

# THE WORLD AHEAD

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## MAILING ADDRESSES

**USA office:**  
 P.O. Box 501111  
 San Diego, California  
 92150-1111, USA  
 or toll free: 1-800-959-1641

**Australian regional office:**  
 P.O. Box 772, Canberra  
 ACT 2601, AUSTRALIA  
 or call: (06) 231-8166  
 or freecall: 1800-816-543

**Canadian regional office:**  
 P.O. Box 2400, Edmonton  
 Alberta T5J 2R4, CANADA  
 or call: 1-800-932-4264  
 or (403) 489-9901

**European regional office:**  
 LE SIECLE A VENIR  
 Allée Grand Chênât 30,  
 B-6280 Loverval, BELGIUM  
 or call: (32) 71-218-190

**Guyana regional office:**  
 P.O. Box 10271  
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**New Zealand regional office:**  
 P.O. Box 2767  
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**South African regional office:**  
 P.O. Box 1154, Ferndale 2160  
 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
 or call: (27) 11-664-6036

**United Kingdom regional office:**  
 P.O. Box 111, Airdrie,  
 Lanarkshire ML6 9BS, SCOTLAND  
 or freephone: 0800-136-362

**Editor in Chief**  
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## EDITORIAL



**Roderick C. Meredith**  
 Editor in Chief

## A Key to Success—Now and Forever

There is one key character trait that can serve all of us well—whether in the secular pursuits of this life, or in our quest for eternal life. It is a trait that is increasingly neglected in our laid-back, pleasure-oriented society. Yet the exercise of this character trait can lift any ordinary man or woman from the level of mediocrity to the level of excellence.

What am I talking about?

I am talking about the cultivated capacity to go all out—to make the *second effort*—to be ZEALOUS in the way we live our lives. As any Olympic champion can tell you, you do not drift to success in the Olympic Games. Most of these champions are very focused individuals. They get up early, train hard, watch their diet—and literally *drive themselves* to win an Olympic medal.

Yet nearly every one of them will tell you that the literal joy of success makes it all worthwhile. The deep sense of accomplishment makes all the “blood, tears, toil and sweat” of the months and years of arduous training seem more than worth it. And when they stand on the victory platform and the crowd rises as their national anthem is played—WOW!—what a feeling. *Why* did they ever think it was too hard? *Why* did they ever think it wasn't worth all the grueling effort?

So it is and *must be* in our own spiritual lives. Jesus went all out to teach His disciples, to set us an example and to qualify to be our High Priest. The book of Hebrews says this about Jesus' commitment to His goal: “In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear” (5:7). As our Savior prepared to die for us, He literally sweated blood (Luke 22:44).

Early in His physical life, Jesus was outraged that businessmen were selling animals and merchandise in the very Temple of God. He jerked their tables upside down—spilling their money all over the place. And He made a whip of cords to drive away the animals they were selling. “Then,” the inspired Word of God tells us, “His disciples remembered that it was written ‘ZEAL for Your house has eaten Me up’” (John 2:17).

Such an absolutely *fervent* display of religion is often embarrassing to most Americans, Canadians and British—but *it wasn't to Jesus Christ!* Jesus taught His followers, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men” (Matt. 5:13).

In spite of our modern “fear” of being too zealous or too dogmatic, the entire Bible shows us that the Living God wants men and women who are ON FIRE for Him! What does God want? He wants people who are truly

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# What Happened to Christianity?

by Roderick C. Meredith



Has Christianity FAILED?  
Or has it ever really been tried?  
Few have understood the shocking  
TRUTH about the Western  
world's major religion!  
Ignorance of this vital information is  
certain to affect YOUR LIFE!

**W**hy is “Christianity” divided up into over 400 competing denominations and sects? Why do churches calling themselves “Christian” have so many differing beliefs and practices? Is God the Author of this incredible CONFUSION?

And what about *you*? Have you ever really proved *why* you believe what you believe? Or did you just grow up in “your” church, taking its doctrines and practices for granted—without deeply studying the Bible? Shouldn’t you PROVE what you believe by the inspired Word of God?

Jesus Himself gives you this warning: “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.... For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:5, 24 KJV). Jesus did not say that only a few would come in His name, but that *many* would come in His name—representing themselves as “Christian” preachers who proclaim Jesus as the Christ—DECEIVING MANY! In other words, there was to be a *mass deception* based on the false teachings of the many who would claim to come “in Jesus’ name.”

Frankly, it is easy for religious teachers to *appropriate* the Son of God’s name as a cloak for their personal doctrines, whether or not what they say has any relationship to Jesus’ life, teaching or message at all! That is why God commands us in His Word: “PROVE all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21 KJV). Each of you is responsible to check up on the preaching you hear, whatever the source. Don’t make careless assumptions! **Be sure you know what the Bible really says!**

The Apostle Paul also admonishes, “For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel, which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it” (2 Cor. 11:4). Would *you* put up with “another Jesus”? Could

*you* have been deceived into believing a false Christ and a *false message* purported to have come from Christ?

## The Real Teaching of Jesus

Remember, the real Jesus was a circumcised Jew. He met in the synagogue and kept the Sabbath day. He kept the Ten Commandments as *a way of life* (John 15:10). He inspired Peter to write, “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an *example*, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth’” (1 Peter 2:21-22). Paul instructed the Christians of his day, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Without question, Christ is our *example*—the light that God sent into the world to show us how we ought to live.

The real Jesus said, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, *keep the commandments*” (Matt. 19:17). He continually made clear by His life and His teachings that the way into God’s Kingdom was not only to believe *on* Him but to *believe His message* and to OBEY the laws and ways of God and—through the Holy Spirit—to develop godly character.

The real Jesus of the Bible did not sanction murder or warfare at all. He said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matt. 5:43-44).

The real Jesus based His teaching squarely on the spiritual law of God, the Ten Commandments. In fact, He came to “magnify the law and make it honorable” (Is. 42:21). If you will *study* the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6 and 7, you will find that Jesus did just that. He magnified the Ten Commandments, making them

*even more binding* because Christians are to keep them in the “spirit” or intent—NOT just the letter. So now Jesus’ true followers must not only avoid murder, they are not to even have a hateful or demeaning attitude toward any other humans (Matt. 5:21-22).

The real Jesus did not sanction weak marital commitments or easy, no-fault divorces (Matt. 19:1-9). He taught that not only are we to avoid committing adultery, but that a man must *not even lust* after a woman! Real Christians must “LIVE by... every word of God” (Luke 4:4).

## Which Holy Days Did Jesus Keep?

The biblical record states that Jesus kept the biblical Sabbath and the biblical Holy Days, which God gave Israel. These are the days kept not only by Christ but also, according to the Scriptures, by His apostles for *many decades* after His death (Acts 2:1; 16:13; 17:1-2; 18:21).

Yet today it is only the few who follow the example of Jesus and His apostles. What happened? How did these biblical Holy Days get changed? Why do some say obedience to the Ten Commandments is not necessary for Christians today? Why are divorces, broken homes and immorality skyrocketing in our so-called “Christian” nations? Why have some of the greatest wars in human history been waged between the so-called “Christian” nations of Europe?

Notice the Apostle Paul’s warning to the Ephesian elders near the end of his ministry. “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears” (Acts 20:29-31).

Writing near the end of the

Apostolic Age, the Apostle Jude warned, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4).

Slowly but surely, clever men—inspired by Satan—began to focus the minds of Christians increasingly on the *person* of Christ. While doing this, they subtly modified and finally did away with the real *message* Jesus Christ brought from the Father.

Many prominent church historians acknowledge this. In his excellent handbook on church history, *The Story of the Christian Church*, Jesse Lyman Hurlbut states, “We name the last generation of the first century, from 68 to 100 A.D., ‘The Age of Shadows,’ partly because the gloom of persecution was over the church; but more especially because of all periods in the history, it is the one about which we know the least. We have no longer the clear light of the Book of Acts to guide us; and no author of that age has filled the blank in the history. We would like to read the later work by such helpers of St. Paul as Timothy, Apollos and Titus, but all these and St. Paul’s other friends drop out of the record at his death. For 50 years after St. Paul’s life a curtain hangs over the church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises, about 120 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul” (p. 41).

WHY was the church VERY DIFFERENT than when Peter and Paul were alive? WHO gave its human leaders the *authority* to change basic doctrines and practices?

Mr. Hurlbut continues, “As long

as the church was mainly Jewish, the Hebrew Sabbath was kept; but as it became increasingly Gentile the first day gradually took the place of the seventh day” (p. 45).

“The forms and ceremonies of paganism gradually crept into the worship. Some of the old heathen feasts became church festivals with a change of name and of worship. About 405 A.D. images of saints and martyrs began to appear in the churches, at first as memorials, then in succession revered, adored, and worshipped” (p. 79).

How *very clever* these early false ministers were! First, the images were just “memorials.” Then, after people adjusted to that little modification, the images were revered, then “adored,” and finally “worshipped”!

Slowly, subtly, bit by bit, people were deceived by the word games of clever apostate strategists. The false teachers would tell the people, “We’re not really *changing* anything. This is just a little upgrade, a clarification, just a different way of explaining the same things we have always believed.”

The hapless sheep were led astray gradually—ever so gradually—as *paganism* took over the name of Christianity! People eventually came to accept the idea that all you had to do was believe on the name of Jesus. These false religious leaders did not teach real repentance. There was no real counting the cost and dedication to obeying God’s laws—to letting Christ live in you the *same life* He lived 1,900 years ago! Christians gradually accepted the teaching that the Ten Commandments were “nailed to the cross” or in some other manner done away. Strangely, they even began to venerate the cross itself—a horrifying object of torture and execution in the pagan Roman Empire!

The true message that God sent from heaven about the coming Kingdom of God, *obeying* God’s laws, overcoming the self and preparing to

rule with Christ in His coming Kingdom—all this was slowly watered down and finally eradicated. Instead, a message was preached about the *person* of Jesus Christ—His “Christmas story” birth, His loving nature, His death on the cross—though cleverly *omitting* the fact that Jesus personally *lived* the Ten Commandments and taught them as a way of life! These false preachers especially omitted teaching the scripturally verifiable doctrine about the biblical Holy Days of God and the weekly Sabbath.

The people were left without any definite standard of behavior. They were told, “Accept Christ,” “Love the Lord,” “Love your neighbors” and other such generalities. But the specific way of life based on the Ten Commandments was cast aside. Therefore, gradually, people lost sight of the sinfulness of lying, cheating, stealing, committing adultery and even waging WAR on their fellow “Christian” nations as occurred in Europe. **They simply didn’t know what sin was!**

The Bible says, “Sin is the transgression of the LAW” (1 John 3:4 KJV). But the attention of “Christians” during the Dark Ages following the great apostasy became focused more and more on the *worship* of the virgin Mary, the *veneration* of idols and pleasing the local priest or bishop—whose *word* was often the “law.”

Over the centuries, an entirely different approach to Christianity was foisted onto the people. “Another Jesus”—as Paul warned about—was presented to the unsuspecting public.

### “Something Vastly Different”

In his enlightening book, *The Church’s Debt to Heretics*, Professor Rufus M. Jones tells us, “If by any chance Christ Himself had been taken by His later followers as the model and pattern of the new way, and a serious attempt had been made to set up

His life and teaching as the standard and norm for the Church, Christianity would have been something vastly different from what it became. Then ‘heresy’ would have been as it is not now, deviation from His way, His teaching, His spirit, His kingdom.... What we may properly call ‘Galilean Christianity’ had a short life, though there have been notable attempts to revive it and make it live again, and here and there spiritual prophets have insisted that anything else other than this simple Galilean religion is ‘heresy’; but the main line of historic development has taken a different course and has marked the emphasis very differently” (pp. 15-16).

Isn’t that a remarkable admission from a respected scholar of church history? If Christianity had really followed Christ’s life and teachings, then Christianity would have developed in a “VASTLY DIFFERENT” manner!

As Jesus prophesied, *many* false teachers came in His own name (Matt. 24:5). They talked about Jesus. They talked about “love.” But they set forth a false Christ and a false message about His *person*—rather than faithfully preaching the message of the coming Kingdom of God, which the Father sent by Him. The result?

People are confused about true Christianity. Those who do believe in some form of Christianity are divided into hundreds of competing sects and denominations. Very few of them understand the original form of Christianity that Christ and His apostles taught and lived!

The “Christian” world is in a malaise. It is confused—and its moral system is *impotent* without the sure foundation of God’s law. Secular forces are increasingly dictating the standards of conduct, whereas that used to be the prerogative of religious leaders.

