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EDITORIAL

Will You Just Follow the Crowd?

Tens of millions in Western democratic nations have been led to believe that the safest and best thing to do is to “follow the crowd.” In fact, it’s almost an *assumption* of the democratic system. The unspoken idea is that the “majority is *always* right.”

But *is* the majority always right?

The largest single nation on earth is China, with more than 1.2 billion inhabitants. Yet *very few* Christians live there. India is the second-largest nation, with a population of some 960 million. Again, very few Christians. And though Christianity is the largest *single* world religion, most people on earth today are not professing Christians. Nor have they been at any time in history. So the *majority* have always been NON-Christian!

Among professing Christians, the Roman Catholics are certainly the majority. Yet in the United States, most people do not think of the Roman Catholic Church as the *true* Church. So think about it. In *that* sense, they’re not going with the majority—the biggest, most “popular” church or group or crowd of the moment. So why should it be so when it comes to mainstream Christianity in general?

What does GOD say? What does His *inspired Word* tell us?

Jesus Christ said, “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26). And again, “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.... [But] narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt. 7:13-14).

In the years that lie ahead, there’s going to be *tremendous pressure* to join a great, “one-world” church. There will be personal pressure, political pressure and even *economic* pressure (cf. Rev. 13:16-17). It may be difficult to maintain friendships, to be “successful,” or even to get and hold a decent job without going along with the majority in joining this great religious movement.

In your family or neighborhood, you may have to stand virtually ALONE in order to obey the God of the Bible—the only *true* God—the only God who can give you ETERNAL LIFE. For as our lead article this month points out, there *will* be a “revival” of a false religious system that God HATES. Yet for several years, joining it will certainly appear to be the “thing to do”! This system will soon dominate the socioeconomic, political and religious life of the

(continued on page 19)



Roderick C. Meredith
Editor in Chief

3 Editorial

14 Cover Story



Europe's Gathering Storm

We may not hear as much about European unification in the news these days. But the process continues to move forward. Just why are the nations of Europe coming together? And to what end?

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12 Living Christianity

18 Letters to the Editor

23 Questions & Answers

Feature Articles

4 **Revival in Our Time?**
As an ecumenical spirit sweeps through the world, many are talking about the greatest revival in the history of Christianity. But what's *really* going on?



8 **Prove Me with Prophecy!**
To many, Bible prophecy is best left to scholars, mystics or even “kooks.” But the truth is, it's a vital part of every Christian's spiritual well-being.



20 **Responsible Parenting**
With children being farmed out to daycare in droves, what is the toll on society? Is there a better way? Just what should today's parents do?



24 **Why America Is the Only Superpower**
Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the United States stands as the only superpower. Just what is the source of its economic and military might?

Inside Back Cover Radio/TV Log

All scriptural references are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

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REVIVAL

in Our Time?

by Roderick C. Meredith



Several well-known religious leaders are predicting a great REVIVAL by the year 2000. But they're in for a huge shock! Religious "revival" may be more than they bargained for!

Staggering events are destined to overtake the entire world during *this* generation. And you should know that these traumatic events will affect your life *enormously!*

Living in a basically godless American society that nevertheless calls itself Christian, many millions are seeking some kind of religious solution. They are trying out various New Age theories and even dabbling in the occult. This after having left, or being in the process of leaving, mainstream denominations—which, as a result, are becoming increasingly irrelevant. Yet other millions of sincere "Evangelicals" are being told that there will be a great religious "revival" within a few years—perhaps even by the turn of the millennium. Dr. Bill Bright, founder and president of Campus Crusade for Christ International, is a leading advocate of this idea. In his recent book, *The Coming Revival*, Dr. Bright states, "America and much of the world will, before the end of the year 2000, experience a great spiritual awakening. This divine visit of the Holy Spirit from heaven will kindle the greatest spiritual harvest in the history of the Church" (1995, p. 29).

Will this revival *really* occur? Or will there actually be a revival of something *else*—something *sinister* and *diabolical*? A "revival" that will

literally TRANSFORM much of the world—and dramatically affect *your* life, *your* family, *your* future?

Are we going to have a *true* religious revival? Or are we going to merely have an increase in religious CONFUSION and CHAOS accompanied by the greatest outbreak of crime, violence, corruption, lust, madness, and physical and spiritual degeneracy in the entire history of this earth?

What the Bible Foretells

Facing up to the real *truth* is often a very SOBERING experience. And so it is in the present case.

But if you want to *understand* what is really going to take place, you need to *study* and BELIEVE the literally *dozens* of scriptures in your Bible that directly describe the religious future of America and our entire Western civilization. And it is important to note that ALL these prophecies *say the same thing!*

Jesus Christ set the keynote Himself in His famous Olivet Prophecy when His disciples asked Him what would be the sign of His coming and the end of the age. Jesus answered, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many will come in My name, saying [that] I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:4-5 KJV).

Notice that Jesus said MANY—not a few, but MANY—would come "in His name." These men do NOT come in their *own* name, but *in the name of Christ!* In plain language, then, they are so-called "Christian"

preachers—telling people *about* Christ. But they are evidently not preaching His message, for Jesus went on to say that they will "DECEIVE MANY."

Then He listed four more conditions leading up to His Second Coming: war, famine, pestilence and persecution of His servants.

Describing the latter, Jesus said, "Then they will deliver *you* up to tribulation and kill *you*, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.... Then many *false prophets* will rise up and deceive many. And because *lawlessness will abound*, the love of many will grow cold" (vv. 9-12).

Here is a clear description of the fact that *false prophets* were to arise. And in fact, there would be more of them at *the time of the end*—the time in which we NOW live! And please notice that in every case it is the MANY who are deceived—not *the few!*

In what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus prophesied this same condition. He 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. [But] *narrow* is the gate and *difficult* is the way which leads to life, and there are FEW who find it" (7:13-14).

Examine the Fruits

Can we believe that Jesus Christ really KNEW what He was talking about?

Jesus continued this warning: "Beware of *false* prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. **You will know them by their fruits**" (vv. 15-16).

Here our Savior warned that the false prophets do not *look* like false prophets, but rather like *sheep*—that is, like *true* servants of God! And to really KNOW how the Almighty regards them, you have to look at their "fruits"—the *results* or what they *bring forth*.

Look about you in some of our Western nations, which in certain cases have been absolutely *dominated* by large church denominations for many centuries! Has religion produced good "fruit" in the lives of their people? Have they learned the *way* to PEACE, to HAPPINESS, to JOY?

Any honest student of the Bible knows that throughout the Old Testament—even from before the time of Abraham—God required men to *obey His commandments* in order to receive His blessings (Gen. 26:5). All *ten* of the Ten Commandments were in *force* and *effect*. But somehow, men reason, this is *no longer* the Father's will. Many argue that Jesus came to *do away* with God's law—to nail it to the cross.

However, when a young man came to ask Him how to inherit eternal life, Jesus answered, "If you want to enter into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Matt. 19:17). Then Christ showed which commandments He meant by naming some of the Ten Commandments

(vv. 18-19).

In literally *dozens* of places in the New Testament of your Bible, Jesus Christ and His inspired apostles teach absolute OBEDIENCE to *all ten* of the Ten Commandments!

Yet some claim that Jesus “ful-filled” these commandments in such a way that Christians no longer have to obey them. We’ve already seen that others claim the commandments were “nailed to the cross,” and are thus no longer binding. Still other denominations teach that *nine* of the commandments *are* still binding, but that *one*—keep the Sabbath holy—was nailed to the cross. And a variation on this theme asserts that *all ten* of God’s commandments were nailed to the cross, but that Jesus somehow *reinstated* nine of them—thus leaving only the Sabbath command of no effect.

However, most of these arguments are no more substantial than wisps of smoke. Major doctrines such as these are usually based on twisting the meaning of one or two verses in the Bible, while *totally ignoring* literally dozens of others that clearly state otherwise!

What CONFUSION! What *ridiculous* human “reasoning” of all kinds will men use to get around obedience to the spiritual laws that God gave to man to keep him in the right knowledge of His Creator—and to teach him how to have *joy* and *peace* in his personal relationships!

But Christ tells us—plain as day!—that “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” (7:21).

Christ on Lawlessness

Describing how He will have to deal with deceived ministers when He returns, Jesus said, “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy

name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” (v. 22 KJV). But is Jesus Christ—the *Christ of your Bible*—going to be pleased with all these accomplishments? Even if they *are* done in His name? He will answer them, “**I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice LAWLESSNESS!**” (v. 23).

And notice how He labels their works. The Greek word *anomia*, sometimes translated “iniquity,” literally means the condition of being without law—in this case, being disobedient to *God’s law*.

Even apparent acts of charity and compassion *can* be empty if they are done with no understanding of the law of God. Not that it’s wrong to help people who are hurting. That’s something we *should* do. But deceived men often simply treat the *effects* of transgressing God’s laws. And they utterly fail to get at the real CAUSE—*disobedience* to the great spiritual LAW of the Creator, the Ten Commandments. You see, God’s laws would STOP so many of our troubles *before they got started in the first place!*

This is indeed a LAWLESS age! The *rebellion* of our society against obedience to God’s law is now reflecting itself in disobedience to *all* the laws of man and even the principles of human decency! It is an absolute MOCKERY to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ as “Lord” and then *deny* the message of obedience to the laws of Almighty God, which Christ brought to this earth and on which He based His entire life and teaching!

