

September/October 2006

The Herald

Of Christ's Kingdom



Great Events of the Twenty-first Century

Climate • Cloning • Political Divisions

Roman Catholicism • Terrorism

Natural Disasters • Great Economic Shifts

The Herald

of Christ's Kingdom

This journal brings you 192 pages of spiritual reading material each year on a variety of biblical subjects. Each issue also lists many Bible conventions and conferences where you will find Christian fellowship. Included in every issue is News & Views, four pages of current events, letters to the editor, and information on the operation of the Pastoral Bible Institute. It is published bi-monthly by:

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Editorial Committee

This journal is supervised by an editorial committee of five, at least three of whom have approved for publication each article appearing in these columns. While responsible for articles published, the committee does not endorse every expression herein. The present editors are: Carl Hagensick, Homer Montague, Michael Nekora, James Parkinson, and David Rice.

The committee and the directors agree that the journal's value to its readers is dependent upon contributors being free to present their thoughts, provided such are generally in harmony with our chartered character and purpose for the dissemination of Bible truths. Annual subscription price is \$5.00. This journal will be supplied free upon written request.

This Journal and Its Mission

Chartered in 1918, the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc. was formed for the promotion of Christian knowledge. Its journal, The Herald of Christ's Kingdom, stands firmly for the defense of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope now being so generally repudiated—redemption through the precious blood (1 Peter 1:19) of “the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all” (1 Timothy 2:6). Building upon this sure foundation the gold, silver, and precious stones of the Word of God (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Peter 1:5-11), its further mission is “to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which . . . has been hid in God . . . to the intent that now . . . might be [made] known by the church the manifold wisdom of God”—“which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed” (Ephesians 3:5-10).

It stands free from all parties, sects, and creeds of men, while it seeks more and more to bring its every utterance into fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the holy Scriptures. It is thus free to declare boldly whatsoever the Lord hath spoken—according to the Divine wisdom granted unto us to understand. Its attitude is not dogmatic, but confident; for we know whereof we affirm, treading with implicit faith upon the sure promises of God. It is held as a trust to be used in his service; hence our decisions relative to what may or may not appear in its columns must be according to our judgment of his good pleasure, the teaching of his Word, for the upbuilding of his people in grace and knowledge. We not only invite, we urge our readers to prove all its utterances by the infallible Word, to which reference is constantly made to facilitate such testing.

To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach

- ◆ That the Church is the “temple of the living God”—peculiarly “his workmanship”; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God's blessings shall come “to all people” and they find access to him (1 Corinthians 3:16,17; Ephesians 2:20-22; Genesis 28:14; Galatians 3:29).
- ◆ That meantime the chiseling, shaping, and polishing of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin progresses and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium (1 Peter 2:4-9; Revelation 15:5-8).
- ◆ That the basis of hope for the Church and the world lies in the fact that “Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” “in due time” (Hebrews 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Timothy 2:5,6).
- ◆ That the hope of the Church is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be “a partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir (1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4).
- ◆ That the present mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next age (Ephesians 4:12; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 1:6, 20:6).
- ◆ That the hope for the world lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed (Acts 3:19-23; Isaiah 35).

Cover illustration by Zak Ruggirello.

In the Beginning



Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.—Luke 21:26

We are less than a decade into the twenty-first century, and we have already experienced a number of momentous events. These come from every area of the political, social, and scientific spectrum. Choosing eight for this cursory analysis is, at best, subjective. However, we trust these will be of interest to all our readers.

Weather affects every one of us, and *The Great Climate Debate* discusses this important subject from a Christian perspective. Another highly controversial scientific area, *Cloning*, is examined in the following article.

Two hotly contested elections in the U.S. with acrimonious divisions between Republicans and Democrats have fed an ever-growing rift between these two political rivals. This trend is described in *A World Divided*.

The following article looks at the events associated with a man whose life touched thousands of others, and whose accomplishments were perhaps more noted for their political than for their religious impact. Pope John Paul II is the subject of *A House Divided*.

The twin bombings of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., opened a new era in world conflict. This has, in turn, unleashed a “war on terrorism” and its leading sponsor Al-Qaeda. The cost in money and lives is the basis for *A New World Disorder*.

The awesome powers of nature is the subject of *Biblical Earthquakes: What Do They Mean?* Natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, landslides, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions have increased in the past few years and have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

The final article, *The Heathen Rage*, chronicles the rise of emerging nations with their powerful impact on the geopolitical stage. Highlighted are the twin economic influences of China and India.

It is not our aim to alarm our readers, but to look optimistically at these developments as “signs of the times” of the nearness of the kingdom for which we all pray so fervently (Matthew 6:10). May its nearness energize us to be faithful even unto the end.

September/October 2006	
Volume 88	Number 5
In the Beginning (Great Events of the 21 st Century)	3
The Great Climate Debate	4
The advantages of an industrialized world come with ecological problems.	
Cloning	7
Medical science is now involved in an ethical debate over human cloning.	
A World Divided	10
The growing divide between political parties has resulted in an increasingly disenfranchised electorate.	
A House Divided	13
The death of Pope John Paul II marks a new era for the Church of Rome.	
News and Views	17
A New World Disorder	21
Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Ladin have become household words in a controversial “war on terror.”	
Biblical Earthquakes: What Do They Mean?	25
The forces of nature have claimed an alarming number of lives in the past decade.	
The Heathen Rage	28
The twin giants of China and India are making their presence felt by their impact on world economics.	
The Jew! The Jew! The Jew!	34
A perspective on the Jew and the land of Israel written one hundred years ago.	
Poems and Short Features:	
Roman Catholicism In Trouble , p. 16	
The Madding Pace , Back Cover	



Global Warming

The Great Climate Debate

Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.—Isaiah 32:15

Richard Doctor

In 1881 Allegheny, Pennsylvania, was a hotbed of activity on every front of spiritual, human, and industrial endeavor. *Food for Thinking Christians* published in that year by twenty-nine-year old Charles Taze Russell marks one of the most significant advances in a Christian challenge to the received dogma of institutionalized Christianity. Five years later, *Millennial Dawn* (soon renamed *The Divine Plan of the Ages* so it would not be mistaken for a novel) awakened Christians throughout the world to the true promises of God for the blessing of all the families of the earth through Christ and the church.

This prosperous town lay north of the world industrial powerhouse of Pittsburgh, on the opposite side of the Allegheny River. The development of steel-making with all the raw resources at hand provided the region's industrial base. Twenty-two years earlier and eighty miles upriver, the world's first oil well was drilled fifty-nine feet into oil-soaked sandstone, thus inaugurating our unprecedented era of unquenchable thirst for petroleum.

Allegheny's civic planners placed the railroads carrying raw materials and finished product below street level. They made provisions for an organized park system, attractive boulevards, and a cultural center. It also was the host site for a new world-class astronomical observatory linked to the local university. Heading the Allegheny Observatory was Samuel Pierpont Langley, who had achieved fame as a world expert on sunspots. His studies of the moon's temperature added immensely to our knowledge of the "lesser light that rules the night." In the same year of 1881 he and three colleagues traveled to the pristine atmosphere of southern California to make observations from Mt. Wilson. These observations were not of the heavenly bodies, but of the earth itself to validate theories of French mathematician and theorist Joseph Fourier, who in 1827 wrote of the "greenhouse" effect provided by earth's

atmosphere. Langley made scientific history by returning with the first direct measurements of "greenhouse" warming. The "greenhouse" principally is caused by water vapor and carbon dioxide in earth's atmospheric blanket that wraps and warms us against the frigid cold of outer space; this "blanket" keeps our planet at a comfortable 15°C (60°F). This means water is a liquid most everywhere on earth, and our temperature is nearly 40°C (72°F) warmer than it would be in the absence of this effect. But there can be too much of a good thing.

At the close of the nineteenth century Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius, using Langley's data, made thirty thousand sophisticated mathematical computations to calculate the impact of mankind's geophysical experiment in the massive use of fossil fuels. He calculated that earth would warm by 5-6°C (9-11°F) if the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere were doubled; this still is considered a reasonable estimate. Arrhenius' greatest miscalculation was to anticipate that nearly a thousand years of human activity would be needed for this to happen. As we stand at the beginning of the twenty-first century, this doubling may be expected within the next forty-five years unless something happens to stop it. Faced with such challenges, Dr. Botkin in a study for the National Academy of Science concludes, "A new approach to studying Earth processes [is needed], in which the Earth is viewed as an integrated dynamic system, rather than a collection of isolated components." In this Bible Students heartily agree.

Jehovah's Footstool Made Glorious

The Lord's people have the special privilege of knowing about the work of the kingdom. We understand the promise that the physical earth "abideth forever" (Ecclesiastes 1:4) and that the earth in its entire potential splendor will someday be the glorious footstool of Jehovah. We see this in two promises recorded in Isaiah: "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is

my throne, and the **earth is my footstool**: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?” (Isaiah 66:1). “And I will make the **place of my feet** glorious” (Isaiah 60:13).

There is a dual application to the phrase “place of my feet” being made glorious. In Isaiah 60:13 the thought is evidently the sanctuary: spiritually, the sanctuary class, the Church. When the temple was destroyed, Jeremiah lamented that God “remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger” (Lamentations 2:1). Isaiah 33:9 speaks metaphorically, just as does Jeremiah 22:29, “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.” It is the people of Israel, not the literal land, of whom both Isaiah and Jeremiah speak.

Ezekiel uses the same kind of metaphor: “Say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the LORD [clearly people, not trees] ... I will kindle a fire ... it shall devour every green tree in thee ... all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it” (Ezekiel 20:47,48). This is a prophecy of calamity on people, not a forest fire. Yet in another sense these promises also refer to the physical earth. Throughout the world there is a growing respect and concern for the environment and what is happening to our planet. In fact there is recognition that through mankind’s unwise management, “The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down, Sharon is like a wilderness” (Isaiah 33:9).

If one were to visit the magnificent forests of northern California, one might get a sense of the glory Lebanon once had, a land now in a sad and languishing condition. Faced with a growing body of evidence that man’s activities have a degrading impact on the environment, the response within the greater Christian community has for the most part been dismissive, although there are notable exceptions who advocate “environmental stewardship.” However, as we move forward, the societal, political, and economic impacts are a concern for every world government.

Perplexity of Nations

Among the poorest nations, Bangladesh with an average elevation of about five feet above sea level, would see its unrelenting misery increase if even the most conservative estimate of a rise of about three feet in sea level were to occur during this century. The third world

and developing economies, such as China that does not face the threat from the sea as does Bangladesh, do see both immediate threats to shifting watersheds, challenges to an already stressed and marginal agriculture, and a roadblock to their economic path forward. This is perceived as but one more ill the developed world is visiting upon the third world, increasing further the polarization that characterizes our day. By any metric, the industrial world’s way of life is deeply enmeshed with the release of carbon dioxide. Already, all these problems are feeding into the perplexity of nations that characterizes this great “time of trouble” (Daniel 12:1).

As the Lord’s people, we have a privileged vantage point that permits us to see the Lord’s wisdom in the affairs of earth. By faith we are counted among that company upon the “sea of glass mingled with fire” (Revelation 15:2). In seeming defiance of the Creator’s own laws, our feet stand supported by the very waters of the stormy seas, as did our Master’s (John 6:19,20). Like him, our message to the humble of heart is, “Be not afraid.” While not in any way advocating staying the course with a “business-as-usual” approach to “sustainable development,” let us recognize that some of the problems that are, or will, come, as a consequence of the environmental response to the buildup of greenhouse gases and climate change, will actually be a blessing in terms of how the kingdom is going to be ministered.

What Does This Mean?

What if the resurrection took place this afternoon, with world conditions just as they are right now? First, there would be incomparably better administration. We might be tempted to think, “So that takes care of all these problems for the billions that are coming back from the grave,” and that is true. It will be a perfect administration, the best the earth has ever seen. Surely that’s why it has taken so long to find the “jewels” here on earth, and for our heavenly Father to oversee their much-needed polishing.

But let us take the next step. What if the resurrection took place right now and people came back from the grave possessing only the skills with which they went into the grave? Concerning the resurrection, “Where the tree falleth, there it shall be” (Ecclesiastes 11:3). What skills do the majority of humankind possess?

God intends to make the Earth glorious.

On the eve of the industrial revolution in the 1820s, as the old economic order was coming to a close, agrarian China accounted for nearly one-third of the world's economic productivity (David Hale, "China Takes Off," *Foreign Affairs*, November 2003, p. 37). Economic historian Fernand Braudel chronicles how England as the world leader in the industrial revolution, found industry overtaking agriculture by 1820. Shortly thereafter town-dwellers outnumbered farmers. For the U.S. and Germany, economic domination of industrialization at the expense of agriculture occurred in the late 1860s, while France followed nearly twenty years later in the mid-1880s (F. Braudel, *Civilization & Capitalism*, vol. 3, Harper Rowe, 1984, p. 306). Currently, less than 3% of the developed world's population is involved with agriculture production to supply their domestic dietary needs, with 50% more produced for export markets (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *The Future of Food*, Paris, 1998, p. 27). The thousand-year period from David to Christ (Matthew 1:17,18) supports a reasonable approximation of three generations per century. So for England it took only five generations to reach the point where farming skills did not play the dominant role in that society.

