

The Herald Of Christ's Kingdom

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EDITORS' JOURNAL

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.-Revelation 19:10

Prophecy is a theme that whets the appetite of most Christians. We like to know what the future holds. It gives us the big picture. Knowing what lies beyond the current scene, we see the part that the present plays in the overall plan of God. Prophecy also enables us to be more intelligent co-workers with the Almighty, for we can better grasp what he is doing in the world today.

At the same time it is tempting for the student of prophecy to try to become the prophet himself, rather than merely trying to grasp the significance of the prophecies of the Bible.

Because prophecy is written in veiled terms clear comprehension is not easy and often leads to endless speculation on the possibilities of varying interpretations. Still this should not cause the student to avoid the subject, but rather to be continually aware of the pitfalls of a too rigid and dogmatic interpretation of the prophetic word.

Perplexing Times

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring" (Luke 21:25).

Not only are the nations perplexed but often the student of prophecy is hardly less so. The breakup of the Soviet Union, the current disrepute of Communism as an ideology, the peace talks between the Palestinians and Israel, ethnic battles throughout the globe, the growing power of Islam-these are just a few of the factors that tend to confuse the prophetic picture.

In this issue of THE HERALD we will be taking a broad look at the subject of prophecy. An overview of the subject is given in the leadoff article, *Bible Prophecy-Its Purpose in God's Plan*.

Getting more specific, the verse by verse Bible study is on the second Psalm. Entitled *Ascending the Throne*, it looks at the functions of both the first and second advents of Christ in the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom on earth.

It is a well recognized principle that many times biblical events are prophetic, almost typical, of larger scale future events. In this vein the author of the third article, *The Coming of Josiah*, seeks to interpret an Old Testament event as being prophetic of our times.

Two books to which Christians most frequently turn for prophetic pictures are the highly symbolic writings of Ezekiel and the book of Revelation. Entire volumes have been written in exposition of these prophecies, and it would be presumptuous indeed to seek to cover them thoroughly in the limited space at our disposal. However, a quick tour through the contents of these books can be found in this issue as a stimulus to further study and with the aim of giving an overview of their contents.

Our *Echoes from the Past* article also deals with the general subject matter of prophecy. *The Fig Tree* by Julius Bednarz, shows how this figure of speech so beautifully represents the developments in the nation of Israel.

The concluding article in this issue, *Crisis Control*, does not deal with prophetic matters, but is of concern to all of us as we seek ever improved methods of handling differences of opinion on both doctrinal and ethical matters, and the friction which results from the resultant conflicts.

New Booklet

We are now going to press with a new booklet, *God's Kingdom*. This booklet is being prepared especially as a witness to the prospect of Christ's thousand-year kingdom promising a resurrection for all people. It has a four-color cover and is prepared as a self-mailer with a return reply postcard. The booklet is also unique in that it offers a video cassette with the same message for personal, home, or church viewing. Copies of the booklet can be ordered free with the order card on the back of the wrapper for this or any issue of THE HERALD,

Readers' Response

Your response to our readers' survey was excellent and we are in the process of tabulating the suggestions. These will be helpful to us in planning future issues of the magazine. We want to thank all of you who took the time to respond. This will help us make this a cooperative endeavor.

Bible Prophecy—It's Purpose in God's Plan

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.—Amos 3:7

By Charles Redeker

The Bible as God's gift to us is a book of great diversity! It contains history and law, types and symbols, poetry and promises, devotion and doctrine, parables and paradoxes. Much of it also contains prophecy. In the Old Testament alone there were sixteen different prophets who authored seventeen books of prophecy; hence one of the three division of that work is designated as "The Prophets." (The other two are "The Pentateuch" and "The Holy Writings."

In the New Testament, the book of Revelation is devoted merely to outlining events that would occur all through the Gospel Age, culminating in the establishment of the kingdom. In addition, many prophecies are interwoven throughout the other books of this Testament. The sayings of Jesus were so frequently associated with predictions of future events that some consider him to be among the greatest of the prophets (Acts 3:22, 23).

Considering such weighty emphasis upon prophecy in the Scriptures, we may properly ask regarding its purpose in God's unfolding plan. Why did our heavenly Father cause so much of his word and revelation to consist of prophetic utterances that spoke of future times, circumstances, and events? All Scripture, we understand, "is profitable for doctrine. for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). But what is the special role that prophecy holds in influencing the life of the believer?

Before proceeding, let us look more closely at the words "prophecy" and "prophet." In modern usage, a prophecy is thought of as a prediction of a future event, especially when made under divine influence or direction. To this should be added what commonly accompanied such declarations in biblical times: rebuke for sin and a call to repentance. It is estimated that more than half of the prophetic utterances in the historical books and those of the major and minor prophets fall under this latter category. Thus a prophet was one who delivered the divine message or interpreted God's will, and this generally entailed the foretelling of future events.

One author has described the function of a prophet as two-fold: to "forthtell" and to "foretell." Forthtelling sets forth the message of the Lord by teaching, warning, exhorting, and comforting. Foretelling involved the prediction of future events, whether of people and nations, or of Messiah's coming reign. A surprisingly large number of prophecies deal with our Lord's return and detail circumstances involved in this event and in the setting up of his kingdom upon earth.

Bible time prophecies are a yet more specialized and exacting form of prophecy. These lay out a period of time required for the unfolding of a given event and thus permit a specific year to be determined. It is a fascinating study to see how some time prophecies

were hidden in Bible types or in seemingly vague wording of Scripture, awaiting God's due time for them to be understood.

To Reveal the Glory of God

Our first consideration fittingly pertains to God, the source of all true prophecy. In fact, God claims to be the only one capable of foretelling the future: "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa. 46:9, 10). "Who then, like me, can call and declare . . . things yet to be and that shall come to pass? Let them declare on their part" (Isa. 44:7 *Rotherham*).

God has also challenged all others to manifest this clear evidence of divinity: "Let them . . . tell us what shall happen . . . or let us hear the things that are to come. Tell the events that are to happen hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods" (Isa. 41:22, 23 *Leeser*). As most are aware, the accuracy of worldly prophets who attempt to penetrate the future with their predictions is very low indeed, and hardly exceeds that of chance occurrences. Neither the astrologers and magicians of the past nor the scientists and intellectuals of today have been able to shed any light on future events. Yet God, speaking through his prophets, is able to do just that, demonstrating his glory and his unerring wisdom.

To Establish the Bible's Credibility

The Bible as a book is unique in that it contains literally hundreds of prophecies that span thousands of years and that have witnessed equally as many fulfillments. Other sources may venture opinions or suggest reasonable outcomes of events, but they amount to little more than hopes or outright guesses. Only the Bible, as the word of God, has proven consistently reliable in its predictions dealing with empires, nations, civilizations, and events, often very specific and detailed in their coverage.

It has been said that prophecy is greater than miracles in establishing faith in the Bible. A miracle that occurred, say 2,500 years ago, fades into the mist of time and cannot be confirmed today. But a prediction of antiquity, if preserved in writing, especially if appearing at odds with known facts at the time and therefore most improbable of ever occurring, yet fulfilled later as stated, amounts to very convincing evidence.

The credibility of the Bible as a whole is greatly enhanced when the accuracy of its prophetic forecasts is considered. Careful reflection shows that these predictions are of an order and detail that preclude the possibility of historical facts being mere wrested to fit the outcome. Numerous recent archaeological findings have further validated certain Bible prophecies by indirectly confirming their early origin. This has disarmed the critics who contended for later dates or had supposed they originated after the historical events they depicted had occurred. Now even skeptics are being forced to admit the accuracy of the Bible without being able to provide a satisfactory explanation!

As a sincere truth seeker considers the claims of the Bible as the word of God the overwhelming testimony of fulfilled prophecy encourages an overall faith that will accept the divine revelation in its entirety. This builds confidence in the yet to be fulfilled promises and a willingness to accept its broader teachings and precepts.

To Enlighten the Believer

Bible prophecies provide a whole range of information related to the divine plan that is useful to the believer. Especially do they reveal the steady progress that is being made in the outworking and final culmination of that plan. Such developments as the punishment of Israel, the coming of Messiah in his role as Suffering Servant, the lease of power to the gentile nations, the rise of the Antichrist system and the persecution of the saints, the cleansing of the sanctuary, and many others were all predicted in Scripture and find clear fulfillments in history. Thus step by step we are able to recognize the approach of the climax of God's purpose in the establishment of his kingdom and the blessing of mankind.

Another era of enlightenment is in the time prophecies relating to the end of the age. There are forecasts of the harvest of the gospel age, the *parousia* of our Lord, the great time of trouble, the times of restitution, the day of judgment, and Israel's returning favor. All of these and more have enabled the Lord's people to be fully aware of the significance of the distressing events taking place about them. Surely this insight into the purposes of God and recognition of our position along the stream of time amounts to a wonderful blessing.

To Stimulate To Activity

Such knowledge is also strengthening and stimulating to the Lord's people. It enables them to be spiritually awake and provides the tools needed to be about [the] Father's business. We are not to be complacent with the insights that prophecy provides, nor hide out light under a bushel. There is a work to be done and a message to be proclaimed (Matt. 24:14).

In this connection we think of Jesus' words, "The night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). The realization that the time is short provides added incentive for zealous activity in the Lord's service. The true gospel of the Kingdom needs to be proclaimed to a fearful and perplexed world about us. Bible prophecy has strengthened us; let us use it to strengthen and encourage those about us (Isa. 61:1-3).

To Comfort and Encourage

When these things come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your [deliverance] draweth nigh (Luke 21:28). What could be more cause for rejoicing to the Lord's people than to recognize by the eye of Bible prophecy that we are approaching unto Mount Zion and the grand fulfillment of our hopes (Heb. 12:22-29)! While we cannot take pleasure in the suffering and pain inherent in the birth pangs of the kingdom, we do rejoice in the prospects of peace and life and blessing that await a very trouble humanity.

There is also encouragement that we receive as believers in the prophecies and in noting their realistic fulfillments. We are confident that we have not been following cunningly devised fables but a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto [we] do well [to] take heed (2 Pet. 1:16, 19). We are convinced of the divine origin and outworking of these matters, which is so heartening and uplifting to us as God's people. Again, this in turn leads to a heightened desire to be found faithful in doing the work of the Lord and in letting our light shine out to others.

To Test Our Faith

We have witnessed so many end-time fulfillments of Bible prophecies in our own lifetime that one might almost think that faith in this area is hardly required any longer. And yet, as we reflect on this matter, we see how vital faith remains as an element in the development of the Lord's people, even to their closing experiences this side of the veil. It was necessary that the patriarchs and saints of past ages be tested, frequently in respect to a promise of God or a predicted event in their day; and so likewise it is for us.

Think of the experiences that must have befallen Noah and his family as they endured the reproaches of their contemporaries in patiently carrying out God's instructions in building the ark and awaiting the due time for the deluge (Gen. 6:12-22). Think of Abraham and Sarah as they contemplated God's promise of a son and heir, and yet realized the impossibility from the human standpoint for such an occurrence at their advanced age (Gen. 18:10-14). Or of the Israelites when they had been taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar and longed for the day of promised restoration (Jer. 29:10-14).

For the experiences of the Lord's people at the end of the age, the matter of the time of their deliverance also has become a test. Major disappointments accompanied the failure of expectations of the church's glorification in 1844 and 1914, and other anticipated dates have come and gone. Yet we are now assured that God's program is on track and his timetable correct: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it [seem to] tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:3).

Bible prophecy provides a test of our faith along yet another line. Sometimes we find that secular history is at variance with the Scriptures in regard to chronology and other

significant dates. There appear to be differences, for example, in the dates which are derived for the destruction of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's day (606-607 B.C. versus 586-587 B.C.) and in calculating the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes (455 B.C. versus 445 B.C.).