When will we WAKE UP? Lawlessness is not *Christianity*. Rather, what we now see taking place as our society breaks down is the end *result* of a great APOSTASY from the Truth of God, which was prophesied to occur in *your Bible!*

We have already seen that Jesus

foretold this falling away from the Truth. Now let us notice a few more of the literally *dozens* of scriptures that warn of *false* Christianity arising and subverting the real TRUTH of Christ and His apostles.

Great Apostasy Prophesied

While He was yet on earth, Jesus warned His apostles, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). And of course, they *did* persecute Him—and finally even *killed* Him.

Jesus further warned His apostles of even worse things to come upon them: “They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever KILLS you will think that he offers God service” (16:2). *Sunagoge*, the root of the Greek word used in this verse, literally means a “gathering,” or “assembly”—which

The rebellion of our society against obedience to God’s law is now reflecting itself in disobedience to all the laws of man and even the principles of human decency!

would include church congregations.

The fact is, the real *Truth* of God—the *message* of Jesus Christ—has NEVER been popular! History tells us indisputably that the early apostles were persecuted and most of them martyred. The world did not accept the true message from them any more than it had from Christ Himself.

Even within God’s true Church, the Apostle Paul was inspired to write of a coming apostasy or abandonment of the Truth. He told the leaders of the Ephesian Church, “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” (Acts 20:29-30).

Notice His inspired description of these apostate religious leaders to come: “For such are *false apostles*, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be *according to their works*” (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

So we see that false ministers *appear* to be righteous. But in reality, since Satan is the master *deceiver*—his servants are *themselves* deceived! They teach a doctrine of “no works”—that is, that we do not need to obey God’s *law*. But Paul said they are going to be *judged* by the very thing they DENY! For their “end” shall be “according to their WORKS”—the very work of falsely teaching that God’s law has been

done away.

Paul also showed the Thessalonian Christians that the Day of the Lord could not come until a great *apostasy* took place. He wrote, “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the *falling away* comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thess. 2:3-4). This “man of sin” is referred to in verse 8 as “the *lawless* one.” He presides over a system called “the mystery of *lawlessness*” (v. 7), which Paul said was at work even in his day.

Yes, a false, paganized “Christianity” was already beginning to

develop within the Roman Empire! It was based on accepting the NAME of Jesus—but teaching a *doctrine of lawlessness*—and denying Christ’s example of obeying the commandments of God.

The Bible shows that this false religious system—this counterfeit *Christianity*—will continue to develop until the end of this age: “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the *working of Satan*, with all *power, signs, and lying wonders*” (vv. 8-9).

Here is a clear description of what takes place just before the time of Christ’s coming. A *great apostasy* will have seduced the world (vv. 10-12). Jesus will have to DESTROY a great false prophet

who will be given direct power from Satan to perform false “signs” and “lying wonders,” through which he will deceive a *gullible* world into rejecting God’s laws and His Truth! Many of you may ask, “Could our mainstream religious leaders really be *deceived* into going along with something like that?”

Absolutely! In fact, it might shock you to know the extent of the compromises *already* being made by many of the leaders of modern Christianity.

On March 30, 1994, the *New York Times* reported on a major ecumenical agreement between American Evangelicals and Catholics. The report stated:

“They toiled together in the movements against abortion and pornography, and now leading

Catholics and Evangelicals are asking their flocks for a remarkable leap of faith: to finally accept each other as Christians. In what’s being called a historic declaration, Evangelicals including Pat Robertson and Charles Colson... joined with conservative Roman Catholic leaders today in upholding the ties of faith that bind the nation’s largest and most politically active religious groups. They urged Catholics and Evangelicals... to stop aggressive proselytization of each other’s flocks.”

Some think this event to be astounding, considering the centuries of basic disagreement on fundamental doctrine—disagreement so profound that many cruel and bloody wars have been waged because of it. But should we be surprised? Not really, since God’s Word directly indicates that a great “one-world” church will emerge from a powerful revival of a system God Almighty clearly condemns!

In Revelation 17, God describes a rich and powerful “woman.” This woman represents a great false *church*. In fact, the term “woman” is often used symbolically for a church (cf. Eph. 5:23; Rev. 12:6, 14, 17). The woman of Revelation 17 is called “the great HARLOT who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (vv. 1-2).

She is rich and powerful. She is “arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of

(continued on page 30)

Prove Me

God's Challenge to Us—

with Prophecy!

by Rex I. Sexton



Five times each day the *Mezzuim* call the faithful of Islam to prayer. Messages from the *Koran* wail from loudspeakers mounted on the ubiquitous towers that dot the landscape of the Islamic world. Followers of Mohammed believe that the *Koran* is a holy book inspired by Allah and given to this prophet. But the Muslims are not alone in believing in a divine book. In fact, virtually every major religion has its “holy book” of sacred writings!

The *Avesta* or *Zend-Avesta* is the sacred book of the Zoroastrians of northern Persia. The Sikhs of India follow the teachings of Nanak, a 15th-century guru. His ideas, visions and teachings were assembled into a holy book, known now as the *Adi Granth*.

The Taoists of the Orient follow the “Way” or “Path.” Taoist teachings are found in many books considered sacred, such as the *Tao Te Ching*.

The followers of Confucius are guided by various books that contain his beliefs, including the *Analects*. These books primarily focus on ethical sayings, ceremonies, songs, history and commentary.

For their part, the Buddhists have three groups of writings considered to be holy scripture. These are known as “the three baskets”—*Vinaya-Pitaka*, *Sutta-Pitaka*, and *Abhidhamma-Pitaka*. Together they are eight times longer than the Bible.

Even in the professing Christian world, supposedly based on the Bible, many other books are believed by some to be infallibly “inspired” by God. Joseph Smith’s *Book of Mormon* and Mary Baker Eddy’s *Science and Health* are just two examples.

But what separates the *Holy Bible* from all these other books? How can we be absolutely sure that the book we base our life on is truly the WORD OF GOD—given to us by the Eternal Creator of heaven and earth? One way is through biblical prophecy. This article will examine the nature of prophecy in

the Bible and our responsibility to prove God thereby.

Prophecy—A Vital Key!

The host of other writings that lay claim to being holy books are virtually devoid of any prophecy. The few predictions about the future in these volumes are either of a very general nature or can be proven historically to have been written *after* the events in question! For example, there were no prophecies concerning the coming of Buddha, Mohammed or any other religious leader except one—Jesus Christ of Nazareth! The time of His coming, His purpose, His destiny and hundreds of details of His life were written down centuries prior to His birth and kept accurately for posterity by the descendants of Jacob!

The Bible, moreover, proclaims that the clear evidence of fulfilled prophecy is undeniable PROOF of God’s inspiration of Scripture. Speaking through the Prophet Isaiah, God declares that He can and does correctly and precisely tell us of future events! “Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them” (Is. 42:9). He adds that no other so-called deity can do likewise!

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: **‘I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God.** And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming shall come.... Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one” (44:6-8).

Much of the Bible Is Prophecy

Many Bible scholars today agree that more than 25% of the Bible is prophecy. There are both specific prophetic statements and types or forerunners of future events in virtually every book of the Bible. After His resurrection, Jesus Christ told the disciples that all three sections of the Old Testament foretold various details about Him that *must be fulfilled*. “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me’” (Luke 24:44). And this process did not end after Christ’s ascension to heaven. Indeed, the entire Old Testament contains many prophecies that our Savior has *yet* to fulfill! These prophecies center around the events that will overwhelm this earth prior to and at the return of Jesus Christ—after which He will establish His throne in Jerusalem and rule the earth for 1,000 years!

At His First Coming, Jesus fulfilled *every* prophecy in Scripture pertaining to that time. These included specific details such as the circumstances of His birth, where He would grow up (Nazareth), what He would teach—and even that He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver! Only the great and all-powerful God could foretell these events centuries in advance and then bring them to pass.

Still, the *majority* of prophecies about Jesus Christ are yet to be fulfilled! And understanding how He came the first time according to God’s inspired Word should convince us that He *will* return as prophesied and that He *will* fulfill every other messianic prophecy.

The history of already-fulfilled prophecies contained in the Bible is all the proof we need in order to know that *remaining* prophesied events will surely come to pass! Our free publications *The Beast of Revelation* and *America and Britain in Prophecy* illustrate

many examples of already-fulfilled Bible prophecy. Please call or write for your copies today.

Ridiculed by Many

In recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in Bible prophecy. Nonetheless, the majority of mainstream Christian denominations tend to avoid the subject. And frankly, they’re missing the boat. For the Bible contains *hundreds* of specific prophecies concerning events that are to befall our modern civilization at the “end of this age.” Many scriptures—especially those in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Revelation—warn of tribulation, war, famine and plagues that will strike the earth just prior to the return of the Messiah. But many modern-day churches have lost any sense of urgency concerning these end-time events. They have instead replaced this message with a “social gospel” or “feel-good gospel” in an effort to add numbers to their congregations. Their ministers often preach a message of flattery—telling people to join their group so they can “discover their gifts” or be “empowered to works of service.” But strong admonitions to repent, and preaching about God’s soon-coming Kingdom—the very message given by John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and the apostles (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 28:31)—are often neglected. In fact, ministers who strongly proclaim the return of Christ are sometimes ridiculed as having “prediction addiction”!

This should come as no surprise since the attitude of neglecting prophecy is *itself* prophesied in the Scriptures! Toward the end of the early New Testament Church era, the Apostle Peter wrote to Christians, **warning them not to forget the words of the prophets** and to recognize those who would ridicule prophecy!

