article in *The Globe and Mail* reported that "Four in 10 Canadians cannot name our first prime minister or identify the year of confederation. Young Canadians often know even less about our country's past than their parents or grandparents" (Marc Chalifoux and J.D.M. Stewart, "Canada is Failing History," *The Globe and Mail*, updated February 23, 2018).

You may be surprised to learn that completing a course in Canadian history in high school is mandatory in only four provinces. It becomes impossible even to debate the value of memorializing historic figures when public knowledge of our history is so shallow. Geoff Currier summarized the problem for Global News: "Sadly, all most Canadians know about Sir John A. is that he drank and helped create residential schools. A study of real Canadian history might provide a better understanding of the complexities of the man and the times in which he lived" (Geoff Currier, "Removing MacDonald's Statue Imposes Modern Values on Historical Figures," *Global News*, August 24, 2018).

With fewer Canadians learning their own nation's history in schools, shouldn't public memorials of historic figures and events be considered even *more* essential for stirring interest in and igniting curiosity about Canada's past?

### **The Cost of Forgetting**

What happens when we dismiss our own history? One terrible consequence is that we fail to learn the valuable lessons it provides. *Tomorrow's World* has



made a point of highlighting the ongoing battle for the culture of our society. Vital aspects of how Canada and other Western nations have become prosperous—such as the foundation of moral law based on Judeo-Christian principles—have been continually pushed aside. While we cannot fool ourselves into believing that our national heroes are without blemish or deficiency, we also cannot overlook their achievements on the basis that part of their story may be ugly when judged in today's context.

Writing for *Maclean's*, commentator Murad Hemmadi states, "What this debate has made clear is that the past, and how we remember it, has become one of the major battlegrounds in the new culture wars. Decisions about who we commemorate, which events and people are recorded in the history books, and what narratives we tell ourselves about how we got here have real consequences for our societies..." ("What Fights About 'Erasing' History are Really About," August 18, 2018).

Whether or not a specific statue remains standing, changes location, or is ground to dust is not the big picture. The sad truth is that we are throwing away much of our history, partly because historical figures are not studied and understood in the context of their times. Many inspiring stories, poignant lessons, and elements of cultural context that have worked together to shape our modern society are being forgotten as a result.



Statue of John A. MacDonald

This article's purpose is not to defend the first Canadian Prime Minister's role in the establishment of residential schools and other decisions that history remembers unkindly, nor is it to convict him. The removal of his statue is representative of countless similar situations, where contemporary justice is

being visited upon individuals who have been dead for decades, even centuries. While it is not likely that MacDonald could be permanently expunged from Canada's public memory, other individuals of significance and the important stories and lessons they represent may be. Ultimately, the question is this: "Should we remember the achievements of flawed heroes?"

### The Perfect Model

It seems pertinent to examine the greatest source of morality and the manner in which it records the labours of its heroes. The Bible is the perfect word of God and contains a reliable, flawless code of moral conduct. It recounts the stories of men and women whom God used to accomplish awe-inspiring feats. Abraham, Moses, David, Esther, Peter, and so many others are heroes whose names and stories have inspired millions throughout the centuries.

How did God choose to memorialize their efforts? He ensured their stories would be recorded for us and established them as examples we should consider emulating in some ways in our own lives. He did this *despite* their human faults and those portions of their personal histories that were not so admirable or praiseworthy. Moses disobeyed a direct command from God (Numbers 20:1-13). Peter was ashamed of and denied his relationship to the Messiah (John 18:15-18, 25-27). David was guilty of adultery and even murder (2 Samuel 12:9). Yet God describes such individuals as "having obtained a good testimony through faith" (Hebrews 11:39).

God is perfect. If ever there were an individual who could cast out an otherwise great person over any particular fault, God would be that individual. Despite having the perfect pedestal on which to stand and pass judgment regarding who should be erased from history, God chose to memorialize these individuals and record their stories—faults and all—for our benefit today.

Will you choose to dismiss the great accomplishments of men and women because part of their story is ugly? Rather, should we not strive to emulate the positive character traits that enabled them to achieve, while thanking God for His mercy and willingness to work with all of us flawed mortals?

—Michael Heykoop





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By **Rod McNair**

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**M**odern America is deeply divided, and those divisions seem to grow every day. However, you might be surprised at what *does* unite Americans. Despite a wide divergence of opinions on just about everything, at least 90 percent of people in the United States observe Christmas, according to a 2013 Pew Research Center study. Yet when it comes to underlying reasons for observing Christmas, Americans are once again divided, with just over half celebrating it for religious reasons, and about one-third doing so for cultural reasons, with little or no “religious connection” at all.

What about you? If you observe Christmas—why?

Truly, Christmas is enormously popular, and people across many nations and cultures observe this annual festival. As *History.com* notes, “Probably the most celebrated holiday in the world, our modern Christmas is a product of hundreds of years of both secular and religious traditions from around the globe” (“Christmas Traditions Worldwide”).

Norway popularized the custom of the “yule log,” but Germany added the tradition of decorating an ev-

ergreen tree. The custom of caroling, which features groups of performers traveling from house to house, originated in England. Central and South American cultures focus strongly on the birth of Christ and the so-called Nativity scene. In Australia, where Christmas occurs in the heat of summer, people commonly celebrate the day with beach outings and outdoor barbecues. In the Philippines, snowflakes are a rare sight—but decorations featuring Santa and his reindeer appear in shopping malls nationwide.

Christmas allure runs wide and deep. For many, it has become one of the most important events of the year. If you observe Christmas, what is it like for you? Author Desmond Morris describes it like this:

Why is that woman over there buying enough food to withstand a siege? What is that man doing, trying to wrestle a small fir tree into the back of his car? Why is that couple staggering along the street clutching a mountain of parcels?... What on earth is going on? The answer, of course, is that Christmas is coming.... The human race is preparing to celebrate its great midwinter festival. **There are many other special days in the year... but there is nothing**

**to touch the huge impact of Christmas Day** (*Christmas Watching*, p. 2, emphasis added).

A lot of shopping, baking, decorating, ornament-hanging—and that’s just the beginning! This annual observance touches virtually everyone, and fills countless hearts with anticipation well in advance. Mr. Morris notes that, at Christmastime...

...everything changes. Work stops, vast business empires grind to a halt. Traffic jams vanish. People eat differently, dress differently and decorate their homes differently.... There is feasting on special foods and drinking of special drinks. There are gifts to be opened and games to be played. Above all, there is a whole series of special rituals to be performed—everything from kissing under the mistletoe and hanging baubles on the Christmas tree to setting light to the Christmas pudding and pulling Christmas crackers (p. 1).

People unfailingly follow the same script every year. But why? What is the purpose of it all? Mr. Morris concludes:

Why do we indulge in all these curious customs?... What does it all mean and what are the origins of the many, seemingly irrational acts we perform each year on the 25th of December and the days around it? **Although officially Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Christ, hardly anything we do during the Christmas festivities has the slightest connection with Christianity, let alone with the arrival of the infant Jesus....** Because it is much more than a simple religious festival, Christmas appeals to almost everyone. It becomes a national event. People who have never entered a church in their entire adult lives still perform the Christmas ceremonies without question. **Usually they have no idea why they are doing them** (pp. 1–2, emphasis added).

Mr. Morris provides a remarkably candid summation of the supposed “most important event of the

year,” and exposes the Christmas traditions as empty and meaningless. Are you willing to examine these traditions? If you have the courage to do so, you might be shocked to discover how much more satisfying it is to keep the special days that God actually intended for us to keep.

### **Christmas: An Honor to Christ?**

Many people observe Christmas in an effort to show honor and loyalty to Christ. Their answer to the question “Why Christmas?” would be, “Well, to worship Christ.” And yes, we should worship Christ! He is our Savior, the Captain of our salvation, the One who will return to rule the world as King of kings and Lord of lords. We should honor Him! The question is, how?

When Jesus was speaking on the Mount of Olives, He asked those in the crowd,

Why do you call Me “Lord, Lord,” and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock (Luke 6:46–48).

We all want more peace of mind. Everyone wants to feel settled, instead of like everything is spinning out of control. Think about what Jesus said in relation to your life. When you have trials, do you want God to “have your back”? Do you want to be more confident that, no matter what comes, you will have His help?

We are living in uncertain times. Our world is becoming more dangerous and unpredictable, and many are justifiably worried about the future. Prophecy warns us of hard times ahead, but as Christ said, those who build on the true Rock can have confidence amidst the storms of life.