We behold the spectacle of sexual perverts taking over more and more key posts in government, in education and even in some of the mainline churches! We behold the horrifying

statistics about *millions* of unborn babies having their skulls crushed and being vacuumed out of their mothers’ wombs! We behold a society that is truly coming apart at the seams. We behold a society that will soon be directly PUNISHED by the Great God who gives life and breath to all.

Why? Because our peoples have been deceived into believing in “another Jesus.” Because our peoples have lost contact with the true God and His revealed way of life.

As Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, **‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice LAWLESSNESS’**” (Matt. 7:21-23)!

### What You Should Do

What should *you* do? If God has opened your mind thus far to what I am saying, then I urge you to begin a genuine STUDY of the Holy Bible. You may wish to begin reading carefully and thoughtfully through *every word* of the New Testament.

*Study* the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—then the book of Acts. What did Jesus say one should do to inherit eternal life (Matt. 19:17)? Did He say the Ten Commandments were done away or were not important anymore (Matt. 5:17-20)? Didn’t God inspire the beloved Apostle John to say at the very *end* of the Bible that the true saints will *keep* the commandments of God (Rev. 12:17; 14:12)? Study with an open mind and find out what Jesus Christ said about Christianity! Then, pray fervently and ask God for genuine understanding.

The plain TRUTH is that God has let this world go its *own way* for these almost 6,000 years of recorded human

history. He is allowing people—under the influence of Satan the devil—to do their own thing. We are writing the lessons of human experience in suffering of every kind.

A very real Satan the devil has got men and women so confused that they don’t know which end is up. Speaking directly of a spirit battle just a few years ahead of us now, God’s Word says, “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who *deceives* the WHOLE WORLD; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Rev. 12:9).

What could be more clear than that? Again, through the Apostle Paul, God states, “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

You need to cry out to God for *true understanding*. One major key to understanding you should prove to yourself is that Jesus Christ and the original apostles taught the *full* Truth. **Carnal men in various ecclesiastical councils have NO AUTHORITY from God to change that teaching and that way of life!**

For instance, we read that Jesus said, “If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matt. 19:17). Later, He said, “I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love” (John 15:10). And *after* His resurrection—*after* everything was nailed to the cross that was to be nailed—Jesus commissioned His disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen” (Matt. 28:19-20).

So the question you need to ask yourself is: “Who had the authority to

CHANGE this direct command of Christ?” Who had authority to teach *something else*? Obviously, NO ONE.

Again, we read that Jesus always kept the same seventh-day Sabbath that all the Jews were keeping (Luke 4:16). No church historian ever argues that point. Then we read that the Apostle Paul, “as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures” (Acts 17:2). Later, Paul “reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 18:4).

Still later, we find James—the presiding apostle of the Mother Church at Jerusalem—telling Paul, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law” (Acts 21:20). And we find Paul himself helping pay the expenses for some offerings to demonstrate that—in James’s words—“you yourself also walk orderly and **keep the law**” (v. 24).

Can you even imagine the *outrage* among the Jewish Christians that would have occurred if Paul—who was regarded as perhaps a little liberal on a minor sacrificial part of the law—was, in fact, advocating the ABOLITION of the Holy Sabbath day: one of the Ten Commandments, which God gave at Mt. Sinai and which Jesus *always* taught and practiced! The UPROAR that would have occurred throughout the Jewish/Christian world would have made the Acts 15 discussion over circumcision seem like a cup of spilled milk in comparison!

### The Example of the Jerusalem Church of God

A vital clue to understanding the puzzle of a modern “Christianity,” which directly contradicts the teachings and practices of Christ and the original apostles, is to *study* the way of life of the *original* Mother Church—the Church of God at Jerusalem.

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# Why Have All the Leaders DISAPPEARED?

by Douglas S. Winnail, Ph.D.

Why are true leaders in short supply today?  
What is the *real* significance of our leadership crisis?  
The Bible holds surprising answers!

America is once again embroiled in a quest to find and elect new leaders. However, as many readily perceive both here and abroad, there is a widespread feeling of *dissatisfaction* and *disenchantment* with the available candidates.

Those who would like to lead are both unexciting and uninspiring to increasing numbers of people. This disturbing situation, which has been building for years, prompted leadership expert and educator, Warren Bennis, to ask, "Why have we not had any *true* leaders in the White House in a generation?" (*Why Leaders Can't Lead*, 1989, p. 59). Have you ever asked yourself the same question?

The public concern and frustration extends far beyond

Canada is remarkable for its *lack* of great leaders. This absence of leadership is by no means limited to Canada: ruling politicians in France, Russia, the U.S., the United Kingdom and elsewhere *seem to lack* the characteristics of the great statesmen of the past.... There seems a reason for the irritability of the general public today.... It is—not only in this land but in others—the *frustration* in the search for true leaders. There are no giants, a regret in the public mind that **no one can really inspire**" (Feb. 20, 1995, p. 68).

Author David Lamb made a similar observation a few years earlier about another major trouble spot of the world. He wrote, "The tragedy of all Africa, a continent that suffers so much at the hands of *misguided leadership*. Never

the chief executive office of America. Pollster George Barna remarked, "In just the last 20 years we have experienced an anchor-like drop in confidence in all our political leaders. The portion of adults who have 'a great deal of confidence' in our congresspersons has declined to just 7 percent—that's a 71 percent decline in just two decades!" (*If Things Are So Good, Why Do I Feel So Bad*, 1994, p. 63).

## A Worldwide Vacuum

"The problem," according to Warren Bennis, "isn't just ours. It's worldwide. No country—from here to Great Britain to Germany to Israel and Egypt—has the kind of leadership it once had, yet now needs more urgently than ever. It's as if humanity... is suddenly falling out of control of its own destiny" (p. 60).

These same sentiments have echoed recently in the Canadian press. *MacLean's* magazine commented, "The current crop of powerful politicians in

has Africa been more in need of men with reasoned voices and clear visions, and **never has the honor roll of leadership been so barren**" (*The Africans*, 1987, p. 54).

## A Leaderless Age!

The leadership crisis we face today is not just limited to politics. In a recent meeting of chief executive officers of major global corporations, chaired by the former U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, the major topic of discussion was not about problems facing business, but the **appalling lack of leadership in our age**. Mr. Kissinger observed, "Great leaders always appeared on the scene [in the recent past] just in time to pull the world through. But now, try to name only one FDR, or Ike or de Gaulle or Churchill" (*Fortune*, Sept. 19, 1994, pp. 241-242). The author of this article laments, "Wherever you go in business as in government these days, you hear people ask, plaintively, 'Where are the leaders?'"

Churches, once the pillars of society, have also been seriously affected. New Zealand theologian, J. Oswald Sanders, reports, "The church is painfully in need of leaders.... The overriding need of the church, if it is to discharge its obligation to the rising generation, is for leadership that is authoritative, spiritual and sacrificial. The church has always prospered most when it has been blessed with strong, spiritual leaders who expected and experienced the touch of the supernatural in their service." However, Sanders soberly concludes, "The clarion voices that used to make the pulpit the paramount influence in the land are tragically few. **In a world aflame, the voice of the church has sunk to a pathetic whisper**" (*Spiritual Leadership*, 1989, pp. 24-25).

Leadership expert, John Gardner, offers the thought-provoking observation that America was founded with a population of about three million, yet had a half dozen world-class leaders in Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison and Hamilton. Two hundred years later, with a population of 240 million, we would expect about 50 such leaders—but where are they (Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 1991, p. 23)? Describing the pathetic parade of leaders today, a scornful press has used epithets like "the march of the pygmies... the Seven Dwarves... the Disappointment of the Decade... the Age of Disposable Leadership" (*MacLean's*, Feb. 20, 1995, p. 68; *Management Today*, Nov. 1993, p. 38).

Regardless of where you look in our current world—from government, to religion, to education—the lack of real leaders is evident. Nearly 20 years ago, historian and political scientist James MacGregor Burns observed, "One of the most universal cravings of our time is a hunger for compelling and creative leadership.... The crisis of leadership today is the *mediocrity* and *irresponsibility* of so

many men and women in power" and that "in the final quarter of our century that life and death engagement with leadership has given way to the cult of personality" (*Leadership*, 1978, p. 1). In a more recent assessment, Warren Bennis asserted, "Greed, timidity and lack of vision are rampant among the current crop of pseudoleaders. All the leaders we once respected *are dead*" (*Management Today*, p. 38).

## The Big Question—Why?

Why have real leaders disappeared from the horizon as we approach the turbulent end of a millennium? Why have the most advanced, affluent and highly educated nations of the world—as well as others—all come up short on leadership at the same time in history? The explanations offered by those who have at least considered the problem are instructive in what they reveal and in what they overlook.

Some suggest that our leadership crisis is the result of circumstance (and thus, we are unfortunate victims!). They reason that the generation growing up in the shadow of the great leaders—FDR, Churchill, de Gaulle—was not given opportunities to lead. Therefore, the "baby bust" generation of the 1930s and early 1940s was not prepared to take risks and be adventurous. So they tended to become conformist managers of their elders' visions.

An even younger generation—the "baby boomers" of post-WW II society—though wanting to lead, lacks a solid moral base since it has been "cut off from traditional family, community and spiritual roots" by the social changes that have occurred in the last 40 to 50 years. The "withering criticism" often heaped on public figures by the press and the overspecialized training provided by many modern career paths are also seen as detrimental to the development of real leaders (Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 1991, p. 24).

Warren Bennis is more blunt and to the point. He openly asserts that "if we have no worthy leaders, it is our own fault." He argues that we have created a contemporary

Former Sec. of State Henry Kissinger

"Great leaders always appeared on the scene [in the recent past] just in time to pull the world through. But now, try to name only one FDR or Ike or de Gaulle or Churchill."—Reuters

social atmosphere that actually “prevents leaders... from taking charge and making changes” (*Why Leaders Can't Lead*, 1989, p. 143).

Bennis feels that we have created a society of entrenched bureaucracies that are committed to maintain the status quo—with the primary interest of those in power being to hold on to their positions of influence. He also notes, “The narcissistic [self-centered] children of the ‘Me Decade’ seem unwilling to embrace any vision of the future but their own” (p. xii).

In other words, our society today is increasingly composed of individuals who are concerned about self, not the community, who don't like to cooperate and who *do not want to be led!* Bennis feels we have created an “unconscious conspiracy” against leadership (p. 143).

### Who's the Boss?

James O'Toole, a Rhodes Scholar and leadership expert, has made similar remarks. He reports that it has become difficult to lead today because **our modern society is “characterized by a widespread resistance to being led at all.”** In an especially telling indictment of our times he states, “With precious few exceptions, the era of the dictator, the czar, the general—even the boss—has passed in Western society. Today we all feel entitled to a say in dealing with the problems that affect us. We, all of us, will rule ourselves.” He comments on the paradox in a situation where **“we still long for the ‘strong leader,’ even as we rebel against anyone who dares to tell us what to do”** (*Leading Change*, 1995, pp. 4-5).

Bennis strikes the same chord, noting, “When everyone is his or her own boss, no one is in charge, and chaos takes over. Leaders are needed to restore order.” His assessment is that “we don't seem to want leaders. In these mean, greedy times, we seem to prefer co-conspirators, and that is exactly what we have—in the White House, the boardrooms, even the classrooms” (p. 27).

O'Toole also zeros in on the inadequacies of our modern ideas about how to lead. He writes, “There is currently a deep, widespread, and unquestioningly academic commitment to *contingency theory*, which is the belief that to implement change, effective leaders **do whatever the circumstances require....** The intellectual attraction of this concept is that it appears to be nonprescriptive, nonjudgmental, and nondeterministic.... The theory seems to say that if the world has changed, the style of leadership must change to meet the altered conditions.... **Yet evidence mounts that contingency, or situational, leadership is ineffective. All around we see signs of failure:** the depressing social and organizational indicators that point to the inability of leaders to bring about constructive change” (p. 7).

More than a decade of studying leadership and several

decades of experience in the field have brought Warren Bennis to some sobering conclusions. He states, “In America today, it is harder than ever to lead.... Though we need leaders as much as ever, we have never held them in lower regard” (p. xi). **“America no longer leads the world and itself is leaderless”** (p. 35). “At the heart of America is a *vacuum* into which self-anointed saviors have rushed. They pretend to be leaders, and we—half out of envy, half out of longing—pretend to think of them as leaders” (p. 36). He continues, “Billions of dollars are spent annually by and on would-be leaders, yet we have no leaders” (p. 37). “It is both an irony and a paradox that precisely at the time when trust in and credibility of leaders are lowest, when people are both angry and cynical, the nation most needs leaders, people who can transcend the vacuum. **Unless new leaders emerge, it seems to me that our society is in grave danger”** (p. 144). He fears we are headed toward anarchy.