He said, “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle... that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation'" (2 Peter 3:1-4).

Wise Will Understand

Certainly, a central part of the message that Jesus commissioned His servants to proclaim concerned our conduct as Christians. He told the disciples to teach others to "observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). So does this teaching somehow abrogate the clear instructions of Jesus to understand the parable of the fig tree (Luke 21:29-33) and to "watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass"—that is, the Great Tribulation of the end time? (v. 36). In fact, just the opposite! For Christ commanded *these very practices*—as a necessary part of the Christian life. Thus, "watching and praying" and being a student of Bible prophecy go hand in hand with the principles of loving our fellow man, being honest and sincere, obeying God from the heart and bearing the fruit of His Spirit.

While serving in the court of the king of Persia, God's servant Daniel was given a vision concerning events to befall this earth at the end time. Desiring to understand the vision, Daniel began praying and fasting (Dan. 10:1-3). After three weeks had passed, an angel of God appeared to him and revealed much of the meaning of the vision. It foretold that many more kings would rule Persia (11:2), and that later there would arise another kingdom, ruled by a great leader, which would eventually be split into four smaller kingdoms (vv. 3-4). This was fulfilled by Alexander the Great and his four generals, who ultimately seized his kingdom. (To learn more, please write for our free booklet, *The Beast of Revelation*.) The prophecy also speaks of one who would desecrate the very temple of God almost 400 years after Daniel's death (vv. 21-32)—later fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes.

The prophecy then focuses on the "time of the end." Notice how it continues in chapter 12: "At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; **and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was** since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. 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 like the stars forever and ever" (vv. 1-3).

So God has specifically foretold, through this message to Daniel, that there is coming a time of unparalleled trouble on this earth—after which the "wise" will be given eternal life and will shine like the stars! But the wise have another characteristic—they *understand prophecy!* Let's continue this march of events: "Then [Daniel] said, 'My lord, what shall be the end of these things?' And he said, 'Go your way Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed *till the time of the end*. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, *but the wise shall understand*'" (vv. 8-10).

No mistake here—God specifically states that there will be *wise* people on the earth who will understand. Understand what? The answer is contained in the surrounding verses, which speak of the 3 1/2-year period at the end of this age (v. 7) and the abomination of desolation (which Jesus Christ Himself admonished us to understand in Matthew 24:15). **Wise Bible students at the end of this age will understand these prophesied events and know how to conduct their lives accordingly!**

Those who neglect the instruction to "earnestly study to show yourself approved to God, a workman unashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15 J.P. Green's *Literal Translation*) are going to be *unwise* and will be caught unawares. In fact, Jesus Christ calls such people "evil servants," as we will see.

Good vs. Evil

The crucially important "Olivet Prophecy" recorded in Matthew 24 was given by Christ in answer to the question: "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (v. 3). The disciples wanted to know about the events that would herald the Second Coming of Jesus to establish His Kingdom here on the earth—something everyone claiming to be a Christian today should also want to know.

Jesus warned His disciples several times not to lose their sense of urgency about His coming. He said to "stay alert" and "always be ready" (vv. 42, 44 *Jewish New Testament*) for we don't know the exact hour of His return.

The blessed servant is one who is faithful and wise, giving proper food (spiritual instruction) at the right time (v. 45). In other words, the wise servant heeds Jesus' lesson of the fig tree (v. 32) and recognizes that Christ's return "is near, at the very doors"! (v. 33). The evil servant, on the other hand, "says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards" (vv. 48-49). The evil servant's disregard for

prophecy leads him to abuse others and neglect his own spiritual growth. And who are the drunkards? What did Christ mean by saying the evil servant would drink with them?

Some of Jesus' servants *have* strayed and literally caroused with ungodly men. But Christ's warning can also have a spiritual dimension, as described in Revelation 17:1-2. "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

Spiritual drunkenness is following this world's false religions—the system described as the "great harlot"! Which leads to an important lesson: **Losing sight of the importance of Bible prophecy and the urgency of Christ's return leads to false religion!**

A true follower of Jesus—one who desires to *live by every word of God*—will have spiritual balance. He will be striving to live according to the two Great Commandments of loving God with all his heart and loving his fellow man as himself (Matt. 22:37-39). He will follow the Golden Rule (7:12) and will grow in the fruit of God's Spirit (2 Peter 3:18). But he will also be a student of Bible prophecy—striving to be a "good servant" rather than an "evil servant."

Early Church Example

As we study the messages to the Churches in the New Testament (Rev. 2-3), it becomes abundantly clear that these early Christians were studious about Bible prophecy and were carefully watching world events. The Scriptures indicate that we could easily label them as having "*prediction addiction*!"

In writing to the Thessalonian Christians, the Apostle Paul knew that they too were students of prophecy. "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, **you have no need that I should write to you**" (1 Thess. 5:1). Paul did not have to explain the times and seasons to these Christians for they were already aware of

prophetic events! He went on to add, "**You yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night**" (v. 2). What did they know perfectly? The prophecies concerning the Day of the Lord and the return of Jesus Christ! Could that be said of *your church*? Of you?

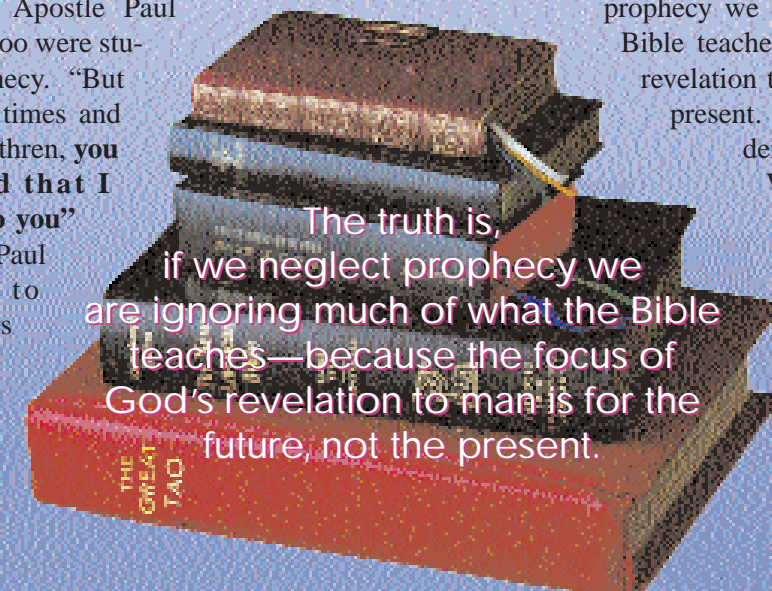
Paul then added, "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake *you* as a thief" (v. 4). A lack of understanding Bible prophecy, then, was likened to not being able to see! What does this tell us about ministers and church leaders who ridicule and neglect prophecy?

Christians are not to be "in darkness." In fact, we are expected to **KNOW THE TIMES** in which we live. Notice Romans 13:11: "And do this, knowing the time, that **now it is high time to awake out of sleep**; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed." Do we truly *know the times* in which we live and what Bible prophecies might well be fulfilled in the near future? For further information on this important subject, please write for our free booklet, *Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ's Return*.

We have already mentioned that Peter taught us to "be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets" (2 Peter 3:2). But this is only the introduction to an entire chapter about the importance of prophecy! He reminds us that the present earth and heavens are being prepared for judgment (v. 7) and will one day be burned up (v. 10). He strongly warns that we should not forget this one thing—a very important key to unlocking many prophecies—that God considers one day as 1,000 years and 1,000 years as one day (v. 8). He adds that we should be "*looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God*" (v. 12).

But how could anyone possibly do this without first studying Bible prophecy? The truth is, if we neglect prophecy we are ignoring much of what the Bible teaches—because the focus of God's revelation to man is for the future, not the present. Prophecy gives us more confidence that the Bible is God's very Word, rather than any of the numerous "holy books" of other religions. Fulfilled prophecy is *proof* to us from God that His book—the Holy Bible—contains the words that can lead to salvation and eternal life. Prophecies

(continued on page 29)



The Golden Rule

Jesus said, "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12 NRSV). In other words, treat other people the way you want to be treated, as this is the message of the whole Bible. This principle of love or outflowing concern for our fellow man has come to be known as the "Golden Rule" of human conduct, for it is the only way to peace and harmony for everyone.

Such nice-sounding words—fine sentiments, you might say. But we must go beyond nice thoughts. We must think about this Golden Rule in terms of day-to-day living. Let's begin in the early morning, when you crawl out of bed and drag yourself to the bathroom. Someone was thoughtful enough to replace the roll of toilet paper, which was emptied last night before going to bed. The toothpaste that you had squeezed dry is gone—in its place, a brand-new tube. There are clean towels on the towel rack. And as you turn on the faucet in the shower, you notice that the shower walls and glass doors have been dried by whomever went in before you. The morning's off to a good start!

Returning to your bedroom to get dressed, you see that the bed's been made and the clothes you'd thrown over a chair the night before are nowhere to be seen. While looking into your closet to decide what to wear today, you see clean clothes hanging there.

While you're dressing you can smell the tantalizing aroma of coffee brewing in the kitchen. You hear the sizzle of eggs frying and the pop of the toaster, mixed with the clatter of dishes and silverware being set out on the breakfast table. Laughter and the chatter of children's voices make you feel even better about the day ahead.