By contrast, notice what happens if we *do not* build on the Rock of Christ: “But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great” (Luke 6:49).

Where are you building your life's foundation, and what about your children? Are you helping them build a foundation that will weather the coming storms?

Many modern Christmas traditions center on an imaginary figure who loves children, flies at supernatural speeds on a mythical sleigh, knows who has been "naughty or nice," and brings wonderful gifts to those who have been good. This is, of course, Santa Claus. And sure, everyone knows Santa isn't real—right?

But consider for a moment that there really is a Being who loves children, can travel at supernatural speeds, and knows our every action and thought! He really does know if we have been good or bad, and He rewards us based on our works. Of course, this Being is the Christ of the Bible, and we can easily find scriptures that reveal His nature:

Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And He laid His hands on them and departed from there (Matthew 19:13–15).

Every year during Christmastime, men dress up as Santa and take prominent places in many of our malls and shopping centers. Ecstatic children wait in great anticipation for their turn to sit on Santa's lap and whisper requests in his ear. But in the inspired word of God, there is a record of Someone who is real and alive, who proved, when He was on earth, how much He loves children and wants to hear of their lives and concerns. Even when His disciples thought He was too busy, He made time for children. He brought them close, hugged them, laid His hands on their heads to bless them, and prayed for them. That is the Jesus Christ of the Bible. **Who is more real to your children? Santa Claus, or Jesus Christ?**

Just after He was resurrected, Christ provided a glimpse of His power:

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst,



and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord (John 20:19–20).

Our culture glorifies stories of a magical figure who brings gifts on Christmas Eve before vanishing into the night. But Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, really did have the power to travel anywhere in the blink of an eye. He even appeared instantly in a room with closed doors, something clearly beyond natural powers!

When Jesus Christ returns, the Bible shows that He will reward human beings according to their works: "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Revelation 22:12–13).

Jesus Christ knows who has been "naughty or nice," and He is going to give rewards to everyone according to their works. While salvation is a free gift from God for those who seek Him in faith and obedience, Christ *does* see what we do and will reward both

**WHY CHRISTMAS?** CONTINUES ON PAGE 26



# STAIRWAY TO HELL

## The smooth path that leads to bitterness and death

**A**s I traveled with my family along the highway winding through America's heartland, we were struck by the natural beauty of the landscape: mile upon mile of fields and forests, spotted with occasional towns. And then we saw it. In this of all settings it looked so out of place.

Like a giant stain on a freshly laundered shirt, there before us was a jarring visual reminder that smut and sleaze are not confined to the red-light districts of large cities. Framed by an otherwise pristine forest stood a solitary billboard advertising an "Adult Entertainment Store."

Some defend sexually provocative imagery as being an art form that promotes the beauty of the human body. Such an assertion seeks to separate the true Artist's work from His intent and instructions. God created our human form after His own image (cf. Genesis 1:27). His creation is indeed beautiful, and He recognized it as such. His intent



from the beginning was that male and female would be united and become one within the parameters

of the marriage covenant. God created sex not only for procreation, but also as an expression of love that brings a husband and wife closer together physically and emotionally. Pornography offers voyeuristic sex in place of real intimacy.

Real sexual fulfillment is a result that is *only* obtained inside of a happy, loving, God-centered marriage union. Pornography offers the promise of sexual fulfillment, but it is only an illusion—like a mirage in the desert. Many are enticed by it and the lifestyle it portrays, only to find out through experience that the reality is emptiness and frustration.

The wise King Solomon warned about the pursuit of illicit sexual gratification in Proverbs 5:3–5: "For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of hell." Actions have consequences, and the results that come from indulging in pornography are anything but pleasurable.

Although the beginning may be sweet, the end result is bitterness and death, just as one would expect at the bottom of a "stairway to hell."

### Harmless Entertainment?

Pornography exploits individuals for the sexual gratification of others. The gratification is temporary and those that seek after it do so to their own hurt. Those that are taken in by the illusion and illicit imagery that is pornography, follow the promise of pleasure "as an ox goes to the slaughter" (Proverbs 7:22). Just as the ox is enticed toward the place of slaughter with a bucket of grain, so also those who follow after illicit sexual satisfaction are enticed toward their own destruction by the promise of pleasure.

Far from being "harmless entertainment," pornography is like a national cancer that works by attacking the most fundamental building block of our society—the family. For many, pornography is an addictive gateway that leads to further illicit sexual pursuits.

Pornography is frequently mentioned at divorce proceedings as a factor in the breakup of the marriages.

**Pornography exploits individuals for the sexual gratification of others. The gratification is temporary and those that seek after it do so to their own hurt.**

A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in 2016 reported the results of a study showing that the odds of divorce double for men and triple for women when a spouse begins watching porn. The results of pornography are pain and suffering not only for the ones who seek illicit entertainment, but also for those whose lives are intertwined—spouses, children, parents, and siblings. Far from being harmless, the illicit imagery comes with an incalculable price tag.

For further reading on the destructive power of pornography, as well as how to overcome the addiction to it, please read our article, "Pornography: Pleasurable Pastime or Toxic Threat?" You can find it online at [TomorrowsWorld.org](http://TomorrowsWorld.org).

—J. Charles Ogwyn

## The Ultimate Sacrifice!



**A**t the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of each year, the world pauses in memory of the Armistice. At this precise moment, we acknowledge the sacrifice of all those who died in the First World War defending the principles of freedom and liberty. This year is the one-hundredth time we have remembered the end of this most dreadful “war to end all wars.”

In Britain, the focus of the nation’s memorial service takes place at the Cenotaph in London’s Whitehall. Cenotaph means “empty tomb,” and on this one are etched the words, “The Glorious Dead.” There, the nation comes together—over television, the Internet, and in person—led by the Royal Family, politicians, the armed forces, and representatives of faith communities and the Commonwealth. The atmosphere is charged with emotion, as—up and down the country—life stops for two minutes in remembrance of those who died so we might live. Bugles pierce the respectful silence to sound out “The Last Post.” Wreaths are laid. Hymns are sung. Prayers are said. The band plays. And the long March Past of veterans’ groups begins.

All living memories of those who served in World War I are now lost to us, taken to the grave by those who held them. But we will not forget their sacrifice, or the sacrifices of those who have died in wars since. Year after year, the nation rehearses the same solemn vow: “*We will remember them!*”

In 2014, at the centennial memorial marking the beginning of the First World War, almost 900,000 ceramic poppies were prepared, one for each British and Colonial serviceman killed in the war. These were

then arranged to create a sea of “blood” that flowed from and around the Tower of London—shed blood, preserving life for future generations. Afterwards, these ceramic poppies were sold to the public, one per family, as personal reminders of the war dead—the price of freedom.

Paradoxically, while we remember the dead of past wars and pray for peace, our nations continue to arm for war! Mankind, divided by ideology, religion, national aspiration, and the personal quest for power, fights on. But isn’t it time to think about doing things differently?

### A Radical Solution

What if we also memorialised peace and the way to peace? What if we could memorialise a plan to change human nature and put a stop to all war? What if the “Glorious Dead” could be returned to life? Amazingly, such magnificent thoughts are not wishful thinking or the mindless meanderings of the deranged. They are the hope of your Bible!

This book points us to a very different memorial, one with striking parallels to that of the Armistice, but with a very different purpose in mind. This memorial is of enormous magnitude, universal in impact, and more essential to life than we can possibly imagine. Yet it is neglected, ignored and largely forgotten by most.

This is not the memorial of a sacrifice made by millions of fighting men for the lives of future generations. It is the sacrifice of just one Man, whose blood flowed for you, for me, and for everyone else who has ever lived—a life sacrificed made so that we could be forgiven, be set free from our sins, and receive God’s gift of eternal life (Romans 5:6-10; 6:22-23; John 3:16-17).

If His blood had not been shed for us, we would have no hope of a better life beyond this one. Yet because of His sacrifice, everyone who has ever lived—including all who died in war—will enjoy a return to life, with the prospect of *eternal* life.

The Man we are speaking of is, of course, Jesus the Messiah, whose death took place some 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem on the day of Passover. On every Passover since, as long-time readers of this magazine will know, faithful Christians around the world have continued to remember the events of that day as a memorial to His death and its meaning. This involves not a blood-red poppy, but a little red wine and a small piece of bread, representing His shed blood and broken body.

Shouldn't *everyone* remember this Man, God's very own Son (Matthew 14:33; 16:16), who made the ultimate sacrifice so we all might live? Is it not worth suspending normal life for just a short time to acknowledge His death and the sacrifice He made for us?