Kingdom Skills

In the resurrection those having farming skills will predominate among those returning from the grave. If you were one of these resurrected ones, you would be entering a society with no particular use for your farming skills. How would you feel under those circumstances? Since you are far from perfect, you would likely feel as if you were a second-class citizen with marginal skills, and no skills whatsoever in respect to present-day technology.

But what if you came back at a time when your skills as a farmer were exactly what the world needed? A well-predicted chain of events may be over-simplified as, "Climate stress leads to a weakened forest and that sets up conditions for forest fires." This paradigm has blamed climate stress as a contributor to forest fires ranging from the Blue Mountains of Sydney, Australia, to the devastating blazes around San Diego, California. The further we continue with "business-as-usual" the worse things become. It is already recognized that higher carbon dioxide levels promote woody

tissue growth, but since the cycling of other critical nutrients such as phosphorus, nitrogen, and sulfur, do not increase, decay slows down, setting up conditions for more fires. Recognizing this, there are suggestions from leading researchers that these new dynamics "may even diminish long-term carbon storage," thus amplifying the problem (C. Korner, *Science*, 23 May 2003, p. 1242). Did the Lord forewarn us of this?

In biblical types, "trees" often picture the established world leaders of high ethical principle and purpose. Nebuchadnezzar was one such "tree" (Daniel 4:10). Perhaps these texts, previously considered as symbolic, may have both a symbolic and literal application. Perhaps "trees" might also picture ... trees! "And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them" (Isaiah 10:19).

There is, of course, a promise of restoration: "Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest" (Isaiah 32:15). "Is it not a very little while and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?" (Isaiah 29:17).

Clearly we have brought some of the ecological troubles that will close out this age upon ourselves. Man's original job was to "keep" the garden (Genesis 2:15). Now it appears as if his job will be to straighten up the mess he's made. If children mess up their bedroom, a good parent doesn't straighten it for them while they are at school. A good parent makes them learn by making the children take care of it.

The Lord's people understand the scriptural basis for the times of restitution and ecology. As the resurrection takes place, people coming up from the grave will have the job skills and life experience that are just what the earth needs.

There should be more than enough replanting work to keep everyone productively employed as they make progress walking up the highway of holiness (Isaiah 35:8-10), and this will certainly be the most massive public education and public works program ever! After everything is reconciled in Christ, we will find Jehovah's footstool both glorious for its moral perfection **and** of surpassing beauty.

*Mankind's job
will be to
straighten up
the mess they
have made.*

Cloning



Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD."—Genesis 4:1¹

Kornelius Fil

In the spring of 1997 people all around the globe heard the news that a sheep named Dolly had been cloned. This information raised interest in this particular animal as well as in the whole process of cloning. Before this event, cloning was an umbrella term used by scientists to describe different processes for duplicating biological material. Now the term is well known even to elementary school children; when used by the media the term usually is used in the sense of reproductive cloning, which means producing a genetically identical copy of another organism. This whole event became a catalyst for a wide-scale debate on the ethics of cloning, in which both political factions and Christian churches were strongly engaged. It resulted in new laws being introduced in most developed countries.

What should be our attitude toward these events? To answer this question we need to have basic information on what cloning is.

Our body contains trillions of cells. The center of each cell is the nucleus that holds genetic information coded in DNA, the "blueprint" specifying the structure and functions of our whole body. Although our body contains cells in various shapes and sizes depending on their functions, all contain the same genetic information, the same DNA. One of the exceptions to this rule is the male and female reproductive cells. These contain only half of the typical cell's quantity of DNA. During fertilization these cells fuse to form a zygote, the first cell of a new organism, which again contains the "full" amount of DNA: half are from the father's reproductive cell and the other half from the mother's. During the formation of reproductive cells various processes take place to mix the genetic material. That is why each of us has unique DNA and why we are genetically different individuals. One exception is a case of identical twins; the DNA of each twin is exactly

the same. That is because each originates from a single zygote, the cell that at the beginning of its existence split into two, or rarely even more, parts initiating the growth of further organisms. Cloning resembles this process which is why it can be referred to as natural cloning.

Dolly the sheep was cloned using a process known as somatic cell nuclear transfer. The nucleus of an unfertilized sheep egg was replaced with the nucleus of another cell, which belonged to the "mother" of Dolly (actually in this case it was more like an older genetic twin). By doing this, the moment of fertilization can be omitted: the egg acts as a zygote which, when placed in the proper condition found in the uterine cavity, divides and forms an embryo. That embryo can be implanted in the uterine wall and after some time forms a normal fetus. This procedure is not as simple as this brief description might imply. Dolly took 267 attempts of nuclear transfer just to create one clone. Dolly was not the first cloned sheep. Another had been cloned before but in a process that used nuclei from embryo cells. The first cloned animals were frogs, and that happened in the 1950s. What was so unusual about Dolly was that she was cloned from a nucleus from an adult sheep's udder cell, a specialized cell. To create an entire organism, the nucleus had to reverse its differentiation to use its full genetic information. So far, at least eight mammal species have been cloned; Dolly is certainly the best known.

Human Cloning

Could the same thing be done with human beings? Theoretically, it can. But it is still a long way from theory to reality. First, the development of an egg cell with an implanted nucleus into a multi-cellular organism is protected by various, poorly-known mechanisms. That is why numerous attempts to clone many species result in failure. The cloned frogs

1. All Scripture citations are from the *New American Standard Version* unless otherwise designated.

never advanced beyond the stage of a tadpole for what are still unknown reasons, though the research has lasted several decades. Another flaw of cloning is low efficiency. In the cloning of Dolly the efficiency ratio was 1:267, a number that is below 0.4%. The amount of research and expense connected with cloning is not justified by the results, as scientists get only, at most, two living offspring for every hundred experiments.

Assuming it would be the same with human clones, this means one surviving human clone would also produce the death of many embryos that never developed. Furthermore, about a third of the cloned animals are affected by a “large offspring syndrome” meaning parts of their body, sometimes even the whole organism, is abnormally large. This state is not only a threat for the life of the clone but also for its surrogate mother in whose womb the clone is growing. Cloned animals have a higher rate of infections and tumors. Because of a lung tumor and advanced arthritis, Dolly was euthanized at the age of six, barely half the average life span of a Finn Dorset ewe. It is probable that Dolly may have been suffering from premature aging, possibly caused by the fact her DNA was six years old at the moment of birth (that was the age of the genetic material’s donor). The same problems cloned animals face are likely to be found in human cloning.

More importantly, we do not know what impact cloning has on mental development. This may not be important in the case of animals, but surely it is for healthy human beings, unless of course mankind wants to pay to support multitudes of disabled people which could likely be the result of human cloning. With all the unknowns associated with human cloning, no responsible scientist or physician currently supports the idea to do it. Even the researchers from the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh, Scotland, where Dolly was cloned, warn of trying to do it. That is why human cloning is illegal in the USA and all the European countries, even for medical research (the United Kingdom is the only exception). Nevertheless claims have been made that the first human beings have already been cloned. Although there is no evidence to substantiate such claims, experts admit that given the pace of human cloning research and the commitment to the project, even if such news is false, we will likely see clones born soon, unfortunately with huge

physical and emotional risks to the babies created.

Why Clone Humans?

Why would anyone want to clone a human being? Some see cloning as a way to bring deceased people back to life. These might be parents or children who die prematurely. But can cloning really bring back life? Of course not! Only the heavenly Father and his son possess that power, and they will use it at the right time to bring forth everyone from out of their graves. Were one to successfully clone a person who had just died, the result would only be a genetic copy of that person, a “twin” separated in time and experience by a specific number of years and multitudinous life-shaping events.

Perhaps some like the idea of cloning to duplicate those with exceptional abilities, geniuses with a sharp mind or people with unique physical abilities resulting in great achievements in sports. This sounds terrifying since the natural development of a child is full of surprises as to character, temper and abilities. Do we want a breeding program in which only exceptional individuals are produced and channeled into specific purposes?

Some see cloning as a way to aid couples with infertility problems. Infertility is a serious problem among some married couples, but surely not to be solved using such doubtful techniques. Cloning would only provide an identical genetic resemblance to one of the parents, making the child more like an identical twin. It parodies the well-known verse, “In [the] place of your fathers will be your sons” (Psalm 45:16). Although full of hardships, the best way for a Christian couple to solve the problem of their inability to procreate is to adopt children who do not have parents to care for them.

These reasons for reproductive cloning show it is mainly egocentrism that leads people to consider doing it.

Ignoring God’s Laws

A problem arises when, in order to achieve a goal, God’s law and advice must be ignored. The desire to learn about the world and the principles by which it is ruled turns into “pride of life,” one of Satan’s tools to subdue mankind (1 John 2:16,17). Eve was enticed into tasting the forbidden fruit when the “serpent” told her a partial truth: “The day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you

The best way for a Christian family to solve the problem of their inability to procreate is to adopt children.

will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). Moreover, “The woman saw ... that the tree was desirable to make one wise” (Genesis 3:6).

The adversary tempted our Lord using the same methods. He tried to get Jesus to do a simple thing just to demonstrate that he was capable of doing it, that he had the power. Satan wanted Jesus to cast himself from the top of the temple; he even quoted words from a psalm to prove that he would not have been hurt in any way. But had he done so, our Lord would only have proved that he had been overreaching the privileges given to him, that he was simply too proud. The Son of Man did not succumb. His answer was short but full of strength: “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test” (Matthew 4:7).

Is human cloning against any of God’s commandments? There is no clear prohibition in the Bible banning this procedure. But reproductive cloning could harm the fundamental structure of our society, which is the family. We read: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24, *KJV*). God wants successive generations of children to be conceived and brought up in a consciously embraced relationship. Cloning excludes a man as a necessary part in bringing forth life and reduces the woman’s role to an “incubator” for a growing life, a life that need not be related to her. When we look at the fall of the institution of marriage, the growing number of divided families which results in the constant moral degradation of successive generations, one might prefer to not imagine the consequences of being able to create children without either a father or a mother.

Therapeutic Cloning

In addition to reproductive cloning, there is another type called therapeutic cloning. This is a process by which a person’s DNA is used to grow an embryonic clone. However, instead of inserting this embryo into a surrogate mother, its cells are used to grow stem cells. Stem cells are totipotent which means any kind of tissue or organ can be grown using them. It is presumed that this procedure could help those who suffer from disorders such as Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease.

The ethical problem is what to think about the embryonic stem cells that emerge from this

process. There is no fertilization in therapeutic cloning and it does not result in the birth of a baby; the whole procedure of creating embryos takes place in a laboratory environment. However, what emerges out of this nuclear transfer is an embryo, which, if put in favorable conditions—a uterus—would produce a fetus and, after the passage of time, that fetus could be born as a baby. Although there is no literal fertilization, it is replaced by nuclear transfer. As we have already seen, not every life begins with a separate fertilization; identical twins are the result of single fertilization.

The Bible says that life begins long before we actually see a baby: “The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named me” (Isaiah 49:1; see also Job 31:15; Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5; Galatians 1:15). This does not allow us to consider any of the techniques that manipulate embryos as being in accordance with God’s will. This is the biggest argument against human cloning.

It is surely a great objective to strive to find a cure that would heal any sicknesses that trouble mankind. But this must not be done when the price is the suffering, or even the death, of other individuals, particularly those not able to protect themselves. Fortunately there does appear to be a way to gain the benefits of therapeutic cloning without the controversies associated with embryonic cells. Scientists have discovered there are cells scattered all over the body that are capable of developing into many different cell types; they are a kind of “repair kit” for the body. These researchers now must find a way to identify these adult stem cells from among all the other cells in one’s body and then stimulate them to differentiate in some desirable way. It is these adult stem cells that are responsible for the success of bone marrow transplants used to treat leukemia. There is also experimental use of such cells to generate healthy heart muscle cells for those with chronic heart disease. The use of umbilical cord blood is a similar alternative.

But we know that whatever mankind succeeds in doing, it can bring only temporary relief to the troubled human race. The permanent cure can only be found in God Almighty and his kingdom. That is why we long for the day when “the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:21).

Whatever mankind succeeds in doing can bring only temporary relief to the troubled human race.



A World Divided

And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.—Mark 3:24

Peter Karavas

Which U.S. political party should Bible Students support: the Democrat, Republican, or some other party? This is like asking the Apostles which political/religious group they support: Pharisees, Sadducees, or Herodians. As Bible Students our support is with our returned Lord and the kingdom he is establishing, not for the present “heavens” and “earth” reserved for destruction (2 Peter 3:7). During this Gospel age the Scriptures admonish Christians to stay separate from earthly entanglements:

“For our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20, *NKJV*).