Now let's ask ourselves a question: Do we just take it all for granted? Or do we reciprocate and show our gratitude for these gestures of thoughtfulness? If we do, we're probably feeling pretty good about things and it looks like clear sailing for the day ahead!

But as far as the day-to-day routine is concerned—nothing lasts forever! The kids are off to school and you're now in your car, heading down the highway to work. The traffic is unusually heavy. And, of course, the driver behind you is tailgating, anxious to get around you but unable to do so. You glance in your rearview mirror frequently as the tension begins to mount. You look down and see that you're already doing the speed limit. The other driver finally pulls away from behind you, speeding up as he passes you on the wrong side. Looking over, you see him make an obscene gesture! Now your

tension turns to anger—the first stage of "road rage." So what should you do? Speed up—trying to turn the tables and tailgate him? Or do you ignore him and let your anger subside? This is a good time to

remember the fine start you had this morning. It's time to remember the Golden Rule.

You finally pull into the lot at work, searching for a parking space. When at last you spot one, so does another driver approaching from the opposite direction. What now? Do you graciously allow the other driver to take the space? Or do you cut him off, hurriedly pulling into the spot yourself? Another good time to remember the Golden Rule.

Entering your building, you sense someone coming up behind you. Do you stop and hold the door open, or do you go through without even considering the other person? You stride toward the elevator and someone inside reaches forward to hold the door back for you to enter. Makes you feel good again, doesn't it? Perhaps others know about the Golden Rule as well.

Your coworkers greet you with a cheery "good morning." You respond with a friendly word and a broad smile. Your mood continues to improve as the morning progresses.

As all of us should be able to see, we each have an effect on one another. No one lives in a vacuum. There are so many things we do that can make—or break—someone else's day. And vice versa!

Later, when lunchtime rolls around, you decide to grab a bite to eat at the diner across the street. But the waitress has a trainee in tow and

it's causing a delay in the noonday rush. You're in a hurry to eat because you also want to run a few errands before heading back to the office. And when she finally brings your order, you find that it isn't even what you asked for. Do you get angry? Do you demand to speak to the manager? Do you tell him what horrible employees he has? Or do you now remember the Golden Rule and exercise patience—trusting that the waitress

was doing her best under the circumstances. Patience has its own reward, remember? Practicing the Golden Rule, then, you begin to feel good again.

Now for the errands. You have to stop by the dry cleaners and pick up the clothes you dropped off the other day. But the clerk informs you that they couldn't get a large spot out

of one of your coats. Again, do you get angry at the clerk? Do you curse at the manager? Or do you once again remember the Golden Rule? After all, it's not the clerk's fault that the spot wouldn't come out. Nor is it the manager's. And how you respond will not only affect your attitude, but the attitude of these employees as well. It could ruin your day and theirs. But a polite "thank you for letting me know" could make all of you feel better the rest of the day. And if you do think it's proper to speak to the

Practical Applications of the Golden Rule

1. If you open it, close it.
2. If you turn it on, turn it off.
3. If you unlock it, lock it.
4. If you break it, repair it.
5. If you can't fix it, call in someone who can.
6. If you borrow it, return it.
7. If you use it, take care of it.
8. If you make a mess, clean it up.
9. If you move it, put it back.
10. If it belongs to somebody else and you want to use it, get permission.
11. If you don't know how to operate it, leave it alone.
12. If it doesn't concern you, don't mess with it.

—From a column by Ann Landers

EUROPE'S GATHERING STORM

by Douglas S. Winnail

What is the real significance of Europe's march toward unity? Where is it all leading? Are there some big surprises ahead?

While the world looks the other way,

preoccupied with matters of the moment, veteran Europe-watchers recognize that "important changes... are brewing" on that continent (*Arizona Republic*, Jan. 31, 1998). The European Economic Community (EEC) has become the European Union (EU), the number of member nations has grown from 6 to 15, and by January 1, 1999, there will be a Central Bank and a common currency, if all goes according to current plans. And these changes are destined to have an *astounding* impact on the world.

Some foreign-policy analysts assert that Europe's future is "uncertain" and that it's "impossible to know" where these events will lead (cf. *Daedalus*, Summer 1997, p. ix; *Foreign Affairs*, Nov.-Dec. 1997, p. 62). John Newhouse writes in *Europe Adrift* that "although much of what lies ahead is *unclear*, chances are that Europe will not again play a dominant role in world affairs" (1997, p. x).

But such assertions are simply not true! For the direction and outcome of changes in Europe *can* be known. Bible prophecy gives us remarkable insight and real answers!

Emerging Superpower

Quietly, under the nuclear umbrella of American protection, European nations have opened borders and eliminated customs barriers. In recent decades bureaucrats have hammered out reams of regulations governing almost every aspect of intra-European commerce. Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser to former United States President Jimmy Carter, notes that Europe "is already the most multilaterally organized region in the world... [wherein] political unification would create a single entity of about 400 million people" (*The Grand Chessboard*, 1997, p. 57). He adds that "such a Europe would *inevitably* be a global power." Journalist James Flanigan states that the "European Monetary Union [EMU] has the potential to create the largest single financial market in the world" (*Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 1, 1998). In fact, some analysts feel that "Europe could become *the* economic superpower" of the world in the years just ahead (Michael Biscop, ed., *Europe*, 1992, p. 22).

Which begs an important question: Will a European economic superpower be *benign* or *hostile*? Yale historian Paul Kennedy points out that **military and political power tend to follow economic power** (*The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 1987, p. 439). Brzezinski warns that "at some point a truly united and powerful European Union could become a global *political rival* to the United States" (p. 75). Harvard economist Martin Feldstein suggests the transition to the EMU and subsequent political integration could "lead to increased conflicts within Europe and between Europe and the United States"—**including future wars** (*Foreign Affairs*, Nov.-Dec. 1997, p. 61).

But do other nations have anything to fear if the EU merely establishes the euro as a common currency? According to international economists, "**the euro... will end the dollar's role as the world's dominant currency**" (*Financial Times*, Sept. 11, 1997). This changeover could also bring a "relative decline in the dollar's *importance* and *value* because European [and other] governments that now hold dollars as official reserves will begin to hold euros instead" (*L.A. Times*).

However, the *real* significance of the euro goes far beyond just being a potent weapon for global economic competition. Europe-watchers are keenly aware that "the euro has been billed as the **linchpin of a united continent**" (*Baltimore Sun*, July 10, 1997). The

creation of a single currency... would carry a *strong symbolic overtone* of the existence of a united Europe" (*International Affairs*, Jan. 1998, p. 56).

The Real Goal

Most observers agree that "*political motive* has been a central force behind European integration" (p. 56). The original aim of Jean Monnet and other pan-European visionaries was to use economic resources for social and political ends. They sought to bind European nations together economically in a common market in order to promote peace and prevent wars that had so often torn the continent asunder. A common currency was conceived as an integral part of that plan.

For some leaders, a strong unified Europe was envisioned as standing *shoulder to shoulder* with the United States in a transatlantic alliance against communism (cf. Franz Josef Strauss, *The Grand Design*, 1965, p. 103). However, other leaders foresaw this political union as a means to *counter* American influence. In 1956, when the United States pressured France and England to abandon their attack on the Suez Canal, German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer advised the French foreign minister, "France and England will never be powers comparable to the United States and the Soviet Union. Nor Germany, either. There remains to them only one way of playing a decisive role in the world; that is to unite to make Europe... we have no time to waste: **Europe will be your revenge**" (quoted by Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 1994, p. 547).

France and Germany both have a strong desire to see Europe unite—but for different reasons. As Brzezinski relates, "France seeks *reincarnation* as Europe; Germany hopes for *redemption*" (p. 61). France sees a united Europe as a means of regaining her past greatness and harnessing Germany's militaristic adventures. Germany, however, sees building a united Europe as a way to regain a clean moral and political slate in the eyes of the world. In fact, working within the structure of the EU, Germany has once again become the most powerful nation on the continent. The Germans have thus achieved through economics and politics what they were unable to accomplish through military force in World War II.

What began as a dream for promoting peace among Europe's perpetually quarreling nations could end up as an *instrument of retaliation* by establishing Europe as a superpower capable of combatting the "Americanization" of Western culture—a phenomenon that many Europeans regard with *contempt* (Brzezinski, p. 61).

Risky Business

The mood in Europe, however, is anything but one of unity! Behind all the media hype about a common currency lies a seething cauldron of concerns. As immigrants flood through open borders seeking jobs, and unemployment soars as countries tighten financial belts for the coming union, confidence in the EU has *plummeted* from 72% to 48% in seven years.

Public skepticism is also fueled by the apparent determination of European leaders to push through the monetary union by suppressing differences and, in effect, deferring their problems until later. Italian economist Antonio Martino charges, "The euro is being introduced *coercively*. To start a currency with this situation of distrust is to *play with fire*" (*The Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 29, 1997).

With fixed exchange rates, how will the community deal with external financial shocks that may affect individual countries differently? Since the EU has 15 different tax systems, the *Wall Street Journal* article just cited asks, "Can a monetary union work without closer economic and political union?" With 15 different historical and political traditions and many diverse cultural elements, reaching agreement on common goals will be challenging. In light of these concerns, some have called the move toward monetary union "a **gigantic, real-life crapshoot.**"

Adrift and Leaderless!