### A Crisis Prophesied!

There is another important dimension to the leadership problem that has gone almost totally unnoticed in our modern, secular world. Astonishing as it may seem today, the God of this universe **prophesied the emergence of a leadership crisis as we approach the end of this age**—especially in the principal countries of Northwest Europe and North America, whose residents are mostly of Israelite descent. (For more information on the “roots” of these peoples write for our brochure *America and Britain in Prophecy*.) The Bible describes, in some detail, events that are taking place right before our eyes—events we regret, yet do not seem to understand either the significance or the reasons why.

This lack of understanding comes as no surprise. Our modern age with its ideas and approaches to life has been heavily influenced by secular intellectuals (cf. Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*, 1990, p. 1). These people have chosen to ignore, reject and ridicule the Bible, which claims to be the inspired word of Almighty God. As a result we have a society with a collective blind spot when it comes to the content of that divine revelation. We just don't know what the Good Book really says! The Bible, when properly understood, provides vital insights regarding not only the problems we face, but also their causes, solutions and significance.

Important passages that shed light on our leadership crisis are found in the messages of several Old Testament prophets—books that even many modern professing Christians have been led to believe are no longer relevant today! Isaiah, in a message directed at both Judah and Israel, describe nations rebelling against God, riddled with sin, suffering from internal moral and spiritual decay and heading for destruction (Is. 1:1-6, 20). The parallels to our modern situation are no coincidence.

One of the consequences of rejecting God's instructions recorded by Isaiah will be that “The Lord, the LORD of hosts, *takes away* from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store [all the supports of human society], the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water; the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the diviner and the elder; the captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the skillful artisan, and the expert enchanter” (Is. 3:1-3) In these verses, Isaiah is describing “the removal of responsible and trusted leadership” and the erosion of the “pillars” of a stable society (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1985, vol. 6, p. 41).

In place of wise leadership, Isaiah indicates that God will “give children [capricious and impulsive youths] to be their princes, and babes [people despised and lightly esteemed] shall rule over them” (3:4-5). A recent issue of *Newsweek*, almost echoing the prophet's tone, noted the impulsiveness, lack of consistency and unabashed cocksureness of the baby boomers. The magazine asked, “Is this generation unfit to lead?” The article observed, “Boomers have the worst follow-through of any generation.... They have no loyalties. They don't believe on Tuesday what they did on Monday” (Dec. 1994, p. 35).

Leaders like this do not inspire confidence.

Isaiah also reveals that the frustration over poor leadership and eroding social conditions would reach the point where “the mere possession of some outward semblance of wealth or rank would attract the attention of those desperately seeking for someone to bring a measure of order to a situation of chaos”—to a society on the verge of collapse (*Expositor's*, vol. 6, p. 41). In Isaiah's words, “When a man takes hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, ‘You have clothing; you be our ruler, and let these ruins be under your hand.’ In that day he [the person asked to lead] will protest, saying, ‘I cannot cure your ills, for in my house is neither food nor clothing; **do not make me a ruler of the people”** (3:6-7). In the light of these verses, it is interesting to note that Colin Powell, one of the few potential candidates on the American scene who appears—in the eyes of some political pundits and ordinary citizens (see *Newsweek*, Mar. 4, 1996, p. 31)—to have the character and charisma needed to lead, deflected the pressure to run for president with the comment: “Who appointed me the savior of the Republican Party?” (p. 31).

Isaiah continues God's prophetic indictment of society by stating: “As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! **Those who lead you cause you to err**, and destroy [confuse] the way of your paths” (3:12). The prophetic description fits our situation like a hand in a glove! “Therefore the LORD will cut off head and tail from Israel.... The elder and honorable, he is the head; the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail” (9:14-15).

Isaiah prophesied that political and religious leaders

would no longer command respect—which is the case today! Isaiah concludes, **“For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and those who are led by them are**

Retired General Colin L. Powell, Joint Chief of Staff, addressing relatives of soldiers killed during the Persian Gulf War.—Reuters

**destroyed”** (v. 16). The prophesied outcome for the modern descendants of ancient Israel is national destruction and captivity at the hands of a powerful enemy (10:5-6; Jer. 30:1-7).

The Prophet Micah describes a period of corrupt and oppressive leaders who are in it for the money, and claim the Lord is among them when He is not! (Micah 3:1-4, 11). Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, in a scathing rebuke of misguided religious leaders, states: “Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base before all the people, because you have not kept My ways but have shown partiality [favoritism] in [the application of] the law” (Mal. 2:9). These religious leaders turned their backs on what the Scriptures actually said and caused many to stumble and lose their way.

Jeremiah mentions that misguided leadership (Jer. 23:1-2, 16-17) and the resulting social chaos (vv. 10-14) will be part of an “incurable” affliction that will plague the modern Israelite nations. Jeremiah was inspired to write concerning this prophesied situation: **“In the latter days you will understand it perfectly”** (v. 20).

### The Missing Foundation

Our modern leadership crisis is hardly an accident. It is the *prophesied result* of trying to build a society and develop leaders using principles contrary to God's laws.

(continued on page 30)

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Correcting a Mistake

I was very impressed with the article "Does It Really Matter Which Days You Keep?" in the February 1996 issue of *The World Ahead*. We have switched over to a Saturday Sabbath, but my older son doesn't believe it matters. This would give me more information when I try to talk to him about the true Sabbath.

Please send me information on how to order Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi's books, which were mentioned in the article.

Diana Fryer  
Duchesne, Utah

The interview you mention was presented serially by *The World Ahead* in our last two issues as information about how Dr. Bacchiocchi, an internationally renowned and respected biblical scholar, has now accepted the need to observe the biblical Holy Days. After receiving a number of comments from our readers, it is clear that some of you have the impression that we endorse all his beliefs. This is not the case. He does not share many of our doctrinal points of view.

Moreover, it is the policy of *The World Ahead* not to promote literature from other religious persuasions, nor products and services of a commercial nature. We apologize for having inadvertently invited our readers, contrary to our policy, to write for information on how to obtain Dr. Bacchiocchi's books. We regret any confusion this may have caused—ed.

## Behind Prison Walls

I sincerely would like to thank you for your wonderful and very informative magazines that you sent upon my request. They are truly a blessing here in prison. I once considered this to be the worst part of my life, but now see what a blessing it has turned out to be. Out in the streets, I never took the time to study God's Word. But thank God for people like you who have blessed me with books and other literature to help deepen my understanding about God's precious words.

Mr. Meredith's editorial in the January 1996 issue, "America at the Crossroads,"

really struck home in my heart. These prisons are truly overcrowded, with limited bed space. The saddest thing about it, though, is that most of the men in here never change their ways. They only become more embittered, hardened and violent in every conceivable way. A majority will be paroled and end up committing even worse crimes. Repentance is the only solution to rehabilitate a prison inmate.

I have one year still to serve before God releases me back into society. Please help me to use that time wisely by learning as much as I can about God's Word.

Joe L.  
S.C.C. State Prison

## Depression

Thank you for your well-researched articles. The current one on depression ("Kick That Black Dog," Jan. 1996) gives a variety of possible causes for this problem. I appreciated the emphasis on nutritional and spiritual sources of help.

Irene Welling  
Seattle, Washington

## World Ahead on TV

I did not know about *The World Ahead* before truly miraculous events led me to watch it on TV. When I saw it, I was overwhelmed by emotion. I want to thank God and your television program for bringing the true Church back into my life.

Dawn Hagen  
Sylmar, California

I've only been really interested in Bible study for three months. I was having a lot of trouble understanding what I read. So it was hard for me to get the true meaning. I watched your program on TV and ordered *The World Ahead*. I encourage you on your good work. May God be with you.

Ruby Lecroy  
Summerville, Georgia

## Thanks for Literature

I was filled with joy to receive the booklets you sent several days ago. Like the ancient Israelites in the desert when they received manna falling from the sky, I simply *devoured* them on the spot—hardly taking the time to thank God or yourselves. I am eagerly awaiting several other booklets I recently ordered because my heart is so touched to be able to once again feed on ALL the Word of God.

Jacqueline Cazin  
Bagnolet, France

## Gospel on the Internet

I just wanted to say that the new Web pages look great! I'm sure a lot of work has gone into making them. I'm downloading *America and Britain in Prophecy* right now because I haven't yet received my copy in the mail. Keep up the good work—we're all behind you.

Michael Thomas  
Internet e-mail

As a reminder to our readers, the *World Ahead* magazine and many of our booklets can be downloaded from the Internet. We welcome all of our "on-line" friends to visit our home page on the Internet: <http://www.worldahead.org> is our new address—ed.

## A & B in Prophecy

I just received *America and Britain in Prophecy* in the mail. WOW!!! I am overwhelmed. What a super job! It could be your greatest achievement.

Craig Marley  
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

We received the booklet *America and Britain in Prophecy*. Wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderful! It was received with tears of joy. God has used you in proclaiming His

Gospel to the world and warning Israel.

We have been blessed, all of us, by your diligent service in writing this wonderful booklet. We know it was God inspired.

Jessie and Wilda Reynolds  
Tyro, Kansas

Please send me *America and Britain in Prophecy*. I have received other booklets and materials from you and want you to know how happy I am to have the Truth in my hands once again! Thank you and God bless you.

Yvonne Alvey  
Dayton, Ohio

## On French Radio

After carefully listening to the *World Ahead* programs I like so much on Radio RTL, I wanted to write you this note of thanks. I will remain a faithful listener to your broadcast.

K.A.  
Angenteuil, France

## Your Ultimate Destiny

Just a few lines to let you know that I have read the booklet, *Your Ultimate Destiny*, twice over and studied it throughout. I really enjoyed it very much. I have never read a booklet as plainly put and so easy to understand as this one. I can understand your writings clearly and you tell us just where to go in the Bible to find what you are talking about. I am 79 years old.

Rosella Walters  
Purvis, Mississippi

We welcome your comments, criticism or questions. Please mail letters for this section to "Letters to the Editor" at our U.S. address. Be sure to include your name, address and daytime phone number. We reserve the right to edit your comments for clarity, propriety or space.

## EDITORIAL (continued from page 3)

zealous to do His will—and to do His Work.

After describing how God will send Jesus Christ back to this earth and seat Him "upon the throne of David," God's Word tells us, "The ZEAL of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Is. 9:7). Again, after describing God's determination to preserve His people, Isaiah was inspired to write, "The ZEAL of the LORD of hosts will do this" (37:32).

One of the most pitiful examples of a *lack of zeal* is found near the end of the New Testament. God describes the lethargic state of most of His own people in the final era of the true Church—called the Laodicean era. The fearful thing about this is that these are *His* people—*His* Church. But most of them, influenced by Satan and by the laid-back society around them, are wishy-washy and lukewarm. They are not totally clear about what they really believe. They are not zealous about doing the Work of Jesus Christ. Since they are God's people, they are apparently "nice" people who at least *talk* about God and *talk* about doing His Work.

But they do not have a heartfelt commitment. They lack fire in their bellies. They are not truly ZEALOUS for God, for His true ways, for His Work!

God admonishes these people: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16). These people *think* they see and *think* they understand God's will. But God tells them, "**Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see**" (v. 18). Finally, God says to them, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be ZEALOUS and repent" (v. 19).

Throughout the pages of *The World Ahead*, and throughout this Work of God, you will notice a spirit of ZEAL *to do* God's Work, to get the message of the Bible *completely straight*, and to help all our readers come to *understand* the awesome *purpose* being worked out here below and to help them actually fulfill that purpose in their own lives. Perhaps at times we come across as a little too strong, too dogmatic or too zealous. At times, that may be so. But we would rather be too zealous than not zealous at all! Our goal is to hear at the close of this Work Jesus' encouraging words: "**Well done, good and faithful servant!**"

God grant that all of us may come to be on fire for the Great God whom we serve and to wholeheartedly *give ourselves* in ZEALOUS service to do His Work and fulfill His purpose in our lives!



# Mene Mene Tekel Uphars

## Ancient Keys for Unlocking a Modern Mystery

by John H. Ogwyn



All eyes turned as an elderly man walked erectly into the brightly lit and lavishly decorated banquet room. The wine-induced laughter and the loud banter that had filled the room a mere hour ago, had abruptly given way to an eerie silence followed by subdued whispering in the aftermath of a spine-chilling scene. It seems that during the height of the revelry a hand had appeared out of thin air and had written a message in large letters upon the wall. The occasion was a great banquet thrown by Babylonian King Belshazzar to celebrate the invincibility of Babylon. Babylon, which had been under siege by the troops of Cyrus the Great of Persia, considered her walls impregnable.