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

“If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight” (John 18:36).

“Every one who serves as a soldier keeps himself from becoming entangled in the world’s business—so that he may satisfy the officer who enlisted him” (2 Timothy 2:4, *Weymouth*).

There are no New Testament examples of Christians entering the political arena. Citizens of heaven must not become entangled in the politics of this earth. An earthly ambassador must not interfere in the politics of his host country. Those of the new creation are being prepared for a **future** work as earth’s kings and priests (Revelation 20:6). They are to be patient, submit to God’s time table for changing the world, and not walk ahead of the Lord as King Saul did when he personally offered sacrifices to God because Samuel was not there (1 Samuel 13). Saul paid dearly for this transgression.

There are those who are working hard to make America a “Christian Nation.” Although we may sometimes admire their good intentions, they are moving ahead of God by working against his plans to destroy the present

heavens (religious arrangements) and earth (civil government) (see Daniel 2:44).

Polarization of American Society

When terrorists struck the United States on September 11, 2001, Americans came together in grief and resolve, rallying behind President Bush in an extraordinary show of national unity. But when Hurricane Katrina hit last year, the opposite occurred: Americans divided along sharply partisan lines in their judgment of the president’s and the federal government’s response.

In a speech after the 2000 election, Bush said, “I am optimistic that we can change the tone in Washington, D.C. ... I know America wants reconciliation and unity. I know Americans want progress. And we must seize this moment and deliver.” Yet the tone in Washington has only gotten worse and more partisan during the years of the Bush presidency.

Over the years, leadership of the Democrat party has shifted to the extreme left, favoring various disjointed special interests, including pro-choice, pro-homosexual, affirmative action, the feminist movement, national health care, more taxes and bigger government. Since clearly presenting this kind of platform would alienate too many voters, their approach has been to focus on attacking the president and the Republican party.

The president has shunned unity, preferring confrontation over conciliation, while favoring policies superficially aimed at deepening support among his conservative base at the expense of ideas that might produce bipartisan consensus and broader approval among the people.

The Republican party has attempted to take over the center as well as trying to hold the conservative right. This “be more things to more people” approach has won them votes, but for how long? A growing number of conservative voters are losing patience with the president and especially the Congress, feeling

they are giving lip service to conservative principles, but showing little backbone in supporting and promoting those ideals.

Bush's greatest bipartisan accomplishments are probably the "No Child Left Behind" education act, prescription drug benefits for Medicare recipients, and his promotion of huge federal relief for Hurricane Katrina victims. Many conservative Republicans have come to view Bush as a fiscal Democrat in Republican clothing. Instead of the old "Reaganomics" supply-side approach of cutting both taxes and spending, Bush has cut taxes only slightly and increased spending dramatically. As is now abundantly clear, out-of-control federal spending cannot be covered by any economic growth generated by tax cuts. Outsourcing jobs to foreign countries increases the profits of big corporations while simultaneously putting Americans out of work.

Over the years, as liberals have been unable to promote their agenda through legislation, they have tried to achieve their goals through the appointment of activist judges, who are anxious to implement changes by legislating from the bench.

As the war on terror continues, many conservatives feel President Bush's recent commitment to securing the southern border with Mexico is more of a reaction to pressure than a deep personal concern. Conservatives are also afraid it will not stop terrorists from crossing the border and may encourage an even greater flood of foreign workers who want to become citizens so they can later bring their relatives to benefit from our welfare, education, medical, and social services.

As politicians have become focused on power and pork-barrel spending, the interests of the people and the nation have gone by the wayside. A "house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25). All of these conflicts before us represent elements of the Lord's great army rising up, the ultimate end of which will result in anarchy and the dissolution of present systems.

Rise in Power of the Religious Right

Over the years the so-called "religious right" has gained and lost ground. The Christian Coalition was founded in 1989 by television preacher Pat Robertson to take over the

Republican party from the bottom up. In an interview with the Denver Post in 1992 Pat Robertson said, "Our aim is to gain dominion over society ... [and] take working control of the Republican Party." Although the Christian Coalition has been remarkably successful at getting its favored candidates elected, the organization is now considered a sinking ship and has been surpassed by Focus on the Family and The Family Research Council.

By election time in 1994, the Christian Coalition had distributed 40 million copies of the "Family Values Voter's Guide" in more than 100,000 churches nationwide. 1994 was the year Republicans won control of Congress for the first time in forty years and made a huge gain in State Legislatures. In 2000, 75 million voter guides were sent out to support George Bush.

Up until 1994, Democrats held strong majorities in both houses of most State Legislatures. In 1992 Democrats had majorities in both bodies of twenty-five legislatures, Republicans eight. In 1994, Democrats had majorities in eighteen, Republicans, nineteen. By 2003, Democrats had sixteen, Republicans, twenty-one.

Out of forty-five new members in the U.S. House of Representatives and nine in the U.S. Senate in 1994, roughly half were Christian Coalition candidates. In 2002 candidates backed by the "religious right" won eighteen new House seats, and eleven Senate and gubernatorial elections. Most of the Republican leadership of the U.S. Congress consistently receives 100% scores from the Christian Coalition. Thirty-eight out of fifty-two Republicans in the U.S. Senate received a 100% rating from Family Research Council in 2003 and forty-one out of fifty-one senators received 100% from the Christian Coalition in 2004.

Prophetic Scriptures

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:13,14).

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In the face of impending anarchy, the three unclean spirits croak the harmonious teaching of the beast (Papacy), dragon (civil power), and false prophet (Protestantism), which is that both the civil government and the clergy have authority over mankind. To prevent collapse, each system will foretell dire results for any failure to obey its counsels. The three most prominent characteristics of a frog are pomposity, an air of superior wisdom and knowledge, and continual croaking. Like frogs, they will croak from pulpits and platforms, and through the religious and secular press.

Ultimately, the masses will throw off the yoke of the church as well as the state, since both will be leagued against their cherished ideas of liberty and equality. The Lord's great army will bring about the destruction of the present social order. Here are words from the 1897 book *The Battle of Armageddon*: "Anarchists, Socialists, and hot-headed radicals of every school of reason and unreason, will be in the forefront of that battle" (Forward, p. xiv).

John the Baptist

In the type John the Baptist pictures the true church, Herod the civil power, and Herodias the papacy. John declared to Herod, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6:18). We, like John, must by our teachings and example declare unlawful any proposed union between church and civil government.

At the prompting of Herodias (Papacy), Herod (civil government) bound John (the true church) and placed him in prison. This typifies the coming restraint of the church's liberties. Herod's promise of up to half his kingdom to Salome (daughter of Herodias) illustrates the future desire of civil government to gain the support and approval of the Protestant churches as a federation. Governed by boundless ambition, Herodias realized her position was insecure so long as John lived. Fully in sympathy with Roman Catholicism, united Protestantism will become her tool in the destruction of the most loyal servants of God.

The Three Hebrews

In Daniel chapter 3 we have the account of the three Hebrews thrown into the fiery fur-

nace. Nebuchadnezzar pictures civil government and the great image of gold symbolizes the coming Protestant federation, cooperating with the Papacy. The dimensions of this image were sixty by six cubits, reminding us of the number of the beast which is 666 (Revelation 13:18).

The religious unity of the Babylonian empire was to be demonstrated by a general worship of the golden image. Worship of the symbolic image is to be a great test or trial upon professing Christians in the end of this age. The time is fast approaching when the religious liberty we now enjoy will be greatly restricted and the work of disseminating truth interfered with by combined civil and ecclesiastical power.

In Daniel 3:8 the three Hebrews (representing the true church) were accused by the Chaldeans, mystical advisors to the king (Daniel 2:5,10) and who represent leaders of the Protestant federation. In verse 15 King Nebuchadnezzar gives the three Hebrews a second chance to live if they would just worship the golden image. As with the John-the-Baptist type, civil government will not be anxious to destroy the true church in the flesh; but the religious leaders will be the main instigators.

The fiery furnace symbolizes the great and final time of trouble. The soldiers casting the three Hebrews into the fire were themselves consumed by it. Likewise in the picture of Daniel and the lion's den, the men who accused Daniel were cast into the lion's den along with their families. These pictures seem to point to the final destruction of Christendom: "And a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all" (Revelation 18:21, ASV).

In the experience of the three Hebrews the people were to worship the image when they heard the music play, representing the false message of obeying the Church-State union. Notice how Revelation teaches that this message will cease.

Just as the king blessed God when he saw the three Hebrews delivered from the fiery furnace, so the kings of this world will ultimately bless God and welcome the resurrected church in the new kingdom arrangement.

The kings of this world will ultimately bless God and welcome the resurrected church in the new kingdom arrangement.

A House Divided



And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.—Mark 3:25

Carl Hagensick

The death of Pope John Paul II, while not unexpected, marked the end of one of the most dynamic periods of Papal history. Karol Wojtyła was the first non-Italian pope since the Dutch-German pope Adrian VI (1522-1523). His tenure of nearly twenty-seven years was only surpassed by the thirty-one-year reign of Pius IX (1846-1878).

A World-Wide Ministry

No pope traveled more than John Paul whose hundred-plus pilgrimages totaling 725,000 miles reached nearly every country of the earth. The audiences for his messages were huge, including a crowd of 4.5 million in Manila, Philippines, on January 15, 1995. His frequent trips to his native Poland were instrumental in the collapse of communism, largely through his support of the Solidarity movement. Mikhail Gorbachev claimed that the fall of the Russian communist system would have been impossible without him.

Critics felt that his meetings with such right-wing dictators as Augusto Pinochet of Chile, and his canonization of Josemaria Escriva of the conservative Opus Dei organization implied that he had become politically involved with extremist anti-Marxist activists. These feelings, augmented with his strong stance against the 2003 Iraq war, were just as likely to be an outgrowth of his pacifist beliefs.

His Doctrines

John Paul was noted for stressing his devotion to Mary, making pilgrimages to her shrines in the Virgin Islands, Knock in Ireland, Fatima in Portugal, Guadalupe in Mexico, and Lourdes in France. His beliefs in the traditional doctrines of the church were affirmed in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Apostolic Constitution*. His first epistle focused on the doctrine of the Triune God. The background of his teachings are found in his eight books on philosophy, as well as two stage plays, later produced as movies. In addi-

tion he published two volumes of his poetry. His pacifist beliefs were indicated in the poem *The Munitions Worker* that ends with these words:

I do not kill people,
I only make the weapons that kill people,
But is that enough?

Ecumenism

Although a strict traditionalist on Catholic dogma, nevertheless John Paul often made contact with other religions, seeking common ground. He had a conference with such diverse leaders as the Dalai Lama and Queen Elizabeth II, the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. On a trip to Egypt in 2000 he met with the Coptic Pope and the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria. He offered prayers both at an Islamic mosque in Damascus and at the Jewish Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. He also was the first pope to visit the Auschwitz concentration camp, the Yad Vashem memorial to the holocaust, and the Jewish synagogue of Rome.

Perhaps his most diligent ecumenical efforts were directed to the Eastern Orthodox churches. For the first time since the Great Schism of 1054 a pope traveled to an Eastern Orthodox country when in 1999 John Paul traveled to Romania. He also visited other eastern countries including Ukraine, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

His Apologies

One of the most remarkable accomplishments of his papacy was the recognition and apology for over a hundred wrongs committed by the Roman Catholic Church. These included:

1. The persecution of Galileo (1992).
2. Catholic involvement with the African slave trade (1993).
3. The historical denigration of women (1995).

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4. The burnings at the stake following the Protestant Reformation (1995).
5. Silence of Roman Catholics during the Holocaust (1998).
6. The execution of Jan Hus in 1415 (1999).
7. For sins of Catholics in violating human rights of ethnic groups (2000).
8. For the Crusader attack of Constantinople in 1294 (2001).
9. For missionary abuse against the indigenous people of the South Pacific (2001).
10. For the massacre of the Aztecs by the Spanish in the name of the church (2001).

Many Roman Catholics, both individuals and organizations, renounced these apologies. Bishop William Richardson of St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary wrote: "Where would John Paul II himself be if Catholic missionaries had never gone into pagan Poland those many years ago and destroyed its idolatry" (*Letter to Friends and Benefactors*).

A Church Divided

Both John Paul and his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, have taken strong stands on moral issues. They both have steadfastly spoken against homosexual marriages, abortion, and euthanasia. John Paul took a pacifist position on warfare and capital punishment and wrote in favor of debt forgiveness and other poverty issues. These positions have been largely ignored by the American and European laity, though popular among Catholics in southeast Asia and South America.

Another divisive issue has been the slow pace of the church to address officially the widespread sexual scandals involving pedophilia, that continues to cost the church countless millions of dollars. The settlements and associated legal expenses, augmented by low church attendance, have been partially responsible for the closing of hundreds of churches and schools.