The date for Jerusalem's fall is critical in establishing many unique harmonies of the divine chronology; that of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes is the basis for calculating the start of a crucial biblical time prophecy pertaining to the first advent of our Lord—the sixty-nine weeks reaching to Messiah the Prince (Dan. 9:23-27). It is not easy to resolve such issues, and our faith may need to be called upon to assist in arriving at a conclusion that harmonizes with our overall beliefs. Thus our faith continues to be put to the test.

To Develop Christian Character

Finally, Bible prophecy is very instrumental in helping to shape and formulate our character. The message of the prophets of old was all but lost upon the rulers and people of Israel, with very few exceptions; but we dare not ignore nor gloss over it in our own lives. There is a personal aspect to the many warnings of wayward conduct that were issued in the past and we need to listen to what God would have us do today.

How does the knowledge of what must soon come to pass, or in fact is already occurring, affect us as the Lord's people? Are we diligent in making every effort to develop that character which is pleasing to the heavenly Father and useful as an instrument of his blessing to others? Are we so thrilled with the vision of the future and by the increasing evidences of the nearness of the kingdom that we are doing all in our power to develop the fruits and graces of the Spirit and to be like our Lord?

This is perhaps the most basic and vital aspect of Bible prophecy that confronts us today. How we respond to it will determine whether we will receive the abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that we so much desire. And as the Apostle Peter reminds us, "He that lacketh these things [the mature development of Christian character] is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Though the world seems immersed in the clouds and gloominess of the present "day of the Lord," the early light of the morning is spreading upon the mountains and can be discerned by the believers who are spiritually awake (Joel 2:1, 2; Isa. 60:1, 2). These earnest students of the prophecies are fully aware of the realities of the present, and have been blessed by the administration of their Lord in the early dawn of the new day (Psa. 46:5). For all such the Apostle Peter has one final admonition:

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [manner of life] and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God. . . . Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."—
2 Peter 3:11-14

What, then, is the role of Bible prophecy in the plan of God? In summary, it is:

1. To reveal the glory of God.
2. To establish the Bible's credibility.
3. To enlighten the believer.
4. To stimulate to activity.
5. To comfort and encourage.
6. To test our faith.
7. To develop Christian character.

The Coming of Josiah

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.- 1 Corinthians 10:11

By John Hasty

It is profitable to consider Old Testament events when they fit into the divine plan as helpful illustrations. In that spirit, the following possible pictures are offered:

In 1 Kings 13:1, 2 we read of Jeroboam and Josiah and a prophet from Judah, all of whom could offer a lesson to us in our day.

In their own day each of these men was tested to see if he would eventually become a faithful "ancient worthy," to guide the children of Israel in the earthly kingdom, or if he would be only a part of all Israel, who must become an Israelite indeed.

Jeroboam

King Solomon had given a high office to Jeroboam in his kingdom. One day, when Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem wearing a new garment, the prophet Ahijah met him in the field. As they talked, the prophet took the garment and rent it into twelve pieces. He said to Jeroboam, "Take thee ten pieces; for thus with the LORD, the God of Israel, `Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee'" (1 Kings 11:31).

Afterwards, Solomon tried to take Jeroboam's life, and Jeroboam fled into Egypt. He stayed there until after Solomon's death. Jeroboam was in Egypt when he received word that the son of Solomon was about to be made king over Israel. Jeroboam then came back and with the congregation of Israel went to talk with Rehoboam.

They told Rehoboam that his father had made their yoke grievous and heavy, and if Rehoboam would make their yoke lighter they would serve him. Rehoboam decided not to do this; instead, he said he would make their yoke even heavier: "The king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel . . . and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying . . . I will add to your yoke . . . I will chastise you with scorpions" (1 Kings 12:1.1-14).

When the ten tribes pulled away from the house of David, saying "What portion have we with David?" they were unknowingly giving up all hope of the blessings that were yet to come through the David class.

The Lord had told Jeroboam: "If thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my

commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee" (1 Kings 11:38).

But Jeroboam did not hearken unto all the Lord's commands. He feared, "If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again to their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah" (1 Kings 12:27, 28). In his attempt to protect his own life and prestige, he kept the people from returning to the house of the Lord to worship.

The attitude of Papacy is similar -tenaciously holding on to power which could have been used to praise God, and doing all it could to keep the people under its oppression rather than encouraging them to return to the worship of the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The fact that Jeroboam is burning incense by an altar that is to be destroyed shows that his burning of incense is unto the Lord. This also reminds us of Papacy, which has burned so much incense contrary to the will of the Lord.

Josiah

The name Josiah means "supported of God." Who is supported of God as much as Jesus? So Josiah could picture Jesus.

In the Millennial age, Jesus is like Josiah, the one "supported of God"- "a child shall be born unto the house of David" (1 Kings 13:2).

Rehoboam's yoke was too heavy for the ten tribes. The narrow way of our Lord was too narrow for those of the early church who pulled away from the teachings of Jesus. In this particular, Rehoboam's demands were like Jesus' during the Gospel Age.

The Prophet

1 Kings 13:3 tells that the prophet of the Lord "gave a sign . . .saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out." So long as the prophet from Judah was faithful to the Lord, he had the Lord's protection. Jeroboam was punished and the altar

was rent (verses 4 and 5)even its ashes, which so often represent the memory of the thing they replace.

During the Protestant reformation, the protestors wounded the beast. But the wound of Papacy was partially healed when the protectors became allies of the Papal plan, when they themselves combined Church and State. Instead of waiting faithfully for their Lord to set up his kingdom, they, like Papacy, decided to set up their own.

Papacy (Jeroboam), delighted, invited the prophet into his home to refresh himself, offering him a reward. Protestants (the prophet) refused the invitation. They remembered to be "separate"- "to touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Usually, the Devil does not give up after his first try. The good prophet was tempted again. This time, he was sitting under an oak tree. We might think about Bro. Russell's comments on inactivity. We should remain in the race. (Hebrews 12:1) A lying prophet tempted him. "I am a prophet also as thou art" (1 Kings 13:18). In our humility about our own worth, let us not forget the command of the Lord.

In listening to what his "fellow prophet" had to say, the good prophet weakly turned from the Lord's commands and obeyed the liar and was destroyed. Surely this is a ruse we must avoid. The weak prophet was turned over to a lion; Satan is described as a lion in our lives.

When Jesus (Josiah) will destroy Papacy and all evil, he will take note of all who died (including the weak and the wicked) and deal with them mercifully, strengthening the weak, educating the wicked toward righteousness. So Josiah protected the dead bones of these two prophets (for had not the one prophesied of Josiah's reign?).

Prophetic Perspective

In the interpretation of prophecy it is important that we should recognize the perspective principle on which it is based. Several trees in the distance, in the same direction, appear near to each other, though quite a distance apart. The space between them becomes apparent only as you approach them. The eye of the prophet is permitted to see future events on the same principle, and though events may be centuries, or even millenniums apart, unless there are prophetic periods given to locate them, it is impossible for us to determine how far apart they will be in fulfillment.

J. H. Paton (R59)

Ezekiel in Brief

And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.—Ezekiel 3:4

By James Parkinson

The first half of the Book of Ezekiel tells Jerusalem's people of their sins and explains why the city of the LORD's people is about to be destroyed. Once Jerusalem is under siege, the next quarter of Ezekiel's message recounts the sins of the other nations and foretells their fate. The last quarter promises the regathering of all of Israel, the LORD's final defense of them, and then the Ezekiel's Temple foregleam of the thousand-year Kingdom of Christ and beyond.

There are messages for fleshly Israel of old to repent, and similarly for Christians today to repent. Punishment is decreed. Toward the end there are promises: of heavenly work for the church with Christ, and bringing back Israel to their land, and ultimately of the resurrection and restoration to perfection of the whole world.

Jerusalem's Sin and Imminent Fate

When King Jehoiachin was captured and taken to Babylon, Ezekiel was among the captives of Judah exiled to the River Chebar (modern Khabur River in Northeast Syria, between Harran and the Tigris River). It appears that when Ezekiel turned thirty years of age he became eligible for the priesthood, and the LORD promptly used him to deliver his message to Jerusalem (Ezek. 1:1-3; Num. 4:2, 46). Judah's capitol had been filled with corruption and innocent blood—utter destruction is now on the way [spoken a mere four a half years before the siege and six years before the fall of the city].

The character of the LORD had once been described as four attributes upholding his throne: Power and Justice behind him, with Love and Truth (Wisdom) leading the way (Psa. 89:14). We see these attributes twice more in Ezekiel and once again in Revelation. In sequence, leading the way first was love [Ezek. 1:10, the face of a man], manifest in God's creation of the human family; then is Justice [Ezek. 10:14, a cherub], manifest in his sending Jesus Christ, who died once for all; and ultimately will be Power [Rev. 4:7, a lion], to be manifest in the resurrection and reformation of "all the families of the earth."

Those mysterious wheels within wheels likely refer to the hubs of the wheels. Earthly impediments, suggested by bumps and hills, or potholes and streams, are no barriers to the spirit of God, which lifts the LORD's chariot above them all (1:15-21).

When God addresses Ezekiel as Son of man (2:1, 8; 3:1, etc.), we are to understand that Ezekiel represents our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 9:6; 16:27, etc.). This expression is equivalent to the finest among men (cf. "the daughter of women in Dan. 11:17). Only Jesus Christ fully qualifies for this role. (The church may be included by implication, as in Ezek. 37:3-9).

The lesson of the scroll is that we must appropriate the Word of God to ourselves before teaching it to others (2:8-3:3; Rev. 5:1, 10:8-11). The outside of the scroll can be read right away, although the message on the inside can be read only after all seven seals are loosed. The inside divides the Gospel Age into seven parts of lamentation or mourning or woe.

Each day symbolizes one year as Ezekiel symbolically bears the iniquity of Israel and then of Judah (4:4-9). Dating from the fall of Samaria, capitol of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, reckoning back 390 years would reach to at least the eighth year of Saul, the first king of all Israel (possibly beginning with Saul's disobedience regarding Amalek, and the LORD's rejection of him); reckoning forwards would reach nearly to the end of Persian dominion.

The fearfulness of Jerusalem, All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water, sounds like people today in the age of nuclear weapons. Casting silver in the streets might almost call to mind the modern cost of automobiles and highway programs. But silver and gold could not save Jerusalem any more than it can save this present evil world today (7:17-19).

About four hundred days late the LORD speaks again concerning religious sins. First, an image in the gate (north of the altar before the Temple) provoking the LORD to jealousy. Should an organization control who shall have access to the way of sacrifice, saying, you must join us to be saved. Second, pictures of idols and unclean things, and the straying son of a faithful scribe leading seventy elders in praising these things with their incense. Would we be ashamed for everybody to know what we do when we think nobody is watching? Third, the women weeping for Tammuz. Do we year for tranquility, even if it were imposed by the peace of Rome? Fourth, men worshiping the sun, who have turned their backs to the Temple of the LORD. Does knowledge of the truth sometimes seem more important than practicing the truth? Truth, apart from the love of the truth, may itself become an idol (8:5-18).

The man with the writer's inkhorn (9:2-4) sounds similar to the angel ascending from the sun-rising, having the seal of the living God (Rev. 7:2-8). We should be sealed in our foreheads with the holy Spirit of God . . . unto the day of redemption by heavenly resurrection (Eph. 4:30), so much so that we should be grieved at anything done to our advantage if it should hurt someone else. King Zedekiah will be captured, blinded, and taken away to Babylon to die, and the people will be dispersed among the nations (12:2-16). Only three years were left for anyone to repent. It is the false prophets who say, "Not in our day." Even in 1994 this world's wise say, "Peace," and there is no peace (13:10-16). Whitewash is no protection against hailstones. Noah, Daniel, and Job each saved three men, but they could save no one today (14:13-20). Jerusalem's destruction was certain (15:1-8), typifying a destruction of this present evil world.

