

# The Herald Of Christ's Kingdom

*January/February 1998*

The Year in Review

## EDITOR'S JOURNAL



Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."—1 Thessalonians 5:6

It has been well said that Christians must live in the world but should not be of it. Their "citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20 NAS). They are in the position of being "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor. 5:20). As good ambassadors, they have an interest in the affairs of their host country. Therefore, while primarily interested in spiritual pursuits, the events of the surrounding world are also worthy of their continuing attention.

Current events are also the backbone of God's prophetic word. God's plan is not some nebulous spiritual concept but deals with real people living on the very real planet earth. If redemption is the "past" of this plan, his kingdom is its "future." And the "present" is the transition from the one to the other.

This issue of **THE HERALD** is devoted to a review of the past year. Our theme is "1997-1998: Retrospect and Prospect." It opens with a treatise on *Studying Today's News* to give a proper perspective on how Christians study the events of their day to see how they fit into the overall prophetic framework of the word of God. The article also deals with principles of prophetic interpretation, acknowledging that the true import of prophecy is best understood only after it has been fulfilled (Deut. 18:22).

*Clouds of Fear, Linings of Hope* examines some of the most significant events of the past year. The author seeks to weed out the trivial and sensational from those more important events showing the trends the Bible leads us to expect in these "end times."

The past year has been a giddy one for the stock markets of the world. Trading has been volatile, with all of the major stock exchanges from the Pacific Rim to the New York Stock Exchange gyrating wildly from new highs to sharp sell-offs, including the largest one-day drop ever in the respected Dow Jones Industrial Average. *Wealth of the Nations* demonstrates how modern society has become more driven by financial motives than by ideological ones, with an increasing emphasis on globalization.

Ecology has been another area of the news demanding attention. Leading scientists warn of global warming and other ecological catastrophes in the making. *Keeping the Garden* offers an in-depth insight into this area of world news.

Jesus chided the leaders of his day for having the sagacity to predict the weather but being ignorant of "the signs of the times" (Matt. 16:3). In the treatise bearing the rather long title of *A Retrospective Look at the Fulfillment of Time Prophecy*, the author seeks to give a historic perspective to the concept of the Bible's predictions of specific dating in God's plan.

The Bible Student movement has always been intensely interested in current events. A regular feature of the leading journal of the movement, "Zion's Watch Tower," was a column entitled "Views from the Tower." These articles provided a running commentary on the news of that time. Often the conclusions needed to be revised but they showed a remarkable consistency in the long-range expectations concerning the present period of transition into the incoming kingdom. We have gone back just one century, to 1898, to compile a few of these observations in our ECHOES FROM THE PAST feature entitled *News from a Century Ago*.

In line with the theme for this issue, our regular "verse by verse Bible study" article, *Scoffers in the Last Days*, examines the third chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter. This chapter provides a fitting summary of the application of the prophetic word to the events of future times. A final article, Earth, As Well as Heaven, is taken from a newsletter of the Chicago Bible Students.

The article *God's Kingdom*, printed in booklet form, is being distributed with this issue. Up to three copies of this booklet will be supplied free to our readers. Additional copies

are available at only postage cost. We are enclosing a convenient order form for such requests.

Many readers will notice that this review of the year omits an area of extreme interest to all students of the Lord's word—the developments in Israel and the Middle East. This omission was not accidental. To mark the 50th anniversary of Israel's statehood, the May-June issue will reprint articles from 1948, 1958, 1968, 1978, and 1988 issues of **THE HERALD** as well as a current in-depth article on God's dealings with "the people of the book."

We invite our readers to visit us on the Internet. **THE HERALD** web page features over 200 articles, some never before published. The web page is updated weekly with additional material. Our address: [www.heraldmag.org](http://www.heraldmag.org)

May the Lord bless you in your personal experiences as he develops in you a character more like Jesus and more like that of God himself.

## Principles of Interpretation

# Studying Today's News

*"Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come."—Isaiah 41:22*

*Carl Hagensick*

The news media reports history as it is being made. Bible prophecy records history before it is made. The two are companion studies, the former verifying the accuracy of the latter.

As our theme text indicates, history follows a logical pattern. Historical events are the natural consequence of that which precedes them. Similar causes produce similar reactions. It is for this reason that the expression, "history repeats itself," is so accurate.

While the Christian's primary focus is the Bible, he is also intensely interested in the news of the world about him. These current events often reinforce faith in the accuracy of the Bible's predictions and give a fix as to the progress of events leading to the full establishment of the kingdom on earth.

### **Areas of Interest**

The sheer volume of news in today's media makes the selection of areas of interest a high priority. Certainly today's infatuation with scandal and voyeurism should hold no interest to the Christian. Sports and other reports of humanity's diversions likewise are of no spiritual value. The arts may hold a secondary interest to the extent that they illustrate the increasing decadence that is one of the biblical signs of our times (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

On the other hand, there are several areas of news that are of high interest in watching the "signs of the times" (Matt. 16:3).

**Israel and the Middle East:** It has been well said, "Israel is God's time clock." The Israelites are the theme of the Old Testament and, though their fortunes went into decline after their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, the Apostle Paul assures us that this "cast off" condition is not permanent (Rom. 11:1, 25). The Bible has much to say of their ultimate return to the land and to God's favor.

From an outward political standpoint, their hold on the land is tenuous. From the biblical perspective, it is strong and permanent (Jer. 31:40). The extent of the borders of their promised land is open to honest debate but seems to include far greater territory than Israel holds today. Therefore the current "land for peace" negotiations are of intense interest to the student of prophecy.

Similar interest can be seen in areas of immigration and the debates between the various religious factions in Israel.

**Christianity:** Since the Bible predicts a general decline in true spirituality at the end of the age and a rejection of the organized religious structure (Rev. 18:1-4), news in this area is worthy of the student's attention. Certain prophecies seem to predict increasing ecumenism and organic joining of churches (Isa. 34:4; Rev. 6:14). The Christian is keenly aware of news regarding church mergers and the advance of the ecumenical movement. Intrusions of the religious world into the political arena and involvement in huge social uplift projects are also studied as they illustrate the secularization of religion.

**Social Justice:** Since the Bible calls attention to a leveling of society as a mark of the latter times (Isa. 40:3), events which show the long subjugated peoples claiming their rights, whether they be racial, gender, or economic groups, all illustrate this trend. It is a time, as the term Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22) implies, a time for "justice for the people." Many Bible students see this same trend marked in the prophecies of Israel's "year of jubilee" (Lev. 25).

**The Third World:** While one of the signs which Jesus gave in his sermon on the Mount of Olives in Matthew 24 was the figure of Israel regaining statehood under the figure of the blossoming of the fig tree (v. 32), in the Luke account an additional illustration is added: "and all the trees" (21:29). Therefore the emergence, not only of Israel, but of the numerous other "third world" countries is followed with great interest as indicative of the fulfillment of this prophecy.

**Economics:** Another prediction of interest to students of prophecy is a foretold economic depression and devaluation of money (Ezek. 7:19). The rapid dependency of a debt-ridden society with governments building up larger and larger deficits is an area of news that rivets the attention of serious students.

The above mentioned topics are only a few of the many which are of concern as the Christian looks for indications of the fulfillment of predictions made centuries ago.

### **Pitfalls**

As interesting as these areas of current events are to the Christian, certain pitfalls must be avoided. First, such studies can be diversionary from the student's main emphasis on the Bible itself. The study of God's word as a basis for doctrinal belief and for principles of living the Christian life are of primary importance. Any other reading which detracts from this main goal is to be watched for and avoided. Such studies as that of current events, and even of prophecy itself, must be peripheral to the main goal of developing a Christlike life and of intelligently working in co-operation with the Lord's plans and his character as shown in the doctrinal framework of the Bible.

Second, there is danger in the prophetic student seeking to become the prophet. At best, as Paul says, we now "see through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). Our comprehension of

prophecy is vague and often flawed. It is only too easy to cross the bridge from interpretation to rank speculation. Biblical prophecies usually do not concern themselves with specific events as they do with trends. Like ocean tides, there is often an ebb and flow in these trends. Therefore conclusions of the long range consequences of current situations must be held tenuously. The Christian needs to use the words "may be" more often than "shall be" in stating his deductions from current news events.

Third, there is the danger of incorrect information. Newspapers, news magazines, radio and television, all rely on "sources" for their information. Like witnesses in a trial, each of these "sources" is reporting a situation as it appears to him. There is a natural bias in their accounts. This is amplified by the public relations agenda of the "source." Even the various news media themselves are often subjective, providing their own slant to the news. It is thus important that the student take into account the bias of the source he is using in seeking accurate and objective information upon which to base an hypothesis.

This problem has been multiplied in the last few years with the internet becoming a source for information. While this new media is incredibly fast and open to a vast store of information, much of what is found on its "home pages" is more propaganda than fact. One is reminded of the rumors that spread in the days of Nehemiah which were bolstered by the statement, "it is reported among the nations, and Gashmu says . . ." (Neh. 6:6 NAS), as though the word of Gashmu, an avowed enemy of Nehemiah, should decide the issue. Even so today; the fame of certain prominent news sources does not necessarily make them credible.

Fourth, there are our own prejudices as students. Some of the clamor for rights, for example, the people are carried to such extremes that a sincere Christian is turned off by the excessive demands and is not cognizant of the fact that there are legitimate ones to be met. In *The Time Is At Hand*, the author writes this warning: "The coming struggle between the aristocracy and the masses of every civilized land will be so peculiar, so unlike any former experience, that moderate, conservative, religiously-inclined people, fearing the utter wreck of society in chaos and anarchy will naturally prefer monarchy, oppression, and bondage to anything certain to be worse. . . . Eventually, probably the only exception to this course, among the lovers of peace and true religion, will be those to whom the King of kings is pleased, through his Word, to reveal his plans" (p. 262). This is a warning the prophetic student does well to heed, especially in such areas as feminist demands and in interpreting the excesses in racial and economic demands of formerly oppressed classes.

### **Principles of Interpretation**

There are certain general principles which should assist the sincere student in his desire to co-ordinate biblical prophecy with today's news events.

**Immediate Interpretation:** The prophets of the Bible lived in an historic time setting. They were surrounded by real people with real personal and political problems. They spoke fearlessly, as the mouthpiece of God, in these situations. Their words were meant

to have an impact and to apply to the situations at hand. While they may well have an impact on our day, it was their own surroundings with which they were particularly interested.

Ancient prophets were not just news reporters. They were commentators on the news. This is especially true from the days of the prophet Samuel. Note the words of 1 Samuel 9:9, "he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer." A "seer" is just what the word implies, "one who sees." He was the equivalent of our reporter, an objective observer of events. A "prophet," on the other hand, was subjective. He spoke as the mouthpiece of God, seeking to interpret the events and their significance. He roughly corresponds to our "commentators" of today.

While our interest in the prophetic word is concerned with the larger fulfillment in our own day, we must not ignore the earlier application in the prophet's own time. The two uses of prophecy must be in accord with each other. The immediate becomes the prototype of the more distant one. History is an adjunct to prophecy. As the noted historian Arnold Toynbee observed, there is a cyclical design in history. This is the concept of our opening text, the events of the "latter end" are best understood by a comprehension of the beginnings. As the prophet writes of God, he declares the end "from the beginning," not only designating his foresight, but also showing that he knows the natural outcome of certain trends of events.

A good example of this is in Isaiah 7-9, a section from which we derive many end-time prophecies. The context deals with a rather obscure period in Israel's history involving a coup by Pekah ousting Pekahiah as king of Israel and making an alliance with Rezin, king of Syria, against Judah. A study of this period of Israel's history in 2 Kings 15, beginning with verse 25, adds depth to the prophecies of Isaiah in these chapters.

**Context:** Prophecy is not only given in a historic context, it also falls into a biblical framework. One needs to read the entire chapter of a prophecy before applying a single verse, or even a set of verses. Sometimes the context contains multiple chapters. Serious students find it helpful to consult a Bible dictionary to look at the overview of the book, and then to build an outline of the chapter which contains a given prophecy before seeking to interpret it.

**Contemporary Prophets:** In most periods of Israel's history, there was more than one prophet on the scene. A comparison of their words often gives a more rounded viewpoint of the situation at hand, just as multiple witnesses in a court situation help to bring out the complete story. For example, Zechariah and Haggai are contemporaries and a comparative study of their works gives a fuller picture of the regathering of the Israelites from their Babylonian captivity.

**New Testament Interpretation:** The most sure foundation for the application of Old Testament prophecy is the application by the writers of the New Testament. However, it must be recognized here also that these New Testament authors are applying the texts to their day. This does not mitigate against a still future and larger application in our day or

beyond. Two examples of this are Peter's application of Joel 2:28 in Acts 2:17, 18 and Paul's interpretation in Romans 9:25, 26 of Hosea 2:23.