Church attendance in Europe has decreased markedly and barely held even in the United States, while growing steadily in Africa and South America. These decreasing numbers have also led to decreased candidates for the priesthood and correspondingly smaller attendance at theological seminaries.

A Scriptural Look at the Past

As the late pope's numerous apologies indicate, there is much in Papacy's past for which to repent and seek forgiveness. The inquisitions, the papal scandals and immoralities, the strident anti-Semitism, the utilization of secular governments to carry out the destruction of their foes, the Crusades, and the burnings at the stake, are only the tip of the iceberg in describing her many sins. Well did the Revelator say, "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (Revelation 18:24).

In the Bible the name "Babylon" is often used in a metaphorical sense. In New Testament times Jews and Christians alike applied it to the city of Rome (see the *Sybilline Oracles* 5 143). This seemed particularly appropriate at that time, because of the descriptive phrases used to describe the city which was home to the great power of Imperial Rome.

- ♦ It ruled over the kings of the earth (Revelation 17:18).
- ♦ It sat on seven mountains (Revelation 17:9).
- ♦ It was the center of the world's merchandise (Revelation 18:3,11-13).
- ♦ It was the corrupter of nations (Revelation 17:2; 18:3; 19:2).
- ♦ It was the persecutor of the saints (Revelation 17:6).

As time progressed, and especially since the Reformation, many Protestant scholars have applied these words to the Catholic Church headquartered in Rome. Certainly these same descriptive elements fit the Papacy as well as or even better than they fit Imperial Rome.

From the days of Constantine until the time of Napoleon the Roman Catholic Church has united itself with the kings of the earth. While claiming to be the bride of Christ, it has itself joined to others. The Scriptures designate this as fornication: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Revelation 14:8).

In describing this phenomenon, the Revelator further writes: "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). The word "mystery" in this title implies

a symbolic and hidden meaning, suggesting it is figurative language.

The abominations of this symbolic Babylon were infectious, corrupting all with whom it came in contact. This was the Lord's tool to show man his own weaknesses. "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad" (Jeremiah 51:7). This same cup is further described in Revelation 17:4, "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."

This picture is based on a prophecy regarding the literal Babylon of Old Testament times: "For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them" (Jeremiah 25:15,16). Then, after listing some twenty nations, he adds: "Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink" (Jeremiah 25:27,28).

A Scriptural Look at the Present

In a parable about wheat and tares found in Matthew 13:24-30, false Christians (tares) are permitted to develop side by side with true Christians (wheat). Only in the "time of harvest" would they be separated. We are now in that harvest period and that separating work has been in progress for over a hundred years.

As literal Babylon had held the Jewish people captive for a time, so symbolic Babylon has been home to many true Christians over the past twenty centuries. But this great system has also become the "habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Revelation 18:2). Just as God had called his people back to Jerusalem after their captivity, so there would be a time when God calls his spiritual people home. That time is now. Now the call is "Come out

of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

In another picture, this false system is called the "church of Laodicea" (Revelation 3:14). For centuries this system had served as God's spokesman on earth. But now, he says, "I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16).

As a result of her unfaithfulness, God, through the Revelator, has decreed a punishment of seven plagues to bring down this great system. These are detailed in Revelation 16. Most Bible Students have concluded that these plagues have already begun, but there are varying opinions as to the specific application of each of them. All do agree that the net result is the final removal of the great systems that have so dominated the world for over 2,000 years, and have been "weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Daniel 5:27). For two alternative viewpoints see the articles *A Foundation for Understanding Prophecy* and *Heads and Horns* in the July/August 2005 issue of *The Herald*. Here is a third opinion:

Plague	Significance
1. Boils and Sores (on Earth)	Dissension from within Babylon
2. Sea as Blood of Dead Men (on Sea)	Political and social polarization of society
3. Fountains Turned to Blood (on Water Fountains)	Modernism entering Christian seminaries
4. Scorching of Men (on Sun)	Investigative reporting unearthing secrets
5. Darkness (on Seat of Beast)	Confusion, lack of direction in Christendom
6. Drying Up of Euphrates (on Euphrates)	Drying up of financial support for churches
7. Great Hail (on Air)	Final destruction of spiritual Babylon

The separating work of harvest has been in progress for over a hundred years.

The final fall of Babylon is depicted in full detail in Revelation 19 and in abbreviated form in Revelation 18:21, "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Many Bible Students see an implication in the fact that the angel "took up" the stone before casting it down, an indication that the great ecclesi-

astical system here pictured may have a brief resurgence of power before its final demise.

A Scriptural Look at the Future

What comes next? Although it is always difficult to prophesy the future with precise accuracy, there is an interesting concept presented in the final verses of Isaiah 23. There these same systems are pictured under the figure of the city of Tyre. The prophet predicts that these organizations shall fall into an eclipse of power for a period of seventy years, after which it shall return to its former ways, described as “fornication.”

Then follows a graphic description of its destruction: “And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing” (Isaiah 23:17,18).

The suggestion in this verse is that the accumulated wealth of spiritual Tyre will not be destroyed but, rather, be converted for the advantage of the common good: “I will shake all nations; and the precious things of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts” (Haggai 2:7, ASV). The same concept is indicated, though less specifically, in Zechariah 14:14.

The religious system to follow the destruction of present institutions will be a true theocracy. It will need no pope or bishop at its head, nor any great church buildings, for there shall be “no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple thereof” (Revelation 21:22).

The religion of that time will be truly catholic (universal), for the willing of all nations and denominations will be a part of it, regardless if in their past they were Catholic or Protestant, Jewish or Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or pagan. Then there will be one church and all who then believe can worship the one true God throughout life everlasting.

100 Years Ago

Roman Catholicism In Trouble

The French government has cancelled its agreement or “Concordat” with the church of Rome, and that religion in France is now on much the same plane as in these United States—that is, that religion shall no longer be supported by the government. There is this difference—the French have gone a step farther than America, and have decided that the great church edifices, etc., built with the money of the French public, are not the property of the Pope and Roman hierarchy, but to be supervised by the French government, which, being a Republic, is the people’s government. ...

Ever since the Spanish-American war Spain has been awakening to a realization of her bondage to religious superstitions of the “dark ages.” The action of France has been a lesson to Spain, which she is gradually learning, and it need not surprise us if it lead to separation between the state-and-church union which has prevailed there for centuries. The entering wedge was the recent decision of the Minister of Justice, that a civil marriage is lawful and binding whether sanctioned by the Roman Catholic church or not. The test case was on the refusal of burial privileges to the corpse of one married without the approval of the Roman clergy. The decision will thus be seen to be a breaking of the power of the Roman clergy over the people.

—Reprints, p. 3881 (November 1, 1906)

A New World Disorder



He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
—*Psalms 91:1, NASB*

Jeff Mezera

John W. Gardner once said, “History never looks like history when you are living through it. It always looks confusing and messy, and it always feels uncomfortable.”

After experiencing the end of the Cold War, the breakup of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of most Communist governments, today’s news speaks of ethnic wars around the world, the growing power of Islam, and the fear of “Terrorism.” The unexpected rise of Islam and its significance to the student of the Bible is puzzling. In the scheme of the biblical prophetic picture significant events are taking place. But just what is that picture?

While the signs of the “end of the age” (Matthew 24:3) are numerous, we know “there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:21,22, *NIV*).

For years Americans considered terrorism to be someone else’s problem. The United States was concerned with the Cold War and the threat of nuclear annihilation. The Palestinian Intifada had become commonplace in the news with repetitive instances of terrorist activity in Israel. Despite repeated attempts at peace, violence continued unabated.

In the 1970s terrorism was not as widespread as in recent years. Suicide bombings, assassinations, and hijackings have since become the terrorist acts of choice. Now both computer and biological viruses are used, chemical and radioactive dirty bombs are threatened. Even women and citizens of western countries have committed suicide bombings.

Since the 1970s, terrorists have blown up oil installations and hijacked airplanes in an effort to draw attention to their cause. Some-

times they went further. The Palestinian Liberation Organization kidnapped and killed several Israeli athletes during the 1972 Olympics in Munich. In 1979 the American embassy in Iran was seized and sixty-three hostages were detained. The 1980s saw several car bombs used against U.S. embassies, including one in Beirut. An explosion was set off in the underground parking garage of the World Trade Center in 1993. Two years later there was a sarin gas attack in a Tokyo subway. In 2000 the destroyer U.S.S. Cole, as it rested at a dock, nearly sank after an explosive attack. North Korea and Iran have, or are seeking, nuclear weapons. Modern-day pirates have attacked ships in the open seas.

In the last ten years kidnapping for ransom has increased as a way for terrorists to raise funds in South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. CNN claims there are between eight thousand and ten thousand such cases annually; Britain’s Foreign Policy Center estimates that these activities alone produce \$500 million a year. Many of these terrorist groups are also funded through drug trafficking, so-called Islamic charities, donations, front companies, family fortunes, and criminal activities.

Life as we know it changed on September 11, 2001, with a terrorist attack on the United States produced by flying passenger jets into New York’s World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. That was not all. A month later several letters containing anthrax were sent to offices in New York, Washington, and Florida. Since 1999 there have been insurgent attacks in Chechnya against both individuals and the Russian government. The seizure of a Moscow movie theater ended with hundreds of casualties. Other ethnic battles continue to rage throughout the world. In March 2004 Islamic terrorists bombed the transit system of Madrid; in July

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2005 four bombs went off in London; in October 2005 several bombs exploded in succession in Baghdad; three hotels were bombed in Jordan; poor lower class Muslims set fires in France in November 2005. Further violence continues in Israel even though Gaza and four West Bank towns were given to the Palestinians. The new president of Iran has threatened to wipe Israel off the map. With little hope of a stable society or government in these terrorist countries, will the world ever enjoy freedom from terrorism? The hearts of many are anxious because of the prospect of the future: "And there shall be ... upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Luke 21:25,26, ASV).

Terrorism

Edward Gibbon said, "History is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation's definition of terrorism is "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives"¹

While America's "war" has captured several terrorist leaders, it has also seen the recent merger of two of the largest terrorist organizations into one larger and stronger Islamic militant association. And Islam is now the fastest growing religion in the world.

Islam

Islam came into existence in 622 A.D. through the efforts of a merchant's son whose name was Mohammed. Today one out of every five people in the world is a Muslim and thus a follower of Mohammed's teachings. Most Muslims are not terrorists. Many devoted followers of Mohammed both believe and teach that their religion is one of peace; but there are a number of other Muslims who teach differently. These Muslim extremists use terrorism as a means to an end. But what is that end?

Similar to other religions, Islam has its own sects and divisions. The main groups, Shi'ite, Sunni, and Sufi, all contain moderates, fundamentalists, and extremists; each has its own

unique perspective on the teachings of the Koran. The Shi'ite and the Sunni are the largest groups. The Sunnis believe their Scriptures are the final authority while the Shi'ites look to prophets as the leaders of the Muslim world community, and they believe in prophetic succession.

The Koran

Although the Koran considers Jesus to be one of the greatest prophets, it denies that he is the son of God. The Koran even denies Jesus died at all. From the time it was first written, there have been atrocities of war and terrorism based on differing interpretations of the Koran. Consider these passages:

2:190-193 "Fight in the cause of God those who fight you ... And slay them wherever ye catch them ... And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevail justice and faith in God."

2:216 "Fighting is prescribed for you and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But God knoweth and ye know not."

4:101 "For the Unbelievers are unto you open enemies."

4:89 "They but wish that ye should reject faith as they do, and thus be on the same footing as they. But take not friends from their ranks until they flee in the way of God. But if they turn renegades, seize them and slay them wherever ye find them."

5:36 "The punishment of those who wage war against God and His apostle and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land. That is their disgrace in this world and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter."

5:54 "O ye who believe. Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors. They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them [for friendship] is of them. Verily God guideth not a people unjust."

9:5 "Fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem [of war]."

1. Source: http://www.fbi.gov/publications/terror/terror2000_2001.htm

47:4 “Therefore, when ye meet the unbelievers, smite at their necks, at length when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly [on them] ... but if it had been God’s will, he could certainly have exacted retribution from them [himself], but [he lets you fight] in order to test you, some with others. But those who are slain in the way of God, he will never let their deeds be lost.”

Psalm 83

“They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance” (Psalm 83:4).

This prophecy has not had a complete fulfillment as yet, for to be “cut off from being a nation” Israel must first have become a nation. That did occur in 1948. On May 15, 1948, the day Israel declared its independence, Azzam Pasha, Secretary General of the Arab League, declared “jihad” against Israel: “This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades” (*New York Times*, May 16, 1948).

At the time Egypt’s president, Gamal Abdul Nasser, stated, “We shall not enter Palestine with its soil covered in sand ... We shall enter it with its soil saturated in blood” (March 8, 1965).