One of the biggest problems facing a united Europe is the lack of effective leadership within the community. Germany, the nation best suited to lead by its size, wealth and geographic location, seems *disinclined*—due to its internal problems and past history. Many Europeans feel that the "leaders have lost their way" and that "politicians don't really know where

New European Coin— A Prophetic Symbol?

One of the prototype coins being minted in Europe in anticipation of a common currency carries an intriguing symbol. Graphically displayed on the face of the coin is a *woman riding a bull swimming in the water*—an image much like the one associated with mysterious end-time prophecies found in the book of Revelation. The woman on the coin is Europa, a figure from Greek mythology. Europa was the legendary daughter of a king of Tyre (or Sidon), an ancient Phoenician city on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Her stunning beauty attracted the fateful attention of Zeus, king of the gods.

According to legend, Europa and her handmaidens were picking flowers by the sea when Zeus appeared in the form of a magnificent white bull. This bull allowed the girls



to pet him and then laid down at the feet of Europa. Initially, "Europa played with the seemingly gentle animal, but when she mounted his back he raced into the sea and swam to the island of Crete with the terrified girl!" (*Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. 10, 1997, p. 666). This is the scene depicted on the new coin. Once on Crete, Zeus raped Europa and disappeared. So much for mythology!

But could it be that this ancient fictitious myth is actually, in a sense, coming to pass? Will it, in fact, play a part in the fulfillment of specific Bible prophecies?

Near the end of the first century A.D., the Apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea. He was probably quite familiar with the legend of Europa and Zeus. While in exile, John was given a detailed and sobering vision of events that would mark the end of this age and the return of Jesus Christ. John recorded this vision in the book of Revelation. In chapter 13, he describes a "Beast" coming up out of the sea, which is believed by many Bible scholars to represent a great politico-military and economic system yet to emerge on the world scene and destined to



dominate the end of the age. Prophecies in the book of Daniel give further information, linking this Beast with the final resurrection of the Roman Empire, which arises just before the return of Christ (2:40-44; 7:19-22).

In Revelation 17 John describes a **woman riding a beast and sitting on many waters** (vv. 1-4). This woman—a harlot—is understood to symbolize a great false church with a worldwide constituency (vv. 4-6). The Beast she rides has its roots in the successive resurrections of the Roman Empire (vv. 3, 9-10). Her appearance heralds the *final* resurrection, which consists of a union or confederation of ten nations that will eventually fight Jesus Christ at His return (vv. 12-14). However, prophecy indicates that this ten-nation "Beast power" will ultimately turn against the woman—the false church—and, in a sense, "violate" her (v. 16), just like the mythical Zeus did to Europa!

Did the Apostle John merely weave existing legends into an intriguing tale about good and evil, or was he *inspired* to use a commonly understood legend to reveal important details about the future course of human history? Was he revealing the *identity* of an emerging world system that will dominate and determine events to mark the end of this age? Claire Lobel, a coin specialist in London, says that the design on bank notes and coins is significant since it reveals much about the history and culture of a country. Lobel states that "bank notes [and coins] are really like a **cultural identity card**" (*Baltimore Sun*, July 10, 1997).

The legend of Europa's abduction by the bull was already centuries old at the time John was inspired to write the book of Revelation. The theologically corrupt church that John describes was beginning to emerge in Europa's namesake—Europe. And the Roman Empire in which John lived has experienced numerous resurrections—once again, in Europe. Will the current efforts to unite Europe via a common currency, a common faith and the yet-to-emerge politico-military figure of the Beast *fulfill* these long-studied scriptures? Bible prophecy indicates that the *individual* referred to as the Beast will gain a position of power by deceitful means—pretending to be peaceable, *but then turning violent* (Dan. 11:21-24). Again, it sounds much like the bull in the legend. Indeed, efforts to forge a European Union will ultimately backfire and leave Europe and the dominant church—like the Europa of legend—devastated, desolate and violated! (cf. Rev. 17:16; 18:8).

These events bear watching! The prophecies of your Bible are destined to come alive in the not-too-distant future. The God who inspired the Bible is going to bring to pass what He has revealed in the pages of His Word (Is. 41:21-24; 46:9-10). In reaching back into Greek mythology, the designers of the new euro coins may have symbolized much more than they realize.

they are taking them" (*Washington Post*, July 4, 1997). Many also worry that too much power is being placed in the hands of unelected officials who are accountable to no political authority.

The most powerful man in the EU once monetary union is achieved will be the president of the European Central Bank. According to *Euromoney*, the selection of this individual will be "in the hands of the politicians" and may well occur "as the result of horse-trading by heads of government" (Jan. 1998, p. 34). This gives little comfort to the average person. The magazine goes on to say that the biggest danger is "that the presidency will be given to the *wrong kind of person.*" The question is being asked: "Will the heads of government know how to spot this **wolf in sheep's clothing?**" Others caution that "Europe isn't designed to be managed by a European central bank; it's designed to be run by a political authority—which currently *does not exist*" (*Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 29, 1997).

The sobering fact is that Europe *is* on the verge of monetary union, but that there is no definitive leader at the helm—*no one in the driver's seat!* The prospect of a "leaderless Europe in a turbulent world" could spell trouble in unexpected ways (*Redefining Europe*, 1994, p. 268).

A Spiritual Vacuum

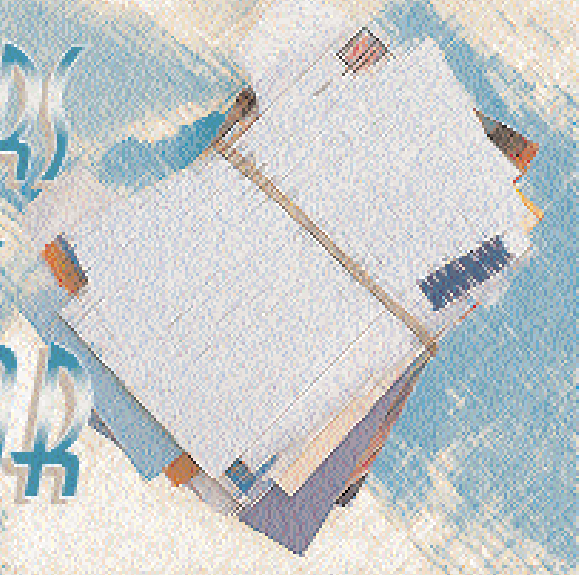
Another dangerous situation is also developing on the continent. Europeans seem to be experiencing an "internal crisis of morale and purpose" (Brzezinski, p. 71). John Newhouse writes, "Europe today lacks an *ethos*"—a distinguishing purpose or set of guiding beliefs (p. 4). The goal of a "continent-wide supermarket, without a soul, without an identity, without the lessons of the past, and above all without protection from future dangers" is not enough to sustain and inspire the minds of most Europeans (*Europe*, p. 61).

Vatican insider Malachi Martin recalls the words of Pope Pius XII, who stated, "Europe... had its eras of greatness when a *common faith* had animated the hearts of its peoples" and that Europe "could have its geopolitical greatness *again...* if it could *create a new heart*" by reinvigorating its former common faith (*Windswept House*, 1996, p. 2).

This new religious heart may have already begun to beat! *Foreign Affairs* reports that during

(continued on page 28)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



CONVERTED?

I truly enjoyed the March–April issue of *The World Ahead*, especially the article titled “How Can You Be Sure You’re Converted?” I’ve been aware of this dilemma. But I’m afraid of making a decision for Christ because of my own failures and shortcomings. I guess you could say I’m “counting the true cost.” Anyway, I just wanted to thank you for your words of encouragement. Your magazine is the only chance I get to read the true Gospel.

L.L.
Blountstown, Florida

It is certainly important to count the cost of committing our lives to God (Luke 14:28-33). But in so doing, we must realize that He knows we aren't perfect. "For ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). That's the very reason we need the forgiveness that comes through accepting Christ's sacrifice (cf. Matt. 26:28)—and then the Holy Spirit, which helps us to love and obey God (cf. Rom. 5:5; 1 John 5:3). Even then, overcoming sin is a PROCESS. We don't suddenly become perfect. Converted people still sin and continually need to ask God for forgiveness (1 John 1:8-9). The Apostle Paul said, "I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do" (Rom. 7:19 Today's English Version).

Of course, disobedience was not Paul's way of life (8:1-4; cf. 1 John 3:7-8), and neither must it be ours. Indeed, we must continue to STRIVE to obey (Luke 13:24; 1 Cor. 9:24-27)—in partnership with Jesus Christ (cf. Col. 1:29). And, over time, we will GROW (cf. 2 Peter 3:18) and

become more like our Savior in keeping His commandments. As long as we don't completely reject our Creator and no longer want His forgiveness at all—which CAN happen through bitterness, constant neglect or deliberately sinning just to spite God (Heb. 12:15-17; 2:3; 10:26-29)—then we will SURELY receive ultimate salvation in His Kingdom. As Paul says, if you are converted, you can be "confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will COMPLETE it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6)—ed.

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

I have to thank God immensely for your article in the January–February 1998 issue of *The World Ahead* titled “Answers to Unanswered Prayer” by Roderick C. Meredith. The article with its 11 key points is really deserving of its title. It offered a lot of lessons. Thank you very much for your diligent work. Keep it up. May God guide, strengthen and bless you.

Dominic Nze
San Geronimo, Dominican Republic

I have been receiving the *World Ahead* magazine since 1996. I enjoy it and have learned a lot from the articles.