**Seek Additional Prophetic Corroboration:** The study of news as it relates to prophetic trends is frequently bolstered by multiple prophecies in the Bible. Seek these out. They will add depth to the picture. It is "by the mouth of two or three witnesses" that all things will be established (Matt. 18:16).

**Recognize Prophetic Accuracy:** Current events are subject to sudden change. Governments switch overnight from liberal to conservative and vice versa. We know the long range forecast for the world. Events that are predicted that seem impossible to the eye today may be very logical tomorrow. Therefore, in comparing today's news with the prophetic word, the balance of power always lies with the Bible for "the word of our God shall stand forever;" "it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 40:8; 55:11).

**Recognize Our Fallibility:** After all the above rules are met, we still have to realize that we are so close to the events at hand that we are open to misinterpretation of them. Therefore any conclusion on a specific event must be held tentatively. Trends today tend to reverse themselves abruptly. Witness the number of expectations for Communism in the fulfillment of end-time prophecy, and then the suddenness of the fall of the former USSR. This does not mean it may not reverse and re-establish itself, but it shows the danger of making firm predictions on possibilities rather than certainties.

### **The Value of Studying Today's News**

Rather than discouraging the combined study of prophecy and news events, we seek to encourage it. There are many values to be found in such an endeavor.

First, it is strengthening to one's faith to note how writers, penning their words thousands of years ago, saw with such accuracy the realities of life today.

Second, it makes us more alert to the proximity of the kingdom. "Seeing," Peter writes, "that all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Peter 3:11).

Third, it enables the Christian to be a more intelligent co-worker with the Lord in the work he is doing at the present time.

Fourth, we are warned not to be ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Cor. 2:11). Noting the increasing decadence in our society should make us more alert not to share in the current fads and fetishes.

Fifth, it corrects our attitudes towards those with whom the Lord is working. Seeing God's hand behind Israel makes us more sympathetic to their cause. Seeing that this is



the time for the leveling of society, we become appreciative (if not supporters) of the call for racial, gender, and economic rights.

Sixth, it excites the mind to note the tremendous harmony between these two fields of study. "All that I have seen," one noted sage wrote, "teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen."

### **Aids in the Study of the News**

There is a temptation in any area of study to become enamored with our own ideas. The Apostle Peter admonished that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20). Therefore it is good to check one's concepts with other Christian students. Many times their thoughts will modify ours. The airing of such discussion is not only productive of a better interpretation of the subject under consideration but is also conducive to more spiritual fellowship in the Christian brotherhood.

It is essential to work from a base of confirmed truth. A knowledge of God's overall plan for man lays a good foundation for looking at the prophetic details. We highly recommend a regular study of the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, particularly the details of the chart in *The Divine Plan of the Ages* to provide such a basic foundation from which to work. It is only from understanding the overall "forest" that we can appreciate the individual "trees." Such a foundation is the balance wheel that keeps the prophetic student from venturing into sheer speculation.

With such a start, the intelligent perusal of the news media of our day can be highly profitable. It is exciting indeed to watch prophecy's "history written in advance" become etched on today's records as verifiable facts.

World Events in 1997

## Clouds of Fear, Linings of Hope

*Watch and Pray.—Matthew 26:41*

*Richard Kindig*

True Christians do not have the luxury of complacency. He who said, "Watch and pray" meant both commands because both are emphatically necessary. Watching implies taking notice, carefully assessing, discerning details and trends. Praying implies reflection, meditation; considering God's ways, seeking his will, placing the clues we discern by watching into the framework we have seen in God's word—and arranging as best we can the minutiae of our own lives in harmony with the grand features of God's design.

"In faith we perceive that the ages have been so thoroughly adjusted by God's command, that not from things then manifest the things now seen have come to pass" (Heb. 11:3 Diaglott).

"The Most High rules over the kingdom of men, and sets over it whomsoever he wills" (Dan. 4:17).

\* \* \*

It may seem strange to say that we are already over one hundred years into Christ's second advent; but when we list the significant historical accomplishments of the last century and a quarter, we begin to see that a supernatural power is at work behind the scenes, directing the affairs of men. Here's a quick recap of the "linings of hope" that have emerged from the clouds of trouble past:

- Destruction of slavery
- Explosion of human knowledge and travel
- Elimination of Turkish rule over Palestine, restoration of Jewish state
- Destruction of colonialism
- Exposure and erosion of established religious systems
- Exposure and erosion of the oppression of women in non-Islamic countries
- Huge improvements in agricultural productivity. (In developed lands, those occupied in farming has shrunk from 70% of the population to under 2%)
- The Industrial Revolution has increased the world-wide production of wealth
- Information Age has helped to eliminate drudgery and make oppression more difficult in developed countries
- Collapse of European monarchical order
- Worldwide experiment with socialism has whetted the human appetite for social justice

That all these major historical developments, and more, could be accomplished in just over a century, is indeed strengthening to our faith. If Christ had moved any more quickly, how could the human race have kept pace with the changes? And yet the pace quickens. This year brought us perceptively closer to the fulfillments of God's promises!

### **Angry Nations**

The first evidence cited by John the Revelator as a condition that accompanied the first phase of the reign of Christ (Rev. 11:8) was angry nations. That is old news, dating back to the beginning of our century. But several events in 1997 demonstrate increasing anger among the nations of the world.

**Bosnian Anger:** Bosnia, the home of the perpetually angry Serbian people, provided the spark that ignited World War I. It continues to defy the United States, NATO, and the United Nations. In June, NATO forces seized several television stations for the purpose of offsetting the extremist defiance of the Serbian outlaw Radovan Karidjic. But soon NATO back-pedaled, and, despite a number of elections, the area remains a powder-keg.

**Moslem Anger:** A U.S. Government report on terrorism states: "the world is increasingly moving into an era in which terrorists may gain access to nuclear, chemical or biological weaponry. . . . Few nations will . . . be quick to disregard consideration of covert operations designed to neutralize this threat."

Five of the seven active terrorist states recorded in the State Department report are Islamic. News that Iran is actively pursuing the acquisition of nuclear weapons from Russia is the most recent ominous portent.

**Russian Anger:** Russia is in turmoil, perhaps poised to become the seething pot Jeremiah saw in the north (Jer. 1:13). A survey of the current political personalities who are vying for power in Russia reveals angry men, with angry agendas: hatred of the West, of Jews, of capitalism. There is wounded pride and desperate desires to restore the power and prestige Russia once held on the world stage.

**African Anger:** Unrestrained by traditions of moderation and civility, generations of conflicts that have been aggravated by colonial intervention and tribal rivalries continue to torture many of the states of Africa. Rwanda continued to bleed, as Tutsi and Hutu tribesmen took turns killing each other. Recent surveys by relief agencies suggest that 85% or more of the children in this region have personally witnessed the murder of a loved one or neighbor. Nigeria continues to suffer under grossly corrupt military dictators and the Congo is now confronting the legacy of heartache left by Sese Seke Mobutu, who was finally deposed this year.

## **The Gathering of the Nations**

Though God himself is angry at this time, he announced his determination to gather these angry nations together into tighter and tighter ties of mutual dependency and communication (Zeph. 3:8, 9).

**The Expansion of NATO:** Boris Yeltsin lobbied against it, but was unable to stop the North Atlantic Treaty Organization from making the decision this year to include Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary in the military alliance, with other former Soviet Bloc nations being considered for future admission.

**The European Union:** One of the most significant steps toward European Union occurred this year when England's new Prime Minister, Tony Blair, decided to reverse two decades of resistance by the Conservative government he recently replaced, and pursued the steps needed to adopt the European currency in England.

Another major milestone occurred when Italy fought off a Communist Party attempt to block deep budget-balancing efforts that are required by the Maastricht Treaty, and thus stayed on course toward the European Union.

## **Shock Waves in World Finance**

In 1997 stocks overtook banks as the primary savings vehicle of Americans. Yet several tremors in the high-flying stock market reminded everyone that, when all is said and done, stocks have no intrinsic value, beyond the price they can bring at any given moment.

For two hours in September, the New York Stock Exchange suffered a "free fall." In October, a similar free fall occurred in China, causing a world-wide downward spiral in prices that accompanied the rising sun as it raced around the world that day. One of Wall Street's brokerages, who had delivered average gains of 28% per year to its clients for the past 10 years, bet heavily that the American market would react favorably the day after the Chinese market plunge. They were wrong, and within two hours they became insolvent.

If we are watching, perhaps we will conclude that the best stewardship we can exercise is to put our resources to work in some fruitful branch of the Lord's vineyard, rather than risking it in the world's mad money game.

## **Valleys Being Exalted**

From the self-centered American perspective, even the booming economy gives little cause for celebration, because real wages have remained almost frozen since 1973. But the rest of the world is making strides economically. The emerging powers in the Pacific Rim, such as Indonesia, Singapore, and Korea, continue to experience a boom. South

America, Africa, Central America are all developing stronger economies with a growing middle class.

But the biggest news of exalting valleys is China. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of China today. One person in five is Chinese; in July, China peacefully took over control of Hong Kong from England. It drove another nail into the coffin of colonialism and the weaving of Chinese-style democracy as a prominent thread into the fabric of Chinese culture. It is said that 17% of the world's construction cranes are now in the city of Shanghai!

### **Knowledge Continues to be Increased**

Just when it seemed hard to imagine further fulfillment of Daniel 12:1-4, several major scientific breakthroughs occurred in 1997. The most noteworthy from a media perspective was the landing of an unmanned rover on Mars. Another is the discovery of an organizational structure of the galaxies, implying much more than simply a random "Big Bang" at the time of creation.

### **Melting the Elements**

In Peter's prophecy of the return of Christ to establish "the world to come, wherein dwells righteousness" (2 Peter 3:8-13), the apostle states that the "elements" shall melt with fervent heat. The word refers, not to the literal elements, but to the "elemental rules" or first principles of human society. Peter refers to basic standards of decency and morals, and basic institutions such as the institution of marriage and the obedience of children to parents. Every one of these first principles is now in full retreat before the destructive onslaught of rebellion.

**Homosexuality:** Homosexuality, for example, has finally entered the mainstream of American culture. Major TV series and movies now feature homosexuality in a sympathetic light. The legalization of same-sex marriages is now a subject of serious debate. Homosexual theorists are unsettling the academic world by reinterpreting historical events and classical literature through the filter of gender perversion. In July, the Supreme Court struck down a Colorado law designed to prevent homosexuals from receiving special treatment under the law. Justice Antonin Scalia bitterly complained, in his dissenting opinion, that the court majority was "imposing upon all Americans" the pronouncement that "animosity toward homosexuality . . . is evil."

Although there is some debate as to the degree that homosexuality is affected by one's genes or by environmental factors, the fact remains that that life style is a choice, and one not sanctioned in the Bible. Even the sympathy accorded AIDS activists has become a means of gaining popular support for such a disease-producing lifestyle. We are reminded of Alexander Pope's famous verse:

*Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
That to be hated, needs but to be seen  
But seen so oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.*

The life style of the homosexual is frequently accompanied by one or more of the sins predicted for "the last days" in 2 Timothy 3:1-7.

**Chemical Abortions:** Another frightful development in "element-melting" this year is the "advancement" of chemical abortions in Europe. RU-486 allows a woman to take a pill that, with relative ease, kills any fetus within her. It is 95% effective. In France this year, 70% of abortions within the first 5 weeks of pregnancy now involve RU-486. Terminating pregnancies in this early stage allows a mother to deal with the matter without the inconvenience of the attention of friends and family (or even husband).

In a euphemism typical of medical practitioners in the abortion industry, one doctor stated, "you have to be very comfortable with your body to undergo this procedure." Translation: it is painful for a few hours, and the mother cannot avoid seeing the dead fetus when it is sloughed off. The main hindrance to wider acceptance of the procedure thus far seems to be the resistance of doctors, because it reduces their role to that of a pill dispenser who must stand by for five hours in case complications arise.

### **Fratricide, Patricide, Infanticide, Suicide**

A whole series of brutal slayings this year— children by their parents, parents by their children, and children by their brothers—is another meltdown of the most basic human "elements." Several capricious "joy killings" or "wildings" this year have arrested the world's attention. Assisted suicide, also, continues to break down humanity's instinctive fear of arrogantly seizing God's prerogative, the ending of human life.

### **The Heavens Rolling Together**

"And the Heavens shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together."—Revelation 6:14

**Rising Tide of Ecumenism:** For the fifth time since 1960, the Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury met to discuss ways of resolving their differences and reuniting the churches they represent. The main barrier continues to be the ordination of women. In the last several years, 2000 Anglican women have been ordained, while "several hundred Anglican priests have defected to Catholicism," according to the Associated Press.