So, on that evening of the new moon of the seventh month in 539 B.C., the powerful elite of Babylon celebrated and drank toasts. Belshazzar had even insisted that the sacred vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem by his grandfather decades earlier be brought. He wanted to use them as drinking goblets. Then the handwriting on the wall appeared and the party came to a stunned halt. The message inscribed on the wall read, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." The words were well-known Chaldean terms for units of weight, but the significance was utterly incomprehensible to those watching.

The elderly man who had been summoned by the king was named

Daniel. He had been brought to Babylon as a teenage Jewish captive and had risen to high office under Belshazzar's grandfather. He proceeded to explain to the king that the God of heaven had numbered his kingdom and that it was at an end. He had been weighed in the balance scale and found wanting. That very night was his kingdom to be delivered into the hands of the besieging Medes and Persians.

Within hours, the Persian army had totally overrun the city, having entered it by coming underneath the mammoth city walls. The river, which flowed underneath the city walls, had been diverted by a canal several hours earlier and in the dark, pre-dawn hours Persian troops marched through the dry riverbed underneath the walls and then opened the massive city gates from the inside. Before the sun rose, they had conquered Babylon and executed King Belshazzar.

Confronted by the events of the evening, Daniel's mind inevitably wandered back to a scene that had occurred some 65 years earlier. At that time, though he was only a young man still in his teens, he had been hustled into the presence of the ruler of what was then the most powerful empire on earth. His own life and the lives of his closest friends had hung in the balance there that day. His purpose in being brought before King Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar's grandfather, had been to interpret a baffling dream that the king had experienced a few days earlier.

Daniel had boldly announced to the skeptical, agitated ruler that there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets. He then proceeded to present a God-inspired interpretation of the king's strange dream.

What relevance could these long-ago events have for you and me in today's sophisticated, modern world? Could they possibly be, as the Bible claims, keys that can unlock the mysteries of where events in today's world are *really* headed?

### Isn't This Just Apocalyptic Literature?

Many modern Bible scholars are quick to deny that Bible prophecy is the key that can unlock the real meaning of present and future events. They claim that books such as Daniel and Revelation are simply "apocalyptic" literature and are not to be understood as actually revealing the details of what lies ahead for modern nations. What about it?

To begin with, let's understand the meaning of "apocalypse." It is a Greek word that is normally translated into English as "revelation." In Revelation 1:1 we read, "The Revelation [Gk. *Apocalypse*] of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place." The first thing we are told is that the purpose for writing the book of Revelation was to explain to God's people the future. Any claims by scholars to the

contrary are simply irrelevant.

But, some might ask, aren't there all sorts of views and interpretations of Bible prophecy? Of course there are! It seems that most would-be interpreters start with what they see on the world scene and then attempt to read it back into the Bible. This is why back in the 1950s and 1960s, nearly all who commented on Bible prophecy identified the Soviet Communist empire as the scarlet-colored "Beast" of Revelation. A few years ago it was Saddam Hussein. Today, most Fundamentalist and Evangelical commentators similarly identify the "New World Order" or the United Nations as the Beast. There seem to be just about as many interpretations as there are interpreters.

Yet the public is intrigued by Bible prophecy. In years past, Hal Lindsey sold millions of books by claiming to lay out a scenario of the endtime. More recently, broadcaster Pat Robertson has written a novel giving his view of endtime events. These and many other authors and broadcasters present widely divergent views of what lies ahead. Is it possible to know what is correct? Or, is it just sort of a hit-and-miss guessing game?

Think about it for a moment. Would a loving, all-wise Creator provide a revelation that could never be clearly understood? That would be a concealment, not a revelation! It would simply be a colossal tease, which would not help or edify anyone.

### Let the Bible Interpret Itself

Of vital importance to really understanding Bible prophecy is the realization that the Bible actually *interprets itself!* As Peter explains, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21). If we are to understand Bible prophecy, we must understand that the Holy Spirit inspired all of the biblical authors. Therefore, different sections of Scripture shed light on other sections. If we are to understand the book of Revelation or be able to answer the questions "Who is the Beast?" or "What is the mark of the Beast?," we must not simply pull one verse out of context and let our imaginations run wild. Rather, we must apply the principle of Isaiah 28:9-13, and realize that the Bible is to be understood by building precept upon precept and line upon line, for it is written: "Here a little, there a little" (v. 13).

As for the current world situation, clearly most analysts, pundits and prognosticators, secular as well as religious, have been proven wrong time and again. They were virtually all caught by surprise when the most significant geopolitical events of the second half of the 20th century took place.

The rapid succession of events in Eastern and Central Europe in 1989 didn't catch everyone by surprise,

however. As an editorial in the Hendersonville, Tennessee *Free Press* on December 7, 1989, stated, "Like a great many Americans, I have been watching the current political situation in East Germany with interest. While many have expressed surprise at the recent events and at East German cries for reunification of East and West Germany, I have to admit I haven't been too surprised by these events. The reason I haven't been particularly surprised is that for years I have occasionally read the publications of... the late Herbert W. Armstrong.... Armstrong predicted that the Berlin Wall would some day come down and the two German states would once again reunite into a powerful nation."

As far back as the April 1952 *Plain Truth*, Herbert W. Armstrong had written that East Germany would be returned to West Germany and that Russia "will be forced to relinquish her control over Hungary, Czechoslovakia and parts of Austria..." (p. 16). In 1956, following Russia's invasion of Hungary, when it seemed that the "iron curtain" had inexorably rung down on the nations of Eastern Europe, Mr. Armstrong stated, "The way is being prepared for a colossal third force in world politics—a European Federation of Nations more powerful than either Russia or the United States!... We have shown years in advance what would happen to Russia's ill-fated Empire in Eastern Europe" (*Plain Truth*, December 1956, p. 3).

How could he possibly have known?

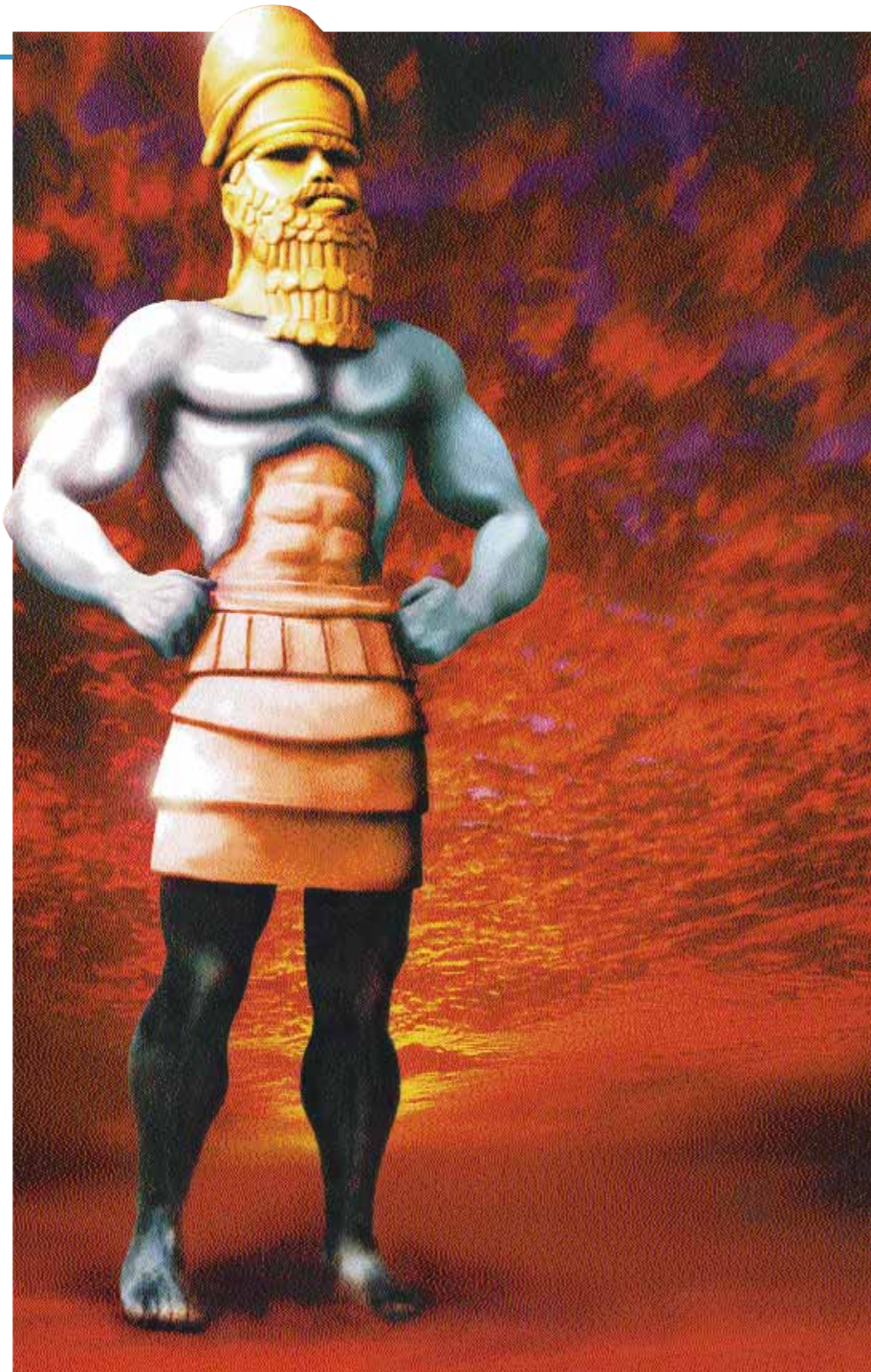
There is a source of information that reveals what lies ahead for nations. In Isaiah 46:10, One quoted as God claims that He declares “the end from the beginning.” We *can* know and understand what lies ahead for our nations and our world in the coming, turbulent years, because the Creator gives us the keys to unlock the mysteries of where modern trends are headed.

### The Book of Daniel Sets the Stage

In 604 B.C., the Chaldean army under King Nebuchadnezzar swept from Carchemish down the Jezreel valley and captured the city of Jerusalem, reducing Judea to a tributary state. Several of the children of prominent Jewish families were taken as hostages back to Babylon. During the decades that followed, one of those captives, Daniel, rose to hold high offices in Babylon. The God of Israel, whom he continued to serve faithfully, gave him many visions and interpretations of dreams, which he recorded in the book of Daniel in your Bible.

Let’s look carefully at the prophetic outline of world events which God inspired Daniel to record. The Bible really does interpret itself and the book of Daniel is pivotal to understanding Revelation and other endtime prophecy.

Daniel 2:1 describes King Nebuchadnezzar’s troubling dream, which the king forgot upon awakening. Neither could the king’s magicians and astrologers recount back to him this puzzling dream. Finally Daniel came in to the king and explained to him that there is a God in heaven who is a revealer of secrets and that He had revealed to Daniel not only the dream itself, but the interpretation as well (v. 28). Daniel then explained to the king that in his dream he had seen a great image rising above the plains of Shinar. This mammoth image



had a head of gold, shoulders and chest of silver, thighs of brass and legs of iron. The iron legs culminated in two feet composed of a mixture of iron and clay ceramic (vv. 31-33). Finally, Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream a great stone of supernatural origin (“cut out... without hands,” v. 45). He watched this stone come down from heaven, smash the image on its ten toes, and at that point the whole image was turned to powder and blew away. The stone became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth (v. 34).

What did all of this mean? Remember, the Bible interprets itself! Daniel was inspired to tell Nebuchadnezzar, “You are this head of gold” (v. 38). He also told him that three more kingdoms would arise, successively, after him (vv. 39-40). Daniel was inspired to record for us that history was to be dominated by four great successive kingdoms or empires. Finally, the king was told, the God of heaven will set up His everlasting Kingdom in the time of the final ten kings. These rulers are represented by

the toes on the feet of the “iron legs” of the fourth kingdom (v. 44).

It is emphasized in Daniel 2:28 that the Living God whom we serve is a revealer of secrets. The king’s dream was intended to reach in time sequence from the days of ancient King Nebuchadnezzar down to “the latter days.” Clearly the dream culminates with the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on this earth (v. 44). Have the events Daniel foretold come to pass just as he foresaw? Absolutely. Let’s see how.

In Daniel 5, we read of the events surrounding the fall of Babylon to the armies of King Cyrus the Great—recounted at the beginning of this article. Clearly the empire of the Medes and the Persians was the second kingdom. It gained political prominence in the Middle East only after Babylon fell. History tells us that the vast realm of the Media-Persian Empire established by King Cyrus continued almost 200 years.