Jerusalem's history is unlovely. It was founded by the Canaanites and later destroyed. It was rebuilt by the Hittite subtribe and again suffered destruction. It was then rebuilt by

the Amorite sub-tribe (Josh. 10:5), and by the Jebusites likewise (Josh. 15:63). When wretched Sodom and Samaria are resurrected in the thousand-year kingdom of Christ, they will put Jerusalem [and Rome] to shame (16:46-56; Matt. 10:15, 11:24). But the LORD will establish an everlasting covenant to reform Jerusalem.

The king of Babylon is as a great eagle who planted Zedekiah as King of Judah and made swear allegiance. But Zedekiah looked to Egypt to help him rebel (in spite of his oath); so the LORD let Nebuchadnezzar take him and all his mighty men. Jerusalem would be destroyed, but Israel in captivity will afterwards flourish (17:2-24). The sinner who reforms himself will be spared, while the righteous turning to corruption will not be spared: the soul that sinneth, it shall die (18:1-4, 20-28).

Judah is like a lioness who raised tyrants. King Jehoahaz was taken and brought bound to Egypt. King Jehoiachin was taken and brought bound to Babylon. Zedekiah is about to be taken, and there will be no successor, and Jerusalem will be destroyed (19:1-14).

With only two and a half years to go, the LORD refuses to speak to the elders of Israel. His goal is their repentance, not their destruction (20:1-4). The Law should help them want life and point them to their need for the promised Redeemer (20:11; Gal. 3:23, 24). In the thousand-year kingdom of Christ the children of the resurrection will be humbled as sheep in order to be brought to perfection and everlasting life on earth, while the wilfully-wicked will in time be destroyed (20:37, 38; Matt. 25:31-45; Rev. 20:11-15).

Zedekiah was the last king of Judah/Israel, and the kingship will not be restored until Jesus the Messiah comes in the throne of his glory (21:25-27). All the mighty men of Judah have robbed the poor, slain the righteous to the extent of their ability, etc. (22:6-12). The penalty will be dispersion, or a Diaspora, among the nations worldwide (22:15). As the dross of silver they are unfit for heavenly resurrection and work (22:17). Forsaking the LORD, Samaria curried favor with Egypt and Assyria, while Jerusalem curried favor with Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon (Chaldean rulers, Semites, descended from Arphaxhad, as was Abraham) (23:1-49).

It is now the ninth year of captivity, month ten, day ten. Too late! The nineteen-month siege began today. Blood they shed, their blood will be shed (24:1-14).

Sins and Punishments of the Other Nations

However the other nations will receive the rewards of their misdeeds too. Ammon exulted when the LORD was profaned against and when the LORD's people were taken captive. They will be humbled and given to the Arabs. Moab said the LORD's people are no different from anybody else. They, too, will be given up to Ammon's captors. Edom took revenge against the LORD's people. It will be made desolate. [Ammon, Moab, and Edom are now the three parts of modern Jordan, which were all once related to Jacob.] (25:2-14). The Philistines took vengeance against the LORD's people with mortal hatred; greater vengeance will be upon them, and the Cherethites (Crete) will be taken away from them (25:15-17). But these nations will thereby learn that the LORD is God.

Tyre originated as Tiras, or Thrace (Gen. 10:2), as a breakaway nation of Japheth, on the west side of the Black Sea, including Troas (Troy, the Trojans). From their colonizations we find Tyre north of Israel; Iter-Tiras ("the way of Tiras"), or the Etruscans (first inhabitants of Italy), and the Tyrrhenian Sea ("Tyr waters") on the west coast of Italy. Hence Tyre is commonly used as a symbol of Rome. Tyre exulted at the pending destruction of the LORD's people and at the chance to take their place. Therefore Tyre (including Rome) will be made eternally desolate (26:1-5).

Tyre profited by many nations: Tarshish (the Celts in westernmost Europe, including Celitberians, Britons, Welsh, Irish, Scots, Belgae, but also Galicia in southern Poland and even Galatia in central Turkey) brought in silver, iron, and lead from the Spanish peninsula and tin from Cornwall in England (still the major European source.) Meshech (Armenia) mined the copper ore. Tubal (Kartavelian people with their capitol Tbilisi; In English, Georgia, at the south of the Caucasus mountains) refined it, and Javan (Ionians, or Greeks who colonized the Black Sea coasts, including those of Georgia and Armenia) fabricated the copper wares. Togarmah originated as a breakaway nation of Kimmer (Gen. 10:3), probably originating when the Scythians (a tribe of Gog) conquered and destroyed the Kingdom of Kimmer/Gomer). (Tocharian is an East European language that lasted as late as the ninth century in Sinkiang, Northwest China. The Septuagint calls the people Thergama, from which comes the name Turk. The Phrygians, Finns, and Estonians are also from this tribe.) Turkestan was famous for raising and breeding horses, primarily for war (as was Magog also) (27:12-14). Among the many others contributing to Tyre's wealth were Judah and Israel.

The prince of Tyre speaks the words of Antichrist (28:1-10; Dan. 7:8, 25; 2 Thess. 2:3-4). But the real power behind Tyre is Lucifer/Satan himself (28:12-19). The LORD had appointed Lucifer the anointed cherub that covereth to protect Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. He had been perfect until pride arose to cause the sin in Eden, but extinction will be his end.

Sidon also did despite to the LORD's people; but from pestilence and blood they will learn a lesson (28:20-24). After the LORD has regathered Israel, after the Day of Wrath they will dwell securely in his kingdom (28:25, 26).

The great nation of Egypt will also be destroyed for its selfishness (29:1-32:21).

Asshur (Assyria, 32:22, 23) was a terrorist nation. They will die by the sword. Elam (like the Hebrew *olam*, to a vanishing point; that is, the easternmost peoples—the Chinese, but including Southwestern Iran; 32:24, 25) were also terrorists. They too will die by the sword. Similarly for Meshech (Armenia), Tubal (Caucasian Georgia), Edom (Southwest Jordan) and Sidon (North of Israel) (32:26-30).

Speak the Word of the LORD, whether people hear it or reject it. Their blood will be upon your head if you fail to tell it out (33:1-16).

Pastors, take care that ye care for the flock, and not for yourselves at the expense of the flock (34:1-24).

Mt. Seir (originally Hurrians/Horite, a Caucasian people) in Edom, hated and slew the LORD's people and sought to take over their Promised Land. Slaughter will pursue them to extinction (35:1-15).

The scattered remnant of the LORD's people can take comfort. Those nations will bear the consequences of their shameful deeds. The LORD will restore the land of Israel, not because the LORD's people have been so honorable (they were not), but for his own sake. He will then cleanse his people from their abundant iniquities (36:1-38).

The Valley of Dry Bones

The LORD draws us to see the apparent hopelessness of fleshly Israel for the 1845 years of disfavor during the Gospel Age, typified apparently by the location in the Kidron River valley with its tombs. Dry bones symbolized the lifelessness of Israel as a nation in Diaspora (dispersion). The church since the nineteenth century has been commanded to prophesy the restoration of Israel. Enabled by the French Revolution and the Turko-Russian war, the new town of Petah Tikvah ("Door of Hope") in 1878 began the return of the Jews to their land, as the bones began to come together. The sinews, and then the flesh suggest the Jews in their land beginning to work together and beginning to function as an independent society. The skin came symbolically over them when they became a nation in 1948 (with definable boundaries). The LORD's people are to prophesy again that the Ancient Worthies and the rest of Israel will be resurrected, so that the Spirit of God will lead and empower the nation of Israel, while bringing the people back to the perfection lost in Eden (Rom. 11:26, 27). (37:1-14).

As the two sticks of Judah (head of the Southern kingdom) and Joseph (head of the ten-tribe kingdom) were to be united, no such division is known any more in fleshly Israel today. David's Lord, Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, will be their prince/governor in his kingdom forever (37:15-28; Hos. 3:4, 5; Rev. 5:5; cf. 1 Chron. 28:4, 5).

From Blitzing Gog to Burial in Hamon-Gog

Finally Gog as the capitol of the eastern bloc, will rule over Great Russia, Armenia (Meshech) and Tubal (Caucasian Georgia, with its capitol Tbilisi), and will assemble alliances with Iran (Persia), Black Africa (Cush, not just Ethiopia), and North Africa (Phut: Libya to Mauritania), plus North Europe (Gomer, at the Black Sea and its northern tributaries, including Germans {Ashkenaz} and Slavs {Riphath} from Gen. 10:3) and the Turkic tribes (Togarmah). The pipeline for the western bloc will continue to be Israel—a prize too tempting for a resurgent Gog to resist (38:1-12).

Arabia will become head of the western block—Western Europe and its former colonies (see above, under chapter 27). These will protest/fight the threat to their economic existence (38:13).

Israel will be the initial battleground and will be badly shaken. But the LORD will stir up others to send bombs of destruction against Gog and stir up confusion among his invading armies (38:14-23). The LORD will see an exchange of thermonuclear fire between Russia and the West (39:6), which will suddenly leave their seemingly-invincible armies in Israel unsupported and ready prey for destruction.

Afterwards the lightweight composite structures of 21st-century weaponry will make good fuel for seven years. The mass of foreign soldiers' corpses will take seven months for burial (in the wasteland on the east side of the Dead Sea) (39:9-16). Armies will have as field day with deadly weaponry (39:17-20). The whole world will then finally learn that it was the LORD who expelled Israel from their land because of their sins, but now it is he who has restored Israel again (39:21-29).

Ezekiel's Temple

Ezekiel's Temple, which was never built, is a vision of Christ and the faithful church (John 2:19-21; 1 Cor. 3:16), and the blessing of fleshly Israel and the whole world in the thousand-year kingdom of Christ and beyond. (This vision was given in Ezekiel's last year as priest, when he was age fifty.) (Num. 4:3, 47).

The dimensions of this symbolic Temple are the same as those of Solomon's Temple, although Ezekiel's outer court may appear somewhat larger. Comparing Ezekiel's prophetic Temple with Isaac Newton's model of Solomon's Temple, the former has added a western building and ovens behind the Temple house (41:12 and 46:19, 20); the latter has cloisters on either side of the three inner gates, with pillars to support the building for the priests, on the north, east, and south side of the Court of the Priests.

The main features of each temple are identical: the Holy of Holies (Most Holy) is 20 cubits square; before the veil, adjoining on its east side, is the Holy, 20 cubits wide by 40 cubits long; together they comprise the Temple house. In front of the door to the Holy is a porch 20 cubits wide by 10 or 11 cubits long, with steps leading up to it from the Court of the Priests, which contained the brazen (copper) altar. The periphery of this court had several rooms for the priests, and gates on the north, east, and south leading up from a second court, the Inner Court of the People. The inner court was surrounded by a wall on the west, and ten rooms for the people on each of the other three sides, each with a gate leading up from the Outer Court of the Gentiles. (The angel appeared to Zacharias in the Holy (Luke 1:11); the widow's mite would have been contributed in the Court of the People (Mark 12:42), while the parable of the Pharisee and the publican would be more appropriate to the Court of the Gentiles (Luke 18:10-14; cf. Rev. 11:2).

If the holy area around the temple is 500 reeds on a side (=3000 cubits, per 40:5), then the perimeter would be 12,000 cubits (45:2). In the grand symbolic vision of Revelation

21:9-16 the New Jerusalem, or government of Christ's kingdom, the twelve edges add up to 144,000 *stadions*, translated furlongs. Of similar character in Rev. 22:2, twelve kinds of fruit for each of twelve months over a thousand years is 144,000 fruits: By their fruits ye shall know them (Matt. 7:15-20; Rev. 7:4-8).