A few months later Nasser stated that his aims were the “full restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people. In other words, we aim at the destruction of the State of Israel. The immediate aim: perfection of Arab military might. The national aim: the eradication of Israel.”

At the same time the Iraqi President, Abdur Rahman Aref, boasted, “Our goal is clear—to wipe Israel off the map.”

The PLO’s stated mission objectives include:

1. “The elimination of Zionism in Palestine!”—Article 15.
2. “The 1947 partition of Palestine in and the establishment of the State of Israel are entirely illegal”—Article 19.

Because similar conflicts as described in Psalm 83 have occurred in times with some of the nations listed, but not with all the specific nations against Israel at the same time, we look to the future and a modern map for fulfillment

of this prophecy. Here are the nations listed in Psalm 83 along with their modern name today:

Biblical Name	Modern Nation
1. Edom	Southern Jordan
2. Ishmaelites	Bedouins (nomadic)
3. Moab	Central Jordan
4. Hagarenes	Egypt (?); <i>or</i> Hagarites (1 Chron. 5:10, 19-22), N.E. Jordan
5. Gebal	Central Lebanon (Byblos; modern Jubayl)
6. Ammon	Northern Jordan (capital: Amman)
7. Amalek	Sinai peninsula
8. Philistines	Gaza strip
9. Tyre	Southern Lebanon
10. Assur	Iraq (Assyria was in Northern Iraq)

The result of Psalm 83 may lie with verse 18, that men may know that only Jehovah’s name is the most high (and not the name of Allah).

The End?

Psalm 83 is not the end. The end of the war is described in Ezekiel 38 where we find the enemy in “Jacob’s trouble” is not the Arab nations as described in Psalm 83, but rather an entirely different collaboration of nations. While the majority of the nations listed in Ezekiel 38 are not Arab, most of them are Muslim. Here is the Ezekiel 38 list:

Biblical Name	Modern Nation
1. Gog/Magog	Great Russians (including Muslim republics, e.g., Uzbekistan)
2. Meshech	Armenians
3. Tubal	Georgians (Kartvelia = mountains of Tubal; capital Tblisi)
4. Persia	Iran
5. Ethiopia [Cush]	Ethiopia, <i>or</i> Black Africa
6. Libya [Put]	North Africa (Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco)
7. Gomer	Northern Europe (Ashkenaz and Riphath) and Turkey

The enemy in “Jacob’s trouble” are not Arab nations.

And for the western block nations of verse 13:

8. Sheba and Dedan	Arabia (Genesis 25:1-6; 10:7)
9. Tarshish and young lions	Westernmost Europe and former colonies (Ezekiel 27:12)

The result of Psalm 83 was that the nations would know the name of the Lord. The result of Ezekiel 38 is similar: “I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign LORD. Every man’s sword will be against his brother. I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed ... and on the many nations with him. And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD” (Ezekiel 38:21-23, *NIV*).

“We are fully aware of the fact that many of the Lord’s people who have come to a knowledge of the Divine Plan have been inclined to discredit any interpretation and application of the prophetic Word to the great Mohammedan power. However, when we carefully examine the history of this once powerful empire, and its baneful religion as it has affected Christianity, its beclouding the Gospel sunlight of Truth, etc., we can scarcely avoid the conviction that it, as well as the great Papal system, has its place in the prophetic Word.”—“The Long Promised Regathering of Israel,” *The Herald of Christ’s Kingdom*, June, 1922.

“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28, *NIV*).

The End of Terrorism

The end result of this will be the fruition of God’s plan and the fulfillment of prophecy. The terrorists will be held accountable.

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Romans 2:14-16).

“But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with

few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48).

They will learn of the Lord God and they will be judged righteously: “The LORD shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment. He shall judge the world in righteousness, and He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness” (Psalm 9:7,8, *NKJV*).

Yet the kingdom of God will lead the inhabitants of the world, including the present followers of Mohammed, to trust in God’s promises and to proclaim in that day that “this is our God: we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isaiah 25:9). “For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isaiah 26:9).

In that day the Lord will make himself known to all men on the earth. “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). “After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

“He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Micah 4:3).

This is God’s answer to terrorism: “So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:31-36).

We can scarcely avoid the conviction that the great Mohammedan power has its place in the prophetic Word.

Biblical Earthquakes: What Do They Mean?



And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.—Luke 21:11

Adam Koczyk

Numerous earthquakes have been experienced in different parts of the world in recent times. Prior to December 26, 2004, few knew what a tsunami was. Now a tsunami that shook the world is known worldwide. Tsunami (tsoo-na-mee) is a Japanese word: *tsu* means harbor and *nami* means wave. The wave can range from hundred-foot-high breakers close to shore moving at speeds of twenty miles per hour to barely noticeable ripples in the deep ocean traveling at speeds as high as 620-mph (faster than a passenger jet) moving away from the sudden movement of the ocean floor. Earthquakes, landslides on the sea floor, volcanic eruptions, or meteorite impacts, form them. Large earthquakes on the sea floor cause most tsunamis; huge slabs of rock on the earth's crust are forced to move past each other suddenly, causing the overlying water to move.

On the morning of December 26, 2004, a magnitude 9.0+ earthquake struck 155 miles southwest of Ache Province, Indonesia. This is at the edge of the ring of fire, an earthquake belt that accounts for 81% of the world's largest earthquakes. The earthquake was only twenty miles below the surface; it deformed the ocean floor, pushing the overlying water into a massive tsunami wave. The rupture was 750 miles long from Western Sumatra to the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. There was a thirty-to-sixty-foot horizontal motion and some vertical movement.

The earthquake itself lasted approximately ten minutes, a surprise since major earthquakes usually last no more than a few seconds. It generated a tsunami that ranks among the deadliest disasters in modern history. TV showed vivid images of the surging waves with debris floating in a wave surge that swept away cars,

buses, and even trains. It overturned huge ships in the harbors and some large ocean vessels were swept a mile inland.

It caused our planet to wobble on its axis one inch and shortened the day by three-millionths of a second. Its power was said to be the equivalent to 23,000 Hiroshima atomic bombs, a number calculated according to the pressure required to displace the billions of tons of water. Smaller islands southwest of Sumatra moved 66 feet. The northern tip of Sumatra moved 118 feet southwest. The earthquake had a huge impact on the topography of the seabed. A newly formed oceanic trench several miles wide was found in the earthquake zone.

The tsunami devastated nearby areas. The wave was up to a hundred feet high and killed over three hundred thousand people. The U.N. estimates that it displaced one million people and deprived five million of basic services.

The wave itself traveled around the globe and was measured in the Pacific and many other parts of the world. It also triggered earthquakes elsewhere as far away as Alaska. The resulting tsunami devastated the shores of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, South India, Thailand and other countries. Some eighteen countries around the Indian Ocean sustained damage. It caused serious damage and deaths as far as the east coast of Africa, five thousand miles away from the epicenter.

For the survivors of the catastrophe, an immense challenge lies ahead. Families are fractured and loved ones are missing or dead. Livelihoods have been lost and local economies are devastated. Much of the infrastructure has been swept away. In some areas no houses remain, not a road, not a bridge, or a water well. In the worst natural disaster in modern

times the world community has rushed to help traumatized victims recover from the wreckage. Villages on the west coast of Indonesia were totally leveled. All vegetation has been wiped out. Roads are under water and bridges look like a giant hand has picked them up and tossed them hundreds of yards away. In many cases the seawater reached three miles inland destroying hundreds of thousands of square miles of farmland.

Since 1900 the only earthquakes recorded with a greater magnitude were the 1960 Great Chilean Earthquake (magnitude 9.5), 1964 Prince William Sound (9.2), and the March 1957 Andreanof Island (9.1). Each of these mega-earthquakes also spawned tsunamis in the Pacific Ocean, but the death toll was significantly lower because of lower population densities.

What Does the Bible Say about Earthquakes?

At our Lord's first advent, the disciples came to Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem with this question: "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3, NAS). Jesus' answer is most enlightening: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes" (Matthew 24:7, NAS).

In a few words Jesus described the history of the Gospel age, with literal famines, pestilences, and earthquakes revealing the imperfect climatic conditions of this "present evil world." God has allowed these imperfect conditions to exist for the express purpose of impressing upon mankind the unfruitful results of disobedience by our first parents.

God said to Adam when he disobeyed in Eden, "Cursed is the ground because of you" (Genesis 3:17, NAS). Famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are part of the curse upon the human family. God foresaw that the death penalty inflicted in this manner would furnish man, through experiences, a lesson of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, a lesson that would never have to be repeated. The lessons will profit everyone throughout eternity.

God gave a promise that eventually the son of a woman should provide deliverance

for mankind. The apostle Paul tells us about God's method to recover man from the original sentence of death which came through Adam's fall. Here is what he says about this Divine Plan of the Ages by which God would remain just and unchangeable in his attitude toward sin and sinners, and yet grant favor to the willing: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26).

Earthquakes and Tempests in the New Testament

The word earthquake in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *seismos*, Strong's #4578, and means "a commotion (of the air) a gale; (of the ground) an earthquake." On one occasion this Greek word is NOT translated earthquake: "Behold, there arose a **great tempest** in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep" (Matthew 8:24). "Tempest" is from the Greek *seismos*. From a scriptural standpoint, cyclones, hurricanes, and tornadoes in recent years are considered the same as earthquakes.

Another scriptural reference to an earthquake is found at the time of our Lord's crucifixion: "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and **the earth shook** and the rocks were split. ... Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the **earthquake** and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:51,54, NASB).

Undoubtedly this earthquake was God's revelation to Israel and to the Roman occupiers of Jerusalem of his great displeasure at their terrible act of crucifying Jesus. It was as though God was saying that henceforth, their temple services were finished. The veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom. God's presence with Israel would no longer be manifested in the temple. Jesus pointed forward to this time

These imperfect conditions exist to impress upon mankind the unfruitful results of disobedience.

when he answered the woman of Samaria who said: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." (John 4:20-23).

On the morning of Christ's resurrection God also used an earthquake: "And behold, **a severe earthquake** had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it" (Matthew 28:2, NAS). This further convulsion of nature, together with the appearance of God's angel, struck terror in the hearts of those charged with securing the tomb, but it also heralded the resurrection morning and brought joy to the disciples who came to the tomb.

Here is what happened when the disciples were all together on the Day of Pentecost: "And when they had prayed, the place **was shaken** where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the [holy spirit], and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). This was an evidence of God's presence to bless the disciples, and give them courage "to speak the word with boldness."

An earthquake was used for a quite different purpose when Paul and Silas were in prison: "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house **were shaken**; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were unfastened" (Acts 16:25,26, NAS). In addition to freeing these two men of God who had been

unjustly cast into prison, the jailor and his house were converted when he realized God was speaking to him through that amazing act of nature. Truly, God works in mysterious ways.

Because of Christ's redemptive work, all may escape death by accepting the conditions of life. All members of the human race, sharers in the death penalty, will be released from the tomb, brought to a knowledge of Christ and his ransom work, and their opportunity to repent and receive full restitution to divine favor (Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:21,22).

Adam's death penalty has been cancelled by Christ's ransom. No longer should death be regarded as final but as a sleep (Matthew 9:24; John 11:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; 5:10) from which all will be awakened and given a full opportunity to live forever. However, all who fail to repent and accept the kingdom conditions will perish (Acts 3:23; Psalm 37:8-11). Second death will apply to any who refuse God's favor of reconciliation and life (Revelation 20:14,15).

God's judgments were manifested through the convulsions of nature at Christ's first advent, and in the days of the apostles. But today the earthquakes occurring throughout the world are not direct judgments of God; they are an evidence of the imperfect condition of the earth.

Earthquakes can well remind us of the great judgments of God that are yet to come when "this present evil world" will pass away so that there can be a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). This principle will be demonstrated in a marked way in the closing days of this "present evil world" or dispensation, in which "earthquakes" will play an important role in the Lord's plan to bring eternal peace and happiness to the world of mankind.

Death is not final; it is a sleep from which all will be awakened.

Countries will fight each other; kingdoms will attack one another. There will be famines and earthquakes everywhere.—Matthew 24:7, Today's English Version



The Third World

The Heathen Rage

Why are the nations in an uproar, and the peoples devising a vain thing?—Psalm 2:1, NAS

*Len Grieb*s

World population has almost tripled since 1950, growing from 2.5 billion to about 6.5 billion today. Even if the slowdown in growth that began in 1990 continues, world population will exceed nine billion people by 2050.

A study by McKinsey Consultants suggests that over the next twenty years, 94 percent of that growth in population will occur in countries with emerging economic markets. Countries with advanced economies will account for only about one percent of the increase in population.

Among the largest of these emerging markets are China and India. With a combined population of 2.4 billion people, they account for almost forty percent of the world's population. More people live in China than in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa combined. Adding those who live in east and south Asian developing countries, we can account for over half of humanity. If these demographic projections are correct, India will have more people than China within the next thirty years. Certainly Asia will become the world's demographic power, if not the world's economic power.