### Remember the Ultimate Sacrifice

Most who died in the "Great War" were just following orders. When they were commanded to charge toward the enemy, they went like "sheep to the slaughter." They knew the odds of survival were against them, but such was their duty. They had no choice. They had



Ceramic poppies placed at the Cenotaph in London's Whitehall during the 2014 Remembrance Day memorial.

been "called up" to fight for their country and, if necessary, to make the ultimate *human* sacrifice. And so they responded. The flower of each nation's youth went to war—and all too many never came back.

The "Lamb of God" had been aware of His calling and destiny from the "foundation of the world" (John 1:29; Revelation 13:8)—and never did He shirk His duty, though He hoped it could be accomplished differently (Matthew 26:39, 42). He freely sacrificed His life for the whole world, suffering a long and excruciating death preceded by humiliating abuse that tore His body apart. As His end neared, a dense darkness descended, and for several hours, life stood still. Upon His death, the ground shook as an earthquake rumbled underfoot. And wide-eyed, fearful witnesses passed the word around that it was indeed the "Son of God" who had died that day (Matthew 27:45–54).

This Son, however, did not remain in the grave. His Father raised Him to life! He also left an *empty* tomb—His own cenotaph—but as an emblem of life, rather than death. And He now sits at His Father's right hand, eagerly preparing for His return to this earth. His second coming will truly be glorious (Titus 2:13–14) because He will establish His government over the entire world, *ending all wars* and bringing lasting peace (Isaiah 2:2–4; 9:6–7).

This year, as we remember the many human lives sacrificed in war for our freedom, let us not forget *the ultimate sacrifice* of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, who gave up His life to set us free from sin, so that we might have personal peace and the hope of eternal life. Let it be said by each one of us, for all time, "Yes, we will remember Him!"

If you would like to know more about God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, and the peace and freedom it will ultimately bring to ALL mankind, please write for our free booklets, *John 3:16: Hidden Truths of the Golden Verse*, *Your Ultimate Destiny*, and *The Holy Days: God's Master Plan*.

—John Meakin





## In Flanders Fields

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

—John McCrae

# Lest We Forget

## Remembering the Lessons of World War I

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By **Gerald E. Weston**

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**I**n Canada, if you travel south from Ottawa, Ontario on Highway 416, you may notice signs in English and French bearing a simple message: “Lest We Forget.” This highway is a memorial to war veterans and to the sacrifices of so many who gave their lives that we might remain free. In the upper right-hand corner of each sign is a red poppy—the flower that became a symbol of sacrifice during World War I, in large part due to the poem “In Flanders Fields” by Canadian surgeon John McCrae.

November 11, 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the conclusion of World War I. It was at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918 that the “war to end all wars” officially ended. Estimates of the number of people killed and wounded in the war vary widely, but it appears that between 15 and 20 million died, and that another 20 million suffered wounds in that devastating conflict. Young men from every inhabited continent spilled their blood in a slaughter that lasted more than four years.

The signs along Highway 416 remind us not to forget, and thus introduce a serious question: What are we to remember? Ten people may give ten somewhat different answers, but most would no doubt include that we ought to remember the many lives lost in the senseless and brutal carnage. Some might say that we must remember the lessons of history, lest we forget and repeat our mistakes. Sadly, remembering history is not one of mankind’s strengths.

Whatever else it may have been, World War I was *not* the “war to end all wars.” That hope proved pain-

fully hollow some 20 years later, when the Second World War broke out. Numerous wars, conflicts and “police actions” have followed. Genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda revealed that even the horrors of the Holocaust taught us little.

When will we remember? Will there ever be a time without war? While many people solemnly think on the lives lost in war, and others consider the events leading up to war, most do not consider the root causes of war.

### **National Self-interest**

Former United States President Richard Nixon explained the futility of man’s attempts to bring about real peace.

Those who make peace at the typing table rather than at the negotiating table have the luxury of being peace-makers without having to grapple with complex problems in the rough-and-tumble world of real international diplomacy. To them the only obstacle to peace is the regrettable lack of leaders who are as selfless and idealistic as they claim to be and who are willing to put aside parochial national interest in the interest of bringing peace to the world. They hope that this era will be the one in which **self-interest, the force that has driven history since the dawn of history**, will simply evaporate (*Real Peace*, Richard Nixon, p. 4).

Mr. Nixon recognized the need for a change in mankind’s fundamental nature, but he was not optimistic about the prospects for this change.

In the long term we can hope that religion will change the nature of man and reduce conflict. But history is not encouraging in this respect. The bloodiest wars in history have been religious wars. Men praying to the same God killed each other by the thousands in America's Civil War and by the millions in World War I and World War II. Unless men change, a real peace must be built on the assumption that the most we can do is to learn to live with our differences rather than dying over them (Nixon, p. 14).

The American five-star General Douglas MacArthur famously recounted how all of mankind's attempts to bring peace have failed. He rightly observed that, "It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh" ("Radio Broadcast to the Nation Following the USS Missouri Surrender Ceremony," *AmericanRhetoric.com*).

Neither of these men lived long enough to see the horrors of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and U.S. Pentagon, the two Gulf Wars, and the numerous additional conflicts and genocides that have taken place over the past 20 years. One can only imagine that neither man would be surprised, considering the growth and proliferation of weapons of unimaginable mass destruction. Mankind's ingenuity to destroy and kill is remarkable!

Statesmen such as Nixon and MacArthur appear irrelevant to younger generations. Each generation feels it is different, that it is immune to the mistakes of past generations, whether regarding stock market crashes or international conflicts. This is especially true of the last several generations, which have never seen a single conflict costing millions of lives. However, when someone with the stature of former Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev told *Time* magazine less than two years ago that "It all looks as if the world is preparing for war," at least some older heads took notice (*Time.com*, January 2017).

Surprising to many, Jesus Christ predicted nearly 2,000 years ago that mankind's fondness for and skill in waging war would bring us to the point where, without His direct intervention, all life would be extinguished from this planet. "For then there will be



great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:21–22).

Later, in the biblical book that bears his name, James, the brother of Jesus, asked and answered the question of what causes human conflict: "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. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:1–3).

Mankind's nature is clearly at the heart of the problem, and because we have no collective desire to change our nature, we will evidently have no peace in the near future. It is only after the return of Jesus Christ, and the removal of the spirit who now influences our nature and directs the course of this world, that we will finally enjoy peace (Romans 3:17; Ephesians 2:1–2; Revelation 20:1–3). That is one lesson we should *never* forget!



It is important to remember the lessons of history and the lives cut short by war, but is there a lesson that almost the entire world has completely forgotten?

### **Lest We Forget Our Creator!**

While many recognize that human nature drives conflicts between neighbors and nations, few understand a major reason *why*. The Bible reveals that God intervenes in the affairs of nations, and sometimes that means He uses the human nature inherent within one nation to punish another. This is especially true regarding the Israelite nations when they fail to live up to the responsibilities of their special calling and forget their Creator!

Many *Tomorrow's World* readers understand that the people known in the Bible as Israel comprise far more than the tiny nation that today calls itself Israel. Our free publication *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy* reveals the truth that al-

that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people" (Deuteronomy 9:5–6).

God warned the Israelite people that if they reject His laws and commandments, many curses would follow. One such curse would be war. "But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments.... I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant... and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy" (Leviticus 26:14, 25).

While mankind's flawed nature, the selfish desires of leaders, and nationalistic pride all cause intense and widespread suffering, God also directly intervenes in human affairs from time to time in order to wake people up. In effect, God must sometimes use such things as war, disease, and natural disasters to chastise rebellious nations and bring them back to Him.

In addition to understanding the identity of every

Israelite tribe, not only the tribe of Judah, it is important to understand the identities of other biblical nations in their modern context. Twice during the last century, Germany warred against the peoples of British descent, the United States, and certain European nations. Most of these countries that Germany opposed are descended from what was anciently

**THOUGH GOD DID CHOOSE ISRAEL, IT WAS NOT BECAUSE THEY WERE BETTER THAN OTHERS. ON THE CONTRARY, THE BIBLE SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT THEY ARE NOT!**

lows us to understand current events in the light of Bible prophecy.

It is important to understand that when we refer to the "chosen people," we recognize that though God *did* choose Israel—not only the Jews, but all twelve tribes—for a special purpose, it was not because they were better than others. On the contrary, the Bible specifically states that they are not! While God anciently used the Israelites to drive out incredibly vile nations (see Leviticus 18:24–28), this was not due to some righteousness of their own: "It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore understand

known as the house of Israel. This is to say nothing of the anti-Semitic holocaust during the Second World War! As explained in our article "Resurgent Germany: A Fourth Reich?," modern Germany is primarily descended from ancient Assyria.