A goat was offered for a sin offering one each of seven days to show that the Great Atonement Day of the Gospel Age is divided into seven parts. (The priesthood was consecrated for seven days; Joshua {Greek, Jesus} marched seven days around Jericho, with seven priests and seven trumpets; again, there were seven messengers and seven trumpets in Revelation.) (Lev. 8:33; Josh. 6:2-21; Rev. 2:1-3:22; 8:6-11:19). After the sacrificing of Christ and his church is completed, in the thousand-year kingdom of Christ the people and their offerings will be acceptable to the LORD (43:25-27).

The priests who had been faithful, those who had followed in the way of David's and Solomon's faithful priest, Zadok, are contrasted with the Levites, who had compromised and strayed badly. (Even Moses' own grandson had greedily ministered before idols, first to one man's house, and then to the tribe of Dan {Judg. 17:7-18:30}; Amos 8:14}). The Levites were to be teachers, but they led Israel astray. Therefore they shall bear the iniquities which they caused Israel to commit, just as the scape goat bore the iniquities of the children of Israel (Lev. 16:21). In the terms of the Gospel Age, do we teach people to worship prominent Christians: Martin Luther or C. T., Russell; John Calvin or Jim Jones; or organizations, such as Rome, Salt Lake or Brooklyn? The issue is not whether the idol is a good idol or a bad idol, because every idol is forbidden! Those who do so will throw away their hoped-for part in the priesthood (44:13), but by the LORD's mercy they shall receive life and shall minister in the kingdom of Christ (44:11-14). As characteristic of the typical Levites, they will symbolically wash their clothes and will have no inheritance in the land (Num. 8:7, 21; 18:20-24), even as in reality the Great Multitude will have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and they, too, will be in heaven—I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven (Rev. 7:14; 19:1). But those who remain faithful when everyone else is going astray will, under Jesus Christ, become the priesthood of the coming age, and they shall offer unto [the LORD] the fat and the blood [of Christ's sacrifice, on behalf of the world]. That will be their part in the offering for sin, or sin offering (44:10-14, 15, 16

The Book of Revelation

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.—Revelation 1:3

By David Rice

Any subject which contains great detail can be bewildering and confusing. For this reason many of the sciences appear complex and difficult. It may amaze us that physicists keep their bearings while faced with myriad subatomic particles, or chemists among the variant isotopes of over a hundred elements, which combine into countless molecules. How is it done? By grasping a conceptual framework, into which the mind can relate the details as they are encountered.

In this respect, Revelation is no different. The maze of symbols and details can be bewildering and confusing. But when we grasp the conceptual outline and progression of the book, we can relate the details to the whole, and understand the message.

The book symbolically describes the Christian age (1:1), to and through the thousand-year Kingdom of Christ and the little season. We can divide the book simply into three parts:

1. Past, Gospel Age—(chapters 1-13)
2. Present, Harvest—(chapters 14-19)
3. Future, Kingdom—(chapters 20-22)

This simple framework is helpful. However, as with many things simple, it is not precise. Actually, part 1 and part 3 overlap (they both speak of the raising of the sleeping saints, for example), and the overlapping area is part 2, the harvest. The three sections are represented better this way:

Part 1 (Chapters 1-13)

This part can be further divided into:

- (A) Introduction (chapter 1)
- (B) 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets (chapters 2-11)
- (C) History of the persecuted Church (chapter 12)
- (D) History of the persecuting church (chapter 13)

Introduction

The Revelation of Jesus Christ comes through this chain: God—Jesus—his angel—John (1:1). There are greetings from God, "which is, and which was, and which is to come" (the always existing one, 1:4, 1:8 NASB), and from Jesus, "the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth..that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (1:5). The Holy Spirit is described as seven spirits (1:4), perhaps because God's spirit operates to each of the seven stages of the church.

The vision was given "on the Lord's day" (1:10, literally Sunday). Some believe the whole scene represents the John class (the Church at the end of the age, cf. John 21:22,23), receiving the vision of Truth from the Lord through his angel (the Laodicean messenger) on the greater "Lord's day," now begun. This writer is partial to that thought, and believes it may explain, for example, the time standpoint of Revelation 17:10, "five [kings] are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come."

The one Church of God is represented as seven churches (candlesticks), and seven messengers (stars), one for each church (1:20). These seven stars are probably human messengers, just as the twelve stars of 12:1 are human apostles, and the star of 9:1 a human reformer.

Three Sets of Sevens

The seven churches, seven seals, and seven trumpets each take us through the Gospel age, with three different viewpoints: The Church, the false church, the governments. These seven stages span the age in seven time divisions, from beginning to end. The evidence for this conclusion is in the various descriptions of each segment. For example, the first church is commended for discerning the true apostles from false ones—a test specially fitting the early church, in which Paul had to defend his own apostleship—while the last church is told "I stand at the door and knock...I will come in...and sup with" his people (3:20). This is the promise Jesus said would be fulfilled at his return (Luke 12:37). Therefore we have traversed the age from church 1 to church 7. And a look at each church in Revelation 2 & 3 will show a clear progression, which matches exactly with observed history:

1. **Ephesus:** Apostolic age, a good beginning with many zealous works, but the tendency at last for a cooling of their first love. But they disdain the deeds of the Nicolaitans, who would exercise lordship in the church.
2. **Smyrna** (bitterness): A period of intense physical persecution. Also a time of tare growth, those who say they are (spiritual) Jews, but are not.

3. **Pergamos:** The rise of the false church among the saints. The Lord's faithful are "antipas," against the pope; spiritual impurity and the doctrine of lordship by the clergy take foot.
4. **Thyatira:** The darkest days of Papal supremacy, when Jezebel seduces and adulterates the Christian world. "Satan's seat" rose in church 3 (2:13), but in church 4 the saints see "the depths of Satan" (2:24).
5. **Sardis:** The command of the Lord is to "repent," and the undefiled ones are promised to "walk with me...clothed in white raiment." It is a time of turning from the atrocities of Jezebel.
6. **Philadelphia:** A period of blest growth and progress, as the reformed church prospers, and anticipates the Lord's soon return. "I come quickly..." (3:11)
7. **Laodicea:** The warmth of Christian zeal has cooled—the unworthy are spewed out, and the worthy ones are clothed and restored to sight by Present Truth, during this end of the age. The Lord stands at the door, having returned to feed and nourish the saints during this harvest time.

Chapters 4 and 5 take us back in time to the beginning of the Christian age when our Lord was declared to have "prevailed" as a "lamb slain," which shows that the following vision of the seven seals (chapters 6 & 7) starts again at the beginning of the age. The final description at the end of the seals shows the Church complete, and even the Great Company purged and rewarded (chapter 7)—the end of the age.

Chapter 8 begins again at the start of the Gospel age, by referring to the act of the offering of incense at the Golden altar, which represents the perfect offering of our Lord, through whom we are accepted. Following this, seven angels blow in sequence seven trumpets, described in chapters 8 to 11. The seventh trumpet introduces the Kingdom during a time of judgment upon the nations, while the saints receive their reward. As with the seven churches, and the seven seals, each of the seven trumpets outlines a distinct and progressive phase of the age passed from Christ to the Kingdom.

Chapter 12 represents the early Church as a woman arrayed with the (gospel) sun, the (law) moon under her feet, having twelve apostolic stars as her crown. But as Paul warned (2 Thess. 2:7), an unholy influence was developing, which would claim to represent God, while in fact constituting the great Man of Sin. In Revelation 12 this is shown by the development of a child which was caught up to heaven(ly authority) and dislodged heathendom from its spiritual ascendancy (verse 7-10). This sounds good, but the true Church was obliged to flee into the wilderness like Elijah, where she was kept during the dark ages by the providence of the Lord. (See Reprint 306, 307.)

The persecution of the Church was for 1260 days in Chapter 12, and in Chapter 13 we encounter a persecutor persecuting for the same time period (42 months x 30 days = 1260 days). On the prophetic scale of a day for a year, this represents the 1260 years, during which the Church was persecuted by that system which grew out of and dominated Rome (Daniel 7:8,25)—the Roman Catholic Church. (Papacy's control of Rome spanned 1260 years. In 538 A.D. Belisarius, Justinian's general, left the Pope in control of Rome, and in 1798 A.D. Napoleon's general Berthier took the Pope as a prisoner to France, where he died the following year; no immediate successor was allowed.)

Papacy is shown in Daniel 7 as a horn growing out of the Roman empire, while Revelation 13 shows it as a composite of the four beasts of Daniel (13:2).

But Papacy was also joined by other false systems: The Anglican church (13:11, see Reprint 319, 320), and allied Protestant churches (13:14, see Reprint 321, 322). These latter two entities ultimately comprise the False Prophet (cf. 13:13-15, 19:20, Reprint 510). Three times in Revelation, the saints are distinguished as those who did not worship, or gained the victory over "the beast, and...his image" (14:9,10,12; 15:2; 20:4). Thus are we warned not to be enticed with the apparent majesty, or threats, or false doctrines, of nominal Christendom.

Part 2 (Chapters 14-19)

This section deals with the period we know as the harvest of the Gospel age. It includes both the harvest of the true Church, and the destruction of the false church and associated governments, with by far the greatest emphasis on the latter. This part subdivides naturally into four sections.

Chapter 14: The harvest and exaltation of the truth Church (see specially verse 14), and the harvest and destruction of the false church (18-20).

Chapters 15 and 16 describe the judgments of Christendom as the seven last plagues. There is an unmistakable parallel between these judgments upon the Christian "earth" (16:1), and the development of (nominal) Christian society (earth) represented by the seven trumpets (8:5). It is as though to show that these seven judgments are upon the same society that grew up in seven stages during the age. The parallel is particularly striking in the first four stages in each case: the symbols earth, sea, rivers, sun, respectively, are shown in each part. (Of interest also is a comparison of earth's creation days in Genesis.)

It is this writer's view that the seven plagues commenced at the beginning of the harvest (the first plague being Present Truth itself), and the last is Armageddon, still future, which will open with the final conflict in the Middle East. It is our view that five plagues have been poured, and only one more, the sixth, intervenes before the final calamity. To see the matter in this light cannot but increase the impetus to press forward with greater diligence in the (relatively) brief opportunity yet remaining for us to prove faithful.

Others view these seven judgments as having been all poured by 1914, with their unfolding impact continuing since then. Still others believe the first plague began with World War I, the remaining plagues being poured progressively since, with the seventh still ahead. Still others believe these plagues describe seven specially forceful and rapid judgments impending in the future. The varied opinions have this in common, however: the seven plagues are seven progressive judgments as a result of the Lord's presence which result in the overthrow of Christendom, and the introduction of the Kingdom.

Chapter 17 details the judgment of the great whore—Papacy—which ultimately will be devoured and burned (verse 16). It is unmistakable that the great harlot, "that great city [government] which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (v. 18), is the power that ruled from seven-hilled Rome (v. 9). Today Jezebel has painted her face, but the aged matron, once "drunken with the blood of saints" (v. 6), will not be spared her just penalty.

Chapters 18 and 19 further detail the harvest work introduced in chapter 14, starting with the pronouncement of judgment on Babylon (cf. 14:8, 18:4), and continuing to the execution of judgment (cf. 14:19, 19:15). At last "the beast [papacy] was taken, and with him the false prophet [allied Protestant systems who falsely speak for God]...these both were cast alive into a lake of fire" (19:20).

Part 3 (Chapters 20-22)

Chapters 20-22 can also be divided into four sections: three distinct views of the Kingdom, plus a closing section.

20:1-10: Satan is deposed, and the world freed from his blight. The saints are raised from the dead (20:4,5 NASB—notice the flow of thought, omitting the spurious first sentence of verse 5 not found in the Sinaitic manuscript). They serve as kings and priests in the new age (20:6). Satan returns for a little season; afterward he and his followers are destroyed.

20:11-21:1: Another view of the Kingdom, with different symbols. The old heaven and earth flee, the dead are raised and judged, the new heaven and earth are established, the disturbed and restless sea class exists no more.