Though Anglican and Roman Catholic reunification is moving slowly, several major steps toward ecumenism occurred in 1997. Conventions of the Presbyterian Church, Reformed Church of America, United Church of Christ, and Episcopal Church approved a pact that would allow each church to accept the validity of each other's bishops, "as a sign of the unity and apostolic continuity of the whole church." The pact, which has been under negotiation for 30 years, then faced ratification by the Evangelical Lutheran

Church of America, to gain full implementation. In a dramatic vote, the Lutheran convention voted overwhelmingly to recognize the communion and ordination of the Presbyterian, Reformed, and United Church of Christ, but fell a mere six votes short of the two-third majority needed to embrace the Anglican Church.

Some delegates were seen crying after the vote, but a sizable minority, mostly from the upper Midwest, remain opposed to the principal of "apostolic succession," under which Lutheran bishops would be appointed for life and preside over the ordination of other pastors. One of the dissenting delegates said, "Lifelong bishops are contrary to the Reformation."

It could take several years for a similar vote to occur again, but in the meantime, more than seven million professed Christians now belong to churches which support the principal of apostolic succession, and five million more (the Evangelical Lutherans) have placed one foot over that line of demarcation.

**Growing Fervor Among Informal Churches:** Against the ecumenical backdrop, a larger and more significant shift is taking place—the trend away from ceremonial and liturgical church services, toward "user-friendly" meetings that emphasize relevant Bible teaching, child care, and joyous contemporary music.

Armed with these tools, mega-churches, such as Chicago's Willow Creek Church, which ignore denominational differences but do teach many substantive biblical principles, are springing up across the country. Is this sham Christianity? We can watch the words and actions of such groups carefully to see whether they should be taken seriously, the way Bible Students took the revival efforts of Moody seriously a century ago. (*See R5168, R3864.*)

We can also watch to see if such assemblies contain souls who might find the harvest message relevant and pray that we can find fresh ways to communicate it to them.

### **Fields Ready to Harvest**

**Promise-Keepers March:** One of the most significant events of 1997 was the Promise-Keepers March, probably twice as massive as the "Million Man" march of a year ago.

Though charged by critics as being a large political rally and emphasizing male dominance, it was really more of a religious revival among men. In it, many men gave evidence that they are renouncing sins of materialism and worldliness and submitting their lives to Christ. Though the liberal media chuckled, and feminists sneered, the profession of genuine repentance from sin and conversion to a life of faith and obedience amongst so large a number should not be ignored.

While disagreeing with the image of God held by many of these clinging to ancient creeds, we must appreciate any genuine attempt to a more godly life style and to the concept of a wholesome and responsible family life.

## **Shaking Everything That Will Shake**

Hebrews 12:24-29 has special emphasis in this day of the Lord. Everything that can be shaken is being shaken—and everything we can see with our eyes can be shaken!

**Corruption in High Places, Institutions on trial:** The year began with paralysis in Congress over its leaders' clay feet. Now the spotlight has moved to the Presidency, with a variety of scandals to erode public confidence. The high theater and petty circus sideshows of the process should not diminish our realization that both Congress and the Presidency are on trial; in fact, the whole concept of representative government is on trial.

Campaign finance testimony reveals the weakness of rulership of the world by mere mortals. Meredith McGehee, legislative director of Common Cause, stated: "This system is no longer about bribery. It's flat-out extortion. . . . This money isn't about ideology, it's about power."

Corruption in government is adding to the cynicism in the people and a longing for just the sort of rulers that Christ's kingdom will provide: leaders of proven high character. They cannot be bribed—partly because their integrity will have already been put to the test and partly because they will show by being role models that righteousness is preferable to unrighteousness.

## **Royal Highness**

One of the most highly publicized events of 1997 was the death of Princess Diana. What did it teach the world, and what can we learn?

The world seems to have noticed how easily we can be misled by the magic of television into thinking that a human being is bigger than life. Our culture's gods are electronic images, and many of them seem to live on, though they've been dead for years.

The world was deeply saddened by the loss of a person who was seen as involved in good causes. Questions were raised about the goodness and power of God, the hope of future beauty, the value of royalty, and whether goodness will win the battle in the end.

The death of Mother Theresa the same week heightened the contrast between the media images of the wealthy princess and the poor cleric or, as Daniel Schorr phrased it, "between a life well-lived and a life lived well."

For ourselves, we perhaps could reflect upon the power of media to capture the world's attention and the ease by which we ourselves could be deceived by a compelling media personality.



## **How Can We Watch?**

The prophetic answer is found in Revelation 15:3. God's people will stand and sing of God's justice and love. That implies public confession as well as mental assent. It implies watching and praying, faith and obedience.

We will rarely gain insights into these situations by watching our TV sets. There we may hear the news, but we will not see the hidden principles behind the news. We may laugh at sitcoms, but we will not discover spiritual joys. Fellowship with the world through television will distort our perspectives by visions of ever fancier and more powerful automobiles, life-transforming sneakers, and soul-satisfying pizzas.

Instead of watching entertainment on television, let us watch world events as they unfold around us. Let our faith increase as we see in these events the confirmation of news written in advance in the sure word of divine prophecy.

## The Economy

# Wealth of the Nations

***"Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath." —Zephaniah 1.18.***

*Leonard Griehs*

The beginning of 1998 finds the world in unprecedented growth and prosperity. The world today is experiencing a comparable flow of capital to that before World War I. A federal reserve spokesman noted that the billions of dollars that move from country to country today is almost as big—compared to the size of the economies involved—as the immense flow of money among countries before 1914. Economists predict that the third world countries will reduce the economic dominance of the Western world considerably. Globalization is a reality of our time.

With the demise of the superpower confrontation, commercial interaction has become the significant force that shapes the relations between nations today. Since the end of World War II, the proportion of trade as a percentage of global income has risen from seven percent to 21 percent. In the United States, trade income now accounts for about one-fourth of gross domestic product.

The economic interdependence of nations is a trend that began soon after World War II. Recent advances in communication and transportation have accelerated the process at a record pace. Countries see "globalization" as their salvation. Over the past forty years, the world has experienced a 15-fold increase in trading volume between nations. This is one of the reasons for the rising standard of living around the world. At today's projected rate, the world production and transport of goods and services will double in the next 20 years.

At the heart of this growth is the relatively new World Trade Organization. It emerged in April 1994, following the ratification of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. This was one of the most significant treaties of our time. It is commonly recognized by both businessmen and politicians as the most ambitious trade agreement since that incorporated into the Marshall Plan of 1947, and it enhances the common economic interests of the world. Over 125 nations now participate.

In *The Battle of Armageddon* (1897), Charles T. Russell suggested that the fall of socialism (communism) would lead to an opening up of the world in unprecedented ways prior to the onset of anarchy. He suggested eight world-wide events that would trigger universal dissatisfaction: 1. Technology would so enhance the ability of the nations to increase their output that manual labor would take a diminished role; 2. this would lead to a common level all over the world and an equal status among nations; 3. no government would be able to legislate wages and profits because the sources of capital would seek the

most profitable areas of the world in which to do business; 4. this would lead to a change in the economic levels of all people throughout the world; 5. the interests of trade would follow wars between nations; 6. distress and division of the nations would build upon the economics of supply and demand for the world's goods; 7. selfish pressure among the nations will grow stronger and demand will increase until a collapse occurs; 8. the conditions will be universal and the momentum will be beyond human power to regulate.

This is an apt description of our own day! Let us briefly survey the economic world to see this fulfillment.

### **Significant Changes in Economic Structure**

With the flow of funds around the world to pay for trade, foreign exchange reserves are becoming more important. Local currencies must be convertible to reserve currencies on demand. Governments are under increasing pressure from each other to maintain stable economies. Standards for spending and deficits are being dictated by investing countries.

This is a significant change from the pre-World War II days, when the gold standard dictated the price of currencies. Countries or individuals with large gold reserves could manipulate values. Today, the stability or instability of currencies is being driven by worldwide forces. World currencies are linked to each other in ways never before known. The demand for conformity dictates participation in world trade markets. As Robert Rubin, Secretary of the Treasury said, "This is not the old days where there are three rich market manipulators in a back room threatening to pull the pin. Now it is everyone."

The financial world has become global. The outflow of confidence in one country triggers the outflow of investment in others that may be in trouble. Over the past 10 years, nearly \$2 trillion has been invested in growing countries. These country's policies are continually subject to international review. As such, "foreign policy" no longer counts for much.

### **The Desire For Wealth Worldwide**

Technology has created instant global communication. This has helped reduce the importance of the nation state. The whole world is pushing towards economic liberalization and equality. People that were suppressed and oppressed now see their opportunity in success and wealth. Battles between nations seem less important than trade between nations. Capitalism is fast becoming a world-wide phenomenon. People are quite willing to compromise their ideals, social principles, and religious beliefs to achieve economic freedom and wealth.

The 1997 example of Albania illustrates how this desire can lead to chaos and anarchy. In early 1992, Albanians were close to starvation. Agriculture and industry were in collapse. Albanians, desperate for relief, began to flee across the Adriatic sea to Italy or Europe. The post-communist regime pulled the country back through harsh economic reforms.

Both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank poured in aid from other countries.

Then a fraudulent financial scheme promised quick economic gain. Out of a nation of 3.2 million, several hundred thousand invested in the scheme and saw their life savings disappear. One-third of the gross domestic product disappeared. In a country where the average monthly wage is \$60, hundreds of millions of dollars vanished, plunging the nation back into poverty. This was followed by a wave of violent unrest which resulted in the deployment of government troops. Anarchy threatened to undermine the entire stability of the Balkan region. What began as a desire for financial equality erupted in social, financial, and political disaster. Yet the Albanians were not as upset with people dying as much as they were with losing their money!

### **Selfishness Continues to Drive Man**

Despite great financial gains in the past year, the world's economic inequality has continued to widen, producing greater unrest among the masses of people. Technological advances and global economic integration have caused a widening disparity between the educated and the uneducated. Those well trained are rewarded; those poorly educated and poorly skilled are being discarded.

### **Economic Instability**

Prior to World War I, England was an imperial power. It would move its forces around the world and fight to protect its interests. Today, there is no imperial power. No one nation is able to prevent other nations from crushing each other. What was once a medium of exchange, money, has now become the fundamental value of the world. Unsure of values, people put their faith in it as the criterion for value. This has created great social and economic unrest.

All over the world, people have declared government intervention as the ultimate evil. The worldwide movement of funds is allowing wealth to accumulate in the hands of a few owners, creating huge disparities in the social standing. The world is fast becoming its pre-World War I counterpart.

### **Where Will It Lead?**

In Ezekiel 38, we find the description of a worldwide confederacy going against the newly regathered nation of Israel. Some of those mentioned are the Scythians, Persians, Ethiopians, and the merchants. Apparently, commercialism is one of the principle reasons for the invasion into the land. This chapter depicts more than a pure militaristic motive in the invasion against Israel. It depicts a united front against Israel "to take a spoil, to take a prey" (vs. 12).

To understand this, we must look beyond the minor battles we see today in the Holy Land. There are far greater issues at stake that become more meaningful as we survey

today's economic world. A commercial offensive aimed at Israel's economic position is apparently one of the major reasons for the attack in Ezekiel 38.

Israel today is gaining increased importance in world trade. The unusual influx of Russian immigrants has given Israel world expertise in advanced materials and technology. It is becoming a powerful, prosperous democracy. The modern Arab world fights because it is still struggling to gain a foothold in the free-market system opening up around the globe.

The land of Israel is the only country in the world where we have seen the social forces reversed by immigration. Over 750,000 refugees from Russia have brought a high technology capability that will soon be unsurpassed in the world. For the first time, Israel has financed economic growth by issuing government bonds in Japan. Boycotts are being abolished. Israel is now recognized as a good place to do business. Joint ventures are being formed by many nations in this new economy. For the first time in its 50 year history, foreign investment is becoming significant. Israel is the only country that has a relative advantage over other nations in that almost its entire workforce is highly educated.

What causes the sudden turn of events that brings the nations against the prosperous Israel? The scriptures are not clear on this point. However, the events of our day certainly suggest that economically motivated issues are a real possibility.

### **The World Today**

Today's world is no longer driven by ideology. It is not good versus evil. Today, economics drives the world. The clash between the haves and the have-nots continues to build in places such as Albania and Africa. Albania is a prime example of the disruption of the social order that this can cause.

The end of our century will be highly unpredictable. Haggai 2:7 says, "I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come." That shaking will involve a total change in society. We are beginning to witness it in our day. Let us be strong and endure. God's promises are true. ". . . I will make the place of my feet glorious" (Isaiah 60.13).