Then, beginning in 333 B.C., the Greek forces of Alexander the Great crossed the Hellespont (Dardanelles) from Europe to Asia. Two years later, in 331 B.C. at the Battle of Arbella, the Persian Empire collapsed and the third great world-ruling kingdom took over. This was the Greco-Macedonian Empire under Alexander the Great. The Hellenistic empires of Alexander’s successors dominated the Middle East for about 300 years until they were finally swallowed up, one by one, by the fourth great world-ruling empire, the kingdom of iron.

This fourth kingdom, clearly identified in history as the Roman Empire, was prophesied to continue as two “legs” all the way down to the time of the end. At that time, the ten toes (or kings, Dan. 2:44) would constitute the final embodiment of this system, which had its origins in ancient Babylon. If we let the Bible interpret itself, and compare what the Bible says in the light of undisputed

history, then the progression of the four world-ruling kingdoms is clear.

### The Beast of Daniel 7

In Daniel 7:1 we find that decades after his interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, Daniel himself had quite an unusual dream in which he stood staring, transfixed, at dark swirling clouds and a raging sea. From this stormy sea he saw four great creatures or “beasts” arise, one by one, and proceed to shore. The first was like a lion, the second like a bear, and the third was described as resembling a four-headed leopard. The fourth beast was described as a terrible creature with great iron teeth (v. 7). Out of the head of this fourth “beast” arose ten horns. This vision culminated in the time when “the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever” (v. 18). Remember, the vision in Daniel 2 also ended at the establishment of the Kingdom of heaven.

Do we let our imaginations soar in trying to discern the identity of these creatures in chapter 7, or do we let the Bible interpret itself? According to verse 17, these four creatures arose successively (vv. 3-7). They symbolize four kings or kingdoms. Verse 23 refers to the fourth beast as representing the “fourth kingdom on earth.” We’ve already seen from Daniel 2 a succession of four kingdoms. The scenarios recorded in both chapters 2 and 7 recount four successive, world-ruling empires. In each case the scenario ends with the establishment of the Kingdom of God to rule the earth. **Clearly these two visions are recording different details of the same set of events.**

When we compare the visions of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, we find that the first kingdom of Daniel 2, the head of gold, is equated with the lion, the king of beasts, in Daniel 7. The second king-

dom, the kingdom of silver in chapter 2, is compared to a bear in chapter 7. The third kingdom, the brass kingdom of Daniel 2, is equated with a four-headed leopard in Daniel 7. Why so?

History records that after Alexander’s death, his empire was divided among four of his generals. Ptolemy held Egypt, Seleucus grabbed Syria and Babylon, Cassander held on to Greece and Macedonia, while Lysimachus held Thrace and Northern Asia Minor. This fourfold division was specifically prophesied in Daniel 8:8. All of these empires were Greek in culture and in language. They were a continuation of Alexander’s empire, which had only been unified under Alexander himself for less than a decade. Just as Persia’s ponderous size and might was symbolized by a bear, even so the lightning-like quickness of Alexander’s Greek armies is well described by the metaphor of a leopard.

Daniel records more details of the interaction of the “second kingdom,” Persia, and the “third kingdom,” Greece.

Daniel 8:3-4 pictures a two-horned ram going out to subdue everything in all directions. According to verse 20 this ram represented “the kings of Media and Persia.” Then a powerful he-goat with one great horn coming up from between his eyes then defeated the ram completely (vv. 5-7). And, in verse 21, the Bible clearly reveals the identity of this goat: “The male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.” After Alexander’s death, “The large horn was broken” (v. 8), and, “Four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power” (v. 22). Four of Alexander’s generals carved the Greco-Macedonian empire up among themselves as was already detailed above. This is why in Daniel 7 we see the third kingdom described as a four-headed creature.

All of the preceding events set the

*(continued on page 30)*



## ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

# HELL!

by Raymond F. McNair

Does the Bible say there is a real "hell"?  
If so, what and where is it?  
Will unrepentant sinners forever burn in an  
excruciating HELLFIRE?

**T**he Word of God clearly says there is a real HELL! It also teaches that every human who has ever lived—and died—has, in fact, *gone to hell!* And, surprising as that may be to many, that even includes all the Old Testament examples of faith—the patriarchs, prophets and other saints! But even more amazing, the Bible reveals that, after His death by crucifixion, Jesus Christ also went to *hell*, where He remained for “three days and three nights” (Matt. 12:40)!

Many are unaware that in the Greek New Testament there are three words (*hades*, *gehenna*, *tartarus*) translated as “hell” in the *King James Version*. As a result of all three of these words being translated the same, many have become confused in regard to the true biblical teaching on this subject.

The only Old Testament word for hell is *sheol*. The New Testament Greek equivalent is *hades*. These words are *identical* in meaning (Acts 2:27; Ps. 16:10). The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* explains further: “The Greek word *hades*... is sometimes, but *misleadingly*, translated ‘hell’ in English versions of the New Testament. **It refers to the place of the dead...** The old Hebrew concept of the place of the dead, most often called *sheol*... in the Hebrew Bible, corresponded quite closely to the Greek *hades*.... Like the old Greek *hades*, ***sheol* in the Hebrew Bible is the common fate of all the dead....** In the LXX [Septuagint] therefore *sheol* is usually translated as *hades*, and the Greek term was naturally and commonly used by Jews writing in Greek” (vol. 2, p. 14).

The *Dictionary of the Bible*, by William Smith, adds, “It is clear that in many passages of the Old Testament ***sheol* can only mean ‘the grave’...** Generally speaking, the Hebrews regarded the grave as the end of all sentient and intelligent existence. In the New Testament, the word *hades*, like *sheol*, sometimes means merely ‘the grave’ (Rev. 20:13; Acts 2:31; 1 Cor. 15:55), or in general ‘the unseen world’” (p. 320).

*Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (10th ed.) defines these foregoing Greek and Hebrew words as follows: “Sheol... the abode of the dead in early Hebrew thought”; “Hades... the underground abode of the dead in Greek mythology... sheol.” Both *hades* and *sheol* simply mean “the GRAVE”—the place where *all* go when they die!

### A Lurid Modern Description of “Hell”

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) was the greatest philosopher and theologian of British American Puritanism. He is given credit for early America’s first great religious revival known as the “Great Awakening.” Edwards let his imagination run rampant when he preached and wrote about hell, as exemplified in his most famous sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” preached in 1741.

In that sermon Edwards told his congregation, “The bow of God’s wrath is bent, and the arrows made ready... [by] an angry God.” He then exhorted unrepentant members of the congregation to have a “change of heart,” if they hadn’t been “born again.” Edwards added, “It is nothing but His mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in *everlasting destruction!* The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: His wrath towards you burns like fire; He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire.... You are ten thousand times more abominable in His eyes than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended Him... and yet it is nothing but His hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment....

“O Sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it [hell] is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of God.... You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder.”

Clearly, that fiery preacher employed the “fear of blazing hellfire” to frighten unrepentant persons in his congregation to become “saved.” Realizing that many preachers often use *hellfire scare tactics*, the famous American evangelist, Billy Sunday (1862-1925), once remarked, “If there is no hell, a good many preachers are obtaining money under false pretenses!” Unfortunately, many modern charismatic ministers still use the threat of

“hellfire and damnation” as a means of scaring their listeners into repentance—rather than using the “love of God” (1 John 4:7-21; Jude 21) to inspire godly obedience!

### Ancient and Medieval Myths

If you consult modern Bible dictionaries and commentaries, you find a confusing jumble of contradictory statements concerning hell. In fact, after such a study, you may be more confused concerning the biblical meaning of hell than before you began. Sadly, it is almost impossible to find any theologian or Bible scholar (whatever his denomination) who, when writing about hell, doesn’t teach a lot of biblical error.

Those who sincerely want to learn the truth concerning this subject cannot do so by simply studying the writings of the ancient pagans. They often expressed contradictory ideas about the nature of hell, with no basis in God’s revealed Word. Neither can the real truth about hell be learned from studying the

conflicting ideas expressed by many of the early Church Fathers, or other theologians from the Middle Ages.

Dante’s imagined description of hell offers a good example of Christianity’s confusion concerning that subject during the latter part of the Middle Ages. Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) became famous for his poem, *The Divine Comedy*. In the section entitled *Inferno*, his fertile imagination runs wild as he describes, in lurid detail, his journey through hell, escorted by Virgil, the famous 1st century B.C. Roman poet.

Subsequently, many famous religious leaders, during the Protestant Reformation and afterward, accepted and continued to preach and write about hell in the most gruesome language. To this day, many modern theologians still cling to the old pagan ideas regarding *sheol* or *hades*—refusing to accept the fact that, in the Bible, those words *never* mean anything more or less than “the grave”! If we really accept what the Bible says about hell, we will readily conclude that much of what the great theologians through the ages have taught is obviously untrue!

### What Does Hades Really Mean?

If we can’t learn the truth about hell from the writings of ancient pagans, medieval theologians or modern clergymen—then where *can* we turn to find the real truth about

this important subject? The answer is—only in God’s Word! *Hades* is used just 11 times in the New Testament. In 10 of those instances, it is translated “hell” (KJV). Only in 1 Corinthians 15:55 is *hades* translated by the English word “grave.” By contrast, the Hebrew word *sheol*, which is identical in meaning, is used 65 times. It is translated by three English words: “grave,” 31 times; “hell,” 31 times; and “pit,” 3 times.

But what exactly does *hades* mean? Were the Bible dictionaries we examined earlier right in concluding that this word is best translated as “grave”? Or have the King James translators best captured the meaning after all? The best way to understand the true meaning of any word in the Bible is to carefully study the *context* in which God’s Spirit inspired it to be used. Let us, examine the remaining 10 verses in the New Testament where *hades* is used. We will find that **in every case *hades* simply means “the grave”!**

Christ prophesied that the city of Capernaum would be “brought down to *hades*” (Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15). By this, He meant the people of that city would, sooner or later, all go to their *graves*, and also that the city would eventually cease to exist. Jesus promised, “I will build My church, and the gates of *hades* shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). Here He meant that His Church would never die—would never be swallowed up in *hades*—the grave!

What did the Apostle Peter say, when speaking to the multitude of Jews assembled in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost about *hades*? In his sermon, Peter quoted Psalm 16:10 (written in Hebrew) in which God said He would not leave Christ in *sheol*. Peter’s words, recorded in Greek, rendered it: “Moreover my [Christ’s] flesh will also rest in hope.... Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:26-27).

Peter continued, “He [King David]... spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in *Hades*, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are witnesses” (vv. 31-32). Peter had heard Jesus say He would only be “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”—in His *grave* (Matt. 12:40)!

Finally, *hades* is mentioned four times in Revelation, where it *always* means the grave. “I [Christ] am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of *Hades* [the grave] and Death” (1:18). Christ also revealed to John that in the

wake of the *pale horse’s* macabre ride through the earth, “Death, and *Hades*” would follow (6:8).

Speaking of a time beyond the 1,000-year rule of Jesus on this earth, John said the “Book of Life” will be opened to those who will be resurrected at the commencement of a Great White Throne judgment (20:11-13). In John’s vision, the multitude depicted as standing before God’s throne will receive mercy and divine pardon—proved by the fact that the Lamb’s Book of Life will then be opened to them (v. 12). Part of this mercy is that they will be called forth *from the grave* to be given an opportunity to become sons of God—an opportunity they never had before.

After God’s Great White Throne judgment period, what will happen next? John wrote, “The sea *gave up the dead* who were in it, and Death and *Hades* delivered up the dead who were in them” (v. 13). Who still remains in the grave after this time of judgment? Only the *incorrigible sinners* who rejected the love, mercy and grace of God.

What will happen to these lawless individuals who will have refused God’s free gift of eternal life? Will He *force* immortality down their throats? Or, will He simply give them what they wanted all along—death? “Then Death and *Hades* [those who come up from their graves in the very *last resurrection*] were cast into the LAKE OF FIRE. This is the second [eternal] death” (v. 14). This verse plainly says those incorrigibles will *not* live forever, but will DIE the second time—this time for all eternity.

The Prophet Malachi also speaks of this time: “For behold, the day is coming, *burning like an oven*, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall *burn them up...* that will leave them neither root nor branch” (Mal. 4:1).

Such is the awful fate that awaits those who are incorrigibly wicked—those who sin *willfully* after knowing better (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26). The Apostle Peter also referred to those *blatant sinners* (2 Peter 3:7-12). He revealed that, at the time of their extinction, the whole cosmos will be “burned up”! Peter calls that cataclysmic time the “judgment and perdition [destruction] of ungodly men” (v.7)! Following that awful holocaust of the wicked, God’s children will inherit “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (v. 13).