21:2-22:15 Another view of the Kingdom, with yet different symbols. The Bride of Christ descends to assist mankind, God dwells among them to dry all tears and remove pain and death, the Bride is shown as a great city, New Jerusalem, whose features are described in detail. Into this city all the repentant can gain access. In this city flows a river of life, lined with trees whose leaves are medicine for the nations. All who wash their robes can enter (22:14 NASB), and without the city are the evil ones (22:15).

22:16-21: These last six verses are a closure to the book (actually verses 7-13 begin this pleasant ending). Jesus affirms that the Revelation was sent from him; he urges fidelity to its message, and affirms again to John that he will soon come. John replies "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," and closes with greetings of grace to us all.

Two additional comments on Part 3

(1) Chapter 20 is not an abrupt break from Chapter 19; it is closely related. Part 2 speaks of three parts of Christendom: the Beast, the False Prophet and the Dragon (16:13,19). Chapter 19 closes with the demise of the first two; Chapter 20 explains the demise of the third. (For this reason, some conclude that Chapter 20 follows in time sequence the close of Chapter 19; others [this writer included] suppose 20:1 refers to the Lord's return, and the gradual work of dispossessing the Dragon from his power from that time forward—a review of a lengthy process.)

There is a disparity in the symbolic representation of the Dragon's treatment between 20:1,2 and Isaiah 27:1. Chapter 20 shows him bound during the kingdom, and freed later to test humanity. But Isaiah 27:1 shows him slain, rather than bound, at the outset of the kingdom. "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall . . . slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isa. 27:1, cr. Psa. 74:14, Ezek. 29:13).

This difference shows that the Dragon is merely a symbolic aspect of Satan. It represents him as the great tyrant who has usurped control of the kingdoms of this world. Satan is given four designations, and the use of each designation is significant throughout Revelation. Each one refers to him in a different aspect.

- Dragon—Usurped power over the nations
- Satan—Opposer
- Devil—(false) Accuser
- Serpent—Deceiver

In Revelation 20, during the little season, the adversary reappears as Satan (v. 7), as a deceiver (v. 8), and as the Devil (v. 10). But he never reappears as the Dragon; he will never again be the master of the governments. In that capacity, he is destroyed (Isa. 27:1) when his power over the nations is broken—at the time Revelation 20:3 speaks of him being cast into the bottomless pit.

(2) Notice that in the first and second views of the Kingdom, the destruction of the ungodly is not the same. 20:9 says they are "devoured," and that with heavenly fire, while 20:15 consigns them to a burning lake. Assuming none would conclude there are two different dooms for the ungodly, this requires that the visions be taken symbolically. And this 20:14 affirms: "This is [represents] the second death."

The End of the End

"But the end of all things is at hand." 1 Peter 4:7

By Carl Hagensick

Eschatology is a theological term describing the study of the end times, or study of the last days. Its importance cannot be overstated since the focus of Bible prophecy is to inform the reader of the end times and prepare him for them.

In this study there is no more important word to understand than the simple word "end." In the New Testament there are two Greek words translated "end," when that word is related to time prophecy. They are the words "*telos*" and "*suntelia*." It is the purpose of this article to note the difference between these two terms and their usage in the Scriptures.

The Distinction

Strong's Concordance defines *telos* as "the point aimed at, as a limit, i.e. (by implication) the conclusion of an act or state (termination.)"

Suntelia is defined by the same source as "entire completion, i.e. consummation (of a dispensation.)" Professor W. E. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* adds to the concept of *suntelia*: "The word does not denote a termination, but the heading up of events to the appointed climax." Vine gives, as his primary definition, "a bringing to completion together (sun with, *teleo*, to complete . . .) marking the completion or consummation of the various parts of a scheme."

The distinction, then, between the two terms is that *telos* refers to a final, definitive termination, while *suntelia* refers to a period of time in which a series of climactic events lead up to the *telos*, or final conclusion. In summary, *telos* applies to a point in time, and *suntelia* to a period of time.

Suntelia

The following texts use *suntelia*:

Matthew 13:39: The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

Matthew 13:40: As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Matthew 13:49: So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

Matthew 24:3: And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Matthew 28:20: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Hebrews 9:26: For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

In the first three references we find allusion to the parable of The Wheat and the Tares where the consummation of the story is in the time of harvest. This harvest becomes the focal point of the lesson. By using the word *suntelia* to describe it, the Lord would have us to understand that this harvest is not a momentary event, but covers a period of time.

Harvest, as related to end-time prophecy, describes the period of time when the church of the Gospel Age is gathered to be with her Lord. That Jesus is present during this harvest seems strongly indicated by Revelation 14:14, "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle."

This accords well with Jesus' promise to his disciples in John 14:3: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." It also connects the harvest with Paul's word in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Many Christians derive the thought from this text that the harvest of the church is instantaneous, a "rapture." This is based on the conclusion that the word translated "together" refers to time and not to place. Lexicographers agree with this thought. Strong's identifies it as meaning "at the same time," though he does note that it is

frequently used of close association. However, "at the same time" does not necessarily mean "at the same instant," but can mean "during the same time period."

That the latter is the thought of this word "together" is indicated by two factors. First, in Philemon 1:22, where Paul asks his friend to "withal prepare me a lodging." Here the word translated withal is the same as that translated together in our Thessalonians text. Instead of withal we would today use the expression in the meantime. This referred to the period of time between Paul's letter and his arrival at Philemon's house.

The second indication that the word together in Thessalonians refers to a period of time is that it describes the same work as the harvest of Jesus' parable in Matthew 13. There Jesus plainly said that the harvest is "the end [*suntelia*, ending period] of the age."

The fourth reference to *suntelia* is in the disciple's question in Matthew 24:3 which provokes the famous Olivet sermon: "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

On several occasions, in answering this question, Jesus says "but the end is not yet." On each of these occasions, however, he does not repeat the word *suntelia* from their question, but substitutes the word telos. We will examine this further when looking at that word.

The fifth reference by our Lord to *suntelia* is in Matthew 28:20 where he assures his followers, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [*aion*, age]." This text serves two purposes: first, to assure his disciples of his abiding spiritual presence with them, and second to distinguish that presence from a more personal presence in "the end of the age." What we have already noted about the harvest and the Lord's presence during it shows us the import of this distinction—the eager anticipation of his church for the time when he "would come and receive you unto myself."

The final usage of *suntelia*, in Hebrews 9:26 is only peripherally related to our discussion since it refers to the first advent of our Lord rather than to the second. But it does go to illustrate the point, for the focus of Paul in Hebrews is not on the event of his death, but his advent, the last three and a half years of which were devoted to the putting away of sin "by the sacrifice of himself"—once again, to a period of time and not a point in time.

Telos

The Greek word *telos* is used ten times in the New Testament in regard to end time prophecy: Matthew 10:22; 24:6, 13, 14; Mark 13:7, 13; Luke 21:9; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 15:24; 1 Peter 4:7. Six of these references are found in the Olivet prophecy, and we will examine them last.

The text in 1 Corinthians 15:24 is also peripheral, for it refers to the end, not of the current dispensation, but the Millennial age. However, it does serve to show that the end referred to here is not a period of time, but that point of time when "he shall have" turned the kingdom over to God.

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 10:11, the expression "the ends of the ages" uses the plural and shows the meeting point of two dispensations, thus demanding the word *telos*, referring to a definite point of time—where the beginning of one age meets the terminus of the preceding period.

The usage in Matthew 10:22 is rather indeterminate, whether it refers to the church collectively enduring to the end of the age, or to the individual Christian enduring to the end of his or her life. If it is the former, then it relates to our subject, and obviously includes the full termination, when the last member of the church is found faithful.

This brings us to our theme text of 1 Peter 4:7, "the end of all things is at hand." This expression is closely akin to one found twice in the book of Revelation: "for the time is at hand." (Rev. 1:3; 22:10) Both the New International Version and the Revised Standard Version translate this "for the time is near," in agreement with Strong's definition of the Greek word here used.

Obviously Peter did not think that the final termination of everything was already present, but neither did he anticipate a delay of some 2000 years before it would. John, the Revelator, on the other hand had his extended vision on Patmos for that very purpose, to show him the great amount of history which must transpire before the fulfillment of their desires. He sees his vision from the perspective of "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10) Most commentaries agree that "the Lord's day" here, while it may include the thought that the vision was seen on a Sunday, has a larger application—to the great Day of Christ, the Millennium. Standing at that point of time in a figure, John still sees the end of time, the *telos*, as future. He is standing within the *suntelia*, viewing the *telos* as still an unfulfilled prospect, howbeit one that is near at hand.

The Olivet Prophecy

The remaining texts using *telos* in an end time scenario are found in the various Gospel accounts of the Olivet prophecy. Since they are largely repetitious, we will only treat the references in Matthew 24.

After the disciples ask for the signs of the *suntelia* [end] of the *aion* [age], Jesus proceeds to paint a black picture of future history, filled with "wars and rumors of wars." But, he assures them, "see that ye be not troubled, for these things must come to pass, but the end [*telos*] is not yet." (Matt. 24:6)

The reason for this postponement of "the end" is shown in verse 13: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Though similar to Matthew 10:22 considered above, there is a distinct difference. Here the context calls for a dispensational interpretation, both because of the question of verse 3 and the postponement of the end in verse 6.

Then, in verse 14, we see revealed just when this "end" [*telos*] shall be:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The final climax of the end of the present world order will immediately follow a world-wide proclamation of the truth of the Gospel.

In summary, let us notice the effect of the interchange of the two words *suntelia* and *telos* in Matthew 24. The disciples inquire about the climactic ending period of this present evil world. In answering, Jesus lists events within that period, but cautions that these do not mark the final termination of the age which concludes the end period.

The signs which Jesus gave were within the *suntelia*, but did not mark the final *telos*, the *telos* of the *suntelia*—the end of the end.

The Word Of God—Today

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."—2 Peter 1:19

Part three in a four-part series on "The Word of God" originally prepared as an audio-visual program for the 1992 International Convention of Bible Students in Poitiers, France.

By Richard Kindig

"Let the little children alone—for of such is the Kingdom of heaven."

"In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go that I may prepare a place for you."

"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

If the Bible is the Word of God, where is it today? We read about the Love of God in the Bible, but where is the evidence of this love in the world? We read about the Justice of God, but where are His judgments among men? We are asked to believe in miracles because we read them in a book. Why doesn't God do some indisputable miracles, now, miracles on a scale that is worthy of God—like the widespread curing of cancer or the delivery of millions of children from starvation?

If the Word of God is true, why is it not more active in the world, now?

The Word Of God Is Active Today

We will try to show that the Word of God is very active in the world today. God is painfully aware of the suffering of all peoples, that though the world seems out of control, the troubled events of today are the necessary steps toward the peace and worldwide happiness of tomorrow.

Let's start with miracles. 1900 years ago, at a time when legitimate miracles were common, the Word of God boldly predicted that special miracles would cease. (1 Cor. 13:8) In fact, the only prophecies of future miracles given in the New Testament describe miracles that will be performed by false teachers. Repeatedly, true believers are warned to be suspicious of miracles done in the name of Christ. (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:14; 16:14; 19:20).

There is not a single New Testament assurance that miracles, or special powers, would be an evidence that God is "with" believers. The only outward sign of authorization promised to believers is that they would find themselves learning how to love one another, and all men. And that this love would be so unusual as to attract attention (1 Cor. 13:13; John 13:35; 1 John 3:14). It is obvious that the number of people on earth who fit this description is just what Jesus predicted it would be: a "little flock" (Luke 12:32).

Preaching The Gospel

The followers of Christ were told to preach the gospel all over the world—as a witness to "all nations." The terms of this command have been met. Faithful Christians have introduced the Bible to over 500 people-groups around the world.