<b>World's Top Ten Economies</b>	
<b>United States</b>	<b>\$5,450</b>
<b>Japan</b>	<b>3,018</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>1,787</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>1,049</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>880</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>787</b>
<b>China</b>	<b>577</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>477</b>
<b>India</b>	<b>394</b>
<b>Spain</b>	<b>358</b>
Gross Domestic Product in billions of dollars (1995 real dollars). Source: Merrill Lynch Economic Research	

## The Ecology

# Keeping the Garden

*"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."—Genesis 2:15*

*Richard Doctor*

A march of bloodshed, social chaos, and human misery inevitably followed the Reformation truths so boldly announced by Martin Luther. Fully two generations after that fateful All Saints Eve 1517, the terror of the age was brutally captured by a Flemish painter, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, in his "Triumph of Death."

Imagine lifting your eyes from prayer in church to gaze at this painting. A pastoral landscape upon which "all Hell has broken loose" stands transformed into scorched red and barren earth, as the artist's imagination of Joel 2:3 is portrayed: "A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth, the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them."

The rich, the poor, the wise, the foolish, the powerful, the powerless and all that they cherish fall in utter ruin before the legions of animated corpses advancing in lock-step behind the shield of the cross. Disdainful of the approaching judgment, card players at the gaming table of Bruegel's painting are interrupted only by the summons of death.

Those of us who enjoy the blessings of present truth may be satisfied merely with dismissing such horrifying images as relics from a less enlightened past. In doing so, however, we miss a subtle point in the make-up of "modern" society. This point is that the basic framework for the laws governing the sale of land and its use for commerce, industry, farming, and forest management is not in fact, modern inventions. These laws were formulated in the era of Bruegel.

How strongly would you feel about stewarding the earth, protecting its environment and the intricate web of life, and enhancing its beauty if you believed that the earth was destined to utterly perish in the Day of Judgment, leaving barren ground?

### **The Time of the End (1799)**

#### **Unprecedented Knowledge of the Bible and Ecology**

Certainly, an unprecedented knowledge of scriptural truth has re-emerged in this "time of the end." At the same time, in lock-step, although seemingly unrelated, an enlarged appreciation and respect for the natural processes of the earth has emerged. This enlarged understanding simply did not have a name prior to 1799, although we now call it "ecology," Greek for "study of our home."

As in the Reformation, whenever there is a growth in consciousness, passionate extremes emerge. One extreme view is that almost any development of resources detracts from the natural order of the environment and is unwise, if not immoral. Yet, the more pragmatic also legitimately question whether living in a stone-age society—as did the native Americans—is what we should ask from the earth and its abundant resources.

The other extreme was expressed by former U.S. Secretary of the Interior James Watt. While in office, he was commissioned with the stewardship of the largest portion of the 700 million acres of public lands for future generations. When charged that he was fostering long-term and, perhaps, irreparable environmental damage to public lands for short-term profits, he quoted the words of Jesus in Luke 19:13, "Occupy, till I come."

Secretary Watt's knowledge of the original Greek was sufficient for him to correctly point out that the word "occupy" would be more accurately rendered "do business," or, more literally, be "pragmatic." Indeed, this attitude towards the environment—that of consuming it until Christ returns—set up Secretary Watt as a caricature of what the emerging environmental consciousness finds wrong with Christianity.

The problem of course is not Christianity. The problem is that traditional Christian belief, rooted in the same soil from which Pieter Bruegel's art emerged, takes no notice of the scriptural promises for the blessing of humanity right here on earth. If modern society does not tremble at a Hellish future so vivid to the Reformation era imagination, neither does it take notice of the unfulfilled promises that the Lord's footstool will be made glorious (Isa. 60:13).

It is little wonder that non-Christian systems of belief, such as native American religion with its deep-rooted respect for the earth, are nominally embraced by some extremists and looked to as the basis for ethical conduct, rather than looking to the Bible. Such beliefs offer a sop to those who correctly recognize that something needs to be changed in how society "does business." But what does present truth have to say to environmentalists?

### **Our Privilege**

There is a great and largely undeveloped privilege here to witness to the Kingdom from a novel standpoint and to seek out those wishing to see the deep things of the Lord. From the Bible, we can show that:

- 1) a heavenward focus for Christianity which anticipated the earth "going to Hell" represented a God-dishonoring set of beliefs now being dispelled by the dawning of the "Sun of Righteousness;" at the same time, wisdom is needed and for the most part, the terror embraced by Bruegel's imagination is dead doctrine except among ultra-conservatives;
- 2) the great promise of scripture, focused on the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, will restore both the human race to at-one-ment with God and the earth to a perfection lost



through sin (this is the promise of the scriptures for "a time of restitution of all things" [Acts 3:19-21]);

3) imperfect creatures on a perfect earth would lead to devilish depravity (Gen. 3:17-24);

4) the charge to mankind to have "dominion" over the earth (Gen. 1:26) was not an open statement of permission to clear-cut "old growth" stands of forest, but rather mankind's purpose in the garden is to "dress it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15); this should be understood as a call to stewardship that would ever enrich and enhance the land (advances in the study of ecology now lead us to understand that maintaining fertility, that is sustainable dressing and keeping involves maintaining "biodiversity");

5) mankind has been given the intelligence and capacity to consider the creatures of earth, how they interrelate, and to classify or "name" them (Gen. 2:19-20); to have dominion certainly does not mean to drive to extinction, nor does dominion mean that the importance of the creatures is reckoned only by their direct value to us in how cute or tasty they are, nor for plants by whether they can serve our direct needs for food and medicine;

6) the Sabbath and Jubilee systems anticipated the need for man, beast, and earth to take periodic extended rests from development for their refreshment and blessing (Lev. 25:1-22);

7) the needs for "sustainable development" is consistent with scripture and was inherent in the Law of Moses (the law strongly reiterates that the land is not our possession to use merely as we please, but the Lord's, with man as the most careful and conscientious of stewards [Lev. 25:23]).

At the same time, we need to be sensitive to emerging lessons from the study of ecology. Perhaps an example will illustrate this point.

### **The Gaia Hypothesis**

James Lovelock, an extraordinary British genius in developing sensitive chemical analysis instruments, was contacted by NASA in the early 1960's to develop a gas-chromatograph life-detection experiment for Mars. He began by pondering the fundamental question of what such an experiment should look for. The results from his work directed towards another planet lead to profound insights about life on the earth.

Looking at life with a fresh set of eyes, Lovelock realized that life weaves a rich tapestry of intricately connected biological-chemical-geological cycles and uses energy to push the chemistry of our planet to a "non-equilibrium" state. In the absence of life, the 98% of our atmosphere available as molecular nitrogen and oxygen would be gone, chemically bound in the rocks and the ocean!

Sadly for NASA, Lovelock's interpretation of ground-based observations of the Martian atmosphere available in the early sixties gave no promise of a prospect for life. Years later, experiments on the surface of Mars—including his—did indeed fail to find life.

However, remarkable predictions based on this "Gaia" hypothesis have been experimentally validated over the last thirty years, prompting the American Association for the Advancement of Science—the most prestigious scientific association in the U.S.—to devote their 1995 plenary session to his work. Because of the distinct Christian perspective evidenced in his writings, I was prompted to write him several years ago. His response is worthy of quoting [letter from James Lovelock, October 13, 1993]:

"Thank you so much for your thoughtful letter. . . . Perhaps the 'times of restitution' are overdue. I often think that people will not respond until confronted by an awesome event, such as the next large environmental change. The record of the earth seems to show that change happens suddenly and not gradually and what we are doing may precipitate the change.

"I appreciate your invitation to explore Gaia's relationship with Judeo-Christian dogma . . ."

He goes on to add that at least three theologians he was aware of already had written on the subject. It is clear that the writing has been even more active since then.

### **The New Creation and the Earth**

Is there a fundamental and needed change taking place in how human beings view the earth and their relationship to it? I believe there is. At the same time, perhaps our thinking, like Bruegel's, takes no thought for the physical earth as the joys of heaven are contemplated. Surely, as new creatures, we are seeking for better balance, for we who understand the Plan of God can reconcile both the environmentalists and the pragmatists.

Jehovah took time to both plant Eden (Gen. 2:8), and walk in it "in the cool of the day" (Gen. 3:8). He enjoyed its splendid beauty, enhanced by intelligent management. Jesus observed how the lilies of the field exceeded Solomon's glory (Matt. 6:29). There was a joy in life and its beauty that excited our resurrected Lord to move about in the garden surrounding the cold tomb and see with new eyes the simple things we take for granted—so that he was mistaken for a gardener (John 20:15). In teaching by example, both our heavenly Father, and his Son have pointed us towards the joy there is in the natural creation. The beauty of the earth's interrelated cycles of life and chemistry reflects back on the craftsmanship, wisdom, and love of the master designer, our heavenly Father.

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## Will Present Resources Last Forever?

"The earth is composed of different elements. These elements, while they may change their forms and disappear from mortal vision, always remain the same elements. No instance has ever been known of where one element changed into another. But there is constant change taking place throughout all of the realms of nature. Yet, nothing is gained, and nothing is lost. Water changes from a solid (ice) into vapor (steam) and then into its elementary gases—H<sup>2</sup>O. Then the operation is reversed. The gases change to vapor—the vapor to liquids, and the liquids to solids. We may reason from this that when the coal, minerals, timber, etc., have all been used in their present form, and having been transformed into some other state, they will be utilized in that state or condition. And this process could go on throughout eternity without exhausting in the slightest degree the original elements.

"The process of change is always in a circle, and all that mankind will need to do will be to follow the circle around to its initial starting point and then repeat the process throughout all the years of eternity." *C. T. Russell (Q772)*

Where are we on the Stream of Time?

## A Retrospective Look at the Fulfillment of Time Prophecy

*"Look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" — Luke 21:28*

*David Rice*

The fulfillment of prophecy is a strong testimony that the scriptures are from God. When time is included in prophecy, it adds a specificity which is even more impressive. How many unbelievers would be surprised to know that Daniel predicted five centuries in advance the very year of Christ's baptism, and of his death?

That time prophecy exists in the Bible argues that some good will accrue to us from its study. And since much of it refers to the "time of the end," and we believe we are in the time of the end, we have all the more reason to expect a special benefit from it. Here are two possible benefits.

First, time prophecies alert us to look for the signs that we are nearing the end of our Christian journey. It is like a man on a long voyage who passed the days reading, resting, or strolling the decks enjoying the fresh sea air. But with the dawn of the last day he was eager for signs of his destination. He went to the bow and looked out through the fog, at first seeing nothing. But time passed and he noticed some kelp floating in the sea. The fog receded, and he noticed a few birds above. As he scanned the horizon he discerned the hazy outline of hills and mountains. He saw a vessel in the distance, then another. He spotted the shoreline, a lighthouse on a hill, then a variety of smaller boats. Soon he could make out the docks on the shore, and some activity in the background. Now the signs were clear, and all about him, and he prepared for his arrival.

Second, time prophecies help us interpret the meaning of the signs we see. It is like three farmers chatting in a field, who noticed a cloud of dust or smoke in the distance. As they mused of it together, one supposed it was a brush fire. Another ventured it could be dust in a whirlwind. But the third asserted with conviction, no, it was smoke from a passing train. With some surprise at his confidence, the others asked how he could be so sure. He answered "It is Monday, twelve noon. It is time for the train!"

Both of these benefits have been demonstrated in actual experience. Time prophecy alerted the brethren to anticipate what 1914 might bring, and helped explain the war that came. Time prophecy prompted the Miller movement in America, and others in Europe, to rouse the Christian world to look for the second coming, and to freshly examine the Scriptures. Even before the French Revolution, prophetic students were watching for a great shaking. "For more than a century before the [French] Revolution, a line of expositors of the Protestant Historical School not only had predicted from the prophecies

of Daniel and the Apocalypse the approaching end of the 1260 years of the ecclesiastic supremacy of the Papacy, but had set forth France as the probable instrument, and infidelity as the possible means of the coming overthrow" (Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, Volume II, page 723).

Understandably, the various forecasts involved some imprecision and some over expectations. But now, through the unfolding of actual events, we can trace the intent of the prophecies more clearly. Papacy's reign of 1260 years has ended. The sanctuary class has been cleansed. The old kingdoms of Europe have been broken. The clouds of trouble do in fact mark a change of the ages.

### **The Time Prophecies of Daniel**

Probably the most notable example of time prophecy appears in Daniel, at the end of a lengthy prophecy in chapters 11 and 12 which begins in the third year of Cyrus (10:1) and extends to the resurrection of the dead in Christ's kingdom (12:1, 2). The passage begins with a prediction of now ancient events. "Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia" (11:2).

After Cyrus came Cambyses, Smerdis, Darius, and Xerxes. Xerxes gathered a vast army to subdue Greece, and his unexpected defeat in this campaign is famous in history. Verse 3 refers to Alexander the Great, king of Greece, who rose some generations after Xerxes' failed campaign. When Alexander died his kingdom was split among four generals, "divided toward the four winds of heaven;" (v. 4).