Just a few weeks ago I received the January–February 1998 issue. I was very grateful to find the article on unanswered prayer. I’m one of those people who don’t know how to pray, so I found this article to be very helpful—the answer to my problem!

Jefferson Sumakang
Honiara, Solomon Islands

EYE-OPENING ARTICLES

Thanks so much for the quality of the work you produce. Since becoming a subscriber a year and a half ago, I haven’t expressed my sincere thanks to you and your team for a job well done.

I very much appreciate every issue of your magazine because all the articles are so informative about our modern world.

The November–December 1997 issue of *The World Ahead* was very interesting, beginning with the cover story titled “Goodbye England’s Rose.” The article “Keeping Love Alive” was also an eye-opener for me because it explained important points on how married life should be. Thank you for making it available free of cost. And thank you for your diligent work with God’s blessings.

Benoni Batike
Lae, Papua New Guinea

I am responding to a letter to the editor that appeared in your January–February issue under the subhead, “Christmas Traditions.”

The Christmas celebration may not be directly comparable to Israelites worshipping the golden calf—yet they not only made an *idol*, but they then declared a “feast to the LORD” [Ex. 32:5]. The people had declared a celebration to honor God that He did not recognize as being in His honor. The result—*He was ready to kill them!* [vv. 9-10].

I think what happened at Mount Sinai is very analogous to the present Christmas celebration. Even though those who celebrate Christmas do not actually bow down to the sun on December 25, they do declare something pagan to be a “feast to the LORD”!

Donna Tillotson
Rocky Comfort, Missouri

APPRECIATES MAGAZINE

Thank you, thank you for the “meat” of the Word that has been so hard to find. I thank God that you “feed the flock” through all of your publications. How wonderful it is to open the pages of *The World Ahead* or any other literature you offer and know that we will be blessed with God’s Word to help in our spiritual knowledge and growth. Please continue to feed us this strong “meat.” I have missed it for so long and can’t wait for

the next issue to study and absorb. I thank God and all of you who work so diligently to publish His Truth.

Mary Granada
Old Town, Florida

I’ve been a subscriber for a while now and have enjoyed all of your literature. I always agree with your well-researched articles, but I must say that they are the most provocative I’ve seen. I’m still learning a great deal from them. By reading through the *World Ahead* articles, I’m coming to know more about the true God. I want to thank you and those who have paid for my subscription. Your magazine really explains the faith and it helps me to better understand the world arena, as well as political and religious events.

Jose Cruz
Milton, Florida

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

I want to thank you for the fine booklet titled *Christianity's Greatest Deception*. I enjoyed reading it and wish I could share and discuss it with others who are so kind, goodhearted and dear to me, but grew up accepting a traditional Christianity. It seems they just can’t believe that their leaders could be wrong. May their eyes be opened before it’s all over.

William E. Harrison
Water Valley, Mississippi

I just recently found your web page while surfing the net, and read your very informative publication titled *America and Britain in Prophecy*. At first I thought, “So what? I’ve never seen anything like this in the Bible.” I was skeptical. But something inside prompted me to read it through. So I started reading and got so engrossed that I couldn’t stop!

John Unterwald
Internet e-mail

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)

entire Western World. Its tentacles will extend *all around the earth*—in a way nothing else in modern times has ever done. Its leaders will pose as the guardians of morality, guardians of the ancient Euro-Christian culture, guardians of the Truth.

Yet God’s mighty angel shouts, “COME OUT of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4).

WHY?

Because this modern “Babylon” will be the antithesis of nearly everything the humble Carpenter of Nazareth taught, and for which He lived and died. It will sponsor “holy wars” to *destroy* its enemies. It will substitute ritual and ceremony for the heartfelt preaching of God’s Word. It will replace the attitude of service and sacrifice that Jesus taught with the politics of power and corruption. To *understand* how this system deceives the masses, please write for your free copy of our powerful booklet, *Christianity’s Greatest Deception*.

Most important of all, this coming system will seek to undermine and destroy those who strive to keep the commandments of God as Jesus taught His disciples (12:17; 17:6; cf. Matt. 19:17). For this great religion will *persecute* those who will not “climb on board.” It will take real *understanding* of the Word of God and profound COURAGE to be able to stand up to the “majority”—who will have thrown in their lot with this religious system. Those who have this understanding will have learned to genuinely STUDY the Bible. It will become their familiar friend and guide. And the God of the Bible—the CREATOR—will be absolutely REAL to them. They will have learned to truly “walk and talk” with God on a daily basis. And therefore, even when threatened with banishment—or even death!—they will put their complete TRUST in the Almighty.

In the end, *these* are the people who will be in Christ’s Kingdom when He returns. They will be GLORIFIED. They will be filled with JOY. And the false, Babylonian politico-religious system soon to arise will be destroyed: “Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her” (Rev. 18:8).

Will *you* be among the millions of “careless Christians” who simply go along with the majority, who do not really *study* the Bible? Or will you have the understanding and the courage to obey God and His inspired Word in the years ahead? Will you follow the crowd, or will you follow God?

In 1998 members of Congress will vote on social legislation of profound importance to families: whether to spend \$21 billion to subsidize daycare for children in the United States. This proposal has sparked some measure of controversy. Should the government participate in the shift of responsibility of early child care from parents to paid professionals? Is this all part of some terrible national experiment with our children? Are we "betting that it does not really matter if parents leave to others the business of rearing their young"? (Michael Kelley, *Boston Globe*, Jan. 15, p. A23). Andrew Thomas in *The Wall Street Journal* warns that passage of this measure will seriously impact American

family life and produce a long-term bitter fallout for everyone (Jan. 8, p. A8). In light of his sobering words, let's take an overall look at the daycare issue and learn what we can to strengthen our own families.

Mr. Thomas states that "the 1950s set a standard for family life that probably has never been equaled anywhere" (p. A8). At that time most children grew up in two-parent homes with Mom at home full-time. Every decade since then, however, the quality of family life has declined in some measure. Today, more than 55% of new mothers return to work within one year of giving birth (p. A8). Instead of spending their earliest years in the home, more than half of today's infants, toddlers and preschoolers receive up to 35 hours

of weekly child care (*Globe*, p. A23).

Why such a departure from the model family of the 50s? Two main reasons—money and morals. Married couples who place their children in daycare claim that they need a second income. But quite often the actual net income of a working wife and mother is not all it's cracked up to be. Money expert Dave Ramsey writes in his book *Financial Peace* of a working mom making \$18,000 annually. However, after higher taxes, more clothes and dry cleaning, increased wear and tear on the car, extra meals out due to fatigue and the cost of daycare itself, she ends up netting around \$1,140—or only \$95 per month! (1997, pp. 48-49). Now, of course, this probably represents a

He states that social policies currently in place encourage illegitimacy and choosing the "single-parent" lifestyle. There is no real effort to "reinforce the message" that having an illegitimate child is irresponsible ("Editorial," *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 16, 1998). We have seen an increasingly widespread acceptance of illegitimacy and government programs that merely treat the effects of family breakdown.

In supporting the daycare "solution," child advocates cite a three-year study of more than 1,300 babies in ten different daycare centers conducted by the National Institute for Child Health and Development (NICHD). The NICHD report concludes that quality daycare does not harm children although, admittedly, only one in seven care centers is rated as "quality." In covering the story, however, the mainstream press featured the optimistic parts of the report to reassure parents that, overall, children are and will be all right in quality daycare—and that family bonding will not suffer (*Globe*, Jan. 22, p. F3).

In opposition to proposed daycare, researchers have reviewed studies from the 70s through the 90s that contradict the hopeful tone of the NICHD material. These earlier studies have found that regardless of the quality of daycare, early-care children are more likely to be violent, aggressive and resistant to basic discipline—and to have reduced thinking skills. Early-care children also risk learning antisocial behavior in direct proportion to the

amount of time they spend in daycare (*Wall Street Journal*, p. A8). Michael Kelley states, "While it may sometimes be necessary for both parents to work full time, it is undeniably better for children that they be



Responsible Parenting

"worst-case scenario." But the general principle of "diminished returns" should be clear to see.

Child care advocates themselves cite monetary reasons to support expanded daycare. They reason that government would spend less on welfare if it provided daycare for children of low-income parents. It is not clear whether or not such a move would yield the desired economic effects. But even if it were to, isn't "mortgaging" the nuclear family a terrible price to pay to improve our "bottom line"?

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani touches on the moral reasons behind changing family structure. More than half of all births in New York City are outside of marriage—in some neighborhoods as many as four out of every five!

raised in their own homes, mostly by their own parents" (*Globe*, Jan. 15, p. A23).

The Value of Family

The debate about early child care brings to mind a timeless truth about marriage, family and child rearing. As the late Christian leader and educator Herbert W. Armstrong wrote, "God has bestowed marriage and family life on no other form of life except on humans, whose potential it is to enter the Family of God!" (*The Incredible Human Potential*, 1978, p. 80). God intends for Christian husbands and



wives to develop, through the power of the Holy Spirit, a family relationship wherein they both feel respected, loved and secure. They are to pattern their efforts after the love and harmony that God and Christ share with one another.

God places the primary responsibility for family well-being on the husband's shoulders. He is to set all the duties of providing for his family's needs in context of the love of Christ. And through the power of the Holy Spirit, the husband is to love and care for his family just as Christ Himself does for us. God commands a wife to yield to her husband's leadership, to respect him and to serve her family through the power of the Holy Spirit as if serving Jesus Christ. When asked to, God invests the family with the power of His Spirit and thereby produces the best possible environment for the development of new life.