Through the Holy Scripture, God reveals to us that He uses modern Assyria as He used ancient Assyria: to punish His chosen people for their sins. God calls Assyria, "the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation" (Isaiah 10:5).

This prophecy in Isaiah continues: "I will send him [Assyria] against an ungodly nation [Israel], and against the people of My wrath" (v. 6). Then comes a revealing statement regarding the ruler over the Assyrian peoples. "Yet he does not mean so, nor does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off not a few nations" (v. 7). In other words, the king

## “Why the Poppy?”

In late 1914, the fields of Northern France and Flanders were once again ripped open as World War One raged through Europe’s heart. Once the conflict was over the poppy was one of the only plants to grow on the otherwise barren battlefields.

The significance of the poppy as a lasting memorial symbol to the fallen was realised by the Canadian surgeon John McCrae in his poem *In Flanders Fields*. The poppy came to represent the immeasurable sacrifice made by his comrades and quickly became a lasting memorial to those who died in World War One and later conflicts.

—from *BBC.co.uk*



of Assyria, who is filled with pride (see vv. 8–11), does not understand that it is God who brings him against, first of all, the ten tribes known as the house of Israel, and secondly, against the house of Judah (the Jews).

A former example of this prophecy’s fulfillment occurred in roughly 720BC, when the Assyrian empire took the northern ten-tribe house of Israel into captivity. Assyria also sought to subjugate the house of Judah, but it was not God’s time for Judah to be defeated and to go into captivity. That time would come more than a century later, when God would stir Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian Empire to take Judah captive. But the greater fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy is yet in the near future.

### Why Such Punishments?

We see from the prophet Isaiah that God uses Assyria, from which descended many of the German

people, as His rod of punishment against rebellious Israel. The peoples of British descent, the United States, France, and various other nations found in Northwestern Europe, have traditionally thought of themselves as righteous, Christian nations, but are they? Is the modern, widespread form of Christianity actually the religion delivered by Jesus and practiced by the Apostles and first century Church of God? The answer is that it is not! The late Dr. Roderick C. Meredith’s eye-opening series on the Protestant Reformation—published over the last year in this magazine—should make this perfectly clear.

Modern Assyria has brought pain and sorrow to the people of God’s covenant, yet God has spared us for His purposes. And after God punishes Israel, He turns to deal with the sins of the nation that is His rod. “Therefore it shall come to pass, when the LORD

has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, ‘I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks’” (Isaiah 10:12). God asks, “Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it? Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it?” (v. 15).

What happened millennia ago with Israel and Judah was only a shadow of future events. We have done exactly what a loving God warned us not to do—forget! “So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers... when you have eaten and are full—then beware, **lest you forget** the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deuteronomy 6:10–12). It is evident that this was a direct warning to the generations that came out of Egyptian bondage, but many prophecies have yet to be fulfilled, and the warning, “lest you forget the LORD” is even more applicable to the Israelite peoples today.

Near the end of the Book of Genesis, the patriarch Jacob utters a remarkable prophecy as he predicts what will happen to each of his twelve sons at the end of the age. We read in Genesis 49:1, “Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you *in the last days*.” We learn that Joseph’s descendants will have many enemies, but God will help them. “The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob” (vv. 23–24).


This prophecy uses terms understandable to those living when it was written, but the time it refers to is designated “the last days.” A similar end-time prophecy regarding Joseph is found in Deuteronomy 33:13–17. Horns are a symbol of military power, and we are told, “His glory is like a firstborn bull, and his horns like the horns of the wild ox; together with them He shall push the peoples to the ends of the earth” (v. 17). Could there be a more accurate description of what happened in World War II, as Britain, America, Canada, Australia, and their allies literally pushed their enemies to the ends of the earth?

Two world wars should have humbled us, but instead we have become arrogant and prideful, despising God and His commandments. It is no wonder that terrorism has come to our shores. “But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: **I will even appoint terror over you...**” (Leviticus 26:14–16). He further warns us, “I will break the pride of your power” (v. 19). Further punishments will result from our pride and our forgetting the One who pours out such great blessings on us.

Many recognize human nature as a cause for war and strife, but few realize that God uses natural human inclinations to punish rebellious nations in order to bring them to repentance. God allowed the modern Assyrians to bring death and destruction upon the stiff-necked nations of Israel twice over the past century. At the same time, He made our nations strong by His mighty arm, sparing us from complete destruction and punishing the punisher, but we have not learned from these conflicts. Refusing to give God His due glory, America and its allies are prideful and descending into immorality. God will not be so gentle with us next time! Defeat is in our future!

We see ourselves as the source of our own economic strength, having forgotten the true source. “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:18). Further punishment is coming upon the Israelite nations, as many other prophecies show. Speaking of our people, the prophet Jeremiah wrote, “Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s [Israel’s] trouble, but he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7).

Nevertheless, millions will die in the future, because we have forgotten!

Be sure to check out this issue’s “London Calling” article by John Meakin for an additional perspective on the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. 

**MAY WE  
SUGGEST?**

**The World Ahead: What Will It Be Like?** Christ will return soon to bring a new world! What will that world be like? You can know! Request this **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at [TomorrowsWorld.org](http://TomorrowsWorld.org). PDF, ePub and Kindle are also available.







# Turn Guilt into Positive Growth!

**W**hat is guilt, and what is its purpose? Why does a loving God allow us to experience it? Is there a right and a wrong kind of guilt?

When we fail to live up to a standard of conduct, we naturally feel guilty. Sadly, in today's world, guilt is a great burden borne by many unnecessarily. Satan has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9), and has led people to determine for themselves what code of conduct, if any, they should live by. As a result, people live by wrong standards and embrace a false value system. Vain intellectual reasoning and tradition have all but replaced the true godly standards contained in Scripture, so *some* of the guilt felt by many is based on a false foundation.

The truth is that Satan and society often use guilt to manipulate people. Guilt is a powerful tool that can deeply affect our emotions and actions, and others may try to afflict us with it for their own selfish purposes. They attempt to use deception and lies to make us feel guilty. It shouldn't be this way. *If we have done nothing wrong in God's sight, we have no reason to feel guilt.* Furthermore, we ourselves must also carefully avoid using false guilt to manipulate others.

Ahab, King of Israel, tried to make the prophet Elijah feel guilty for Israel's problems, but Elijah wasn't tricked into feeling guilty. He responded, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and have followed the Baals" (1 Kings 18:18).

Jesus' enemies among the priests and Pharisees tried to make Him feel guilty when they confronted Him and accused Him of breaking the Sabbath. He responded by pointing to God's laws and teachings on the sub-

ject (Matthew 12:1-13). The lesson is clear: If the guilt is false, *reject it!* Don't let it destroy you with feelings of inferiority and worthlessness. Go to God's word and Christ's example for the true code of conduct.

## Godly Guilt

On the other hand, there is a right kind of guilt, which we should experience when we break God's laws. We should not ignore the prod of our conscience when we feel guilt for violating His clearly defined commandments. Some people lie, steal and cheat, and feel justified in doing so. Others lust and burn with envy and jealousy, and feel no remorse. Some covet what they do not possess, commit fornication or adultery, and feel no guilt. For some, perhaps their conscience has been seared (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

Godly guilt tells us that something is wrong, that something needs to change. When we feel this kind of guilt, it should move us to repent and seek God's forgiveness. Just like a siren, guilt should serve to warn and motivate us to take action that will bring about positive results.

Christ's sacrifice can wash us clean of the guilt of our sins when we confess them to Him and repent of them—turn utterly away from them. That is why the Apostle John was inspired to write, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Guilt should trigger repentance. That is its purpose. That's why the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." And repentance involves not only being sorry for what we have done, but also striving to change and live according to the standard of

conduct as established by our Creator. What is the end result of godly sorrow leading to repentance? “For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (v. 11).

This proper kind of guilt produces positive changes in our lives. Are we diligent in striving to avoid repeating a sin? Are we acquiring a vehement, intense desire to overcome it? Do we put forth great effort to clear ourselves? Do we feel righteous indignation, and are we learning to *hate* sin? Are we developing a proper fear of sinning against God? Are we filled with a zeal to live God’s way of life? If these things are true, if we are completely repentant, then God will forgive us (Jeremiah 36:3). Then, we can be free of guilt and experience spiritual growth. And furthermore, we will be richly blessed! “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity” (Psalm 32:1-2).