The remainder of the chapter takes us cryptically through history toward the kingdom. At the close of the vision Daniel was told to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end:" (12:4). Then we encounter the time prophecies of 1260 days (3½ times), 1290 days, and 1335 days. The first of these is mentioned seven times in the scriptures, once here, once in Daniel 7, and five times in Revelation 11, 12, 13. Its very frequency tells us it is important.

The prophecy is not a mystery to the brethren today. For centuries, Protestant interpreters have identified the 1260 days as 1260 years during which Papacy would exercise considerable power, while both the scriptures and the saints would be oppressed. The dates the brethren of our fellowship usually identify for this period are 539 to 1799. (See *Studies in the Scriptures*, Volume 3, *Thy Kingdom Come*, Chapter 3, "Days of Waiting for the Kingdom.") William Miller and most of those associated with the Adventist movement, applied it similarly, varying by only one year. But the points we wish to observe here are when the prophecy would be understood, by whom, and for what purpose.

## **When, Who, Why?**

The vision was closed to Daniel. He was told to "shut up the words, and seal the book" (Dan. 12:4), and that "the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:9). But verse 4 says at the time of the end (when the things recorded would come to pass) "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." This is frequently applied to the rapid travel and general increase of knowledge which mark our day. However, in context, it probably has a more specific meaning. A parallel scripture which helps explain the meaning is Amos 8:11, 12. Amos refers to a famine for hearing the words of the Lord, and adds "They shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." Daniel, in contrast, speaks of a time when the word of the Lord will be revealed. At the time of the end "many shall run to and fro [seeking the knowledge which was sealed to Daniel], and knowledge [of the prophecy] shall be increased."

In Revelation 10, at the close of the 3½ times (cf. Dan. 12:7; Rev. 10:6) when "there should be [those prophetic times] no longer [since they expired]," the sealed book of Daniel is now "open in the hand of the angel. and he said . . . take it, and eat it up" (Rev. 10:8). The time for understanding the prophecy was due. This was still before the Lord's return at the seventh trumpet, which does not sound until Revelation 11:15.

Daniel 12:10 also affirms that "none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand," and verse 11 implies that the understanding would become general among the wise ones at the end of the 1290 years.

All of this exactly matches the facts. As the time approached for the prophecy to run its course, more and more became aware of its import. The Miller movement in America (and others in Europe), which was founded on an understanding of these prophecies, and explained their meaning broadly through the Christian world, developed about 30 years after the close of Papacy's 1260 years.

Daniel 12:12 implies that another 45 years would take us to a period of special "blessedness." No other clue is given in the text to aid us in its interpretation. But the whole force and purpose of the movements stimulated by these prophecies was to look for the return of Christ. Might this last prophecy therefore take us to that long-sought event? This possibility is strengthened by a comparison with Matthew 24:46, and Luke 12:37. Both texts speak of the return of Christ, and both specify that those watching and diligent will be specially "blessed."

The blessing of Luke 12:37, and the parallel text Revelation 3:20, are spiritual nourishment—truth that was lost in the famine of the dark ages (Rev. 6:5, 6). These texts show that this nourishment is provided after the Lord's return. When we note that the beauties of the Divine Plan opened up to the brethren from the 1870s forward, we observe that the events have confirmed the prophecy.

Clearly, therefore, time prophecy has accomplished its purpose. It predicted a long night, it marked its close, it alerted the watchers to look for the Lord's return, it now tells us we

are at that blessed time, and it confirms that the signs about us point to a climax of the ages.

We therefore value time prophecy highly. Its luster shines more brightly now than ever before.

## Echoes from the Past

# News from A Century Ago

*Excerpts from "Views from the Watch Tower"  
in 1898 by C. T. Russell*

### **Zionism and the Messianic Prophecies**

Some years ago, being curious to know how learned Hebrews view the Old Testament reference to Christ—as "a lamb for the slaughter," etc., we visited a friendly Rabbi, and asked him the question. He replied that Hebrews apply these prophecies to the Hebrew people and their centuries of bitter experiences under more or less of persecution. We are forcibly reminded of this false method of interpretation by the statement of Dr. Herzl at the Basel Congress, held August 29th last;—to the effect that that Congress was the birth of their Messiah;—that the Messiah class which they hope will fulfill all the good promises of Scripture concerning Abraham's seed was there organized. It appears, too, that the date (Aug. 29) was selected in harmony with a tradition prevalent among the Bulgarian Jews to the effect that Messiah would be born on that date.

This is quoted with some assurance of endorsement by Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf in a recent discourse from which we quote the following comment on the Zionist movement and congress. He said:—

"The boldness of that dream startled the world. As for me, when the full report reached me and I read the fearful story of the 'Judennoth,' that was submitted to the congress, I could not wonder at the statement by Dr. Herzl, the president of the congress, during the first day's session 'The Bulgarian Jews have long believed that the Messiah should be born a twenty-ninth of August. They were right, THE MESSIAH HAS BEEN BORN TODAY in the Zionist Congress.'

"It was a magnificent assemblage of Israelites that had gathered there in congress. Two hundred delegates, representing as many hundreds of thousands of people, had come with a most sacred purpose, that of putting an end to the persecutions and miseries of millions of Jews by reacquiring for them of their own native Palestine and reestablishing them there in peaceful and honorable industries.

"It was beyond doubt the most remarkable gathering in the whole history of Israel. The venerable Dr. Lippe opened the congress and Dr. Herzl gave the keynote of the movement, comparing the inflictions of the modern anti-Semite with the Jew baiter of former centuries. A similar tale of woe was told by Max Nordau. It was the same refrain by all, and the congress concluded that the settlement of Palestine was the only solution of the Jewish question.



"It was a dream and yet not all a dream. Some very stern reality was beneath it all, which neither skeptic nor scoffer can sneer away. It has come to stay. The superstructure of the castle will, in all probability, take a different and more practical form from that outlined in its first designs, but the foundation upon which it rests will remain unchanged. Among those builders who had come from different parts of the world to discuss the plans for an ark of safety, there may have been many a visionary, but there were also those who know from personal bitter experiences the real need of an ark that is to bear the Jew high on the crest of the flood of the 'Judennoth' that is rushing in upon us from all sides. The foundation timber is: Relief of the fatally congested centers of Jewish population by means of agriculture and colonization at home, abroad, in adopted lands, in Zion, anywhere, everywhere, but always agriculture with its accompanying handicraftsmen, industrialists, and men following professions.

"Upon research, I have found that Palestine, with the adjacent countries stretching between the Euphrates and the Tigris, that are now almost deserted, could amply support millions of agriculturists. The soil is luxuriantly fertile, the climate salubrious, the water pure and abundant, the irrigation canals of the ancients still available. The winters are short and mild, the summers long enough to ripen two harvests. The products of all the land can be laid down in the capitals of Europe within five days after their shipment and in price and excellence they can drive from the market those of other competing countries. Because of these conclusions I have been proclaimed a Zionist and asked to attend the second congress at Jerusalem next summer." (R2256)

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### **Preparations for War**

The chief concerns of the world are food, clothing, shelter, money, and the preparations of munitions of war;—among the Christian (?) nations. "Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears:" turn your factories from the manufacture of the implements of peace to the preparation of war materials is the order of the day.

Great Britain vs. France and Russia, as well as Spain vs. the United States, are straining every nerve to be prepared for war, should it come;—the former over China and her trade, the latter over Cuba and her liberty. We have many reasons for hoping that a conflict will be averted in both cases. Should war come, however, in either case our sympathies would, we are glad to say, justly be with the English speaking nations. For altho England's policy in China has not been one of disinterested benevolence, there can be no question that it has been and is and will continue to be more liberal toward the Chinese than would be the yokes of other Christian (?) nations of Europe.

An armed intervention by the United States to secure the liberty of Cuba from the despotism and cruelty of the most bitter and cruel nation in Christendom would be, as nearly as can be imagined, a war on lines of disinterested benevolence. We believe that it is neither the desire of the government nor of the people of the United States to annex Cuba, while its population in all respects is as dissimilar to our own as is that of Mexico:

hence whatever may be done for Cuba must be accredited either to pride or to benevolence—as with the food supplies already sent and still being forwarded by government and people to relieve victims of barbarity.

We incline to think that the President's policy will result in securing for Cuba, without war, a liberty similar to that enjoyed in Canada, and if so he will deserve the congratulations of all civilized peoples. However, should war come—either of the above suggested—it would have no special prophetic significance so far as we can see. It would mean loss of life, increase of debts: and by increased business prosperity for a few years it would really put off the great catastrophe which will overthrow all governments in anarchy. (R2281)

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### **The Czar's Peace Proposal**

Czar Nicholas, Emperor of Russia, has startled the world with a proposition looking toward universal peace—"a durable peace"—by the disarmament of the larger proportion of the armies of Europe. He asks a conference of representative men of all nations to consider the subject: and all the leading nations including the United States, have responded favorably, promising to send delegates to the Peace Conference. *The London Chronicle* considers the Czar's note the most striking document of the century, and the *London Telegraph* says, "Rarely, if ever, was there ever a more important document in the history of the world." *The Press* (New York) says, "The document is epochal. . . . The millennium of European disarmament is brought within range of profitable discussion." *The Public Ledger* (Philadelphia) says, "It may not lead at once to a national disarmament and an agreement to refer all matters in dispute to arbitration, but it will pave the way for this desirable result." *The Times* (New York) says, "It may be the beginning of the most momentous and beneficent movement of modern history, indeed of all history."

Among other reasons prompting to the humane course suggested, the Czar calls attention to the fact that present vast armaments were prompted by a desire for peace, but have proved ineffectual and instead are increasing financial burdens. He says:—

"All these efforts have not yet been able to bring about the beneficent result desired — pacification. The financial charges following the upward march strike at the very root of public prosperity. The intellectual and physical strength of the nations' labor and capital are mostly diverted from their natural application and are unproductively consumed. Hundreds of millions are devoted to acquiring terrible engines of destruction which, though today regarded as the last work of science, are destined tomorrow to lose all their value in consequence of some fresh discovery in the same field. National culture, economic progress and the production of wealth are either paralyzed or checked in development.

"The economic crisis due in great part to the system of armaments I' outrage, and the continual danger which lies in this massing of war material, are transforming the armed peace of our day into a crushing burden which the people have more and more difficulty in bearing.

"It appears evident that if this state of things were to be prolonged it would inevitably lead to the very cataclysm it is desired to avert, and the horrors whereof make every thinking being shudder in advance.

"To put an end to these incessant armaments and to seek the means of warding off the calamities which are threatening the whole world—such is the supreme duty imposed upon all states.

"This conference will be, by the help of God, a happy presage for the century which is about to open. It would converge into one powerful focus the efforts of all states sincerely seeking to make the great conception of universal peace triumph."

Right glad would we be to hope for just such a universal peace and maintenance of the present order of things, "the present evil world," if we had no better hope, no better prospect. But as Watchers we have been "taught of God" through his word to expect no permanent peace from even the best intentioned monarchs and governments during these "times of the Gentiles" (Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; 7:4-13, 14, 27; Luke 21:24). Not until Immanuel shall, in Jehovah's appointed times and seasons, take his great power and reign and bind Satan, "the prince of this world," who now "worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience," can we look for the golden age of prophecy. Then humbled under the mighty hand of God, the world will "seek peace and ensue it."

But not withstanding the welcome given the Czar's suggestion, few on sober second thought see reasons of hope for practical results: it is accepted rather as a benevolent wish rather than even the Czar's hope. Our own expectation is that such a disarmament as is proposed will come within about six years: whether or not it will be preceded by a great general European war, only the Lord knows, but we incline to think it will not. We expect such a disarmament surely within the next ten years for several reasons:—

(1) Because within that time commercial competition will make merchandise of all kinds very cheap, and debts, interest charges, and government expenses proportionately the more burdensome. To reduce the burden upon the masses it will by that time be necessary to force it disproportionately upon the wealthy, or else reduce the burden; and disarmament will probably result.

(2) Humanity will delude itself with the thought that such disarmament is the prelude to the Millennium: and so it will be, but in an opposite sense from what they expect. "The wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall not be manifested" (Isa. 29:14); and when thus they shall be disarming, saying "Peace and Safety!" they will be very close to the great cataclysm of trouble, and doing the very thing to hasten the overthrow of the present social structure. Because,

(3) The present glut of the labor markets of "Christendom" will be intensified by further application of machinery within the next ten years; and the tremendous effect of augmenting the supply of labor to the extent of from one to five millions of men in the prime of life would surely mean a financial depression and social upheaval which would shake the thrones of Europe and overthrow many of them.