**“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up... that will leave them neither root nor branch” (Mal. 4:1).**

*(continued on page 28)*

## QUESTIONS & SHORT ANSWERS



**Does Hebrews 11:5 indicate that Enoch was instantaneously transferred from his life on earth to be in God’s presence in heaven?**



Enoch’s fate has long been misunderstood by many who study the Scriptures. Hebrews 11:5 states, “By faith Enoch was *translated* so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found because God had *translated* him’; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” This is a reference to Genesis 5:23-24, which says, “So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”

We should immediately notice that “ALL the days of Enoch” amounted to 365 years—not just *part* of his days, with the rest spent somewhere else. The expression “all the days of” is used about a dozen times in Genesis 5 and it always means the person lived that long “and he died.” In Hebrews 11, just quoted, Enoch is included in a list of faithful examples who “ALL DIED in faith, NOT having received the promises” of eternal life in God’s Kingdom (v. 13)! So Enoch definitely died at age 365.

What, then, about his “translation”? The Greek word rendered “translated” is *metatithemi*. According to *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, it means “to change, REMOVE” (p. 150). This reference goes on to say that the word can mean to *transfer* to another place. So God must have “removed” or “transferred” Enoch to another place. When? After his “walk” with God ended (Gen. 5:24)—when he DIED. The word *metatithemi* is rendered “carried back” in Acts 7:16, in reference to transporting Jacob’s dead body from Egypt back to Canaan—they “translated” him! In Deuteronomy 34:6 we learn that GOD took Moses’ dead body and buried him so that “no one knows his grave to this day.” It is the same with Enoch! His body “was not found” because God had translated or removed him.

So why does the beginning of Hebrews 11:5 say that “Enoch was translated so that he did not see death”? This must not be talking about the literal, physical removal of a dead body. It must refer to a

different “translation.” We find this different translation described in Colossians 1:13. As Christians, God “has delivered us from the power of darkness and *translated* us into [some other versions say “toward” or “for”] the kingdom of the Son of His love.” This is a figurative translation from a path of spiritual darkness to a path headed toward God’s Kingdom! Enoch experienced this same spiritual translation when he began his 300-year “walk” with God at age 65, after his son Methuselah was born (Gen. 5:21-22).

Still, why does it say “he did not see death”? This is a mistranslation. The original *King James Version* is correct in saying that “Enoch was translated that he SHOULD NOT SEE death.” The conditional tense of the verb refers to a FUTURE event! There is more than one death mentioned in the Bible. The first death is appointed to all people (Heb. 9:27). There is also a SECOND death in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:6)—see Raymond F. McNair’s article on hellfire in this issue. In John 8:51, Christ said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he shall never see death.” Obviously He was talking about the *second* death, since all of his disciples eventually died. Enoch will not see this future death either.

Putting it all together, Enoch was spiritually translated at his conversion to God’s way and walked with God for 300 years—making him worthy to escape the future second death, which will destroy the incorrigibly wicked. And, when he physically died at age 365, God literally translated or removed his body so that no one could find it. Enoch did NOT go to heaven.



**Is it wrong to end the life of someone who is suffering terribly from a terminal medical condition?**



The practice in question, known as euthanasia, has been a controversial topic in the news. Several years ago, the Netherlands legalized euthanasia, which had long been widely practiced by Dutch physicians. In the United States, Dr. Jack Kevorkian has led a campaign for years to legalize euthanasia and assisted

suicide. Voters in several individual states have faced ballot questions to determine the legality of euthanasia, with the state of Oregon approving the referendum.

Although it may seem to us to be merciful and humane to end the life of a sick and suffering human being, we need to know what God thinks. It is God who created all human life (Gen. 2:7) and from whom the very life force emanates (Ps. 36:9). Moreover, God has purposed that humans lead productive lives, growing in understanding and knowledge so that they can enter the Kingdom of God as His children. The termination of life, therefore, is solely God’s prerogative. Only He can know whether we have experienced what we need to prepare us for our entrance into His Kingdom.

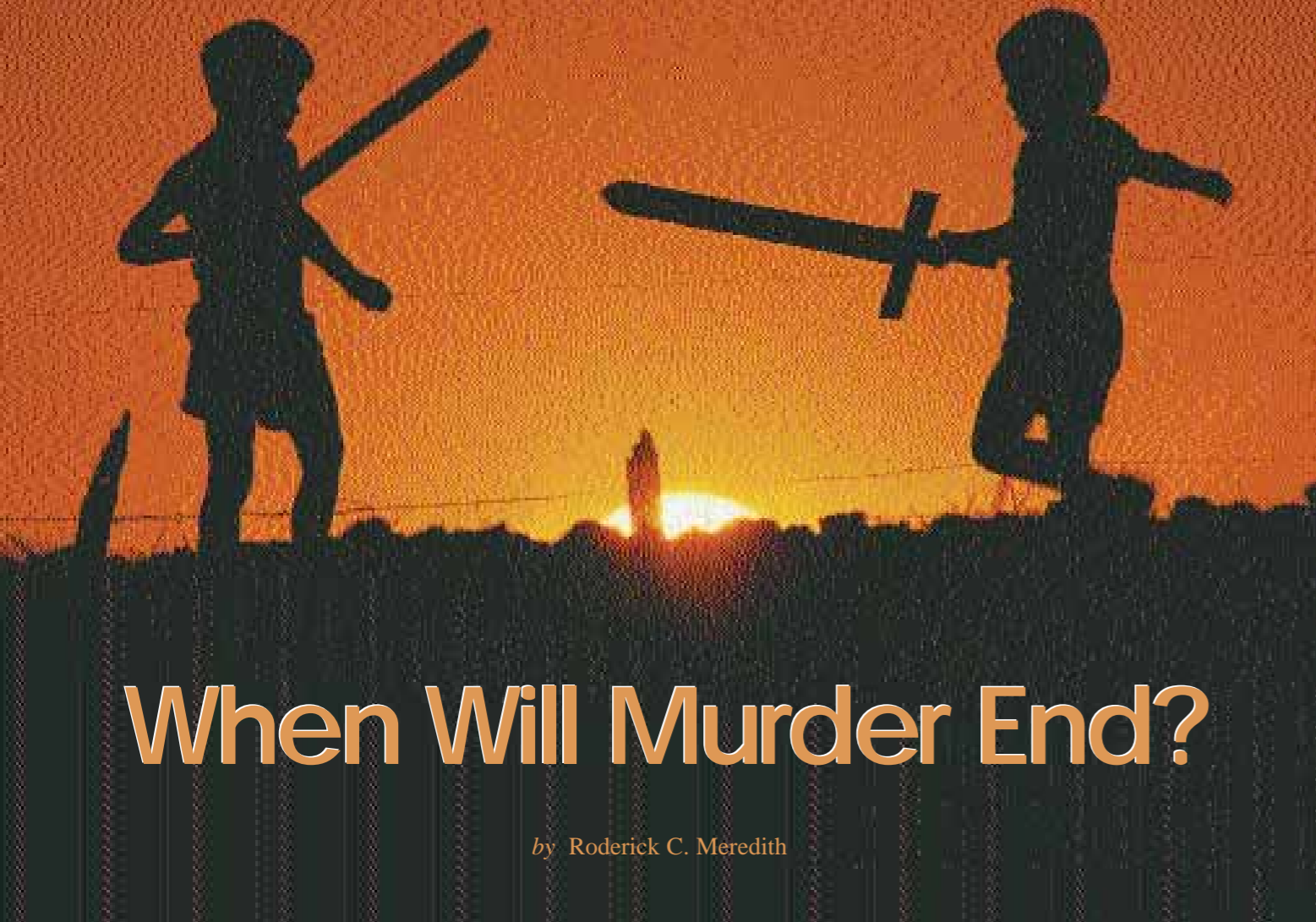
But this we can know—sometimes trials are necessary for our development, even trials that exact a toll of physical suffering. In fact, the Apostle James tells us to “count it all joy” when we encounter trials. The trials help us to develop godly character traits.

God has given man’s governments the official authority to end people’s lives for gross violations of laws that protect the welfare of others (such as capital crimes, cf. Rom. 13). Nevertheless, we can nowhere find in Scripture the delegation of personal authority to assist the suicide or “mercy killing” of fellow humans—even with the motive to ease their suffering.

This is not to say, however, that extraordinary measures must be taken to keep terminally ill patients alive for as long as possible. Medical science has made wonderful technological advances that serve to improve the human condition under certain circumstances. However, sometimes medical technology only serves to needlessly prolong the process of death, thereby *needlessly* prolonging someone’s suffering. When faced with catastrophic illness, it is rightly the personal decision of patients and their families whether or not to avail themselves of extraordinary medical technology to prolong their lives.

If you or someone in your family is faced with such a situation, turn to God and ask for His mercy—to heal and restore health and vigor, or to allow a peaceful death to end the suffering. In so doing, you can rest assured that God will act according to the individual’s best interests.

# The Killing Field We Call Earth—



## When Will Murder End?

by Roderick C. Meredith

Our world is filled with violence—in every form imaginable. Turn on the television and you will see it sensationally portrayed on the news. Perhaps you will even see it glorified by “action” or war movies. But there is nothing at all glorious about war. As Lord Byron wrote in his famous classic, *Don Juan*, “War’s a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art” (canto 9, stanza 4).

The tragedy of Bosnia illustrates the fact that civilization has not become more civil—it is getting

worse all the time. Notice this report from the *International Herald Tribune*: “Newly uncovered evidence of the massacre of up to 7,000 Bosnian Muslims by Serbian militiamen will be passed on to the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal in The Hague, a senior U.S. official said Sunday. ‘We believe there are up to 7,000 missing, and I’m afraid their fate could very well be very clear from the graves and mass execution we’ve heard about in the area,’ said John Shattuck, assistant secretary of state for human rights....

[He] said that in Kravice... ‘up to 2,000 people were herded into a warehouse and then fired upon by grenades and other weapons, and anyone who was left was shot when they left’” (Jan. 22, 1996).

Is human life so cheap that it is no great thing to snuff it out? *Forbes* magazine, commenting on the bloody chaos that devastated Rwanda, said, “In 1994 a pogrom of massacres decimated Rwanda. Of an original population of 7.7 million, at least 80,000 were killed in just a

hundred days. Neighbors hacked neighbors to death in their homes, colleagues hacked colleagues to death in their workplaces. Priests killed their parishioners, elementary-school teachers killed their students. In mid-April, at least 5,000 Tutsis were packed in the Gatwaro Stadium, in the western city of Kibuye; as the massacre there began, gunmen in the bleachers shot zigzag waves of bullets and tossed grenades to make the victims stampede back and forth before militiamen waded in to finish the job with machetes” (Jan. 22, 1996, quoted from Philip Gourevitch, *The New Yorker*).

What a sick state of affairs! But gruesome murder is not confined to war-racked countries. It is all too common on the streets of nations supposedly at peace. Gang initiation rites in America often involve random murder. People are shot while driving on the freeway after upsetting gun-toting criminals, seemingly with no conscience. A million-and-a-half unborn children are slaughtered by a holocaust of “legal” abortions each year in the U.S. alone. One of the biggest killers of American teenagers is suicide—self-murder. And euthanasia—“mercy killing” for those with terminal illnesses—is on the rise. In fact, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals just ruled that “a Washington state ban on doctor-assisted suicide violates the constitutional ‘right to die’ of mentally competent, terminally ill patients.... The court concluded that the state’s duty to preserve life was outweighed by the right to control ‘the time and manner of one’s death’” (*San Diego Union Tribune*, March 7, 1996).

Who is right? Is it ever okay to kill? Do we have the right to choose to take our own lives? How are we to deal with those who want to harm us? What is the reason men go to war? And what is the ultimate solution? In past issues of *The World Ahead*, we have examined the first

five points of the great spiritual law that God gave to mankind—the Ten Commandments. These commandments are broad enough in their spiritual intent to let us know the good or evil of any thought we have or action we take. So, again, it is to God’s spiritual law that we must turn.

food (v. 29). Certain animals were also created to be suitable protein sources for human nourishment (Gen. 7:2; Lev. 11; 1 Tim. 4:3-4).

So God *has* given man the right to take non-human life. But this does not condone animal abuse or the indiscriminate destruction of wildlife

Of all the physical creatures that God created, only humans look like Him and have minds patterned after His.

The Living Word of God—who became Jesus Christ—was the One through whom God actually delivered His spiritual law to ancient Israel (cf. 1 Cor. 10:4). After admonishing all mankind to honor their parents, the pre-incarnate Christ’s voice BOOMED the *sixth* commandment: “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13). Noted biblical scholars generally agree that the word here *should* be “murder” and not “kill” as the *King James Version* renders it. Why? Because, depending on who or what is being killed and why, a killing may not be a murder.