### Dealing with Guilt

We see biblical examples of people—such as King David and the Apostles Peter and Paul—who experienced guilt leading to growth and forgiveness. Others, like Judas Iscariot, allowed guilt to destroy them. Clearly, guilt can have a positive or a negative effect on us. Here are three simple steps we can take to turn guilt into positive growth.



**The first thing we must do is admit our guilt.** God requires that we confess our sin. We must let Him know that we are sorry for breaking His laws, which are holy and just (Romans 7:12). Conversely, hiding from our guilt, or trying to cover up our sins, only postpones facing their natural consequences. As Israel was warned in Numbers 32:23, “be sure your sin will find you out.” In Luke 12:2, Jesus reaffirms this, saying that “there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known.” Until we are willing to acknowledge our sin and admit our guilt, there is no moving forward, and we are kept from enjoying the blessings that result from obedience and having a right relationship with God. As Proverbs 28:13 states, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” Admitting guilt is never easy. It requires humility and the courage to face painful experiences, but it is absolutely necessary.

**However, admitting we are wrong is not enough.**

**Action must follow.** Change must occur. We must truly repent and strive to eliminate the sin. In the gospel of John, we read about a woman caught in the act of adultery. Notice what Jesus said to her: “‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more’” (John 8:10-11). Christ made it plain to her that although her sin had been forgiven, she was not to return to her sinful ways. To do so would have been an abuse of God’s unmerited pardon. When seeking forgiveness, we must put forth real effort to stop sinning.

As humans, we will experience failures in the process of overcoming sin (Romans 7:14-25). If we slip back into sin after truly repenting, we must repeat these steps. We must ask God to forgive us and provide us with the necessary strength to overcome. We must expend effort to grow spiritually on an ongoing basis. Remember, character is developed over a lifetime.

**Finally, we must fully realize that after we have acknowledged our sin and repented of it, God’s forgiveness is available to us!** Once this happens, it is important that we move beyond the guilt—that we *let go of it*. Realizing the seriousness of our sin, we learn the lesson guilt teaches us and we move forward. If we follow these three basic steps, we can turn guilt into positive growth!

—Sheldon Monson



our service to Him and the loving, caring kindnesses we extend to those around us.

In light of all of this, whom should we honor and adore? Clearly, our devotion belongs to the One who really can walk through walls and travel at unfathomable speed across the globe. We should honor and adore the One who really knows our every thought and deed—the One who really does love us and our children, who has proven it by giving up His life!

Yet popular culture glorifies another figure, a fictional hero who has robbed attention from the One who truly deserves it. Later in his book, Desmond Morris makes this exact point:

Santa Claus began life as Nicholas, a saintly bishop in the ancient coastal city of Myra in what is now south-west Turkey.... Because of his generous gift-giving and his protection of small children, [Nicholas] became an immensely popular saint all across Europe.... (p. 12).

Mr. Morris then explains how this figure changed and evolved over the centuries to become the Santa Claus of today:

The name Father Christmas [was amalgamated] with the personality of Santa Claus, to

create our own, immensely popular, Christmas figure. Much to the disgust of the more pious clergy, **Santa eventually became more popular than Jesus with modern children.**

This outraged certain elements in the church, but they were helpless to halt his ascent to the central peak of the Christmas festival... Father Christmas, alias Santa Claus, was here to stay (p. 13, emphasis added).

Is Santa Claus more real to children than Jesus Christ? If so, is it not obvious that something is terribly wrong?

All of us need to get to know the real God better. This requires us to recognize and reject the imaginary imposters that seek to take His place.

### **Christmas: Wholesome Family Time?**

Thus far, this article has focused on those who keep Christmas for religious reasons, but many observe it for secular, non-religious purposes. They see it as an occasion to spend time with family and friends, to cultivate goodwill and positive feelings. It *is* good to spend time with those we love. God created us in families, and made us desire close bonds with others. Even the simple act of eating together strengthens connections between human beings.



But should our mealtimes—and our get-togethers throughout the year—be focused only on being with one another? Should not those special times also include the One who made us in the first place? It is interesting to note that even the word “holiday” hints of a religious past, and one really cannot divorce it from religion. The word itself is a combination of two words: “holi” or “holy,” and “day.” This indicates a time to commune with our divine Creator.

The early New Testament Church did break bread together, but what Holy Days did they keep? Acts 2 describes one of them—Pentecost, or the “Feast of Firstfruits.” Why did they keep this Holy Day, or “Feast”? Because it was one of the days God had required His people to keep as a commanded assembly since the time of Moses and the Exodus. Another such festival was called the Feast of Tabernacles, and Jesus Christ Himself kept this Feast, as John 7:10 shows.

The Bible contains a fascinating description of the Feast of Tabernacles, picturing it as a wonderful time for families, during which fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, and other relatives can enjoy being together:

Then in the presence of the LORD your God, in the place where he'll choose to establish his name, you may consume the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your livestock and flock, so that you'll learn to revere the LORD your God all your life.... You may spend the money to your heart's content to buy livestock, flocks, wine, strong drink, and whatever you desire. You and your household may eat there and rejoice in the presence of the LORD your God (Deuteronomy 14:23, 26, *International Standard Version*).

Who would not enjoy feasting on a delicious meal of fine steak and roasted lamb garnished with tasty fruits and vegetables, perhaps while enjoying a glass of wine produced from one's very own vineyard? Imagine multiple generations together at the table,

laughing and smiling, telling stories, good-naturedly teasing and kidding one another, loving every minute of it! This is the picture, entirely within the context of learning to love and serve the Creator God.


The Feast of Tabernacles not only brought family together, but also involved the whole community. It included those who would otherwise be disenfranchised or alone: “Foreigners, orphans, and widows who live in your cities [will] come, eat, and be satisfied. That way, the LORD your God shall bless you in everything you do” (Deuteronomy 14:29, *ISV*).

What a joyous event, creating memories to last a lifetime! Who would not want to take part in it? The Bible reveals in Zechariah 14:16 that all humanity will keep this same Feast of Tabernacles during the millennial reign of Christ!

Jesus Christ is our Savior. He voluntarily came to earth. He lived and died for us, to save us from our sins. He's coming back as King of kings and Lord of lords. Honoring Him is good, even essential. But we must honor the King in the way that the King tells us to honor Him. Christ sternly corrected the religious leaders of His day, who kept many traditions but didn't acknowledge the true God: “He said to them, ‘All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition... making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do’” (Mark 7:9, 13).

God tells us in Jeremiah 10:2–3, “Do not learn the way of the Gentiles.... For the customs of the peoples are futile.” That is God's instruction. Furthermore, Deuteronomy 12:30–31 tells us, “do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way....”

If our customs are “religious, but not biblical,” could we be missing something? And if our observances are only secular and do not honor the God who gave us breath, are they not ultimately empty and meaningless?

Now is the time to ask yourself: Why Christmas? You might be surprised at the answer you discover. 

**MAY WE  
SUGGEST?**

**Is Christmas Christian?** It seems a ludicrous question to ask, but the answer to this question can change your life! Request this **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at **TomorrowsWorld.org**. PDF, ePub and Kindle are also available.





# THE Works OF HIS HANDS

## Singing Caterpillars

**S**everal issues ago we took a look at the remarkable transformation of caterpillar to butterfly (“The Butterfly: Master of Metamorphosis,” January-February 2018).

But this humble creature has far more surprises in store for those willing to look more closely.

In a number of tropical areas, most notably South America and Australia, one may have the privilege of encountering a midsize butterfly of the *Lycaenidae* or *Riodinidae* species. These beautiful creatures can range in colour from copper to shades of blue. But while their entrancing colors and peaceful demeanor may be delightful to behold, the story of how these two specific species survive to grow into such graceful butterflies is perhaps more amazing still.

A butterfly spends a large part of its early life in a larval stage, a form we know as a caterpillar. In that phase it is slow-moving, vulnerable to attack and becoming the dinner of other species. Butterfly larvae are especially vulnerable to wasps, whose own larvae seem to relish a diet of caterpillar. Wasps will hunt and capture these caterpillars, and lay eggs inside their bodies. Then, when the eggs hatch, the wasps’ young will consume the caterpillars for their own development.

The *Lycaenids* and *Riodinids*, however, do not easily become a feast for wasps, due to a remarkable “partnership” with various species of ants, which end up serving as aggressive bodyguards for our lumbering larvae.