(4) Such social upheavals, eventuating in world wide anarchy, are what the Scripture prophecies lead us to expect as the precursor of the Millennium which God has promised, when our Redeemer and his glorified church shall intervene to deliver mankind from the oppression of its own selfishness, and to bless it with an enforced rule of righteousness along the lines of the heavenly law of love. (R2360, 2361)

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### **The Second Zionist Congress**

The Second Congress of Israelites from all parts of the world, to consider the interests and welfare of the natural seed of Abraham, and especially looking to a reestablishment of Israel as a nation in the old homestead, Palestine, has closed. Like the first it was held in the city of Basel, Switzerland. All reports indicate that the Zionist movement has gathered much momentum since the Congress of a year ago: about four hundred delegates [1,400—*Editor*] were present—nearly seven times as many as at the first one.

Addresses were delivered by a number of prominent Israelites, setting forth the necessity and urgency of the movement, and pointing out that prophecy and the traditions of the nation as well as the growing hostility toward their race, everywhere, all urged forcefully in the direction toward which they were heading. In view of the fact that Palestine is under the control of Turkey, and that foreign Jews have been prohibited from emigrating thither for now seven years, suggested the idea that the duty of the hour would be to labor for the betterment of the conditions of Jews already there, and to wait and trust for the Providential opening of the "door" in the near future. To this end a Palestine Banking Company, "The Colonial Bank," of \$10,000,000 capital was provided for—to promote and foster various enterprises in Palestine—all of which shall in every sense of the word be in Jewish hands and employ Jews only. An advance intimation of this matter had gotten abroad, and as a result it was announced that \$1,000,000, one tenth of the capital, had already been subscribed, and over ninety-six percent of it in single shares of \$5 each, by Jews in all parts of the world. This indicates that the movement is taking hold of the hopes of the race. A new flag was raised;—a white six-pointed star on a blue ground— and it served to add to the patriotic fervor. Even the populace of Basel caught the inspiration seemingly and cheered—"Hoch die Juden;" i.e., Hurrah for the Jews! Has this occurred before for over eighteen hundred years? Not that we know of. God's time has come for regathering Israel, and those who lend a hand will receive encouragement.

For twenty-three years past we have been calling attention to Isaiah 40:1, 2—showing that it became applicable in April 1878, and that within forty years (before 1915) the prophesied divine favor beginning by regathering Israel from all lands "into their own

land" would be an accomplished fact. "Adventists" ridiculed, declaring that much sooner than that the earth would be in cinders; "orthodoxy" sneered that Israel's regathering and the Millennium were thousands of years off and that first the gentiles must all be converted; Jews themselves were of two opinions—one class declaring that they and the leaders of Jewish thought and the rising generation had abandoned all hope of a Palestine home and ignored the prophecies relating to a regathering, or else applied them to the United States—the "new Promised Land;" the other class expressing hope and faith in the prophecies, declared that according to Jewish chronology (not the Bible chronology which we follow) over three hundred and fifty years yet remained before the completion of six thousand years from Adam and that nothing could be hoped for sooner.

Only one-half of the forty years have passed, and what do we see! Palestine is rejuvenating: not only has it been connected with civilization by railroads, telegraphs, and telephones, but the seasons are becoming more regular as respects rain, and the thousands of Jews driven thither by Russian persecution some ten years ago are taking root and are now to be helped with money, in a practical way, and the eyes of Israel and the world are opening to the fact that "The testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple," and that prophecies over two thousand years old are being fulfilled before us.

But the "Watchers" should not for a moment lose sight of the chief lesson which Israel's revival teaches us, namely that every evidence of the return of divine favor to fleshly Israel is an evidence that divine favor to spiritual Israel is gradually drawing to a close, because the divine purpose respecting this Gospel age has about reached fulfillment—in the selection of the Gospel church, spiritual Israel, the bride, the Lamb's wife.—See Romans 11:25-33 (*R2361*)

## The Prophetic Preview

# Scoffers in the Last Days

***"Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!"—  
Isaiah 5:18,19***

*A verse by verse Bible study in 2 Peter 3*

Few subjects have grasped the interest of the Christian more than that of the return of Jesus Christ. This was as true in the early church as it is today. The Apostle Paul dealt with it extensively in his letters to the Thessalonians. It was a major theme in the Apostle John's vision of Revelation on the Isle of Patmos. In our study here, the Apostle Peter shows equal interest in the subject.

### **Stirring Up Pure Minds--Verses 1 and 2**

***This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior.***

Peter's opening sentence in this chapter demonstrates what should be the object of all Christian communication. It is a two-fold object, both to stimulate pure thought and to direct attention to the words of the Bible. This was the object of both of Peter's epistles. In the first, he dealt with the sufferings of the Christian, and how submission to those sufferings would eventuate in salvation. The subject of the second epistle is the certainty of the Lord's return. Although he only deals with this in this third chapter, he precedes it by establishing the authority of the scriptures in the first chapter and warning of false teachers who bring other doctrines in the second chapter.

While Peter's object is to stimulate their pure minds, his method is to bring things they knew to their remembrance. In this he is emulating the method by which God instructs through the holy spirit. "But the Comforter, which is the holy spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

Writing before there was a New Testament, he nevertheless anticipates it by calling attention to two sources for this remembered knowledge: the prophets and the words of Jesus. The King James translation somewhat clouds the issue in the second verse. Most other reliable translations follow the Greek in attributing the "commandments" here to "the Lord and Savior" and not to the apostles. He is the author of them. The apostles were only the channel for their communication.

The inspired author carefully chooses the word "commandments." These are not mere suggestions. They are precepts to be acted upon. Strong's Concordance defines the word as "an authoritative prescription." Thayer defines it as "an injunction that is prescribed to one by reason of his office," "a prescribed rule by which a thing is done." He further states that it is used ethically of "the commandments in Mosaic law or Jewish tradition." In other words, Peter is stating that the words he is about to write are not his own but have divine authority and are not given for mere information but are to be acted upon.

### **Scoffers--Verses 3 to 7**

***Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.***

Before beginning his discussion of the "day of the Lord," Peter continues his theme of the previous chapter by warning of false teachers. The Greek is even stronger than most translations, preceding the noun "scoffers" with the adjective "mocking." The intensity of Peter's distaste for these teachers is shown by his accusation that they are "willingly ignorant" of relevant facts. It is impossible to know to which specific group of false teachers he refers. There were many of them. While the canonical New Testament contains four gospels, there were more than fifty apocryphal gospels circulating amongst the early church, according to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

The specific challenge of these false teachers is, "Where is the promise of his coming (Greek parousia, [presence])?" The probable meaning is "Where is his promised coming?"

The support for this challenge is that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." Jesus encountered such skepticism at his first advent. His rebuke to such skeptics is found in Matthew 16:3: "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" The "signs of the times" in his day were the various miracles he performed and the fact that the gospel was even preached to the poor (Matt. 11:4, 5). His second advent was to be likewise accompanied by specific "signs," many of which he outlined in his Olivet sermon, found in chapters 24 and 25 of the Gospel of Matthew.

The fact that Peter is directing attention to the scoffers of the second advent is supported both by his reference to these being in "the last days" and by the later verses of the chapter which describe the work of the second advent.

The reference to their being ignorant of the lesson of the flood of Noah's day appears to be drawn from the Lord's words in Matthew 24:37-39, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." The point of emphasis is on the unawareness of the ending of the first world being parallel to a similar unawareness of the return of Christ. Peter charges that the refusal to be on the alert for the indications of that return was "willingly" and deliberate. The connection with Noah can also be deduced from the prophecy of Enoch found in Jude 14-16.

The title of James Baldwin's best seller on the black separatist movement, *The Fire Next Time*, is drawn from verse 7. His title is appropriate, though it will be not only racial tensions but the inequities in all of the areas of society that will occasion the eruption symbolized by the "fire" of this verse.

It is significant that he uses the illustration of fire to describe the closing scenes of the present age. It would seem at first more logical to use the parallelism of saying that as the old world ended in a flood so would the new world similarly end in a flood. However such would have been an offense to his readers who may well have remembered God's promise to never send a flood again (Gen. 9:11); though Isaiah did use such a figure of speech (Isa. 28:15-18).

There may be yet another reason for the change of metaphor. Many (perhaps the majority) of those destroyed in the flood were born as a result of an illegal hybridization of the race, being the children of angelic fathers and human mothers. As a result of being an unauthorized race they could expect no resurrection from the dead. In contrast, those who may love their lives in the conflagration which ends the present age will all come back from the grave to receive their trial and judgment in Christ's kingdom (John 5:28, 29). Fire, as contrasted to a flood, could convey this thought for fire is a symbol of purgation as well as destruction.

Another interesting word play is employed by Peter's choice of the words translated "kept in store" and "reserved." The Greek for the expression "kept in store" is *thesaurizo* (from which we derive the English "thesaurus"), meaning a treasure house, or to lay up as treasure. (Note its use in Matt. 6:19, 20; 1 Cor. 16:2; and James 5:3.) The Greek word translated "reserved" is a stronger term than merely to delay an action, but implies an active guardianship. Both Professors Strong and Thayer define the word as meaning "to guard." The picture thus drawn is of a wise Creator treasuring the experiences which man learns through his life under evil influences and guarding, or protecting, the status quo until the fullness of the lessons are learned. It is, as the Lord answered Job out of the storm, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:11).

Though the heavenly Father has been protecting the nations from their own destruction for the present (see Rom. 13:1 and John 19:11), great will be the fall thereof when that



protection is withdrawn. It will indeed be a day of both judgment and perdition. Here, too, the words are carefully chosen. The nations will both receive a fair and equitable judgment, or crisis as the Greek word would have it, and the effect of the negative judgment, which is the thought of the word "perdition." There is, perhaps, a tendency of some to place too much emphasis on this word "perdition," as though it always means a destruction from which there is no relief. While the word can be used of the second death from which there is no release, it is also used of Adamic condemnation. In Matthew 7:13, for instance, it is used as the terminus of the "broad road" upon which the entire race is walking. (Note also its use in Rom. 9:22.)

The ones being thus judged are the "ungodly." These are not limited to those who do wickedness but to all who disregard God and his laws. Their fate is not necessarily eternal death, for, as we read in Romans 5:6, "Christ died for the ungodly."

### **The Day of the Lord--Verses 8 to 10**

*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

Peter extends the thought of the willing ignorance of the scoffers to the warning of the believers against similar disregard of the facts. By reminding his readers that the day of the Lord is not a 24-hour period, but a lengthy term, he suggests that not all expectations of that period will come at one time. Rather, there would be a gradual onset, much as the rising sun gradually makes its presence known.

The apostle is not here asserting that the day of the Lord is precisely one thousand years. That may very well be true and appears indicated in Revelation 20:1-6. Here, however, Peter contents himself with a generality by stating that the day is "as," or "about," one thousand years.

The Greek word *hos*, translated "as" in the King James Bible is open to a broad variety of meanings. However, as Professor W. E. Vine notes in his Expository Dictionary, "when the word is used with numbers, it signifies about." He then cites a number of examples where this Greek word is used. The Gadarene swine that drove themselves into the sea was **about** 2000 (Mark 5:13). Those who ate the feast that Jesus prepared from the loaves and fishes were **about** 4000 (Mark 8:9). Jesus invited Andrew and his companion disciple to stop with him **about** the tenth hour (John 1:39). The disciples had rowed **about** twenty five or thirty furlongs when Jesus came walking on the sea (John 6:19). Bethany was **about** fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem (John 11:18). The disciples gathered before Pentecost number **about** one hundred twenty (Acts 1:15). When the Revelator saw the seventh seal opened there was silence in heaven for **about** a half-hour (Rev. 8:1).

Noting the length of the period, the apostle exhorts against discouragement. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Prov. 13:12). God's reckoning of time is different from that of man. When a thousand years are as one day, then the average life span is only an hour or two. It is this seeming delay that caused the prophet Habakkuk to write, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (2:3).

In our day we see these same tendencies are prevalent. Some tend to look at the Lord's return as a single event, a rapture with a world-wide recognition of a change in world conditions. The Bible, on the contrary, indicates a more gradual event, as the "Sun of Righteousness" gradually dawns on the horizon.

The reason for this "day of the Lord" being so long is then revealed by Peter. It has two purposes. It is an example of the longsuffering of God, first "us-ward," to the church, to give them sufficient time to make their "calling and election sure." But, beyond that, it is for the purpose of dealing with all of mankind, the dead as well as the living, for God is "not willing that any should perish, but come to repentance."

The analogy of the "thief in the night" captures both the suddenness of his coming and its unexpected manner. This metaphor was first used by Jesus himself (Luke 12:39-41), and picked up by the Apostles Paul (1 Thess. 5:2) and John (Rev. 3:3; 16:15) as well as Peter.