But were Christians told to expect the masses to hear the Gospel and be converted? Not at all! Christ predicted that the good seed he sowed would be almost completely overrun with weeds. He wondered aloud whether, when he returned, he would find any true faith in the earth. He compared the days of his return to the days of Noah, when preaching righteousness had no effect, and the people of the world at that time knew not that a great change was at hand. Instead, they went on with their own business until suddenly, the flood came.

The foretold dominance of unbelief, and the predicted lack of trustworthy miracles today, are themselves proof of the Bible's reliability!

One reason why thoughtful skeptics assume that God is not active in the world, is that so many Christians keep on trying to "win the world for Christ"—and keep failing. Today, there are more Avon or Amway salesmen around the world than Christian missionaries! Soap and makeup we can sell—"salvation" can hardly be given away.

Unbelievers find it either amusing or irritating to watch modern evangelists straining, and pleading to get a few converts—all the time speaking as though these meager efforts are God's attempt to reach the unsaved "before Christ comes." No wonder unbelievers are convinced that God is weak and uninvolved in human affairs!

The fact is, that though faithful Christians do preach, they should do so in dignified ways, and they should not expect to convert the world now. Bible prophecy predicts that in the next age, the entire earth will be converted.

"In that day, it will not be necessary to say to your neighbor, 'know the Lord'—because they will all know me, from the least to the greatest. The knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

Perilous Times

A shortage of miracles and an abundance of unbelief. What else does the Bible predict for our day? Unprecedented anger and rebellion. It is fashionable, today, to complain about our rulers. But we should not blame them for all our woes. The Word of God described the "last days" as a time when the people of the world would be practically ungovernable. Men would be lovers of themselves; covetous, liars, boasters, despisers of those that are good, fierce; traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, disobedient to their parents, unholy, unthankful, rebellious. And the masses of religious men at this time are described in the Word of God as having a form or ritual of piety, without the power of a renewed life.

But though the Word of God predicts these frightful times, it presents these troubles in a positive light. The unrest is not a sign of doom, but of the hand of God moving among men to bring to pass Jesus' prediction that "the meek shall inherit the earth."

The Jubilee

The Jubilee is one of many Bible promises that God is a God of Freedom—that history should be viewed as the classroom God has provided to teach all people how to enjoy the benefits of freedom. Bondage to sin and death is merely a preparation for what the Bible calls "the glorious freedom of the children of God."

Since the time of the French and American Revolutions, the spirit of freedom has been heard around the world—but the concept of freedom was whispered into mankind's ear by God himself, 3000 years before.

In the Law of Jubilee, God commanded that every 50 years the land be returned to the families to whom it belonged. All debts were cancelled, all slaves were freed, all people got a fresh start. Even the land had rest from cultivation.

It was a joyous time for those who had lost their land in the preceding generation—but a disappointment to those who had gained more than their share.

And so it has been in the century since the Law of Jubilee began its grand fulfillment. Native peoples are demanding their land back. Newcomers, who have put down roots on someone else's land, don't want to leave.

Women, who have been oppressed throughout history, began to ask for equality. But men, who sometimes confuse their God-given privileges of responsibility for the right to dominate women, have resisted the change.

Slaves cried out for their freedom from bondage and colonialism—but in many cases it has taken bloody wars to give it to them.

The French Revolution was described as a great earthquake—and the events which are shaking Europe in this century were described long ago as part of the greatest earthquake of all—a world-wide revolution and rebellion against every form of established authority.

Think back to just a century ago. Kings ruled by decree, bosses had unlimited power over their workers, fathers arranged marriages, people worked harder for less. Something has changed, and the Word of God tells us that God is quietly stirring up the hearts of men, making them hungry for the blessings He will soon bring to the world.

Of course, true freedom implies limitations. Make freedom absolute and it dies in anarchy. But the extremes of lawlessness and rebellion we see today are also clearly predicted in the Word of God. This is a valuable lesson. Mankind is learning that all the laws in the world cannot replace the simple law of God, written in our hearts.

The second man on earth asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" God has answered Cain in His word, by telling us that we are our brothers' keeper. And God has answered Cain through history, by demonstrating the consequences of hatred and selfishness.

Trouble In The Church

The Word of God described the rise of large institutional churches on the ruins of the Roman Empire. It predicted that they would prosper for more than a thousand years. The near-total ban of the Bible during that time is clearly foretold. The return of the Bible to worldwide prominence was also predicted, along with the date when that rebirth would begin: 1799.

The word of God predicted that many who claimed to follow Christ would be more concerned with money and power than obedience to the simple teachings of the Gospel.

The word of God predicted that the "weeds" that infest God's church would be gathered into bundles—and that though there would be many different denominations of Christianity, God's people would be individually known by Him — spiritually one body, even if unknown to each other.

The word of God predicted that the hand of God would be especially heavy on those Christians who boast loudly that they are God's people, while failing to demonstrate the appropriate fruits.

And concerning the joining of churches into two great camps, the Word of God predicts that their practical union just before the end of their existence will be an uneasy alliance, motivated by self-preservation.

Gathering of The Nations

In ancient times, we read that God scattered the world (Gen, 11:1-9). And for most of man's history they have remained scattered—isolated from one another by differences of geography, custom, and speech. But the Word of God declares that God is determined to gather the nations in the "last days." Are the nations being gathered?

The age-old expression, "it's a small world," has new meaning today. It is now commonly said that we live in a "global village." East is intertwined with West. The North cannot live without the South. China still has its wall, but it cannot avoid trading with the West. Japan is no longer an island. The deeds of African elephant and rhinoceros poachers are the subject of international conferences. Europeans will die to keep Asians from killing whales. The entire world sends observers to an election in tiny El Salvador, and watches with bated breath to see how people vote in South Africa or Pakistan.

The nations have been gathered. For what? For the nations to feel the heat of God's anger. Not that they will be literally destroyed—because the Word of God also states that God did not create the earth in vain. He formed it to be inhabited. After social structures are consumed by the intense probing of a righteous God, the people, we are told, will all call on the Lord, to serve him with one consent.

The prophet Daniel predicted that the time just before the full establishment of Messiah's kingdom would be a great "time of trouble." He described it as a time of much running to and fro when knowledge would be increased.

Modern man tends to be filled with pride at the many inventions of our day. "Educated" people seem to think that the explosive growth of knowledge and travel in this century points to some evolutionary advancement of mankind. But since the technical knowledge of the human race did not significantly change for thousands of years prior to 1800, we suggest that God should be given the credit for advances in modern technology.

The Vision Lives—Outside The Church

The Bible describes in great detail the loss of power of the institutional churches which it criticizes for pragmatic cooperation with the kingdoms of this world. In the book of Revelation, this decline is signaled by a drying up of popular support.

And yet the Bible did not predict that the vision of a "Golden Age" would die. The vision of human potential burns brightly in the secular world.

God has opened the minds of man to the possibilities of human life. Two centuries ago, the masses of men were ground beneath the millstone of oppression. Today, most of them still are, but the full flower of human potential is now a vision before their eyes. People literally everywhere now aspire to the benefits that God created them to enjoy—not just

transistor radios and designer jeans—but beauty, health, opportunity, knowledge, happiness, with liberty and justice for all.

The vision is beautiful, but its contrast to the sad facts of human experience today make it destructive to present society.

"Unless Those Days Were Shortened"

The Word of God boldly predicted that just before Christ takes control of human events, men will have it in their power to destroy the world. Imagine a writer whose only experience with weapons was spears and arrows, predicting that men would be literally able to destroy all flesh! And yet even this fantastic notion has been fulfilled in the frightful specter of "overkill." But God gave us His word that this power will not be fully used. The earth will not be destroyed, either by men or God.

The Word of God described a day when it will actually be possible for the entire earth to be conscious of a fact at the same time, a time when human knowledge will dramatically increase, when travel—and stress—will greatly accelerate. And yet though this is predicted to be a time of knowledge and invention, it is spoken of as a time when "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people."

Yes, there is more darkness than light. In fact, the Word of God predicts that the era of Christ's second coming will be accompanied by the energetic working of Satan—spiritual enemies of God and His people—who will be permitted to exercise all the power, and lies, and even miracles that they can muster, to deceive the world.

According to the Word of God, this increased conflict among competing spiritual forces is strong evidence that Christ himself is actively at work behind the scenes, breaking up Satan's empire, and preparing to liberate mankind from the spirits that deceive them.

Avoid everything occult. Christ will not liberate you through spiritualism, theosophy, or the "New Age" teachings. Christ liberates today's believers through the repentance and conversion described in the Word of God; and he will liberate tomorrow's believers through the Kingdom of God, which he will establish throughout the earth.

Israel, The Harbinger Of Hope

Perhaps the most striking fulfillment of the Word of God have been the many prophecies of the rebirth of Israel. The Word of God had repeatedly declared that His people, Israel, would be dispersed among all the nations, that they would lose their temple, and their priesthood, and their national identity. It predicted that they would have bitter experiences during this dispersion.

The Bible did not authorize anyone to persecute the Jews. In fact, it promises direct punishment from God for anyone who harms the Jews or even curses them. But the Bible

predicted clearly that they would be harmed by the rest of the world—scattered and in despair.

- The Word of God predicted that the Jews would literally buy the land back. They have—paying for their beloved land in cash, sweat, and blood.
- The Word of God predicted that under cultivation by the Jews, the wastelands of Palestine would blossom once again. And it predicted that during the time of God's blessing to Israel, rainfall would increase. It has.
- The Word of God predicted that Jerusalem would be a hotly-disputed territory. It is.
- It predicted that the community of nations would become involved in that debate. It has.
- It predicted that the reborn Israel would be a mighty military power. It is.

The Word of God predicted that Jews and Arabs would, after a stormy period, live together in peace. It hasn't happened yet, but the Word of God said it, and it will come true.

And the Word of God predicted that after that peace is reached, a future attempt by many nations to attack and destroy Israel will be the trigger that brings God forward to declare his sovereignty. Finally, the mystery will be over.

The temporary nighttime of earth will end. The morning will come. Worthy people of God, tested and proven to be honest, humble, and compassionate, will become the leaders of earth.

Heaven will show its face, and open its hands to bless. The Golden Age will have come, and there is not a person who has ever lived who will be beyond the reach of the Redeemer of the world.

Moses gave Israel a test by which they could evaluate a prophet. If what he said came true, you can have confidence that he speaks the Word of God.

The Bible passes that test. It is verified by fossil evidence, historic data, and prophecy fulfilled both in time and precise detail.

The final test is a personal one: does the Word of God deliver on its promise to bring spiritual transformation to the lives of those who seek?

That is its claim—and anyone who feels the hand of God is invited to put it to the test. There need be no blindness in an act of faith, only a solid foundation—the authority of the Word of God.

The Fig Tree

(((Echoes from the Past)))

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." -- Matthew 24:32-33

Condensed from a discourse by Julius Bednarz

The fig tree is one of the more frequently mentioned trees in the Scriptures. It was from its leaves that Adam and Eve made their first covering (Gen. 3:7). The fig tree was valued first of all for its delicious, sweet fruit (Judges 9:11). It was also a symbol of prosperity and security: "and Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree" (1 Kings 4:25). It was an enjoyable thing to rest, meditate on God's word, and pray in the shade of the fig tree. (John 1:48)

Figs are considered characteristic fruit for the land of Palestine. The best loved and most nutritious were the spring fruits, which ripened in May and referred to as figs in the fig tree of the first time (Hosea 9:10). The main harvesting of figs occurred in the later months of the summer and in the fall. Those figs were called late figs. They were inferior in their quality. The poorest ones were even fed to cattle.