### A Remarkable Partnership

Biologists have done much research over the past 40 years on this special interspecies relationship and how it came about. Such a partnership between creatures is

called a *symbiotic* relationship (from a Greek word for “living together”), and the equipment and processes involved in this particular arrangement are truly stunning. Phil DeVries, writing for *Scientific American* in October 1992, described some of the fascinating ways these caterpillars attract and retain ants to serve as their guardians.

DeVries explains how a caterpillar of these species produces sound by scraping a ribbed vibratory papilla (protrusion) against the rough surface of its head. The resulting vibrations carry among the tree branches so any ants in the vicinity may hear them—hence the nickname “singing caterpillars.” These vibrations just happen to have a similar frequency to the vibrations that the ants themselves make when they wish to communicate the location of a newly discovered food source—so, naturally, the other ants come running.

Because ants have been known to prey upon caterpillars, it would appear as though our friend is playing a dangerous game. However, the caterpillar is not unprepared. Toward its rear end, it has a nectary organ that secretes a sugary, protein-rich nectar which happens to be an ideal food source for ants. Seemingly aware that they have come upon a culinary motherlode, the ants guard the caterpillar from other predators, “milking” it by tickling or drumming on the secretion glands with their antennae. Sue Ann Zollinger writes, “In some Australian species, the attending ants even build thatched or earthen corrals to contain the caterpillars. By day the caterpillars are protected from predators by the corral and the ants. At night the ants herd the caterpillars up a nearby tree to feed on leaves” (“The Special Relationship Between Ants and Lycaenid Butterflies,” *A Moment in Science*, September 15, 2008).

The ants are even able, in many cases, to defend against birds! If a bird or larger predator approaches, the ants swarm over the caterpillar. Most birds consider ants to be foul-tasting, so the sight of ants on the potential meal repels them—and, thus, the caterpillar is spared.

Some of the ants' behaviors, however, have puzzled researchers. For instance, a University of Arizona publication reported that ants will often defend certain nectar-secreting plants by attacking—and sometimes eating—other insects, thereby keeping the food source just for themselves. However, the ants give a pass to nectar-producing caterpillars, allowing *them* to eat the plant. Meanwhile, the ants milk the caterpillars' nectar and fight off potential threats (Stiles, Lori, "To Tend or Not to Tend: The Choice Varies in an Ant-Butterfly Mutualism," August 7, 2000. *Arizona.edu*). Other research indicates that the caterpillar's nectar is more nutritious than that of the plants (DeVries and Baker, 1989, *Journal of the New York Entomological Society* 97: pp. 332–340). Interestingly, as Stiles reports, "The caterpillars will only secrete the substance [nectar] when ants are there."

### Commanding a Private Army

Ms. Stiles further observes that at different times, the caterpillars' pores secrete substances that appease or



Ant tending a lycaenid larva

excite the ants. In addition, on its eighth abdominal segment, the caterpillar has a pair of tentacle-like organs which are somewhat balloon-like and covered with fine hairs, and it uses them in a remarkable way. Ants get very agitated when they touch these organs, and it seems that the caterpillar *uses* them to manipulate the ants, making them defend it when needed and sending them away when they are not.

So, on the surface, the caterpillar seems to receive protection from the private army of ants it has attracted, while simply providing delicious nectar in return. This is impressive in itself. However, biologists have discovered this relationship to be *more* complex, and that the caterpillar is designed with the ability to *control* the ants!

In 2015, Sandhya Sekar reported for *New Scientist* magazine on the work of Japanese scientist Masaru Hojo. The biologist noted early in his work that the ants defending the caterpillar did not leave it, even to take food back to the colony. Instead, they remained on guard duty and drank nectar. He noted that, "when-ever the caterpillar everted its tentacles—flipped them so they turned inside out—the ants moved around more rapidly, acting aggressively" ("Caterpillar drugs ants to turn them into zombie bodyguards," July 2015. *NewScientist.com*). In this mode, the ants attacked wasps, spiders, and any other threat. Hojo speculated that the caterpillar, when approached by a possible predator, gave a chemical signal ordering the ants to attack, thus dictating their behavior through both chemical control and powerful nectar. Experimentation showed that the caterpillar can "spike" its nectar with drugs to control the dopamine levels in the ants' brains, making its bodyguards more or less aggressive as it wills.

What Professor Hojo discovered is truly amazing. He demonstrated that *Lycaenidae* or *Riodinidae*, relying on ants for their security, use chemical controls to cause the ants to do their bidding. Their nectar can calm the ants, entice them to stay around, and make them aggressive enough to fight off dangers (Hojo, Pierce, Tsuji, "Lycaenid Caterpillar Secretions Manipulate Attendant Ant Behavior," *Current Biology*, 2015).

In order for this relationship to have ever begun functioning in the first place, these caterpillars would have had to be able to attract ants, produce desirable nectar (which they use only to feed defender ants), control the ants they attracted, and avoid being eaten by the rest of the colony. This would have required advanced knowledge of sound frequencies (especially those the ants use to communicate) and enough expertise in biochemistry to create tasty nectar and drugs capable of calming or exciting attendant ants at will. To suggest that such a complex arrangement could have been accidentally developed by random, minute evolutionary steps defies both reason and probability. What we see in these "singing caterpillars" is clear evidence of deliberate design and the production of fully functional creatures, made with an intricacy that is nearly impossible for mankind to comprehend.

—Stuart Wachowicz





# TURNING POINTS

in

## WORLD HISTORY

## Europe's Final Revival

**M**any sense that a major change is underway in Europe—the fabled land that gave birth to Greek and Roman civilizations and the Reformation, and spread Western values that transformed the modern world. Though war has, for centuries, been a recurring theme in Europe, few expected the sparks that set the continent aflame in August of 1914 to spawn two world wars that would devastate the continent and leave millions dead and wounded around the globe.

Today, the continent is home to the European Union, a modern attempt to unite fractious nations under a supranational government. However, the great “European Experiment” is in trouble, and the often belligerent nations on the continent are once again drifting apart. Europe is fragmenting, old animosities are re-emerging, and some European leaders are pondering a new direction. Few understand the real significance of what is happening in Europe and where these developments are going to lead. However, events in Europe are moving toward the fulfillment of ancient Bible prophecies that describe a *major turning point* that will occur just before the return of Jesus Christ. That turning point will shock and surprise the world—even more than in 1914!

### A Fading Dream and the Return of History

To understand the current troubles in Europe, we need to look to the past. The Romans united Europe by force of arms and brought peace and prosperity to much of the continent for centuries. The basis of that unity was the cult of the emperor, the fusion of politics and religion, the threat of internal civil war, and defense against external enemies. Caesar Augustus promoted “the idea of a di-

vinely ordained empire with a divinely ordained emperor at the center” (*The Dream of Rome*, Johnson, p. 98).

Although Roman Catholic popes appropriated Caesar’s pagan title of Pontifex Maximus (“Greatest Priest”), Europe today has no continent-wide religious rituals that support a political leader—no “religious glue” currently holds its peoples together—and the modern attempt to unite Europe on the basis of a common economic policy, a common currency (the euro) and the goal of preventing another war in Europe is *proving inadequate*.

While the common economic policy has greatly benefited Germany, it has impoverished countries in southern Europe—creating divisions and resentments among European nations. The invitation to foreign guest workers to meet labor shortages in Europe has turned into a massive flood of immigrants that threatens to overwhelm the national cultures of European countries, and this has spawned an anti-immigrant crisis and civil unrest. Some are mindful of the nations that descended upon the ancient Roman Empire and brought about its fall. Today, the threat of terrorist activities instigated by radical, unassimilated Muslim immigrants has generated fear all over Europe—and has inspired reminders that Islamic armies invaded Europe several times in the past. Some fear that history will repeat itself once again.

The current threat of social disruption and economic turmoil has unsettled Europeans and their leaders. The British vote to leave the European Union, as well as threats by recent American administrations to pivot away from Europe to Asia, and to pressure Europe (especially Germany) to pay for its defense, are pushing European leaders to rethink their future—*apart from*

long-time British and American allies. As a result, the president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, has called on the nations of Europe to pool their military resources and create a "European Army" (*The Times*, March 9, 2015) to defend Europe's borders and values against foreign aggressors. Other sources report that "Germany has ambitions to run an EU army" and is "looking to position itself as the military leader of a *coalition of EU countries* which would no longer take orders from NATO" (*RTUKNews*, September 27, 2016). There are also concerns that American decisions to remove the military umbrella from Europe "could awaken the sleeping giant of German might" (*The Washington Post*, November 10, 2016). As one observer comments, "Throughout Europe we see increasing tensions within and between nations." At the same time, Europe is facing a series of unprecedented problems.