At the 2005 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, former U.S. treasury secretary Larry Summers argued that our world is in the midst of a transformation as profound as the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. He said that today's transformation is being driven by technological change in communications as well as the entry of billions of Asians into the world economy.

Communication technologies have always played a key role in human history. Consider the impact of writing, printing, the telegraph, telephone, radio, and television. Today the Internet is reducing the marginal cost of collect-

ing, storing, accessing, and transmitting information to almost zero. More than one billion people have access to the Internet and more than one and a half billion can access information through cell phones.

This acceleration in the speed of communication accompanied by the decline in the cost of transporting information around the globe has resulted in a four-fold increase in the number of workers available to the world economy. The untapped potential is even bigger than anything that has happened to date. We are globalizing the economy as we enter the Information Age.

The End of the Industrial Age

The Industrial Age began in the 1700s in England with the invention of the steam engine. Within two hundred years England's workforce committed to agriculture had dropped from 75% to less than 10%. By the 1920s, manufacturing had replaced agriculture as the world's leading industry.¹ Before World War I, cross-border trade and investment as a share of economic output reached an all-time high—even higher than today. British East India, the first corporation, was formed at that time to promote international trade. Arguably the two World Wars were merely disruptions in the world's transformation to globalization that began with the Industrial Revolution.

By 1950 75% of the available labor pool was engaged in some type of manufacturing. Then with the advent of the technology industry the importance of manufacturing began to decline. Within ten years, only 50% of the world's labor pool was engaged in manufacturing. By 2000 this had declined to 16%.²

1. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. Academic Press: New York, 1974.
2. Raj Aggarwal, Firestone Chair and Professor of Finance, Kent State University in *Globalization and Outsourcing*.

Data regarding spending on capital equipment, published by Global Insight, an organization that collects information from 120 industries in over two hundred countries, shows this decline in the importance of manufacturing. Beginning in 1991, the annual global spending on computing and communications exceeded spending on all other capital equipment.

Thomas Friedman, in *The World is Flat, A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*, suggests a three-stage transformation that occurs during globalization. The first stage occurs as countries develop and control services and information; the second stage is a shift from country-based to company-based control; the third stage is a shift from company-based to connections/people-based control. At the third stage nation states are irrelevant in the conduct of commerce or the accumulation of wealth.

With the rise of the Internet and technology, distance is no longer a barrier to participation in the pursuit of economic wealth. This has resulted in an Information Revolution akin to the Industrial Revolution. It has transformed external and internal business relationships. It is driven by technology rather than transportation, and has accompanied, if not caused, a decline in socialism around the world as people rush to participate. No better example exists today than that of China and India, two countries with emerging population growth.

It has taken almost one hundred years to restore the cross-border trading and investment as a share of economic output to the same levels as in 1905. With the fundamental forces in operation, the only thing that could slow or reverse it is another World War.

“Chindia”

Today China is the second largest and India is the fourth largest economy in terms of purchasing power. The Chinese economy is growing and expanding its ties with the rest of Asia. While development is particularly strong along the coast, poverty remains throughout the interior regions. This has caused instability in China’s social system and could result in major political change. China remains a

reforming communist country with little regard for World Trade Organization rules.

Manufacturing has been rapidly moving to China, resulting in a great negative impact on other countries such as the United States. Manufacturing in China is low-cost, high-quality, and reliable. Chinese companies are becoming increasingly sophisticated and building global brands.

India is quickly closing the gap between itself and China. The value of its goods and services (gross domestic product) is about \$630 billion. Services account for one-half of India’s economic activity with the other half equally split between agriculture and manufacturing. India’s real growth in GDP was the highest in the world in 2003, and remains among the fastest growing economies in the world.

As in China, a wealthy class is emerging in India. This upper class is estimated at about 50 million; a middle class is estimated at 250 million; a poor class is estimated at 400 million and a class in severe poverty of some 350 million. Unlike China, India is a democracy with a free press, a strong and independent judiciary, and an advanced educational system.

India is becoming the high-quality “back office” of the world, with more CMM level 5 certifications than any other country.¹

The types of work being outsourced to India include software services, customer relations, finance and accounting services, medical tourism, engineering and design, and research. U.S. companies have no difficulty servicing customers 24 hours a day using Indian companies.

In both India and China these four forces—population shifts, technology, globalization, and outsourcing—are transformational. They are making these emerging nations into world powers as nothing has done before. The result is a change in the religious, social, and economic world for the remainder of this Gospel age.

Failure of Christianity in China and India

End-time prophecy speaks of God gathering the nations to pour out the “fire” of his indig-

China is the second largest and India is the fourth largest economy in the world.

1. Developed by the Software Engineering Institute (SEI) at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, CMM (Capability Maturity Model) is a set of rigorous standards for software development based on five levels. Of some seventy companies worldwide that have publicly acknowledged reaching the highest rating of Level 5, about fifty are in India, according to the SEI and Gartner Inc.

*As power shifts
to the east the
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supporters
will wane.*

nation. Of course that “fire” need not be literal. God will give everyone, including those who have not known him, the pure language of his truth: “Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people [who felt his wrath] a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent [shoulder to shoulder]” (Zephaniah 3:8,9).

When nineteenth-century missionaries from Christian nations were sent to China, raiders used both Protestantism and Catholicism to aggressively strip the country of its resources, and most Christian churches went underground. When Communism took hold and The People’s Republic of China emerged, Christian churches became even more reclusive. The result was a poor showing for Christianity; there are only thirty million Christians (3% of the population) in China today.

Christianity entered India at about the same time as it did in Europe. Tradition says the apostle Thomas preached in India, but there is little evidence to support that contention. Most converts heard the message from missionaries who arrived during the fifteenth century European commercial explorations.

The Portuguese were the earliest explorers to arrive. Vasco da Gama commanded the first venture, circling Africa and arriving in 1498. Pope Alexander VI, the secular pope of the Renaissance, had encouraged Portuguese explorers. Alexander was anxious to restore credibility to the church after the Middle Ages and ordered explorers to forcibly baptize converts wherever they went. As a result, da Gama and others fought wars against the local Indian rulers, and forced Roman Catholicism on Syrian Christians who had been worshipping God for centuries.

During the transition of India to British power beginning in 1600, missionaries were not allowed to enter until some two hundred years after British rule began. These missionaries did not force conversion and only a small minority of the population was converted. The result is that India has only 30 million Christians (2½% of its population) spread through-

out Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Manipur, and Mizoram, with a large community in Mumbai. When ruling parties changed in 2004, more tolerance was granted to minority religions such as Christianity, but the U.S. State Department’s Annual Report on International Religious Freedom still cites much religious intolerance there, including frequent attacks on Christian minorities.

As in the past changes are likely to occur in world politics as economic power shifts from the “Christian” west to non-Christian nations. The countries wielding demographic power and dominating the global economy will not be driven by even the appearance of Christian values. Perhaps the biggest change will occur in the small nation of Israel. Today Israel is supported by evangelical Christians from western nations who wield a dominant role in world politics. Soon power will shift to the east. The influence of Israel’s current supporters will wane and be superseded by those with little regard for either Christ or Judaism.

Jacob’s Trouble

“Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say: Thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; and I will turn thee about, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed most gorgeously, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them handling swords: Persia, Cush, and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah in the uttermost parts of the north, and all his bands; even many peoples with thee.”—Ezekiel 38:2-6, *Jewish Publication Society (1917 translation)*.

No scriptural passage describing the last great battle preceding the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth is as descriptive and informative as that found in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Here, the final overthrow of earth’s current order is pictured in the invasion of a restored holy nation by Gog (of/and) Magog.

Written in about 600 B.C., these two chapters detail the historic invasion of the Middle East by the Scythians from the north during the reign of Josiah. Ezekiel compares it to the battle that will be fought against Israel at the

end of this present evil age. The difficulty is that many of the nations contained in his record no longer exist. Without attempting to identify all these nations, one important fact stands out: None of the invaders Ezekiel names are plaguing Israel today. Many of them were those farthest from Israel in Ezekiel's day. Prophetically this suggests that the fulfillment will come after the current issue of land rights has been settled and Israel is no longer warring with its Arab neighbors. The battle is waged by the world outside the Middle East coming against a fairly peaceful and holy nation restored under the headship of God.

Gog and Magog

"Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." Some translations render "chief" in verse 2 as the proper name "Rosh ... prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal." Supporters of this translation thus connect it with Russia. A popular evangelical idea suggests Russian leaders directing forces from the United Nations against Israel. Newer translations, including the Jewish Tanakh, render the Hebrew as "chief prince" because the term ROSH appears 456 times within the Old Testament and never as a proper noun. Example: the "first" or "chief" day of the Jewish calendar is called ROSH HASHANAH.

So is identifying Gog and Magog with Russia incorrect? Perhaps not. But perhaps it should include China as well. Modern Russia began in the ninth century with the entry of the Rus, a tribe of Vikings, into what is now northwestern Russia. According to the medieval *Primary Russian Chronicle*, a certain Viking prince named Rurik was hired by the Slavs to bring order to their country. By the tenth century the group had developed a flourishing state known as *Rus*. This area included parts of modern Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Of course no such nation existed at the time Ezekiel wrote his prophecy.

One of the earliest references to Magog is found in the writings of Hesiod, "the father of Greek didactic poetry." He identified Magog as the Scythians in southern Russia during the seventh century B.C. Hesiod was a contemporary of Ezekiel.

Some two hundred years later, Herodotus of Harlicarnassus, known as the "Father of History," wrote extensively about the Scythians. He described their reign of terror in

southern Russia from the tenth to the third century B.C.

Another well-known source is Josephus Flavius, who records that the Magogians were called "Scythians" by the Greeks. "Magog founded the Magogians, thus named after him, but who were by the Greeks called Scythians. But even the Scythians, who delight in murdering people and are little better than wild beasts, nevertheless think it their duty to uphold their national customs." (Josephus, *Antiquities* 1:6:2).

The Great Wall of China, in an eighth century reference, was called *Sud Yagog et Magog* (The Rampart of Gog and Magog). Marco Polo, Venetian traveler to the Orient in the thirteenth century A.D., seemed to hold to the idea that the Mongolian people were part of Magog. He further listed the names of "Gog and Magog" as "Ung and Mungu" in China (Polo Travels:87)

The term Mongol may be derived from the term Magog. In India, for example, Mongol becomes Moghul and a large part of China was known as Mangi when the Europeans first visited it. The word Mongolian is one that is frequently used to denote the whole population of inner and northern Asia.

How does this fit with Ezekiel's prophecy? The land and people today occupying "the land of Magog" are likely those who migrated via southern Russia to Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, central and some of northern and southern China. Today these are the Chinese people.

An Economic Battle

Ezekiel 38:10-13 (CEV) states why Gog and Magog have an interest in the regathered nation of Israel: "When that day comes, I know that you will have an evil plan to take advantage of Israel, that weak and peaceful country where people live safely inside towns that have no walls or gates or locks. You will rob the people in towns that were once a pile of rubble. These people lived as prisoners in foreign nations, but they have returned to Israel, the most important place in the world, and they own livestock and property. The people of Sheba and Dedan, along with merchants from villages in southern Spain, will be your allies. They will want some of the silver and gold, as well as the livestock and property that your army takes from Israel."

In Ezekiel's day, silver, gold, livestock, and property represented multiple sources of eco-

None of the invaders Ezekiel names are plaguing Israel today.

conomic wealth. The Hebrew can mean anything that is acquired or achieved, either physical or intellectual.

Alvin Toffler has been one of the world's most influential futurists since the publication of his 1970 landmark book *Future Shock*. He anticipated, long in advance, today's computer revolution, as well as cyber-warfare, cloning, the fragmentation of the family, cable television, satellites, customized products, the speed-up of daily life, niche markets and the rise of the "knowledge economy." Military strategists from Washington and Paris to Beijing and Moscow have studied his and his wife's recent book, *War and Anti-War*. Some of the ideas expressed in the book are worth considering when discussing how things may transpire as Ezekiel's prophecy begins to be fulfilled.

"Can the world make a peaceful transition into what we've called a 'Third Wave civilization'—a knowledge-based economy and society? Unfortunately, the world cannot undergo so profound and accelerated a transformation without conflict. ... If you haven't factored conflict into your forecast, it's likely to be wrong. Conflict, of course, doesn't have to be violent. It may just take the form of corporate politics. ... It may be social, religious, or cultural conflict in a community or country. But whatever form it takes, no significant change can occur without it. When you add the speed of change we're now experiencing to all the changes in technology, economics, family life, demography, ecology—and you put all these together, you have a recipe for conflict—and escalation. When the industrial revolution began in England it triggered fifty years of political conflict with the 'landed gentry,' the agrarian elite trying to maintain its economic and political power against a rising group of commercial and industrial interests."