But though the onset of this day is sudden and not anticipated, the effects will be felt worldwide. It will accomplish a complete dissolution of the present world order and its replacement with a "new heavens and a new earth." Peter uses intensive words to describe the completeness of this dissolution. It will be accompanied by "great noise" and the elements shall melt with "fervent heat," resulting in their being utterly "burned up." The present religious ("heavens") and civil ("earth") orders of society will be completely done away with in preparation for the new kingdom of peace and justice for all.

The "elements" refer not to physical components of the universe, but to the basic principles upon which present society is based. The base concepts of "might makes right" and "survival of the fittest" will have no place in the new government that considers the rights and dignity of all peoples.

### **Practical Effects--Verses 11 to 14**

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

The effect of this knowledge about the utter dissolution of earth's society should not be discouragement or fear but stimulation to a more devout and godly life. Realizing the possible shortness of our time on earth should be an incentive to prove all the more faithful and to finish the work that God has given us to do. The exhortation is not so much to work and activity, though, as it is to holiness and purity of conduct. The Greek word translated "conversation" (*anastrepho*, Strong's 390) is not limited to what comes out of our mouth but the entire manner of behavior, our conduct in life. The prefix *ana* in this word suggests a turning back, and answers to the "repentance" of verse nine. The proper course for all has always been "repent and be converted" (Acts 3:19), not only showing sorrow for past misdeeds but also changing one's course in life so as not to repeat past mistakes.

The Christian is admonished to not only "look for" this promised day, but also to "haste its coming." The word "unto" is not supported in the Greek, though the thought may be there. Although the American Standard Version translates the phrase "eagerly desiring," most translators follow the usual usage of the word as indicating the hastening or speeding up of its arrival.

This raises a serious question. Can man change God's timetables? Can he truly hasten any feature of God's plan? The answer seems obvious: No! We suggest that the statement is not to be taken in a strict literal sense but as an admonition to work diligently towards the end of speeding its arrival. The blessings of that day cannot commence until the church is complete. The church cannot be completed until each of its members proves faithful. Therefore giving diligence to such faithfulness is, as it were, a hastening of the promised blessings that day will bring.

The specifics of this "holy conversation and godliness" are given in verse fourteen, "that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight." The peace here referred to is that peace of mind that comes from doing that which is right. This gives one confidence of a favorable judgment by God. The encouraged action is to live a life as pure as possible so that one is neither defiled nor can be justly so accused by others. This is to be done with "diligence." The word for diligence is from the same root as the word "hasting" in verse twelve and illustrates how we can do this hastening in a practical way.

### **Paul's Concurrence--Verses 15 and 16**

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

The seeming delay of the "day of the Lord" gives each Christian ample opportunity to show his faithfulness and to learn the lessons from his daily experiences.

Peter cites Paul as being in complete agreement with his arguments. This statement indicates either that the epistles of the apostles had broad circulation in the early church or that there were epistles that have been lost. Paul speaks most directly of these issues in his letters to the Thessalonians. Peter is writing his second letter to the same church as his first (2 Peter 3:1), and that was directed to the Christians in what is now north central Turkey (1 Peter 1:1), a long way from Thessalonica in Greece. Only the epistles to Colossae and Galatia were in the vicinity of Peter's audience. Peter's reference to Paul also shows the high regard he had for his fellow apostle, despite the fact that they had had a face to face confrontation in Antioch (Gal. 2:11), an example for all Christians who may sometimes have differences with each other. While Peter shows his respect for Paul, at the same time he suggests that Paul's complex logic was frequently misinterpreted and given meanings other than Paul intended.

### **Final Admonitions--Verses 17 and 18**

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

To be forewarned is to be forearmed. This adage is the essence of Peter's closing remarks. The Living Bible phrases it well, "I am warning you ahead of time, dear brothers, so that you can watch out and not be carried away by the mistakes of these wicked men, lest you yourselves become mixed up too."

Peter concludes his epistle by encouraging his readers to grow in both grace and knowledge. Either without the other makes for an unbalanced and unstable character. Both are needed, both must be diligently developed.

## Two Phases of Salvation

# Earth, As Well As Heaven

***"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matthew 6:10***

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The concept of the dual nature of salvation —one celestial, to live in heaven, and one terrestrial, to live on earth—is a common theme in the Bible. It is literally found from Genesis to Revelation.

The Apostle Paul styles the message of the evangelist as "the gospel preached before to Abraham" (Gal. 3:8). That promise is succinctly stated in Genesis 22:15-18, "And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Here God used two symbols to describe the promised seed of Abraham, sand and stars. It appears to be no coincidence that one of these elements is found on earth and the other in the heavens—the sand of the seashore and the stars of the heaven.

One of these seeds, the spiritual, is identified as Jesus Christ and his church in the book of Galatians. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:16, 29).

There is just a suggestion as to whom the earthly seed will be in Genesis 12:3, "Those who bless thee, I will bless; those who curse thee, I will curse, and in thee shall all the world find a blessing" (Knox Translation).

Other scholars give the thought of the last phrase as being "all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by becoming thy seed."

In the book of Revelation the same theme is summarized by inference in three different verses: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (1:5).

This text implies that if there are to be "kings of the earth" there must be subjects for them to govern. The next two Revelation texts identify the subjects by specifying them as "the nations of them which are saved."

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it" (5:10; 21:24).

The Apostle Paul makes very specific reference to this dual nature of salvation in 1 Corinthians 15:40: "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."

### **Many Mansions**

Also emphasizing the fact that God has prepared a number of residences for his creatures is John 14:2: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

Here he refers to a spiritual domain which we are assured he has prepared for those that love him. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Another of the mansions which he has prepared is earth as man's everlasting home. "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else" (Isa. 45:18).

### **All Men to Be Saved**

The reason for the dual aspect of salvation is found in a simple statement of the will of God by the Apostle Paul. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:3-6).

Salvation is a simple concept. It comes by a ransom. One man, Jesus Christ, died for one man, Adam, so that he and all his posterity might live. The Greek word translated "ransom" in the above passage, *anti-lutron*, illustrates this simple truth, for it means a corresponding price.

The Apostle Paul simply outlines this concept of ransom in two passages: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:21, 22).

"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" (Rom. 5:15).

Since the first man, Adam, was a perfect human being, it follows that Jesus, as a corresponding price, must also be a perfect human being and that the resultant life must be perfect human life.

This salvation, however, must not be mistaken as a guarantee for everlasting life, for after they are "saved" it is the "will of God" that they "come to a knowledge of the truth." Man's salvation, as shown above, is from original Adamic transgression. Living all their lives under sin has had its side effects. Man has come to view might as right, evil as good (Isa. 5:20).

It is for this reason that men, raised from the dead, will need to be thoroughly educated in the laws of righteousness. Only then, having tasted first of sin and its consequences—sorrow, suffering, and death—and then of righteousness and its consequences—happiness, health and life—will man be fully in a position to choose life that he might live. This, then, is the earthly phase of salvation for those who will be raised with bodies terrestrial.

### **Heavenly Life**

But the church, the Bride of Christ, are promised heavenly life. The ransom could never produce such life. It is only by forfeiting all claim to life on earth that some could be offered life in heaven. These must die to the fleshly life in the same manner as did Jesus. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Rom. 6:8). "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (2 Tim. 2:11,12). Not only does this text promise Jesus' followers that they would live with him, but that they would reign with him.

This relationship between the two parts of Abraham's seed—the heavenly and the earthly, of kings and subjects, of educators and educated—is beautifully predicted in Malachi 3:17, 18. "And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."

To this agree the words of the Apostle Paul: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters" (1 Cor. 6:2)?

What a wonderful God who has a plan of salvation for all, the good and the evil. We read this promise in John 5:28, 29 RSV: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment."

The word translated judgment here [mistranslated damnation in the King James Bible] is *krisis* and means the same as the English word "crisis," a critical juncture that can have either a favorable or unfavorable outcome.

This is the judgment referred to in Malachi when the Lord's "jewels" will return and "discern between the righteous and the wicked" (Mal. 3:17, 18). This is the "day of judgment" when "the saints shall judge the world." And thankfully this judgment will be a righteous judgment. "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9).

Yet some may argue that this would constitute a "second chance" for man and that it would remove all incentive to live a righteous life now. Truthfully seen, however, it is man's first real chance. "Born in sin, and shapen in iniquity" (Psa. 51:5), man has had little chance to follow righteousness. He has been "blinded by the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) and is thus to be pitied as a blind man and not condemned as an evil one.

As for the incentive to obey righteousness now, Paul covers it simply in these words: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7, 8).

John describes the grace of Jehovah with the words "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). How wonderful it is that we can appreciate this great truth that God has provided for life on earth as well as life in heaven.



## **Earth's Brighter Day**

*A brighter day is dawning soon,  
When morning rays shall end the night,  
And brightness like the sun at noon  
Shall fill the earth with radiant light.*

*For in that day shall heaven's power  
Restore redeemed ones from the grave,  
'Twill be the bright Millennial hour  
When Christ shall free from death its slave.*

*The Sun of Righteousness shall rise  
With healing strength within its rays,  
For then His glory fills the skies  
With anthems of eternal praise.*

*And every one shall then be taught  
Of their Creator's righteous laws  
And men will find the one they've sought  
And hail him with their glad applause.*

*With courage wait, 'twill not be long,  
It's signs are all around us now,  
So join the choir and sing the song,  
When every knee will 'fore him bow.*

*How great that time when earth made new,  
Becomes man's resurrection home,  
And heavenly truth like morning dew  
Shall teach all men no more to roam.*

*Carl Hagensick*

# Instead

Instead of the thorn, there shall come up the fir tree  
Instead of the brier the myrtle shall spring  
Back to its primeval freshness and beauty;  
God will creation triumphantly bring.  
Streams in the desert shall heal the parched places,  
The rose in the wilderness fragrance shall shed;  
Mountains and hills shall break forth into praises;  
Wonderful word of Jehovah—"Instead."

How sweet the assurance to hearts that are weary!  
What hope it awakens, what strength doth convey!  
Sunshine shall follow the days that are dreary,  
Sorrow and sighing shall vanish away.  
Symbol and type and the Gospel's glad story  
Say to the fainting one—"Lift up your head.  
Soon shall this sad earth be filled with God's glory;  
He for the curse will give blessing instead."

Behold on the altar a victim is lying,  
Upraised is the knife in the patriarch's hand  
The child of the covenant promise is dying,  
An offering made at Jehovah's command.  
When lo! At the word of the angel from heaven,  
The son is restored, as alive from the dead.  
The Lord Himself hath a sacrifice given—  
A ram in the thicket is offered instead.

Alone in the garden, while others are sleeping,  
Our sinless Redeemer, a suppliant, kneels;  
His earnest entreaty, his blood drops, his weeping,  
To the heart of the Father his anguish reveals.  
Though bitter the cup that surety has taken,  
Though heavy the stroke that must fall on his head,  
He goes to the cross to be cursed and forsaken;  
To give us the cup of salvation instead.

Now saved on the ground of his infinite merit,  
His people rejoice in the soul-cleansing blood.  
Transformed by the might of his indwelling spirit,  
They bear, day by day, precious fruit unto God.  
All glory and honor and majesty giving  
To him who redeemed them, their glorious head,  
They count it their joy evermore to be living

No longer to self, but to Jesus instead.

Believer rejoice, for the glad day is nearing  
For which all creation still travails in pain;  
When Christ, our Redeemer, in glory appearing,  
Shall take to himself his great power and reign.  
When Satan, the evil usurper, expelling,  
To earth's farthest limits Christ's kingdom shall spread,  
And peace and prosperity sweetly be telling  
That Jesus, Immanuel, ruleth instead.

Author Unknown

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## Pastoral Bible Institute News

### New Booklet on the Trinity

Until now the PBI has had no booklet refuting the widely-held world-wide belief in the doctrine of a triune God. After reviewing booklets published by others, we are pleased to announce the selection of the booklet *The Doctrine of Christ*. It is published by the Oakland County Bible Students. This 80-page oversize booklet discusses virtually every aspect of how this unfortunate doctrine came to be accepted by mainstream Christianity, and how contrary it is to the word of God. In addition to the value of its content, it may also be the most beautifully printed booklet available from any Bible Student group today. Single copies will be sent free. Multiple copies are 50-cents each.

### New Overseas Distribution Service

Although the world's postal system is a marvel and a blessing, we have been aware that the time it takes to deliver **THE HERALD** to countries outside the United States is longer than we would like. We are now using a distribution service that promises much faster delivery at a modest increase in cost. We invite comment from our non-U.S. readers as to whether or not they see an improvement in the delivery time of **THE HERALD**.

### Letters

Thank you for **THE HERALD**. It gives me spiritual encouragement and knowledge, not only to me, but also to our church and ministries in Myanmar. In our country it is very hard to get spiritual books and it costs us very much. We are thankful to you for sending **THE HERALD** regularly without cost. We praise God.