German sociologist Ulrich Beck makes some profound comments about the potential consequences of tensions that are building on the continent. He notes that today we live with "the constant expectation of catastrophes" at the local, national and global level which affects how people and nations think and function (*German Europe*, p. 8). This expectation can unleash historical forces that "set the political landscape in motion" and the "existing order of things may legitimately be suspended in order to defend the common good" (pp. 26-27). He continues, "rhetoric of the



The pagan title "Pontifex Maximus" once held by Roman Emperors was eventually transferred to the papacy.

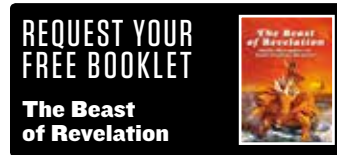
imminent collapse of Europe may easily result in the birth of a *political monster*" as these "impending catastrophes throw up opportunities... that can be seized by a man—or indeed a woman—with a talent for power" (pp. 45-46). Professor Beck also notes that "the anticipation of a catastrophe can lead people to do things tomorrow that were absolutely inconceivable yesterday"

(p. 82). Each of these analysts senses that Europe is approaching a major turning point.

But how do these current events relate to Bible prophecy?

### Prophecies Coming Alive

Today, many assume that the Bible is only a collection of myths and stories that are no longer relevant to our modern world. However, the Bible contains nearly 2,000 specific prophecies that have come and are coming true. The Scriptures state that only God can accurately predict the future and bring it to pass (Isaiah 46:5, 8-11) and that God guides the course of history



(Job 12:23; Daniel 2:21; 4:17). Around 600BC, the prophet Daniel recorded that just before the return of Jesus

Christ, a power will emerge in Europe with links to the ancient Roman Empire (Daniel 2:31-44). Daniel described an image with legs of iron (the Roman Empire) and feet of iron and clay that is struck by a stone (the Kingdom of God). In Daniel 7:23, this end-time European power is referred to as a "beast" with iron teeth and ten horns. In Daniel 11:40-45, this European power is referred to as "the king of the North" who will be provoked into military action by a "king of the South" (an Arab-Muslim configuration) and will move into the Middle East. The Bible connects this king of the North with Assyria—modern Germany (see Isaiah 10:5-11; also, request our free resource, "Resurgent Germany: A Fourth Reich?").

In Revelation 17:3-5, this same "beast" has seven heads and ten horns, and is ridden by a prominent religious organization described as the "mother of harlots." The ten horns are ten kings (or leaders) who will surrender their sovereignty to a political leader in Europe for a short period of time, resulting in a superpower that, once again, combines political, military, and religious power as did Rome of old. However, this superpower will be conquered and destroyed by the returning Jesus Christ (Revelation 17:12-14). The dramatic rise and fall of the last revival of the Roman Empire in Europe will be a major turning point in history and will impact every nation in the world. Learn more details in our free booklet, *The Beast of Revelation: Myth, Metaphor, or Soon-Coming Reality?*

—Douglas S. Winnail

we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10). He is our living Savior and great High Priest, as the book of Hebrews emphasizes! And He is coming as King of kings and Lord of lords!

Today’s Christians are also thankful for the promised future. We are thankful for the true Gospel—the message Jesus preached about the coming Kingdom of God on earth, when all nations will learn the way to peace. We know that the world will not end in a nuclear holocaust or be snuffed out by a biological pandemic—because Jesus Christ promised that for the elect’s sake He would return, just in time to prevent us from destroying ourselves (Matthew 24:22)!

The world **needs** the Kingdom of God on earth. Do you realize how much you are blessed compared to many countries around the world? The United Nations Development Programme currently estimates that more than 800 million people live on less than US\$1.25 a day. Can you imagine living in such poverty? How thankful are you? As Jesus said, “To whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Luke 12:48)! We must be faithful stewards of our blessings, and we must be willing, nationally and individually, to give to others. We especially need to **give the good news of the Gospel** to the rest of the world! Our **national purpose** should be to live God’s way of life—and to share that way of life with the rest of the world! God’s ways should be our nation’s ways. Notice these words of Moses: “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Deuteronomy 4:5–6).


Yes, God will bless those nations who recognize that their national purpose is to grow in godly character—to exemplify biblical values as shining lights in a dark world, to live by God’s own Ten Commandments, and by His statutes and judgments, and to proclaim

the good news of God’s soon-coming Kingdom, ruled by the King of kings, Jesus Christ!

Will we fulfill our national purpose as a thankful people? As those of us in America observe Thanksgiving, we need to remember that any unthankful nation that refuses to submit to its Creator is sowing the seeds of its own destruction. But God is patient! He is giving us a little more time to change our lives individually and nationally. God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Yes, there is good news for the future. Most people who celebrate Thanksgiving Day do not know that the Bible speaks of a future time when the whole world will celebrate a kind of biblical Thanksgiving—called the Feast of Tabernacles. All nations will go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles under the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ! Scripture describes a future world at peace under the rulership of the Messiah—a world He will begin to establish when He returns to Jerusalem, the future world capital. “And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east” (Zechariah 14:4). And who will rule the earth after Jesus’ return? “And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—‘The LORD is one,’ and His name one” (v. 9).

Yes, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, will unify all the nations under His rulership. He will bring representatives from all the nations of the world to Jerusalem to worship during the annual Festival called the Feast of Tabernacles. There is coming a time when all nations will worship the King of kings with thanksgiving (v. 16). Until then, God has given His Church the commission of sharing with all nations a vision of that future, and calling all nations and peoples to repent (Acts 17:30).

May we all be filled with thanksgiving—thankful for God’s will and for the love of God and Jesus Christ. May we seek to love, obey and serve the Source of all our personal and national blessings. As the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:57, “But **thanks be to God**, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 

MAY WE  
SUGGEST?

**The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy** Are America and Britain mentioned in prophecy? Yes they are! You need to see for yourself. Request this **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at [TomorrowsWorld.org](http://TomorrowsWorld.org). PDF, ePub and Kindle are also available.





# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## How should a Christian approach Christmas?

**Question:** Does the Bible give any guidelines as to how Christians should observe Christmas?

**Answer:** Many are surprised to learn that there is neither biblical command nor biblical example supporting the commemoration of the anniversary of Jesus Christ's birth.

Not once does Scripture record a birthday celebration for or by Jesus Christ. Some wrongly assume that Matthew 2:11–12 is the first occasion of Christmas gift-giving, but in fact the “wise men” were paying homage to the “King of the Jews”—already a young child—not giving birthday gifts to a newborn infant.

It is instructive to note that the only “birthday parties” we find in Scripture are associated with un-

pleasant events. In Matthew 14, for example, King Herod's “birthday gift” was the decapitated head of John the Baptist. Even as late as 245AD, the noted scholar Origen “repudiated as sinful the very idea of keeping the birthday of Christ” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed.).

Scripture does, however, give us some hints about the date of Christ's birth, telling us that He was born when there were “shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8). During the cold Judean winters, shepherds slept indoors. We also read that while Zacharias was serving at the Temple in the division of Abijah, an

angel appeared to him and announced that he would have a son—John the Baptist (Luke 1:5–25, 57–58). The division of Abijah was the eighth to serve each year, and by calculating the dates forward we find that John the Baptist was born near Passover, in the spring, and Jesus was born six months later (Luke

1:24–26), which would place His birth in September or October—not on December 25!


Since Scripture does not establish a celebration of Jesus Christ's birthday, and makes it clear that He could not have been born on December 25, how did the date of “Christmas” originate? In Rome, December was the time of the celebration of the pagan Saturnalia as well as the “holy days” of worshippers of Mithra and Sol Invictus. As pagan “converts” changed the original teachings of Christianity to suit their old habits, they continued to observe their end-of-December festivities, merely changing their object of worship.