—"Looking at the Future with Alvin Toffler," a series of four columns in USA Today.com, February 2000.

Could it be that Israel gains some proprietary and envied technological or intellectual advantage that the then well-established powerhouses in Asia find attractive and that this triggers a war? Economic pressures are used today throughout the world to bring nations to their knees and force them to conform to desired rules and regulations. Perhaps this is

the key to understanding how Israel might become isolated. In his 1942 (revised 1968) exposition, *Jacob's Trouble*, the late A. O. Hudson described a scenario that seems an eerie predictor of today's environment:

"Most wars of conquest in history were waged with an economic motive, to gain possession of natural advantages or sources of raw materials or the control of trade routes. ... The great commercial powers of the world, trained to think only of acquisition and profit, but necessarily having to consider effects upon the human populations involved, who are both their customers and their sources of labour, have other weapons in their armoury which are employed to the full before resource is had to naked force. Terms such as economic sanctions, withholding of credit, tariff barriers, cold war, had no meaning to the Scythian marauders of Ezekiel's time but they do have a meaning today. Perhaps the first sign that Gog's army, drawn from all the world, has begun its march to the place where it is to meet its end might well be the launching of a planned and unprecedented economic aggression aimed at cutting off the Servant Nation's links with the remainder of the world and forcing it to agree to its enemies' terms. A stranglehold upon the trade and production of the Holy Land might be tightened over, perhaps, a period of years."

It is significant that the list of enemies of Israel appearing in Ezekiel 38 contains none of the Semitic race. By comparing them to the Table of Nations listed in Genesis 10, one can see that the nations of Ezekiel 38 that descend from the North originate from Japheth and those from the South are from Ham. Could China and India be part of Gog and Magog? The peoples of both countries trace their ancestry to Japheth. Both are rising powers that will soon dominate world economics. It could well be that Russia and modern China will emerge from the land of Magog and lead the nations against Israel in Ezekiel's final battle.

If so, the current rise of the eastern countries is surely evidence that God's plan is swiftly moving ahead. We can be assured from the prophecy that God will bring these spoiling nations to their knees: "He gathered them together in a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

The current rise of the eastern countries is evidence that God's plan is moving ahead.

On the Other Hand

Magog Is Not China

Magog means the “region of Gog” (the king); the name Gog (or *Saka* in eastern languages) means “lifted up” (like the Hebrew *gag* meaning roof). The people are called Massagetae by many, meaning Ma-Saka-Ta, “the region of the Saka hordes” (e.g., see Gesenius’ lexicon). Lamsa, from the Aramaic, translates Magog as Mongol. The ethnic group includes the Great Russian, Samoyed (northern Russia), Uzbeki, Kazakh, Mongol, Korean, Yakut (they call themselves Sakha), Eskimo and Aleut. Genesis 10 derives them from Japheth. When the Saka tribe engaged in foreign conquests, they left their own region (Ma-); so they were called simply Saka Ta (Scythian in the West, Sogdian in the East).

Elam, meaning “most distant” (in space or time; like Hebrew *olam*), is the firstborn of Shem, and the most numerous of Semitic peoples—therefore the Chinese. The Chinese built a wall to keep Magog out. Hence, the Chinese are no part of Magog and are not specifically mentioned by Ezekiel 38 (though Ezekiel 32:24 links Elam with Egypt, Meshech and Tubal, Edom, and Sidon), and evidently will play no great role near Israel.

India was invaded by Caucasians of the Medes (Madaï) and then of Magog, pushing the Dravidians (from Cush) to the south. India, like China, has little history of distant wars so it is also questionable whether India will have great involvement in the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39. Could the rise of China and India be what causes Gog to invade elsewhere?

Sheba and Dedan are descended from both Cush and Abraham (Genesis 10:7; 25:1-3)—likely the Arabians. Mentioned first in Ezekiel 38:13, they are likely to be then at the head of the Western bloc of nations. Tarshish and its young lions represent westernmost Europe and its former colonies. In that they protest, “Art thou come ...” (rather than “Art thou gone ...”), this Western bloc likely has already a prior involvement with Israel and its immediate neighbors.

—James Parkinson

The Jew! The Jew! The Jew!

Reprints, pp. 3854, 3855 (September 15, 1906)

Spiritual Israelites, who recognize that according to the Word of God natural Israel is yet to play an important part in the world's affairs, naturally watch keenly everything transpiring throughout the world affecting the Jews. Noting that the favor to Spiritual Israel meant the disfavor of natural Israel, and that the completion of Spiritual Israel would mean the return of natural Israel to divine favor (Romans 11:25-32), we more than others were prepared to look for and to apply the prophetic promises which belong to fleshly Israel. Thus it was that thirty years ago we were preaching the regathering of natural Israel to Palestine before A.D. 1914. Others mocked, and even orthodox Jews assured us that they did not expect such things for several centuries. Not for fifteen years after that did Dr. Herzl and Dr. Nordau and others dream of and organize the Zionist movement for the reoccupation of Palestine by the natural descendants of Abraham, who, the Apostle says, are still "beloved for the fathers' sakes."

Just as the persecuted Jews of Russia were beginning to look for a place of refuge, and were debating colonies in South America, United States and elsewhere, some going to Palestine—the door to the Promised Land was suddenly closed by the edict of the Sultan of Turkey in 1892. That very prohibition led the Jews to look to the land of their fathers with greater intensity than ever, and the Zionist movement took form and took hold of the hearts of the Jews all the world over. The closing of the "door" led to the greater desire to enter it, and a Zionist fund was started, ostensibly to purchase the land. But only the poor Jews have faith in the promises of the Law and the prophets—the wealthy ones, generally unbelievers, refused their millions to the poorer Zionists and loaned it instead to the persecutors of their race.

As years rolled on and the Zionists became more and more enthused, their plans were laid before the Sultan by Dr. Herzl, and it was said that all of their funds were proffered for conces-

sions in Palestine looking toward the establishing there of a Jewish State, but to no avail—Palestine remained closed. Then the British Government offered specially favorable terms for a subordinate Jewish State south of Palestine, in Africa, and this drew off the interest of some, but only the more whetted the desire of the others for the Promised Land. Then came the death of Dr. Herzl, their great leader, and no one seemed to fill his place, and Zionism began to faint by the way. Now, suddenly, without the influence of a great leader, without the coöperation of the millionaire Jews, without the expenditure of one dollar, the Sultan has lifted the embargo on Jewish emigration to Palestine as suddenly as he placed it, and without ado or explanation. To us who are watching, this all reads, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit [power, influence] saith the Lord." God is behind the movement, and the Jews will yet realize this, and the meek among them will rejoice therein and learn to lean less upon the arm of flesh, and more upon the arm of the Lord.

Meantime the Jews are charged ... by the Russian autocracy with being largely responsible for much of the trouble of that revolution-shaken land. No doubt they will on this account be more and more made the scapegoat of the situation—the Government conniving at their persecution by the revolutionaries. If this persecution has gone on even when Jewish bankers loaned money to Russia, may it not be expected to be intensified when these shall refuse further loans, as is now generally anticipated? The intelligent opposition of the Jews to the present reign of legalized anarchy may lead to a forcible expulsion of the Jews as a popular remedy. ...

A little longer and the plan of God will be complete, and we shall know as we are known. But, meantime, the "watchers" will take comfort from the evidence we have, that all these and other matters of prophecy are reaching fulfillment, and that **on time**.

News & Views

PBI News

Our brethren in Australia have produced fun exercises keyed to each of the ninety-three lessons in the PBI-distributed book *Adam to Zion*. These worksheets plus the text of the book itself are in Adobe Acrobat pdf files and may be printed on a computer. A CD ROM containing the files will be sent without charge on request.

World News



Religious

Church and culture analyst George Barna, founder of The Barna Group, says millions of Christians are leaving conventional churches to meet in homes. According to the researcher, about 50 million American adults meet in home churches at least once a month, and the numbers choosing this option are on the increase. Barna says home churches are a growing trend among Christians who want to “be” the church, not just attend church.

—*Agape Press*, 6/16/2006

Passages from Saudi textbooks:

First grade: “Every religion other than Islam is false.”

Fourth grade: “True belief means ... that you hate the polytheists and infidels but do not treat them unjustly.”

Fifth grade: “It is forbidden for a Muslim to be a loyal friend to someone who does not believe in God and His prophet.”

Eighth grade: “The apes are the Jews, the people of the Sabbath; while the swine are the Christians, the infidels of the communion of Jesus.”

—*Freedom House report*, May, 2006

Fifty women in Morocco have been officially certified as religious teachers, a first for the Muslim nation.

—*The Week*, 6/2/2006

A talent war for financially literate Islamic scholars has erupted as western investment bankers rush to sell their services to devout Muslims. At present, devout Muslims will only buy financial products if a recognized Sharia scholar has issued approval. That is because many Muslims consider usury a sin, and will only invest in products structured to

avoid interest payments. However, there are very few Islamic scholars who command enough religious respect to issue such approvals, called fatwas, and speak good enough English to read the necessary market documentation. That coupled with the fact that investment bankers are rushing to expand their business in the Middle East amid an oil price boom, has triggered heated competition for sharia advice.

—*Financial Times*, 5/20/2006

The Christian population in Japan has remained at around one per cent of the country’s population since 1549, when Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier arrived, says a professor of the sociology of religion at Tokyo’s Roman Catholic Sophia University. “But the young generation no longer has a negative image of Christianity, which was once stigmatized as heretical or a religion of Japan’s enemy [during the Second World War], as many of them are seeking Christian-style weddings,” said Mark R. Mullins, author of the book “Christianity Made in Japan” that has sold thousands of copies in its Japanese version.

—*Ecumenical News International*, 6/22/2006



Social

Warren Buffett on Monday signed over much of his \$44 billion fortune to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, uniting the world’s two richest people in a bid to fight disease, reduce poverty and improve education. The roughly \$30.7 billion donation doubles the Gates Foundation’s size to \$60 billion, five times larger than any other U.S. charitable group and bigger than the gross domestic product of Kuwait.

—*Reuters*, 6/26/2006

A majority of baby boomers say they want to work in retirement. A survey conducted by Harris Interactive for Merrill Lynch found that 71 percent of adults hope to work in retirement. Earning money is just one reason, and it ranks third, the study found. The two leading reasons include remaining mentally and physically active and trying new professions. Many employers aren’t ready for the shift that could affect thousands of their workers.

—*Associated Press*, 5/22/2006

Tens of thousands of Indonesians left homeless by an earthquake on Java had to wait days for food and medicine to arrive. The runway at the region's airport was damaged, so planes couldn't land there, and many of the roads from other airports were impassable. Hospital beds were in short supply for thousands of the injured. More than 5,000 people died in the 6.3 magnitude quake.

—*The Week*, 6/9/2006

The Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze was inaugurated in a public ceremony. The project took 13 years to complete. [It is] 2.3 km (7,575 ft) long and



185 meters (607 ft) high and is one of the vastest engineering works ever realized anywhere in the world. The government claimed the dam cost around 22.5 billion dollars, but many foreign experts in the sector say it is “un-thinkable” that the

project could have been completed with anything less than 40 billion. [It will produce] 84.7 billion kilowatt-hours per year.

—*AsiaNews/Agencies*, 5/20/2006

Angola is in the midst of a gusher in oil revenue with tankers carrying away the 1.4 million barrels of crude pumped here each day. The economy grew by 18 percent last year. The government racked up a budget surplus of more than \$2 billion. This year it is expected to take in \$16.8 billion in revenue, well over twice the \$7.5 billion it received in 2004. Economists say the government simply has more money than it can spend. Yet it seems powerless to address even the basic issues of clean water and sewers. Luanda's slums are now the center of one of the worst cholera epidemics to strike Africa in nearly a decade, an outbreak that has sickened 43,000 Angolans and killed more than 1,600 since it began in February. “I have never seen anything like it,” said David Weatherill, a water and sanitation expert for Doctors Without Borders, which is leading the response to the epidemic.

—*New York Times*, 6/16/2006

In the past three decades, the number of nations that have abolished the death penalty has risen from 16 to 86. Last year four countries accounted for nearly all executions worldwide: China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United States.

—*Newsweek*, 6/26/2006

New Jersey became the first state to institute a statewide steroid-testing policy for high school athletes. Then-Gov. Richard Codey ordered the testing program last December in response to national statistics showing increased steroid use among high schoolers. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 6% of U.S. high school students, or about 300,000, took steroids in 2003 without a doctor's prescription.

—*USA Today*, 6/8/2006

In less than a decade, an estimated four million people have died, mostly of hunger and disease caused by the civil war in the Congo. It has been the deadliest conflict since World War II, with more than 1,000 people still dying each day. Aid agencies in Bunia, the regional capital, have struggled to work in the area. The militias and bandits remain in the countryside even if they have been pushed from their hilltop redoubts, and they prey upon aid convoys for food, medicine and money.