In Myanmar 85% of the population is Buddhist. Most of the leaders have very little Christian education and knowledge because our country was cut off from the world for 26 years. By the grace of our Lord, now the government opened the doors, but very carefully. So we need more Christian education and knowledge.

Some of the articles from **THE HERALD** I translate into Myanmar and distribute to some believers and some churches and ministries. We always pray for **THE HERALD** and for the staff, And believe God will bless you more. I pray that **THE HERALD** will not get diluted like the Gospel is nowadays-Being diluted in many places.

*Samuel Pau Za Lian, Union of Myanmar  
[Prior to 1989 Myanmar was known as Burma]*

## Around the World

A study by the US Agency for International Development said that 25,000 people die each year in Cairo because of the high level of lead pollution, mostly from gasoline and pipes. The study suggests that children's intelligence is negatively affected by Cairo's lead pollution problem, and that as many as 11,600 people suffer heart attacks each year as a result of lead pollution. Egypt is promoting the use of natural gas in cars instead of lead, because it is environmentally safer and in order to preserve petroleum for export.

*El Wafd, Cairo, 10/28/97*

Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled met with U.S. government investigators and briefed them on what he asserted was Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's link to the terrorists who bombed New York's World Trade Center in 1993. Peled spoke of Arafat's arrival in Khartoum, Sudan, four days before the bombing. He also pointed to a CIA report that linked Arafat to Sudanese and Islamic terrorists. Several key members of Congress have said that if the assertion proves correct, they will immediately cut the annual \$100 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority.

*Jerusalem Post, 10/97*

A new World Bank report predicts that economic growth in developing countries will accelerate over the next 25 years led by the five biggest emerging economies-Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and Russia. Despite this, it is also true that never have there been more poor people in our world, and never has the world kept adding more poor people to its population. The Washington-based Population Institute published its own study which said that nearly a third of the global population of 5.8 billion lives in "absolute poverty," defined as per-capita income of less than the equivalent of \$370 annually. Some 82 countries are unable to produce or buy sufficient food for their populations, even as a record 100 million children are being born each year in "developing" countries. Chronic water shortages, mounting environmental degradation, urban congestion, high crime, rising numbers of abortions, increasing drug use-all are established consequences of population growth. Despite all the cheerful talk of global economic growth, there are more children hungry each night, more mothers having unwanted babies and more people in need of jobs.

*International Herald Tribune, 9/16/97*

Pol Pot, the leader of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s, granted his first interview in 18 years. Now under house arrest in northern Cambodia, Pol Pot told reporters, "My conscience is clear. Everything I have done and contributed is first and foremost for the nation and the people and the race of Cambodia." Pol Pot presided over the killing of at least one million of his fellow Cambodians during a ruthless four-year reign in the 1970s. Analysts envision him of wrapping up the wickedness of Hitler, Stalin and Mao into one mysterious figure in an attempt to prevent Viet Nam from taking over Cambodia, which it did eventually in 1979.

*Financial Times, 10/20/97*

The Anti-Defamation League is monitoring anti-Semitic incidents that have occurred in Atlanta. In 1996, the Federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act reported over 7,900 hate crimes in the United States. In its annual report on anti-Semitic incidents, the organization said over 1,700 incidents of vandalism and intimidation occurred. Jay Kaiman, Southeast Regional Director for the Anti-Defamation League said, "Each of these motivations suggest symptoms of larger problems for our society. The state of Georgia is one of the few states in the country that does not have a state hate crime law."

*PR Newswire, 9/15/97*

The Middle East Desalination Center (MEDRC) will announce the implementation of a substantial research grant program to fund research on desalination technology. The program includes ten specific research projects. The Middle East is facing serious dangers of fresh water shortages in the next century. The project is aimed at preventing this and finding a solution to the crisis. MEDRC is based in Muscat, Oman.

*Press Release by MEDRC, 10/02/97*

## Israel

Israel has virtually no need for the supercomputer the U.S. and Japan have refused to sell to them. It now has scientists that have developed a next-generation multi-processor parallel device, according to the Hebrew University professor who headed the 10-year project. Prof. Amnon Barak, head of the university's computer science institute said that he and his team developed the computer operating system based on algorithms for use with ordinary workstations. The cost of the project was \$150,000 versus \$10 million for a supercomputer. The U.S. and Japan have refused to sell Israel the computer because it could be used to develop nuclear weapons.

*Jerusalem Post [date unknown]*

The Palestinian Authority has drafted a plan which would create a belt of Palestinian communities circling Israeli neighborhoods in Jerusalem. The announcement came from Faisal Hussein, the Palestinian in charge of Jerusalem affairs. Palestinians have been enlisting the aid of Arab international business leaders to implement a plan to buy land in Jerusalem for the program.

*Israel My Glory, October/November, 1997*

Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov will discuss selling Russian natural gas to Israel. Israeli officials will press Russia not to supply Iran with nuclear technology and missiles. An Israeli foreign minister stated, "Russia is one of the sponsors of the peace process, but they haven't been very positively involved in Iran. Russian companies are active there in nuclear development and supplying missiles. We intend to raise this point:

You can't build peace on one hand and destroy it on the other." Israel may import gas as fuel for power generation as its electricity consumption grows. It is currently seeking gas from Egypt and a new pipeline to Turkey could be extended under the Mediterranean Sea to Israel.

*Bloomberg News Service, Jerusalem, 10/26/97*

Sephardi Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron recently criticized rabbis who call for Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount, and said such a move could cause many Jews to sin unknowingly. Bakshi-Doran recalled that following the Six Day War, the Chief Rabbinate ruled that because of its holiness, it was forbidden for Jews to ascend the Temple Mount.

*Jerusalem Post, 10/97*

Dan Propper, president of the Manufacturers' Association of Israel met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to discuss strengthening the ties between business in Israel and Egypt. Propper said that the two countries should pursue peace without waiting for the politicians and that the economies of the two countries were complimentary rather than competitive.

*El Ahram, Cairo, 10/28/97*

Palestinian unemployment has nearly doubled and per capita income has shrunk by a fifth since the start of the Oslo peace process with Israel in 1993. Overall investment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has slumped from 28 percent of GDP to just over 18 percent. A collapse in private investment from 25% to 10% also threatens the weakened economy. All this is in stark contrast to developments in the far bigger and more sophisticated Israeli economy since 1992. Israel's exports had by 1995 grown by 43 percent in dollar terms, nearly doubling in Asian markets opened up by the peace process, while foreign investment in Israel went up sixfold over the same period to over \$2 billion a year.

*International Monetary Fund, September, 1997*

## Islam

Indonesia is concerned one of its worst droughts in years could cause a famine in Central Java and Sulawesi by January. Of particular concern is the food shortage will likely coincide with the Moslem holy month of Ramadan, when Indonesian food inflation is always its highest. Though Ramadan is called the "fasting month" because devout Moslems don't eat during daylight hours, the observances include lavish feasts at night. The government is concerned a famine could lead to unrest. The dry season on Java this year has been worse than normal, exacerbated by the tropical weather pattern El Nino, which occurs when trade winds slow and allow the Pacific Ocean to heat up.

*Bloomberg News, 8/27/97*

## Christendom

Evangelist Billy Graham's three-city Bay Area crusade realized the highest percentage response among young people of his 50-year ministry. More than 1,400 churches representing over 100 denominations came together, representing unprecedented unity in the area. An average of 41,200 attended the meetings. Young people aged 12-18 made up more than 50 percent of the attendance and accounted for over 60 percent of the 10,000 who responded to altar calls. Graham's message was geared toward a "neutral" evangelistic setting.

*Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 10/27/97*

## Economics

An economic crisis in Thailand threatened to close down half of the country's finance companies. The government is currently seeking up to \$15 billion in aid from the International Monetary Fund, with appeals to the governments of Japan, Asia, Australia and the U.S. to be part of the lending group. The suspension of 42 financial companies has caused a major economic impact, since they are the main employers of thousands of the best-educated, most highly-paid professionals. Last August, a run on the deposits of the institutions threatened to topple the financial system. A national press conference halted the crisis. However, the country is experiencing a 25% default rate on loans.

*Wall Street Journal, 8/6/97*

Programmers are constructing a single global system to handle the settlement of funds that flow through foreign exchange markets each day, about \$2.4 billion. The system will handle the funds of the world's largest banks. With the significant increase in the flow of funds around the world, the purpose of the system is to prevent a trading collapse such as happened in 1974 when Germany's Bankhaus Herstatt defaulted. If such a thing were repeated on the scale of today's foreign exchange trading, it would produce a shock to the world's financial system.

*Financial Times, 10/1/97*

By the year 2029, the U.S. Social Security System will be bankrupt, according to a World Bank report. The government-run retirement system is facing a fiscal crisis based on the medical advances which are leading to an increased life expectancy. In 1930, a 65-year-old man was expected to live 11.8 years and a woman 12.9 years; by 1993 the expectancies had increased to 15.2 years and 19.1 years, respectively. During the next 70 years, the life expectancy is projected to increase by an additional 3 years. Also, the elderly's share of the world's population will increase from 9% in 1990 to 31% in 2030. In the U.S. alone, the number of people over 60 years of age will increase from 16.6% of the population to 30.9% of the population. A decreasing number of workers for each retiree will result in the inability of the system to endure under current design.



Investor's Business Daily, 10/16/97

China's gap between rich and poor is widening and government policies are heightening inequalities risking social upheaval, a World Bank study has concluded. The report warns that in spite of remarkable average rates of growth since 1978, rural China is falling behind. The benefits of growth were distributed unevenly, accruing to those most able to take advantage of rising opportunities: the educated and the enterprising, the mobile and those with high quality land. The World Bank warns that if richer groups enjoy consistently higher growth, "simmering social tensions" can become politically destabilizing.

Sharing Rising Incomes: Disparities in China, The World Bank, 1997

Defense co-operation is taking its place alongside geopolitics and commerce as one of the axes of Washington's burgeoning relationship with a string of former Soviet republics, which are also establishing a dense network of ties with one another. The Ukraine played host in August to a naval exercise which simulated the suppression of an ethnic rebellion fomented by a neighboring power. Russia is a grudging participant in the Central Asian war games. President Boris Yeltsin deplored rising U.S. influence in the Caucasus. "Our interest is weakening, but the Americans, on the contrary, are beginning to penetrate this zone." Strobe Talbott, deputy secretary of state, said in a speech that U.S. policy towards the Caucasus and Central Asia was motivated by "a valuable trade and transport corridor" and the fear of extremism, instability and even outright war. "It would matter profoundly to the U.S. if that were to happen to an area that sits on as much as 200 billion barrels of oil." The real wild card in the area is Russia's relationship with Iran, which Moscow has treated as a tactical ally.

*Financial Times, 9/23/97*

In October, the collapse of a stock market in a small territory on the other side of the world caused turmoil in western markets. Why did the Hong Kong crash have such a wide-ranging impact? The aftermath of the Hong Kong crash is an early example of how globalization is increasing the volatility of western markets. More integration of the world's markets means that the performance of one country's financial market will be subject to the movements of many other countries' markets. The world is being tied together in ways not before thought of.

*Financial Times, 10/25/97*

## Book Review

***"Creation Facts of Life", Gary Parker, Master Books, 1994. 215 pages.***

Brethren generally, and properly, dismiss 1859 Darwinism, the "man from monkey" idea, which is clearly contrary to the Bible's specific assertion of the direct creation of man. However, many are unaware of the century of extensive research (and scientific discovery such as DNA) that has gone into supporting Darwin's ideas. Darwin's book, "Origin of Species," has been claimed to be second only to the Bible in its influence on society, and some would now put it first. Many see in natural selection a means to explain all appearance of design without reference to a Designer, and are unimpressed with the creationist argument that "the watch implies a watchmaker." The historian Will Durant said that the book changed the whole course of history.

Dr. Gary Parker began his scientific career teaching evolution enthusiastically at a respected university. He believed he was ridding his students of "pre-scientific superstitions, such as Christianity." After attending a Bible study led by a fellow professor, he soon found that the errors he tried to point out were his errors. He spent the next three years re-examining evidence of evolution, and gave it up in favor of the biblical framework.

In this book, Dr. Parker discusses in an easy-to-understand manner DNA, embryo development, fossils, "early man," symbiosis, genetics and much more. The book is written for a younger reader which makes it especially useful for those readers (like this author) who understand little about science. It helps to answer questions such as: does the "Big Bang" theory support evolution or creation? does DNA research support evolution or creation? were there really dinosaurs? The book is worth reading if only for the discussion of fossils, which is perhaps the most overwhelming "evidence" presented by evolutionists today that man was at one time very different from today in looks and makeup.