But is there anything wrong with “Christianizing” the world's custom of birthday celebrations and applying it to our Savior? Scripture explains that we cannot worship the true God by abandoning His ways in favor of customs used in the worship of false gods (Deuteronomy 12:30–32). Notice: “Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the

workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with ham-

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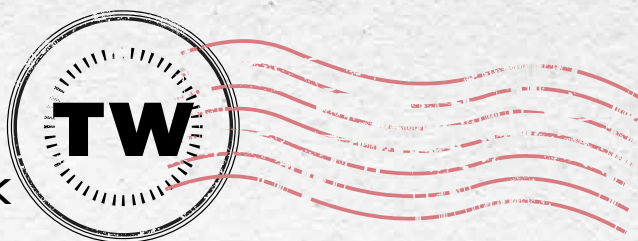


mers, that it move not” (Jeremiah 10:2–4, *KJV*). God's people should not adopt heathen customs, such as the custom—described in these verses—of decorating a tree as part of a celebration. Yet how many decorate Christmas trees every year, contrary to these verses? Jesus Christ asked His followers, “But why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). In a world that becomes obsessed with “Christmas” festivities, it may be tempting to take part in what may seem like an “innocent” celebration, and it may be socially awkward to refuse. But, as Christians, we must refuse. Instead, we should follow Jesus' example and observe the actual Holy Days that God gave His people, which portray His plan of salvation for humanity. To learn more about these Holy Days, please write for a free copy of our booklet, *The Holy Days: God's Master Plan*. 

**Is there anything wrong with “Christianizing” the world's custom of birthday celebrations and applying it to our Savior? Scripture explains that we cannot worship the true God by abandoning His ways in favor of customs used in the worship of false gods.**

# LETTERS TO TW

## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK



Your book on marijuana is so inaccurate and full of Nixon-era disinformation. How can you be accurate on Bible meaning and so wrong on marijuana? The FDA just approved a marijuana-based medicine to treat epilepsy in kids.

*Email from a Reader*

*Editor's Note: Thank you for your comment, and we hope you will read our articles and booklet on this subject more closely. All were written using recent medical and scientific research. And, as we discuss in our materials, medicines such as the one you have mentioned (Epidiolex) use only the non-hallucinogenic ingredient from cannabis, not the psychoactive THC ingredient. This is not the same as so-called "medical marijuana," which retains the hallucinogenic element. Our free booklet Marijuana: What They Aren't Telling You provides helpful detail and up-to-date research on this controversial substance.*

Thank you so very much for this interesting article about music. It seems that each generation has its own style and "beat." Sometimes I wish the music industry would go back in time to when songs had meaning and purpose to life, not someone "yelling their heads off" or "beating or playing the same notes over and over again" with no meaning or purpose to their music.

*From an Online Reader*

*Editor's Note: Thank you for your encouragement! You can ensure you never miss a new online commentary by visiting [TomorrowsWorld.org](http://TomorrowsWorld.org) and clicking on the tile that says "Subscribe to Our E-Zine."*

I watched your *Tomorrow's World* television program, "The Secret of the Seven Churches" on my cell phone. As Rod McNair was explaining each church and its era, I recognized teachings I remember from Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of the Worldwide Church of God. Can you please send me instructions about what I must do to become a member of Living Church of God?

*Viewer in Illinois*

*Editor's Note: We're glad you recognized us! Mr. Armstrong was, indeed, our predecessor in this Work, and it is a privilege to continue what God began through him. You can find an interactive map of our congregational locations and contact information for each one by going to our home page at [TomorrowsWorld.org](http://TomorrowsWorld.org) and clicking on the "Find a Congregation" link near the bottom. You can also call or write to one of our regional addresses, listed on page 4 of this magazine.*

It is always enjoyable to read the truth as it is always given by these gifted teachers at *Tomorrows World*. God's message going out to all who are inspired to read and willing to put into practice God's way of living as described in our Bibles. God will always reward those who genuinely make the effort to follow His will.

*Reader in New Zealand*

I would like you to continue shipping *Tomorrow's World* magazine to me. It has given me great revelation and understanding of the works of God's hands. My mind is no longer veiled from the gospel (good news). I have decided to request the booklet, *Marijuana: What They Aren't Telling You*.

*Reader in Kenya*

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Mail your letters to "Letters to the Editor" at one of the regional addresses listed at the front of this magazine, or send e-mail to: [Letters@TomorrowsWorld.org](mailto:Letters@TomorrowsWorld.org). Letters may be edited for space and clarity.



# TOMORROW'S WORLD

## TELEVISION LOG



### AUSTRALIA

Nationwide 7Two SU 7:00 a.m.

### BARBADOS

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

### JAMAICA

Kingston TVJ SU 7:00 a.m.

### ICELAND

Reykjavik Gospel FR 8:30 p.m.

### NEW ZEALAND

Nationwide TVNZ2 TU, WE, TH 9:30 a.m.

Nationwide TVNZ2 +1 TU, WE, TH 10:30 a.m.

### SOUTH AFRICA

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

### TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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

### UK & NW EUROPE

CBS Action Freeview 64 SU 8:30 a.m.  
CBS Action Sky TV 148 SU 8:30 a.m.  
CBS Drama Freeview 74 SA 7:30 a.m.  
CBS Drama Sky TV 149 SA 7:30 a.m.  
CBS Reality Freeview 66 SU 7:30 a.m.  
CBS Reality Sky TV 146 SU 7:30 a.m.  
Gospel Sky TV 587 MO 7:00 p.m.  
WORD (TWN) Sky TV 590 WE 6:00 a.m.  
Sky TV 590 MO 12:30 a.m.  
Sky TV 590 SA 12:00 a.m.



### CANADA

#### Nationwide Networks (All times Eastern)

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

### UNITED STATES

#### Nationwide Networks (All times Eastern)

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

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

NewsMax SU 9:30 a.m.

IMPACT SU 11:00 p.m.

WORD Network SU 7:30 p.m.  
FR 7:00 p.m.

#### DISH Network\* (All times Eastern)

Angel One Ch. 262 SU 8:00 p.m.  
WE 7:00 p.m.  
TH 9:00 a.m.  
SU 11:00 p.m.

Impact Ch. 9397 SU 11:00 p.m.

#### DIRECTV\* (All times Eastern)

WORD Ch. 373 SU 7:30 p.m.  
FR 7:00 p.m.

For the most up-to-date listings please go to:  
[TomorrowsWorld.org/tune-in](http://TomorrowsWorld.org/tune-in)

AK Anchorage GCI SA 10:00 p.m.  
Anchorage CREDO SA 7:00 p.m.  
Anchorage KYUR SU 6:00 a.m.  
Fairbanks KATN SU 6:00 a.m.  
Juneau KJUD SU 6:00 a.m.

AL Dothan WTVY SU 7:00 a.m.  
Montgomery WBMM SU 7:00 a.m.  
Tuscaloosa, AL WVUA SU 10:30 a.m.

AR Fort Smith KHBS SU 7:00 a.m.  
Little Rock KASN SU 10:30 a.m.

AZ Prescott Community SU 12:30 p.m.  
Prescott Community SA 5:30 p.m.

CA Bakersfield KGET SU 8:00 a.m.  
Chico KHSL SU 8:00 a.m.  
Eureka KUVU-LP SU 8:00 a.m.  
Monterey KION SU 8:00 a.m.  
Orange County Time Warner MO 5:00 p.m.  
Palm Springs KCWO SU 8:00 a.m.  
Palm Springs KCWO-LP SU 8:00 a.m.  
Sacramento RCTV MO 5:30 p.m.  
Salinas KION SU 8:00 a.m.  
San Francisco Access WE 8:00 p.m.

CO Grand Junc.

CT Naugatuck

FL Gainesville

Jacksonville

Panama City

Tampa Bay

GA Atlanta

Augusta

Macon

Macon

Macon

IA Des Moines

Dubuque

Dubuque

Dubuque

ID Boise

Idaho Falls

IL Chicago

Chicago

Chicago

Moline

Peoria

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Columbia

Joplin

Kansas City

MS Biloxi

Columbus

Greenwood

Jackson

Jackson

Meridian

Billings

Butte

Butte

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## UPCOMING TELECASTS

### Sunset for Britain and America

Prophecy is clear: The end is coming for British and American power!

November 15-21

### Why Did God Create Us?

Why did God create mankind? The truth is more amazing than you can imagine!

November 22-28

### The Powerful Privilege of Prayer!

The Bible gives us keys to experiencing answered prayer. You need to know what they are!

November 29-December 5

### Evolution on Trial

Darwin's theory of evolution is accepted by millions of people. Should you believe it?

December 6-12

### Who Are the End-Time Superpowers?

Several great political powers will dominate the world before Christ returns. Who are they?

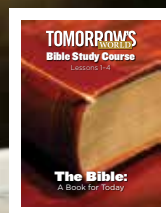
December 13-19

### Why Christmas?

This winter, millions will celebrate Christmas. But we need to ask an important question: Why?

December 20-26

Schedule subject to change



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