The Fig Tree as a Symbol

Some places in the Bible indicate that the fig tree also has a symbolic meaning. One of the Lord's miracles is most intriguing when his curse of the fig tree caused it to wither. This seems to have been the only miracle in which Jesus used his power to destroy, to annihilate something. It also is the only miracle which was of no benefit to anyone. All others were done for men. The Lord multiplied bread, healed diseases, raised the dead. This miracle was as if in conflict with our Master's disposition, who to the suggestion of destroying the wicked, answered back to his disciples: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of". (Luke 9:55). All these facts imply an exceptional character of that miracle and its symbolic meaning. But to understand this symbolism, the miracle must be considered in the light of our Lord's parable of the barren fig tree.

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him: let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it. And if it shall bear fruit, well and if not then after that thou shalt cut it down." (Luke 13:6-9)

The parable was preceded by his words: "Except ye repent ye shall likewise perish". The explanation of this parable was obvious to the listeners. The owner of the vineyard is the

God of Israel (Isa 5:7). The dresser is the Messiah, who, three years into his mission, would, through his digging and fertilizing, make the nation bring fruit unto God. At the time of the utterance of this parable, the fate of this nation was still not decided. Our Lord still had half a year of his dressing work before him. It seems that the cursing of the fig tree is as if it is the finishing of the unfinished parable.

After his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the end of our Lord's mission was fast approaching. Returning from Bethany, the Master approached the fig tree and looked for fruit in it. Having found none, he passed this sentence on the tree: "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever" (Matt. 21:19). Some interpret this event literally, as a curse on a tree which had no fruit. But such an interpretation is in conflict with a note made by the author of the Gospel of Mark, who emphasizes that "the time for figs was not yet" (Mark 11:13). Both our Lord and his disciples realized that in that season, in the early spring, no figs could ever be found on a fig tree. The lesson was manifest: his seeking the fruit had a symbolic meaning, it was a living parable, so often used by the prophets. Jesus wanted to finish the story of the barren fig tree which he had told earlier. After three and a half years of the dressing work was complete, he wanted to show that the antitypical fig tree brought no fruit. The fate of the tree was decided. On the next day it withered.

Israel

The fig tree was used as a picture of Israel not without a cause. As early as in the Old Testament, figs were identified with the nation of Israel by the prophets. Hosea wrote: "I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness, I saw your fathers as the first ripe in the fig tree in her first time" (Hosea 9:10). Jeremiah received the vision of two baskets of figs, which represented Israel: "Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah" (Jer. 24:5).

How soon was Christ's prophecy fulfilled about the withering of the symbolic fig tree to be fulfilled?. In the year 70 A.D. the temple was destroyed. No longer was there a place to offer sacrifices, the opportunity to serve the Lord according to the precepts of the Law thus ended. Jerusalem fell into ruin, and the whole nation was expelled from their own land and dispersed throughout the world. Speaking about the time of his Kingdom approaching, Christ again turns his disciples' attention to the fig tree. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth his leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door". (Matt. 24:32, 33)

It should be observed that this parable was uttered on the same day when the barren fig tree was cursed. Therefore it would be difficult to assume that when Christ told them to watch for signs taking place on that very kind of a tree, it was merely accidental. These two events constitute one whole. As a result of the rejection of the Messiah on the part of the Jews, during his first advent, God's favor was turned away from them, as shown in the withered tree. Whereas, the softening of the branches and the bringing forth of leaves represents the return of favor to this nation during the time of the establishment of the Kingdom in Christ's second advent. Let us, then, carefully observe this symbolic fig tree.

Crisis Control

But if ye have bitterness and envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.—James 3:14

By Ben and Joy Thompson

All of us face conflicts of one kind or other—a clash of needs in families, in ecclesias; a clash of differing perspectives, hurtful words, or of unacceptable behavior amongst brethren and friends.

What do we do when we experience conflict? The first thing I tend to do is to run away. I have avoided those I haven't agreed with, or those who I thought disapproved of me or disapproved of my family. I have harbored feelings of anger and resentment. Sometimes I have volunteered information about brethren that was uncomplimentary and unnecessary to repeat.

But the Lord has assured us that there is a better way. Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight (Psa. 144:1). The Lord is saying to me that he is willing to teach me to deal with conflict. The enemy is not our brother or our ecclesia. Most likely, our enemy is our fear-based approach to the problem.

We fear discussion of an uncomfortable topic. We fear rejection if we talk about our real feelings and struggles. We fear to follow the counsel of the Scriptures because it takes courage to do what is right. Some things have become painfully clear to me. If I do not take care of my feelings of anger and resentment, they will find expression in my life through my words and my behavior. The end result is the choice to trespass against my brother (Matt. 18:15). Then, if my brother does not come to be because of his fear, we have created a cauldron of conflict that can involve many people and that can destroy the life-sustaining relationship of the body of Christ. Conflict creates the opportunity to hate or to love. The choice is ours.

So what does the Lord counsel us to do?

Put away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of the other (Eph. 4:15). It is foolish and dangerous to hide hatred or conflict (Prov. 10:18). The Lord asks us to be honest with one another because we are part of one another. He asks us to deal with the conflict on the lowest level first (Matt. 18:15). That means going directly to the person who wronged us. He asks us to make the approach with kindness and in the spirit of equality, realizing our own vulnerability and mistakes (Ga. 6:1).

In Ephesians 4:31 he asks us to put away all evil speaking or "hurtful blasphemy"—to speak of God or something sacred in an irreverent or disrespectful way. He is asking us to

see each brother and sister as sacred. To speak evil is to pass on negative information that is unnecessary. To speak evil is with the intent to lessen the respect one has for another, to gain a following of people that agree with me, and to make me look better and the other person worse. Evil speaking is the natural result of unresolved anger and hurt. How do I know if the matter is important enough to approach the other person? There is a simple way to tell. Is it something that repeatedly comes to my mind? Do my feelings or thoughts influence my view of one of the Lord's own? Is the relationship irritated or strained? These conditions create vulnerability to gossip. These attitudes can lead to exasperation (anger), then to a lessening of respect ("*Raca*") and finally to a judgmental condemnation of the individual in which I am superior and have no need of you ("Thou fool" Matt. 5:23, 24). If I have a need to talk to others about this person I have a responsibility to talk with this person (Eph. 4:29-32). The tongue can start fires. Lack of direct communication with the person involved can create much destruction both in our relationships and in our own hearts (Jas. 3:5, 6).

Sometimes we have a fear that direct communication will make things worse, or hurt the person more. It may hurt and it may be very difficult, but an open rebuke [with kindness and in the spirit of equality] is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend (Prov. 27:5, 6).

No matter which side of the conflict we are on we can remember the example of our precious Savior. Jesus did not receive his trying experiences as from an individual, but from his loving Father, the only opportunity he would have to show loyalty and patient endurance. Thus his attitude was one of surrender and acceptance (John 18:11).

I acknowledge my littleness before God [and my need for help.] . . . Yet I also claim his power with confidence as your child, that the arrows of his love might destroy the enemies within each heart [whatever obstacles to truth and righteousness there are in any of us (Psa. 144:3-8)].

I will sing praises unto God. It is he that giveth victory over kings (vs. 9, 10). No matter how discouraging the conflict his purpose will triumph. It is not us to learn not to question the ways of the Lord, but to rely upon his unerring wisdom in the management of his own cause. He has sent us a message which if rightly appreciated should give us comfort amongst all the discouragement that might come to us. That message reads, My word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it (Isa. 55:11). If we are willing, his purpose will triumph in our hearts.

He is able to deliver David his servant from the hurtful sword (Psa. 144:10). He can teach us to deal graciously with misunderstanding and hurt. Even these challenging experiences with conflict can have a sweetness to them. To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet (Prov. 27:7). His mighty power is at work through pain and, despite fear, tests, refines, and accomplishes his purposes. Painful experiences can be sweet according to the degree of our hunger—our hunger for righteousness, for wholeness and healing of heart, for

greater closeness and dependence on our precious Savior. Such needs can make us ready to receive, even through bitter experiences (Deut. 8:2, 3).

"The eagle said, 'I could fly so much faster if it wasn't for the wind in my face.' But then he suddenly realized that if it wasn't for the wind in his face he couldn't fly at all (Martin Luther).

May the end results of all of our experiences be the blessing of the spiritual Jerusalem—a functioning body where all needs are met (Psa. 144:11-15)

NEWS & VIEWS

Tapes Available

The Institute has a large supply of cassette tapes featuring the singing of the late Brother John Read. Entitled "Ministry in Song," many of the recordings on this cassette were made when Bro. Read was over 90 years of age. Anyone who wishes to receive a tape should write to the Institute Secretary at the address listed on the inside cover. Please specify the number of tapes you would like.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Re: Change of format for the Herald

I wish to thank you for the thoughtful, meaty articles that have always been a part of the magazine. I certainly hope they are always included in the magazine. However, it is a great pleasure to see 'basic milk' included in the magazine. Broadening its scope to include all its readers -young or elder-enhances its usefulness. I myself was just a babe when I first began subscribing to the Herald. It was many years before I had grown enough spiritually that the meat could all be eaten and digested by me. The reason I kept right on subscribing was the personal work of encouragement a called brother and sister gave me. Never once did they require me to sign a `join us' form. When they found me I had been thoroughly beaten and injured spiritually. These two did not evangelize me. This had already been done by means of the written Word itself! The letters of Apostle Paul and Apostle John convinced me to take the low seat of a disciple under the care and keeping of our glorified Lord Jesus. The gospels of Matthew, Luke and John guided me with the help of the holy spirit, the comforter, of course. As of this day there has been no permission for me to take a high seat on this earth-though I have certainly become an elder disciple. At this time I'm permitted to write to others of Jesus' disciples because the need for encouragement and continued child-like trust in our God and His Son has never been greater. I know that all human flesh and blood disciples are scattered in every nation and tribe on this earth. I know they are already in the spiritual green pasture where they are safe no matter what occurs on the earth. With them all I add my voice in prayer for the kingdom our God has planned and provided for to come to the earthen part of his created universe bringing his will and favor and blessing to it. To me it is inconceivable that a Satanic god-the Devil-could be either immortal or as powerful as the God and father of our Lord Jesus. It is quite evident today that the earth is already part of the heavens-the darkness that permeated the past has dissipated greatly. Our Lord himself is immortal now, no longer a human male. I thank our Father he has never asked anyone what denomination or school do you belong to? I am deeply grateful He reads the heart and its motivation. Thank you for hearing me out. May all go well, for your moves and changes do have effects-not all of which are good. However, success you can have if a child-like trust accompanies the faith in Jehovah and His Beloved Son whom He has designated to be head for both heaven and earths!

-Roberta Chicoine, Redding, California

Re: New Archaeological Find

April 5, 1994. Good News from Vendyl!!! "We're happy to report that based on Satellite Imagery, we were successful today (4/1/94) in finding the Geder (boundaries) that surrounded the Tabernacle at Gilgal!" According to this fax we received early Friday morning, Vendyl and some of the excavation team were able to walk directly to the southeast corner and, using the anomalie rods, were able to obtain approximate measurements. The walls are 11 meters thick and one side appears to be about 160 meters long. Because of the rain, a measurement of the east/west side could not be taken but it was estimated to be approximately 450 meters long.

They found some places on the west side, where the top of the wall is exposed on the outside and 2/3 of the wall on the north side is slightly exposed from the inside. Vendyl says part of the exposure occurred naturally but further exposure resulted from the mining of minerals from salt pans by residents of near-by Kibbutz'. The sun evaporates the water from the ponds and the salt and minerals are collected. Trenches were dug across the area in order to avert the flow of fresh water from the salt pans. The digging of these trenches resulted in the partial exposure of the walls.

This in itself was not the height of the excitement, this came when a piece of pottery was found (a pitcher with the handle, neck and part of the bowl intact) which tentatively dates back to the 2nd Bronze Age!

Vendyl (Jones) is asking that each of you continue your prayers for the safety and success of this excavation and your financial support to keep our office operating. To God be the Glory! As more information comes in, we will be sending out further updates. We know that you are all waiting as anxiously as we are for the news of these fascinating discoveries.