"Human babies are born helpless! They need the tender care, the loving instruction, the patient training and discipline and the warm affection and love of a father and a mother. They need the warmth and protection and security of family and of home life" (Armstrong, *The Missing Dimension in Sex*, 1971, p. 61). Recent scientific understanding confirms the importance of family nurturing. "Brain growth in the early years is unparalleled. At no other stage does the brain master so many skills with such ease. Nurturing plays a huge role in how the brain chooses to wire itself for life. The pathways created form... the foundation upon which a child builds a lifetime of skills" (*Boston Globe* supplement). From birth, children develop in critical areas as the brain makes connections

for sight, language, motor skills, music, emotional stability, logic and character development.

Essentially, building character involves understanding right from wrong, and then choosing to *do* the right thing. Teachers today refer to children who act in this way as

If I Had My Children to Raise All Over Again...

I'd finger paint more, and point the finger less.

I'd do less correcting, and more connecting.

I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.

I would care to know less, and know to care more.

I'd take more hikes, and fly more kites.

I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.

I'd run through more fields, and gaze at more stars.

I'd do more hugging, and less tugging.

I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.

I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.


I'd teach less about the love of power, and more about the power of love.

—Diane Loomans

having learned "self-control." Educators say that parents can best prepare their children for school by teaching two fundamental self-control skills—sitting quietly and completing tasks. A Boston high school teacher wrote, "On a daily basis, I see students who have difficulty developing study and work habits that will make them successful.... If completing tasks on their own appears daunting, many simply refuse to do it" (*Globe*, Dec. 5, 1997).

Speaking out against classroom disorder and poor student performance, one editor wrote, "No breakthrough will take place until parents feel urgent about the need to banish incivility and neglectfulness at home. Classroom disruption is boundless... and will remain so until children arrive at school with internal controls" (*Globe*, Dec. 5, 1997, p. A26).

Regardless of the social conditions that undermine family structure, God has not changed the *parental obligation* to rear children as befits His potential heirs. Since we live in the conditions foretold by the Apostle Paul in his second letter to Timothy, we need God's help in becoming more honorable husbands and wives and more effective parents: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power" (3:1-5). We must train our children in godly values and self-control and not assume they will learn the rudiments of character somewhere else.

The NICHD report emphasized the importance of quality child care—and so it is. But the only real quality child care and training involves teaching our loved ones about the marvelous plan of God and their incredible potential as His very sons and daughters. And there's no doubt that this can best be done within the confines of a loving, Christian family! 

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Some professing Christians demonstrate their faith by handling venomous snakes and drinking deadly poisons. Is this what Jesus instructed?

First of all, let's look at where this idea comes from. Jesus *did* say, "These signs will follow those who believe... **they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them**" (Mark 16:17-18).

The context here is that Jesus was commanding His apostles to go into all the world, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (vv. 15-16). Specific, miraculous signs would follow them—and *did*, as recorded throughout the entire book of Acts. But there was also a *promise of protection* for those God called to preach the Gospel.

The phrase "if they drink anything deadly" clearly connotes something *accidental*. There is no example in the New Testament, for example, of *deliberately* handling snakes or ingesting poison. But we do find God's *promise of divine protection*—the promise of "authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19).

The Apostle Paul's experience recorded in Acts 28 illustrates what Jesus Christ meant. En route to Rome, Paul was shipwrecked. By God's intervention, all those on board were able to swim ashore to the remote island of Malta. As he gathered wood for a fire, Paul was bitten by a snake. A severe reaction or possibly death would have been the expected result. However, God fulfilled his promise to protect Paul from this *unintentional* encounter with a poisonous snake (vv. 1-10). It's clear that Paul did not seek out the snake to make a show of his spirituality. It was merely an accident that God turned into witness of the Truth.

Deliberately tempting God by handling poisonous snakes or drinking deadly liquids is contrary to Christ's teachings. When Satan attempted to persuade Christ to jump from a great height, he appealed to vanity: "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down" (Matt. 4:6). Satan then quoted scripture, but it was a

misapplication of what God intended.

Today, the devil's tactics have not changed. So we must remember Christ's firm response: "**You shall not tempt the LORD your God**" (v. 7). And neither must we tempt God by *deliberately* engaging in these highly dangerous activities that simple common sense would tell us to steer clear of.

How can I know if God's Spirit dwells within me?

This question is of profound importance to all Christians, because "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Rom. 8:9).

God's Spirit is what Jesus Christ promised that true Christians would receive to help them overcome sin and to lead them into all truth: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper.... It abides *with* you, and will be *in* you.... [and] shall teach you all things, and remind you of all things which I said to you" (John 14:16-17, 26 Wilson's *New Emphatic Version*).

To properly answer the question, we should first look at *how* we receive the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter gave these simple, yet soul-searching instructions: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Repentance means to "turn around" from the way of selfishness and self-will and to go the other way—*God's* way. It is a heartfelt change from rebellion against the Lord's instruction to unconditional surrender to God. A truly repentant person will desire to live by "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Baptism is the scriptural ordinance that follows repentance. This important requirement reflects inward faith in Christ's sacrifice and resurrection, and submission to the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Rom. 6).

Obviously, this is a deliberate and rational choice that could only be made by a thinking, mature adult. The all-too-common practice of baptizing infants,

then, is nothing more than an exercise in futility! After repentance and baptism, one then receives God's Spirit through the laying on of hands by a minister of Jesus Christ or someone who has been duly appointed by the Church of God to render this service (Acts 8:17).

The Spirit of God enables a Christian to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). But what does that mean? The Apostle Paul explains that "God's *love* has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5 NRSV). Indeed, this supernatural, divine love is described as the fruit of the Spirit, which is abundant in the life of true Christians (Gal. 5:22-23). And just how is this love manifested? The Apostle John answers, "This is the love of God, *that we keep His commandments*" (1 John 5:3).

John, in fact, has much to say about how to know if we have God's Spirit. He writes, "Now by this we know that we know Him, *if we keep His commandments*.... Whoever keeps His word [God's instructions in the Bible], truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him" (2:3-5). Even more directly, He says, "All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us" (3:24 NRSV). To learn more about God's laws, please request our free booklet, *The Ten Commandments*.

The commandments express love toward God and love toward neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). John expands on this, writing, "We know that we have passed from death to life [through receiving God's Spirit], because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14)—something, John explains, that must be implemented through actual deeds, not just well-wishing (vv. 18-19).

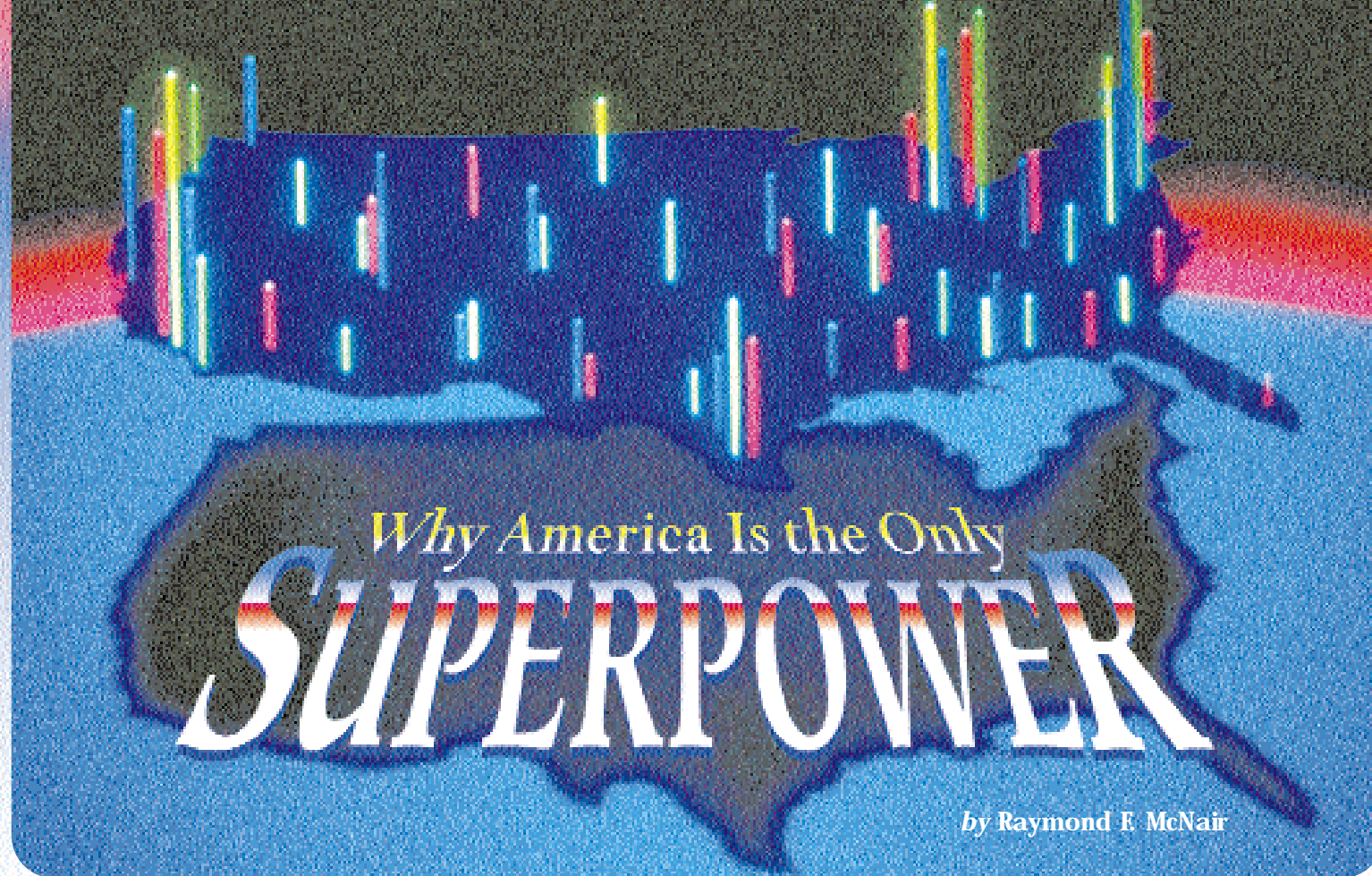
Receiving God's Spirit is a dramatic life-changing event! Through it, the very nature of the Godhead is formed within us! (Phil. 2:5; Gal. 4:19). Only those who truly grow in becoming like Jesus Christ will inherit eternal life in the Kingdom of God. If you would like to know more, please call or write for our free booklet, *What Is a True Christian?*