### The Giver of All Life

From the first chapter of Genesis, it is clear that all life on earth is the handiwork of the Creator God. Life is sacred because it is God-given. The Giver of all life alone has the authority to end a life or to allow its termination (cf. Job 1:21). So, do humans have the right to kill plants and animals? Some philosophers would say the answer is no. Today, there are not only vegetarians who believe we shouldn’t ever kill animals, but also “fruitarians,” who think it is wrong to pick fruit from a tree—that we must instead wait for the fruit to drop on its own before eating it. However, Genesis 1:28-29 shows that God has given man “dominion” over all animals and plants on earth. God wants us to use plants and their produce for

or the environment. God intended man to “tend and keep” the earth (Gen. 2:15). This implies responsible stewardship. Look at what God taught: “If a bird’s nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days” (Deut. 22:6). Killing animals for the mere enjoyment of it is never what God intended.

So what about killing fellow humans? In Genesis 1, God describes how each physical creature was to reproduce “according to its kind” (v. 25). And then God created a being in *His own* image! “Then God [the Father and the pre-incarnate Jesus] said, ‘Let US make man in OUR image, according to OUR likeness’” (v. 26). Of all the physical creatures that God created, only humans look like Him and have minds patterned after His. Only humans were created in His very image and likeness—just as a human child is in the image and likeness of his parents (cf. 5:3). Not only is God our Father by creation, He is also in the process of begetting us as His spiritual children: “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:18). God will

one day raise us to the glory of His plane of existence (cf. Heb. 2:10).

This should make the value of human life obvious. We humans can become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4) and eventually be “filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:19). All of us have this divine potential! Not of ourselves, as many New Age thinkers would claim, but through the power and purpose of the infinite God! The life of God is the most valuable life there is. Remarkably, God intends that we share that life with Him!

Though our existence is like a short-lived vapor (James 4:14), it is still important. We need *experience* in order to build the character that God intends for us. To gain experience requires a lifetime. God gave us our present physical existence for the ulti-

Christians are now “of the *new covenant*, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit *gives life*” (2 Cor. 3:6).

mate purpose of preparing us to be in His Kingdom and Family for eternity! Yes, God’s gift of life and breath is the greatest physical gift we mortals can know. By it we have conscious minds that enable us to grow in character through the things we learn.

Murder, on the other hand, ends the victim’s potential character development. Cruelly and unexpectedly, it crushes the hopes and dreams of one made in the very image of his Creator. “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Ps. 146:4 KJV). To take the life of another person without divine sanction is to wickedly usurp a prerogative that belongs only to God, the Giver of life. This is what murder is—and why it is one of the ten great sins. It is an attempt to thwart God’s master plan!

Suicide is the same in effect. Each person does NOT have the right to take his own life. We do NOT own

ourselves; GOD owns us! As the Apostle Paul was inspired to write, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own” (1 Cor. 6:19 NRSV)? Only God has the right to say when our time on earth is finished.

### Killing a Human Is Not Always Murder

Under the “ministration of death” (2 Cor. 3:7 KJV) that God gave ancient Israel, He commanded the Israelites to execute those guilty of capital crimes (Ex. 21:12-17). It is possible, therefore, for someone to kill another human being without committing murder. Manslaughter was not looked upon as murder (Num. 35:9-34). Still, even acciden-

tally killing another human was a great offense—for which the guilty person might have had to stay in a “city of refuge” for many years until the death of the high priest (v. 28).

Just as capital punishment was not only allowable, but even *mandated* for serious crimes under God’s civil law code, so Israel’s wars that God ordered should not be viewed as murder. When God’s physical nation, Israel, went to war at His command, the people were not committing murder. Rather, they were human instruments carrying out God’s will. For example, God was moved to wipe out the heathen nations dwelling in the Promised Land during the time of Moses and Joshua. Why? Because the Canaanites’ abominable, extreme wickedness merited death; **they even burned their own children alive in demonic human sacrifice rituals!** Yet how would He accomplish this? God directly

ordered the Israelites to exterminate those sinners (Deut. 7:1-2).

Was this okay for the people of Israel to do? Absolutely! This was neither humanly plotted warfare, nor was it done to satisfy human malice and personal vengeance. The annihilation of the Canaanites was God’s expressly revealed will. And it is *never* a sin to obey God. Some religious fanatics today continue to claim this reason as a cover for murder. However, we will examine shortly why such logic has become obsolete today.

As the Creator, not only is it fully within God’s right to take someone’s life, it is also His right to command another to do so. **But there is not one example of a Christian personally taking the life of another in New Testament times.** Rather, today God is working with the *attitudes* of all Christians so that they will not hate or even *think* about murdering someone (Matt. 5:21-22, 43-45)! Nevertheless, Paul stated that the civil authorities could exercise capital punishment (Rom. 13:1-4).

It was not God’s original intent that man learn to kill his fellowman. Yes, as we’ve seen, it was permitted and even ordered in certain instances to the ancient Israelites. But now God is building within His Spirit-begotten children the character to love, protect and save life—not destroy it! Christians are now “of the *new covenant*, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit *gives life*” (2 Cor. 3:6).

### The Sermon on the Mount

The Prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would “magnify” the law of God and “make it honorable” (Is. 42:21). And so Jesus did. In His famous Sermon on the Mount, Christ showed the real spiritual intent behind the Ten Commandments and how they were to be fulfilled by Christians. In addressing the sixth

commandment, Christ said, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder,’ and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matt. 5:21-22).

Christ got right to the source of murder—bitter anger and hatred. It is possible to be angry without sinning. For instance, we can be righteously indignant at sin—just as God is. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Be angry, and do not sin” (Eph. 4:26). However, notice how he immediately explained this: “Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil” (vv. 26-27). We must never *stay* angry—stewing over real or imagined wrongs done to us. If we do, we can develop a bitter attitude toward others. When this occurs, we are harboring the spirit of murder and are in danger of judgment. As Jesus instructs in his Sermon on the Mount, we must immediately repent and seek reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-24).

Murder and other acts of vengeance are the ultimate expressions of a murderous attitude at work. Action follows thought. First we think, then we do! God’s Holy Spirit guides Christians to control not only our actions, but also our thoughts. We must never try to avenge ourselves upon others. Paul wrote, “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Rom. 12:17-19). Man cannot take vengeance with absolute fairness and wisdom. Only God can do this—even to the extent of executing the offender if necessary. Christians must learn to faithfully accept that God is totally REAL—and so are His promises of

protection and just vengeance!

With this in mind, how should we treat our enemies? Paul said, “Therefore if your enemy hungers,

“We used to wonder where war lived, what it was that made it so vile. And now we realize that we know where it lives, that it is inside ourselves.”

feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:20-21). This is right in line with Christ’s Sermon on the Mount: “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44). This is a real test! It demands tremendous strength of character to be able to help and serve someone who has tried to directly hurt you. It requires perceiving the offender as a fellow human being—made in God’s image—who, for the time being, is simply misguided in his thoughts and deeds.

### Mankind’s Worst Atrocity

On its largest scale, the murderous spirit of man’s carnal mind reveals itself through the merciless slaughter of millions by the terrible scourge of war. And what has it accomplished? Incomparable losses in life and property! Untold amounts of pain and suffering!

Shortly before the Second World War, Pope Pius XII pleaded, “Everything is gained by peace; nothing is gained by war.” Most of the world’s great religious and political leaders have acknowledged that war is utterly futile. It resolves nothing. Rather, it only breeds MORE WAR! Jesus said, “All who take the sword will *perish* by the sword” (Matt. 26:52).

Yet countless wars have been fought throughout history for one

ridiculous reason after another. WHY? The Apostle James reveals the answer: “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do

they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war” (James 4:1-2). French philosopher Albert Camus wrote, “We used to wonder where war lived, what it was that made it so vile. And now we realize that we know where it lives, that it is inside ourselves” (*Notebooks*, Sept. 7, 1939).

In the diary of Anne Frank, this young Jewish Holocaust victim expressed great insight into the nature of murder: “I don’t believe that the big men, the politicians and the capitalists alone are guilty of the war. Oh, no, the little man is just as keen. Otherwise the people of the world would have risen in revolt long ago! There is an urge and rage in people to destroy, to kill, to murder, and until all mankind, without exception, undergoes a great change, wars will be waged, everything that has been built up, cultivated and grown, will be destroyed and disfigured, after which mankind will have to begin all over again” (entered on May 3, 1944).

A great change certainly *is* needed—especially now with the proliferation of nuclear weapons. One of the greatest military leaders of all time, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, commented, “Men since the beginning of time have sought peace... military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we will not devise some greater

and equitable system, our Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and


kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should

living might mankind have acquired, if the money spent in wars had been employed in works of public utility;

what an extension of agriculture even to the tops of our mountains; what rivers rendered navigable, or joined by canals; what bridges, aqueducts, new roads, and other public works, edifices, and improvements... might not have been obtained by spending those millions in doing good, which in the last war have been spent in doing mischief" (Letter, July 27, 1783).

Believe your Bible—the World Ahead IS coming! No more will young men be taught to hate and murder. Instead they will

be taught God's law of LOVE—the "perfect law of liberty" that FREES us from all that is harmful to us (James 1:25). No more will innocent children die in bomb blasts. There will be no more abortion clinics, no more assisted suicides and no more violent settlements of personal grudges. No more will people fear being victims of murder.

Rest assured, all murder will cease. Jesus Christ, who is against it in every form, is going to someday put a stop to it forever. What a wonderful time it will be when all people will, through the Spirit of God, obey the sixth commandment of the Great Giver of life: "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER." 

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involves a spiritual recrudescence [revival], an improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural developments of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh."

It must indeed be "of the spirit"—it must be of God's HOLY Spirit through following the actual teachings of Jesus Christ! War is the complete antithesis of Christ's admonition to LOVE our enemies. Yet many professing Christians have no problem taking up arms and going to war against their fellow human beings. There have even been Crusades fought in Christ's very name. How vile this is in the eyes of God!

### When Murder Will Be History

Jesus came to announce the coming world government over which He will soon rule—the Kingdom of God. While on trial for His life, He told Pontius Pilate, "My

not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36). Those who profess Jesus as Lord should hear this instruction. He said that His servants *would* fight—IF His kingdom were of this world. But it isn't! The conclusion, then, is clear. The true servants of Jesus Christ DO NOT FIGHT at this time!

When the Kingdom of God is established on this planet, then the law of God—including the sixth commandment—will be the absolute standard of conduct for all nations of the earth (Micah 4:1-2). The Scriptures announce the glorious good news that, in the awesome age to come, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (v. 3).

Just think of what humanity could accomplish in a civilization without war. Through cooperation and pooling of resources—with no manpower depletions—there is no end to the right kind of societal development that would result. Benjamin Franklin wrote, "What vast additions to the conveniences and comforts of

### WHAT HAPPENED? (continued from page 7)

Paul wrote the mainly Gentile church at Thessalonica: "For you, brethren, became IMITATORS of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 2:14). Nearly all church historians recognize that the earliest headquarters church was at *Jerusalem*—and that it set the pattern for the teaching and way of life for apostolic Christianity.

A respected and thoroughly researched history of this period is Edward Gibbon's monumental work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Writing of the apostolic and post-apostolic period, Gibbon states, "The first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews; and the congregation over which they presided united the law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ. It was natural that the primitive tradition of a church which was founded only 40 days after the death of Christ, and was governed almost as many years under the immediate inspection of his apostle, should be received as the standard of orthodoxy. The distant churches very frequently appealed to the authority of their venerable Parent" (vol. 1, p. 389).

I should point out here that "the law" which the early Christians observed was NOT the complete law of Moses. That is a mistaken idea foisted off on church historians by the misguided theologians of the Middle Ages. What the Christians *did* observe were the Ten Commandments, which Jesus Christ had always taught and commanded—the *spiritual law* of Almighty God (Rom. 7:14). But because these early Christians observed the biblical Sabbath, many historians persist in calling it the "law of Moses" and try to lump it in with animal sacrifices. This is absolutely WRONG and *it is deceptive!*

But the knowledge that the early church kept God's law is everywhere. Will Durant, in *The Story of*

*Civilization*, said, "Most of the apostles, apparently spared in this persecution because they still observed the law, remained in Jerusalem with the Judaic Christians. While Peter carried the Gospel to the towns of Judea, James 'the Just,' 'the brother of the Lord,' became the head of the now reduced and impoverished church in Jerusalem. James practiced the Law in all its severity" (vol. 3, pp. 576-577).