—*New York Times*, 6/23/2006

Political

Construction has begun on the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, designed to house as many as 3 million of the world's crop seeds. Prime ministers of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland were to attend the cornerstone ceremony near the town of Longyearbyen in Norway's remote Svalbard Islands, roughly 620 miles from the North Pole. Norway's Agriculture Minister Terje Riis-Johansen has called the vault a “Noah's Ark on Svalbard.” Its purpose is to ensure the survival of crop diversity in the event of plant epidemics, nuclear war, natural disasters or climate change, and to offer the world a chance to restart growth of food crops that may have been wiped out. The seeds, packaged in foil, would be stored at such cold temperatures that they could last hundreds, even thousands, of years, according to the independent Global Crop Diversity Trust.

—*Associated Press*, 6/19/2006

Water supplies are declining from San Antonio to Austin, the Texas capital, as a mushrooming population and drought conditions strain underground reservoirs, threatening to stall the region's growth. San Antonio is the third-fastest-growing large city in the U.S. according to Census Bureau estimates. Water systems aren't keeping up with the new subdivisions, and wells used by some homeowners are drying up. Central Texas received only two-thirds of its usual rainfall last year and is running behind again this year.

—*Bloomberg News*, 6/19/2006

An environmental disaster is brewing in the heartland of Iraq's northern Sunni-led insurgency, where Iraqi officials say that in a desperate move to dispose of millions of barrels of an oil refinery by-product called "black oil," the government pumped it into open mountain valleys and leaky reservoirs next to the Tigris River and set it on fire. The resulting huge black bogs are threatening the river and the precious groundwater in the region, which is dotted with villages and crisscrossed by itinerant sheep herders, but also contains Iraq's great northern refinery complex at Baiji. Exactly how far those pollutants will travel is unknown, but the Tigris passes through dozens of population centers from Baghdad to Basra.

—*New York Times*, 6/18/2006

Financial

A Massachusetts firm is bidding for the rights to beam radio commercials into school buses. Bus Radio, based in Needham, says it has already signed contracts with school districts representing 100,000 students and will start transmitting a blend of "age appropriate" pop music and kid-targeted radio ads.

—*The Week*, 6/16/2006

As the insurance industry debates how to handle billions of dollars in potential claims from natural disasters, Allstate is dropping earthquake coverage for 352,000 policyholders in most states to cut its risk of losses from catastrophes. Robert Hartwig, chief economist at the insurance information institute trade group, said insurers face rising disaster claims, regulatory caps on raising premiums and higher prices for reinsurance, which is coverage for insurers.

—*USA Today*, 6/7/2006

The gap between rich and poor is bigger in the United States than in any other advanced country. After you adjust for inflation, the wages of the typical American worker—the one at the very middle of the income distribution—have risen less than 1% since 2000. In the previous five years, they rose over 6%. The fruits of productivity gains have been skewed towards the highest earners, and towards companies whose profits have reached record levels as a share of GDP. The structural changes in America's job market that began in the 1990s are now being reinforced by big changes in the global economy. The integration of China's low-skilled millions and the increased off shoring of services to India and other countries have expanded the global supply of workers.

—*The Economist*, 6/15/2006

China's huge hunger for energy and other resources needed to feed its juggernaut economy is creating a profitable bond with commodity exporters, helping to refashion global markets and trading alliances. Sales of Australian coal, farm products, iron ore and other resources drove a 46 percent increase in exports to China last year, to US\$11.8 billion. China is now Australia's second biggest trading partner, after Japan. China is the world's biggest consumer of steel, grain, aluminum, cement, copper, iron ore and zinc, among other commodities. Worldwide, investments in mining and energy exploration are rising ... to keep up with Chinese demand.

—*Associated Press*, 6/27/2006

Israel

In a major diplomatic milestone, Indonesia's government says it will allow its women's Fed Cup tennis team to compete in Israel. Indonesia is the most populous Muslim nation and has been a vocal critic of Israel, which is scheduled to host the world group II playoff in July. The Indonesian tennis federation had originally asked for a change of venue, but Israel would not yield its right to host the event.

—*The Media Line*, 5/24/2006

Hizbullah chief Sheikh Sayyad Hasan Na'srallah told a Beirut conference on "the culture of resistance" that armed warfare is the "only available alternative before us." He said that Israel's northern territories are "under the firing line" of more than 12,000 rockets Hizbullah is believed to possess. May 24 is the sixth anniversary of Israel's unilateral pullout of its forces from Lebanon, a move for which Hizbullah credits its armed attacks on Israeli troops and territory.

—*The Media Line*, 5/24/2006

Adult stem cells are being used by an Israeli research team to create a new orthopedic solution to a difficult and common problem: how to heal torn ligaments and tendons. The research team, led by Professor Dan Gazit, is working to change this by using stem cells taken from bone marrow and genetically engineering them to become different cells altogether. "With this in mind, we can genetically engineer new skeletal tissue—ligaments, cartilage, tendons," explained Dr. Gadi Peled, a senior scientist at the lab. Peled said that in time, the new technology might be used to help people who suffer with lower back pain as well. Invertebrate discs consist largely of tendon tissue that deteriorates over time. The new approach for tendon regeneration was reported in the April issue of the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*.

—*Arutz 7*, 4/6/2006

Investment banker Lehman Brothers' Tel Aviv office did six venture capital deals in less than two weeks in April. Activity in Israel has grown so much that Lehman had to add three more investment bankers to the ten it already has there. The tiny Middle Eastern country, with a population smaller than Manhattan's, has become a global player in innovation, thanks to its thriving venture capital scene, and many home-grown startups. There are now 75 Israeli companies listed on the NASDAQ market—more listings than any foreign country with the exception of Canada. [Israel's] growing strengths include medical technology, biotechnology, and nano-technology.

—*Red Herring magazine*, 6/16/2006

Contradicting most of his colleagues, a former senior leader of the Waqf, the Islamic custodians of the Temple Mount, told WorldNetDaily in an exclusive interview, he has come to believe the first and second Jewish Temples existed and stood at the current location of the Al Aqsa Mosque. The leader, who was dismissed from his Waqf position after he quietly made his beliefs known, said the Muslim world's widespread denial of the existence of the Jewish temples is political in nature and is not rooted in facts. The former leader, who is well known to Al Aqsa scholars and Waqf officials, spoke on condition his name be withheld, claiming an on-the-record interview would endanger his life.

—*WorldNetDaily and YNet.com*, 6/14/2006

China and Israel will work together to introduce Israeli water technology into the world's most populous nation, under a cooperation agreement reached with China's Ministry of Water Resources. Mekorot Water Company Chair, Booky Oren, headed the Israeli delegation, which also made a cooperation agreement with the head of Beijing's water system on the local level. An additional agreement was made with the city of Shenzhen which has 11 million residents. The city suffers from serious water problems, and its water budget under China's current five-year plan is around US \$9 billion. Israeli water technology will be introduced there by 2007.

—*Haaretz*, 5/4/2006

An American couple was posthumously honored at Yad Vashem for saving nearly 2,000 Jews from the Nazis during the Holocaust. In a ceremony at the memorial, Martha and Waitstill Sharp became only the second and third Americans to be inducted into the memorial's "Righteous Among the Nations" group for non-Jews who saved Jews. The Sharps

left their home in Boston—and their two small children—to travel to Prague in 1939, where they helped hundreds of refugees escape the Nazi occupiers of Czechoslovakia. Later, they traveled to Lisbon, where they helped refugees flee Nazi-occupied France into Spain, then Portugal and then to the United States. About 20,000 non-Jews have received the "Righteous Among the Nations" honor.

—*Jerusalem Post*, 6/12/2006

Book Review

Misquoting Jesus. Bart D. Ehrman. New York: Harper Collins Publishers. 2006. 242 pages.

Since the publication of the fictional novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, and the release of the movie based on the book, the media have attempted to discount the authenticity of canon Scripture.

In this best-selling book popular religious scholar Bart Ehrman attempts to prove that current biblical manuscripts are far removed in accuracy from the original texts. Manuscripts were hand copied for almost 1,500 years before the printing press changed everything. Many who copied texts were not professionals, and were heavily influenced by the theological and political disputes of their day. This makes it difficult to reconstruct the actual words and thoughts contained in the original texts. Why should this fatalistic view of Scripture be of interest to Bible Students?

Textual scholars tell us that the Greek New Testament is the second-best-preserved work of antiquity. The best-preserved is the Hebrew Old Testament. Bible Students generally agree that copyists made changes in texts and at times added words of their own (producing what we refer to as spurious texts), as in Matthew 6:13, 24:36; Mark 16:9-20; John 1:18, 7:53 to 8:11; Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 John 5:7-8; Revelation 20:5; and probably Luke 23:34. However, they also contend that the accuracy of Scripture was assured by God's overview producing an accurate record of Jesus' words upon which we can rely as God's word.

One interesting point of Ehrman's book is his discussion of errors that likely crept into the texts because of the influence of beliefs such as the divinity of Jesus and the Trinity. He shows the differences that occur as one compares later manuscripts with earlier ones. He also presents a thorough discussion of the history of today's manuscripts.

—*Len Griehs*

News & Views is edited by Len Griehs. Items of interest may be sent to him at 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades CA 90272, or via e-mail (Griehs@comcast.net).



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Convention Announcements

Inquiries should be sent to the individuals listed below.

Sept. 2, 3—Jackson MI.

FaHoLo Camp & Conf. Center,
 3000 Mt. Hope Rd., Grass Lake
 MI 49240. Mrs. Ray Lumley
 517.782.7252.

☎ Lumley@aol.com

Sept. 2, 3—New York NY.

Wellesley Inn, Two Bridges Road
 at Exit 52 (Rte 80), Fairfield NJ.
 Debra Szybinski 212.998.2095.

☎ ds2@nyu.edu

Sept. 2-4—Seattle WA.

Seabeck Christian Conf. Center,
 15395 Seabeck Highway NW,
 Seabeck WA 98380. Laurie Flinn
 253.939.9838.

☎ laurie@flinn.us

Sept. 8-10—Huntsville AL.

Holiday Inn Select, 401 Williams
 Ave., Huntsville AL. Phillip Mos-
 ley 256.582.3640.

☎ pdm-mlm@charter.net

Sept. 24—Los Angeles CA.

Auditorium, 406 Irving Dr., Bur-
 bank CA 91504. Richard Bieniak
 949.457.0894.

☎ rjbieniak@aol.com

Sept. 24—Detroit MI.

Northwest YWCA, Grand River at
 Beech Daly, Redford MI. Frank
 Nemesh 248.649.6588.

☎ NemeshF@aol.com

Oct. 13-15—New England.

Quality Inn, Vernon CT. Anna
 May Suraci 203.248.3793.

☎ r.suraci@comcast.net

Oct. 14, 15—Pittsburgh PA.

Sewickley Grange Hall, Rt. 135,
 West Newton PA. Charles Kra-
 sonic 724.872.5429.

Oct. 14, 15—Grand Rapids MI.

Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950
 Hendershot Ave., Grand Rapids
 MI. Joanne Houlmont 231.972.4259.

☎ houlmont@charter.net

Oct. 14, 15—San Antonio TX.

Comfort Inn Fiesta, 6755 North
 FM 1604 West, San Antonio TX.
 Sandy Hendrix 512.918.3089.

☎ sshendrix@sbcglobal.net

Oct. 21, 22—San Luis Obispo CA.

Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh St.,
 San Luis Obispo CA. Mark
 Allard 805.773.2962.

☎ medlallard@juno.com

Oct. 22—Detroit/Metro Detroit MI.

Pleasant Ridge Community Cen-
 ter, 4 Ridge Rd., Pleasant Ridge
 MI. Frank Nemesh 248.649.6588.

☎ NemeshF@aol.com

Oct. 28, 29—Orlando FL.

Garden Club of Sanford, 200
 Fairmont Dr., Sanford FL.
 Helen Jeuck 407.699.8303.

☎ hajeuck@earthlink.net

Nov. 5—New Haven CT.

Italian American Club, 85 Chase
 Lane, West Haven CT. Anna May
 Suraci 203.248.3793.

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And finally...

The Madding Pace



Moving, rushing, shoving, pushing,
Heading for some unknown goal,
Always racing, hectic pacing,
Fearing ev'ry treacherous shoal.

Reckless lurching, as they're searching,
For that one elusive end
Still they're going, never knowing,
Upon whom they can depend.

Men desiring, and aspiring,
For an end to toil and strife,
Ever hoping, barely coping,
Seeking for a better life.

Yet it's nearing, soon appearing,
When all wars will ever cease;
Angels singing, Christ is bringing
True and everlasting peace.

Christians praying, waiting, staying,
'Til that time that's promised long,
When peace on earth, no more dearth,
All men will laud in tuneful song.

—Carl Hagensick



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