-Institute of Judaic Christian Research From a letter to James and Jean Caudle

AROUND THE WORLD

Christendom

The Roman Catholic church is experiencing difficulty dealing with its African bishops. Meeting in Rome, some 300 bishops and cardinals bring a harsh reality to the church. A Namibian bishop says, "Yes, our Namibian African people have accepted Christ, but this Christ walks too much among them in a European garment." Evangelical protestant churches have been blossoming and so has Islam. In Africa's newer tumult and bloodletting, the church's influence on issues it labels matters of justice and peace has lessened considerably.

New York Times. 5/1/94

A clash between a Presbyterian minister feeding the homeless in Washington, D.C. and affluent neighbors is the source of the first major test of a new federal law meant to reduce government interference in religious practices. The local zoning board barred Rev. John Wimberly from continuing his 10-year mission to the homeless. Lawyers for the church have appealed the decision under the Religious Freedom Registration Act signed by President Clinton last December. The law limits government interference with religious practices except in cases of "compelling state interest." J. Brent Walker, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Affairs said, "It [the zoning decision] reflects the greatest threat to religious liberty in our time: intrusive governmental monitoring of religious practice."

New York Times, April 1994

Israel

For the first time since the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967, Jews constitute a majority in East Jerusalem, the portion of the city previously held by Jordan. There are approximately 160,000 Jews living there and 155,000 Arabs. In his statement before the signing of the Peace Accord, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said that the entire area of Jerusalem would remain outside the Palestinian autonomy. However, Palestinian opinion is that Jerusalem has to be shared. Muslims hold that the Koran identifies Jerusalem as the third most sacred city (next to Mecca and Medina). The great orthodox Christian churches, most notably the Roman Catholics, assert that Jerusalem must be internationalized. A clash over this issue is likely to be the next major issue to be faced in the peace process of the Middle East.

- Christadelphian Watchman, January, 1994

Four days after the PLO-Israeli handshake in Washington, Fatah and Hamas (two of the Palestinian political groups) negotiated a "Document of Honor." The partnership designated that the PLO negotiates and Hamas takes responsibility for killings. Hamas now distributes leaflets in Gaza pledging to "turn every day into hell for the Israelis."

-Washington Post, 3/4/94

The Reverend Jesse Jackson defied an Israeli ban and convened a conference in Jerusalem on April 9 to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

-Reuters News Service 4/9/94

The planned force of lightly armed foreigners to patrol Hebron has met with continued opposition by many Israelis. Palestinians dismissed the agreement and called for the evacuation of the 450 Jewish settlers there. Prime Minister Rabin refused. Foreign minister Shimon Peres called the criticism of the plan hysterical. A future force of 8,500 to 10,000 foreigners to keep the peace is likely.

-New York Times, 4/2/94

As a result of the massacre at Hebron by a Brooklyn born Jew, an anti-American mood is rising amongst Israelis. The newspaper *Maariv* complained about American parents who "send their lunatic children to Israel." Prime minister Rabin called the attack at Hebron the result of "a foreign implant." The sentiment was summarized by one retired businessman in Tel Aviv this way, "Most of the American Jews are extremists, and troublemakers, too."

New York Times, 4/94

Yaakov Kirschen is a Brooklyn-born Jew who is one of the leading political cartoonists in Israel, and apparently not considered as one of the extremists and troublemakers. In fact, many there hail him as a modern-day John the Baptist. Last December he published a book called, *Trees: the Green Testament*. The book tells the story of the Jews in Israel from the viewpoint of trees. The various scenes in the book illustrate several biblical signs that evangelical Christians believe will presage the Second Coming. Although Kirschen denies any belief in the Messiah, he is being hailed as a prophet because his book is spreading the word of the gospels more extensively throughout Israel than any religious group.

-Wall Street Journal, 3/14/94

A recently discovered German file in Moscow has given renewed vigor to the Simon Wisenthal Center in Jerusalem (the organization responsible for identifying Nazi war criminals and bringing them to justice). The file contained the death roll by execution site, sex, and place of origin of Jews in Lithuania prior to 1945. The records in the file show that 96 percent of Lithuanian Jews were exterminated, the highest proportion in any single country. The new government in Lithuania has refused to cooperate with the Center in identifying any war criminals who operated there. Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wisenthal Center said, "The Lithuanian government is afraid of the information which will be made public . . . the nationalist opposition has incredible difficulty acknowledging the role played by Lithuanian collaborators in the mass murder of Lithuanian Jews." One of the documents discovered was a report by Karl Jaeger, regional head of the Special Security Force. Jaeger himself was arrested in 1959 after being discovered by Nazi hunters, and hanged himself while in prison awaiting trial. Some of the excerpts from his reports are chilling. In his report, Jaeger gave advice on the best organization for carrying out 'special operations' [mass killing]. Jaeger proudly announced that 143 Jewish children had been murdered in Kaunas and 599 in nearby Kedainic. He concluded, "The Jews who have been kept alive for work should be killed after the winter (of 1941). I also believe that after sterilization of the male Jews an end will be put to them, and if any Jewish woman gets pregnant she should be killed." The total number of Jews estimated to be killed in Lithuania was 137,346.

-John Crossland, British journalist and archivist

Editor's note: Much of this issue's Around The World contains scenes of upheaval in societies throughout the earth. In some areas such as Bosnia and Rwanda, daily events change the scenario rapidly, making it difficult to report events which may have already disappeared. It is certainly evident, however, that throughout the earth, societies are being shaken and governments are struggling to maintain control. These events should be reviewed in connection with the fulfillment of prophecies relating to end time.

Algiers

Danger in their country has made Algerians turn to soothsayers for comfort. The 5,000 legally registered soothsayers are being beseeched by a society plunging into chaos. Amulets, charms, spells and signs are being looked to for comfort by those who feel they have lost control of their destiny.

-New York Times, 3/10/94

Bosnia

Ethnic hatred in Croatia has reached new heights as routine killings and rapes have become part of a reign of terror. Joren Bjallerstedt, the chief protection officer for the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said, "People are arrested on the streets, totally beaten up for nothing. We have many examples of people found dead, often with their throats cut. And the next day a Serb family will move in (to their house) with blood still on the floor." Reports sent back to the United Nations give a hint of the anarchistic atmosphere: "Vicious persecution of minorities continues. Three Muslim citizens were brutally murdered . . . a 13-year old girl was raped. In the predominantly Muslim area of Verbanja, men entered the house and apparently beat the couple who lived in it. Neighbors heard the screams but were too afraid to intervene. The men then shot the husband in his stomach and head and shot the wife in the hand and finally struck her with a heavy metal object on the head, killing her instantly. The men were seen carrying the TV out of the house, and when a neighbor came out to investigate, the man in uniform stepped out of the vehicle and shot him in the heart at close range."

-New York Times, 3/27/94

China

China's economic boom is shrinking the country's farmland at a rate which endangers its ability to feed itself. Farmers have abandoned their land to chase prosperity in big cities and towns. Agriculture minister Leu Jiang said that 50 million Chinese farmers abandoned farming in 1993 to seek jobs in the cities. Disruption in farming patterns touched off shortages and panic buying, sending grain prices skyrocketing. Zhou Guangzhao, head of the Academy of Sciences said that China's "ecological stability is at stake and society has not realized the seriousness of the problem."

-New York Times, 3/2/9.

A new surge in inflation, labor unrest and corruption is rattling leadership. A secret government document leaked to Hong Kong detailed more than 6,000 illegal strikes in 1993 and more than 200 riots.

-New York Times. 4/10/94

Islamic militants shot and killed two priests outside a monastery in southern Egypt. Muslim militants have stepped up their efforts to transform Egypt into a strict Islamic state. They have killed scores of Christians and burned down churches as part of an effort to destabilize Egypt. Over 320 have been killed and over 700 have been wounded in the last two years. The Islamic Group, the most radical of the fundamentalists, has issued warnings to foreigners and investors to leave Egypt.

-New York Times, 3/13/94

Haiti

A bloody wave of terror has created near anarchy. The campaign to wipe out resistance to army rule has resulted in burning down entire neighborhoods to flush out suspected dissidents, raping and kidnapping the wives and the children of political organizers. United Nations observers were chased out of town by armed civilians who threatened to kill them. Bodies are dumped in the street badly disfigured and left for days as a warning to others. Haitians hoping to escape the country have been turned back by the United States Coast Guard continuously. The disfigured body of one returnee was recently found near the Haiti airport, his eyes plucked out, a rope around his neck, his hands tied and a red handkerchief crudely marked, "President of the Red Army." Every month 50 or more bodies turn up on the streets of Haiti's capital.

-New York Times, 4/2/94

Italy

Gunmen linked to organized crime shot to death an anti-Mafia priest in Italy as he donned his garments in church. Rev. Giuseppe Diana was shot twice in the head by two gunmen who crept into the church. Six months ago another anti-Mafia priest was shot to death in Palermo.

-New York Times, 3/20/94

Japan

The economic crisis in Japan is realigning its four decade old political structure. After Japan's defeat in World War II, there was a powerful pacifist streak in the country. The new single party-like structure favors a more active international role for Japan and taking a hard line on business and trade issues.

-New York Times, 4/10/94

Russia

The Russian government is displaying disarray at the highest levels, resulting in panic within its ranks. In March, a "coup plot" caused investigations of top ministries; on March 31, the presidential press secretary issued a statement regarding the signing of a peace plan which was flatly denied by the foreign minister the next day; the state news agency issued a report that the country would establish 30 military bases in neighboring states which was denied by the foreign ministry the next day.

-Financial Times, 4/18/94

Kenya

The death of Rwanda's president in a suspicious plane crash left the country at the mercy of rampaging troops. They killed the acting premier and as many as 11 United Nations soldiers. They also killed 11 Roman Catholic nuns and eight priests—all African—and dozens of aid workers. The continued fighting between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes has resulted in the closing of the country to almost all foreigners. The countries of Rwanda and Burundi share one of the world's worst ethnic disputes, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives. Modern weapons have led to a "genocidal orgy." It is reported that the streets are lined with men armed with machetes, clubs and spears. Hundreds of Tutsis were reported hacked to death by armed Hutus at a church-run university. A nun told a radio reporter that about 100 people were massacred in a town hall. An estimated 20,000 were killed in just six days. Most foreigners have now fled the country.

-Dow Jones News Service, 4/8/94-4/12/94

Editor's note: The situation in Rwanda changes for the worse daily. At press time, it was reported that inhabitants were standing in five mile long lines at the border, attempting to leave the country. It is noteworthy to examine this situation in light of the prophecies of Joel 2, which discusses the Lord's great army as a precursor to the final end of the Gospel Age. In *The Battle of Armageddon*, Pastor C. T. Russell suggests that we might expect to see the world degrading into anarchy as part of this end-time. The situation in this small African country, although insignificant in its influence on world events, is perhaps the first example of a fulfillment of this prophetic picture.

Saudi Arabia

In a highly unusual action, this country stripped citizenship from one of its wealthiest merchant families because the head of the family supports Muslim fundamentalist movements. Many of the leading Islamic fundamentalist figures have lived in Saudi Arabia for years.

-New York Times 4/10/94

South Africa

In Johannesburg, supermarkets report wide-spread hoarding, gun shops are low on weapons and ammunition and fear has been the main topic on talk radio. People fear that the elections in April will be followed by strikes, violent marches and looting and that power plants and water supplies will be sabotaged. The fear is over what could happen if the new government cannot control the rising tide of political violence. There has been a run on firearms in this country where most white men already own and carry licensed guns.

-New York Times 4/10/94

Ukraine

Elections in the Ukraine have left uncertainty about its political future. Equal blocs of nationalists in the west and communists in the east have split the country's populace. The nationalists support Ukrainian statehood as part of Europe while the eastern bloc would like to resurrect the old Soviet Union.

-New York Times 4/10/94