It is clear that many historians recognize that even the early *Gentile* Christians observed the Sabbath, the biblical Holy Days and the obedient *way of life* taught by the original apostles. Who gave ANYONE authority to change all of this?

Speaking of the decades after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., Will Durant writes, "Therefore Judaic Christianity waned in number and power, and yielded the new religion to be transformed by the Greek mind... Judaic Christianity survived for five centuries in a little group of Syriac Christians called *Ebionim* ('the poor'), who practiced Christian poverty and the full Jewish Law. At the end of the second century the Church condemned them as heretics" (vol. 3, p. 577).

The *truth* of the matter is that Apostolic Christianity was preserved by *many* little groups here and there—far beyond the end of the 2nd century. That is why the Apostle John was inspired to describe a remnant of the true Church at the END of this age as those "**who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ**" (Rev. 12:17). He again identified God's true Church: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). And at the very end of the New Testament, John was inspired to tell us, "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

Jesus Christ said, "NO ONE can


come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). Jesus described His true Church as the "little flock" (Luke 12:32).

Jesus also said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

Some may ask, "Where is the remnant of that commandment-keeping Church today?" The answer is looking you right in the face! The Global Church of God, which publishes *The World Ahead*, is continuing to teach that *same way of life* revealed in the New Testament. We are certainly the "little flock." But through these pages and by the *World Ahead* television program, God is using us to proclaim to a potential audience numbering in the millions the true Gospel, which Christ and the apostles preached. He is also using us to proclaim the endtime prophetic *warnings*, which God wants His people to receive.

We have ministers and churches or small video groups in many nations around the world. If you would like more information about this Work or about meeting with one of our ministers or representatives, please write to us at the mailing address nearest you as listed on page 3 of this magazine. And if you are interested in a thorough historical account of where God's true Church has been all these years, write for your *free* copy of our interesting and well-documented booklet, *God's Church Through the Ages*.

Jesus said, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Though scattered and persecuted down through the centuries, *that true Church still exists*. True Apostolic Christianity is still being taught and practiced—and *you* have come in contact with it.

Will you ACT on the Truth that God is now revealing to you? 

## HELL!

(continued from page 20)

### Wasn't the Rich Man Conscious in Hades?

One of the most misunderstood of all Christ's parables is that of Lazarus and the rich man. Christ said that "the rich man... died and was buried. And being in torments in *Hades*, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said... 'Have mercy on me'" (Luke 16:22-24).

Does this mean that the rich man was *conscious* all during his long stay in the tomb? Or, does it mean that *after* God resurrected him (to call him to account for his past ungodly deeds) he was *only then*—at that time—fully conscious? The Prophet Ezekiel gives another example of those who had been dead—in the grave—being resurrected to consciousness. He speaks of a "valley of dry bones"—a great multitude of Israelites resurrected from *sheol* (37:1-10). Who are they? "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel" (v. 11). What will they think when God resurrects them? "I will *open your graves* [Heb. *qevrot*] and cause you to come up from your *graves*.... Then you shall know that I am the LORD" (vv. 12-13).

Those resurrected Israelites will then speak, *after* they "come up" out of their *graves*. They will say, "Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off" (v. 11). At first, they will *think* they are lost, but a loving God promises, "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land" (v. 14). Like the rich man who spoke to Lazarus (Luke 16:24-30), they too will be able to converse with God, but only *after* He resurrects them. *Unlike* the rich man, however, they had not sinned *willfully* (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31). Therefore God will forgive them and grant them His Spirit—which He only gives to those who *repent* of sin and begin *obeying* Him (Acts 2:38-39; 5:32)!

The Bible has more to say on the subject of consciousness after death: "For the living know that they will die; **but the dead know nothing**" (Eccl. 9:5). The passage goes on to say that "there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in *the grave* where you are going" (v. 10).

King David said, "For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the *grave* who shall give You thanks?" (Ps. 6:5). And in Psalm 146:4, the KJV shows that man's "breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

Clearly, then, there is no consciousness for those in the grave.

One question remains: What, then, will happen to the rich man? Plainly, he had his chance to repent and live by God's Word. But he stubbornly refused to repent—until it was too late! The Bible clearly reveals that God does

not want anyone to perish, but hopes all will repent and receive immortality as His free gift (John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4). When the rich man rises up out of *hades*, the grave, he will experience a dreadful sense of fear and hopelessness—then will realize it is too late. His fate will be like that of all the rest of the incorrigibly wicked—*annihilation in gehenna* (Rev. 21:8)!

### What Is the Biblical Meaning of Gehenna?

As we have seen, the Bible reveals that *hades* always refers simply to "the grave"—into which all humans, sooner or later, will descend. But what is the meaning of *gehenna*, or the "gehenna fire," mentioned in the New Testament?

Jesus Christ repeatedly spoke of incorrigible sinners being "cast into *gehenna*" (Matt. 5:29-30; Mark 9:43, 45, 47). He said, "Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell [*gehenna*]" (Luke 12:5). Furthermore, Christ tells us we are to "fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [*gehenna*]" (Matt. 10:28). Jesus also said, "But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire [the fire of *gehenna*]" (Matt. 5:22).

The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* tells us what *gehenna* really is: "GEHENNA. Valley, currently known as the Wadi er-Rababeh, running S-SW of Jerusalem and also a designation for fiery hell. The Lat[in] form is derived from the Gk. *geenna*.... The name means 'Valley of Hinnom' or its full form 'Valley of the son of Hinnom.'

"The Valley of Hinnom... was the scene of the idolatrous worship of the Canaanite gods Molech and Baal. This worship consisted of sacrificing children by passing them through a fire on Tophet (a high place) and into the hands of the gods. These practices were observed during the monarchy at least under the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh who themselves sacrificed their own children.

"Josiah defiled the site as part of his reform program.... Jeremiah [said] it would no longer be called Tophet or the Valley of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter because of the numerous Judeans killed and thrown into it by the Babylonians" ("Gehenna," vol. 2).

After certain apostate Jews sacrificed their children to Molech in the Valley of Hinnom, it later became a "refuse dump... [and Jeremiah prophesied that] the dead bodies of the wicked" would be cast there (*Anchor*).

The *New Unger's Bible Dictionary* adds: "GEHENNA. The valley of Hinnom. A place where the Jewish Apostasy, the rites of Molech, were celebrated (1 Kings 11:7). It was converted by King Josiah into a place of abomination, where dead bodies were thrown and burned (2 Kings 23:13-14)" ("Hell," p. 550).

The Bible reveals that just before the Millennium begins, two very wicked people, the *beast* and the *false*

*prophet*, will be destroyed in *gehenna*. "Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence.... These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20).

Some think the beast and the false prophet will be tormented forever and ever, but the Bible does not teach that. Rather, they will be destroyed—annihilated!—in the lake of fire! The reason some think they live forever in *gehenna* is that they misunderstand the following verse: "And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are [more correctly, "were cast"—more than 1,000 years earlier!]. And... [he, the Devil] will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

The KJV has properly italicized the word "are" in this verse, showing that it was not in the original Greek, but was added by English translators in the early 1600s. Furthermore, the wording in the KJV is more accurate than in the NKJV, by showing that it is "the devil... [who] shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

An honest inquiry into the meaning of *gehenna* reveals that it is not a place where "immortal sinners" forever writhe in hellish flames, but is, in fact, the place of eternal death for the wicked (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14)! The Prophet Isaiah describes what will happen to the wicked men who will be cast into *gehenna*: "And they shall... look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched" (Is. 66:24). The destroying agents (worms and fire) will not be stopped until they have *consumed* the corpses of the wicked who have sinned against God.

### What Is the Biblical Meaning of Tartaroo?

The third Greek word translated as "hell" in the KJV is *tartaroo*. It is used only once in the New Testament and clearly refers to *wicked angels*—not humans! "God did not spare the *angels* who sinned, but cast them down to hell [*tartaroo*]" (2 Peter 2:4).

Referring to the single use of *tartaroo*, the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* tells us that "the angels who sinned were 'cast... into *hell*.' The verb *tartaroo* is derived from the noun *tartaros*... which in

Greek mythology was the locale below *hades* where the Titans were imprisoned.... Peter described *tartarus* as having 'pits of gloom'" ("Hell," vol. 2).

Appendix 131 in *The Companion Bible* says this of *tartaroo*: "The Homeric *tartarus* is the prison of the Titans, or giants... who rebelled against Zeus." Many epics by pagan historians are merely garbled accounts of truth that had once been known by their ancient forefathers. The Greeks had, by some means, apparently




learned the truth of the rebellion of the mighty angels (the "Titans"—demons) who, in pre-Adamic times, had rebelled against their Creator—here called "Zeus" (cf. Jude 6; Is. 14; Ezek. 28).

"The verb *tartaroo*, translated 'cast down to hell' in 2 Peter 2:4, signifies to consign to *tartarus*,

which is neither *sheol* nor *hades*... but [is] the place where those angels whose special sin is referred to in that passage are confined 'to be reserved unto judgment'; the region is described as 'pits of darkness'" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*). The place of imprisonment for the fallen angels is this earth.

### An Inescapable Conclusion

When rightly understood, the Scriptures reveal that all humans go to *hades* or *sheol* when they die—that is, the grave. Only Jesus Christ has the "key" that will unlock *hades* and loose its inhabitants (Rev. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:22-27, 54-55). But God will not force immortality upon those who have known the Truth and deliberately rejected it! Rather, such incorrigibles will "perish" (John 3:16) in the LAKE OF FIRE—that is, *gehenna*—at the end of the ages (Rev. 20:14-15).

Those who freely accept God's way of life, His Son and His gift of immortality will live forever. The Prophet Daniel speaks of the glorious inheritance of God's obedient sons and daughters: "And many of those who *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are *wise* shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and **those who turn many to righteousness [shall shine] like the stars forever and ever**" (Dan. 12:2-3)! 

## LEADERS DISAPPEARED?

(continued from page 11)


Many of the uninspiring and uninspired pseudoleaders of today have either rejected or chosen to ignore basic principles that have been widely recognized to be the fundamental building blocks of true leadership. These principles are discussed extensively in the Bible. They involve qualities of character that God has repeatedly emphasized in His dealings with human beings down through history.

The choice we have made as a society—to reject revealed information in the Word of God and follow, instead, the “wisdom” of secular intellectuals—is proving to be a very costly mistake.

Regarding important factors that would lead to social chaos in both ancient and modern Israelite nations, the Prophet Hosea said, **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.** Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hosea 4:6). The clear implication here is that there is knowledge in the Word of God that promotes strong societies and preserves social cohesion.

While the inspired Scriptures can be used to point us to the Truth (John 17:17)—including the truth about how to lead (Ps. 119:105, 142)—the Bible also reveals that God gives us the freedom of choice: to obey and be blessed, or to go contrary to God’s instructions and reap the catastrophic results.

Those who choose to reject or ignore principles found in God’s Word will discover that God “will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their deeds” (Hosea 4:9). The prophet comments later about those who rebel against the laws of God: “They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind” (8:7). Jeremiah echoes the same theme: “Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will reprove you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the LORD your God, and the fear of Me is not in you” (Jer. 2:19).


The challenge we face, approaching the tumultuous end of this age, is to rediscover the fundamental principles upon which true leadership and healthy, stable societies are built. God is calling individuals to become leaders in the World Ahead to assist Jesus Christ when He returns to this earth to reestablish the government of God (Rev. 5:10; Is. 9:6-7). Under new leaders schooled in the practical application of the immutable laws of Almighty God, this earth, and all mankind, will finally experience peace, judgment and justice. 

## MODERN MYSTERY

(continued from page 17)

stage for the fourth kingdom described in Daniel 7. It is a creature too terrible to be characterized by one of the animals mentioned earlier. This is the “iron kingdom.” In Daniel 2 it is characterized by two legs of iron and in Daniel 7 as a creature possessing great iron teeth. Daniel 2:40 explains: “And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters all things; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.” Notice what Daniel 7 reveals about this fourth kingdom: “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet.... The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces” (vv. 19, 23). It is this fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire, that is pictured as continuing in some form or another on down till the time of Christ’s return. What does history reveal?

At the Battle of Actium, the forces of Marc Antony and Cleopatra were vanquished by the Roman forces of Octavian (later known as Augustus Caesar) in 31 B.C. As Langer’s *Encyclopedia of World History* explains: “This brought to an end the last of the Hellenistic [Greek] monarchies” (1968, p. 97). At last the Roman Empire dominated the known world.

In the next installment of this series, we will compare some of the prophecies of Revelation with those of Daniel and look at the Roman Empire in both history and prophecy. It is only in the pages of the Word of God that we can find the real keys to unlocking the mysteries of where today’s trends are truly headed. 



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