There are currently thousands of American servicemen standing guard in the Persian Gulf region—making sure that Saddam Hussein doesn't continue to defy United Nations Security Council resolutions in his development of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. But despite the Security Council resolutions, the United States, now the world's only superpower, seems to be the one military force on earth that has both the *power* and the *will* to make certain that Saddam is kept in his U.N.-imposed "box." It appears that the United States alone can ensure that he doesn't again seriously threaten his neighbors in the Middle East.

In fact, many feel that the United Nations would be basically ineffective if it were not for the United States and her closest ally, Great Britain. After all, it was primarily the Anglo-American alliance that defeated the Central Powers in World War I and the Axis Powers in World War II. And it was, in large measure, the military might of the Anglo-Americans that forced Iraq to retreat from Kuwait in 1991.

Moreover, since the sudden fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has been left as the world's *only* superpower. In fact, the USSR had always trailed the United States in gross domestic product (GDP) as well as in overall military strength. And now that the Soviet Union has broken up into several republics, this leaves the United States with the third-largest population in the world at 270 million. Having such a huge potential workforce—coupled with low unemployment and declining inflation—some wonder if the U.S. economy will ever stop soaring. America's annual GDP now hovers at around \$8 trillion—20% of that of the entire globe!

So how did the United States *become* the wealthiest and mightiest nation on earth? How did it come to



Few realize *why* the United States is the world's only superpower. Was it by sheer chance? Or did a divine Architect, thousands of years ago, plan that America would play a dynamic economic and military role in this modern age?

dominate the world's political landscape—becoming a global *superpower* and *world policeman*? Was it through superior intellect, virtue or human ability? Or was something else involved?

Blessings from God

Some of the most incisive remarks concerning American prominence in the world were made 25 years ago by a former prime minister of Japan, the late Kakuei Tanaka. He said: "I often wonder why [Americans] worry so much about domestic problems when you have such an abundance of resources.... When I compare the situation here in Japan with the situation in your country, I think that as a nation you are *too privileged*."

"Yes, I think God has not been very fair in the distribution of resources.... Americans have the most stable economy, they have an abundance of resources available within their own country, and they have more investments abroad than any other country. When you think in terms of a capability in exercising economic, political and military

power, the weight of the U.S. in world affairs has not declined at all. I expect it to continue to be as important as it has been in the past" (*U.S. News & World Report*, Nov. 26, 1973). And his prediction has thus far come true!

But just where does God fit in all this? President Harry S. Truman was fully convinced that the Almighty had raised the United States up to play a leading role in world affairs. Speaking in Washington, D.C., on April 3, 1951, Truman said, "I do not think that *anyone* can study the history of this nation of ours without becoming convinced that *divine providence* has played a great part in it. I have the feeling that God has created us and brought us to our present position of power and strength for some *great purpose*."

Sir Winston Churchill, British prime minister during World War II, made a similar statement while speaking before the U.S. Congress on December 26, 1941. Churchill said, "He must indeed have a blind soul who cannot see that some *great purpose* and *design* is being worked out here below!"

Truman and Churchill both believed that God was working out His great purpose on this earth in and through the primarily British-descended people of America, as well as their traditional British-descended allies in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

If that's so, then would God's Word, the Holy Bible, neglect to mention such a powerful nation as the United States of America? Bible prophecy covers the great empires of ancient history—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. It even mentions many smaller lands like Cyprus, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Libya and Spain. So does it really make sense that prophecies concerning the end time would fail to mention the greatest economic and military power this earth has ever seen wielded by one nation—the United States?

Even though the British Empire grew to be five times larger than that of Rome and eventually ruled more than a quarter of the earth's land and nearly a third of its people, the United States is, nevertheless, the greatest *single* nation that has ever existed. Has it really gone *unnoticed* in Bible prophecy? The answer is no. Scripture *does* mention this nation, though not by its present name. To properly identify it, we must examine the ancient genealogical roots of its people.

American Israel?

In the early United States, it was popular among some to figuratively identify this nation with Old Testament Israel. For example, in 1783, Ezra Stiles, president of Yale University, preached a national election sermon in Connecticut. He began with the biblical account of the covenant at Mount Sinai "as introductory to a discourse upon the political welfare of **God's American Israel**, and as [being] allusively prophetic of the future prosperity and splendor of the United States... this **America Joseph** (now separated from his brethren)" ("The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor," quoted by Conrad Cherry, *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, 1971, p. 83).

Stiles continued, "Already does the new constellation of the United States begin to realize this glory. It has already risen to an acknowledged sovereignty among the republics and kingdoms of the world. And we have reason to hope, and I believe to expect, that God has still greater blessings in store for this VINE which His own right hand hath planted, to make us 'high among the nations in praise, and in name, and in honor'" (pp. 83-84).

The symbolic use of the term "vine" was undoubtedly a reference to God's use of the same symbol when speaking of the Israelite people. Through the Prophet Jeremiah, God asks rhetorically, "Is Israel a *servant*?" (Jer. 2:14). His answer: "Yet I have planted you a **NOBLE VINE, a seed of highest quality**. How then have you turned before Me into the *degenerate plant* of an alien vine?" (v. 21). Doesn't Jeremiah's prophecy aptly describe what has happened to the American people—who today have little or no fear of God, as evidenced by their hostility toward Him and His law and by their resultant degenerate morals?

Of course in Stiles' day, morality had not yet taken such a downturn. Thus, considering the wonderful blessings given this land, he identified modern-day America as the very embodiment of the promise of national prosperity that God gave to the father of the Israelites—Jacob.

Now did this eminent scholar really understand the profound truth he expressed at that time? We don't

know, of course. But we *can* say that the Israelite identification he made is not simply figurative.

Indeed, surprising as it may seem, the *ancestral roots* of the English-speaking peoples—including, of course, the United States—can be traced through history to ancient Israel! For proof of the amazing ethnic identity of the United States and other British-descended nations, please write for our free color brochure, *America and Britain in Prophecy*. It explains from both Scripture and secular history just how this is so.

The story begins in Genesis 12 with God Almighty calling the patriarch Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans and telling him to migrate to the land of Canaan—which he and his descendants were promised to later inherit (vv. 1-7). After fathering a child named *Ishmael*, progenitor of many of the Arabs (Gen. 16), Abraham had another son called *Isaac*—father of *Jacob*, also known as *Israel* (Gen. 21-28). Jacob, in turn, had *twelve sons* (35:22-26). “Abraham begot Isaac... and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the *twelve patriarchs*” (Acts 7:8). Finally, these twelve sons of Jacob became the founding fathers of the *Twelve Tribes* of Israel.

Joseph, one of these twelve patriarchs, had two sons, *Manasseh* and *Ephraim* (Gen. 41:50-52). Before Jacob died, he laid his hands upon the heads of these two grandsons, and God inspired him to *adopt* them as his own sons and to place his own name—Israel—upon them (48:13-22).

According to Jacob’s blessing, his elder grandson Manasseh would become a single, *great nation*, whereas his younger grandson Ephraim would become a *multitude of nations*: “[Manasseh] also shall become a **people**, and he also shall be **great** [or a *great nation*, i.e. the United States]; but truly his younger brother shall be **greater** than he, and his descendants shall become a **multitude of nations** [i.e. the British-descended Commonwealth nations]” (v. 19; cf. 35:11).

So Joseph’s sons Ephraim and Manasseh were to receive a *greater* blessing than the other tribes of Israel—a blessing known as the “birthright.” Though this birthright would normally have gone to the *firstborn*, Jacob’s eldest son Reuben had earlier disqualified himself (cf. v. 22; 49:3-4; 1 Chron. 5:1-2). Thus, the descendants of Joseph would eventually inherit the greatest nations in the world—as they surely have.

PropheSied Military Might

As part of the birthright, Joseph’s descendants were promised not only the greatest material blessings of any people on earth, but also that they would become the world’s strongest military power.

Here is Jacob’s deathbed prophecy for Joseph’s offspring “in the last days” (Gen. 49:1): “Joseph is a fruitful bough... The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But **his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob....** By the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above” (vv. 22-25).

A few hundred years later, the Prophet Moses also spoke of the great military strength that Joseph’s descendants would wield in the last days: “Blessed of the LORD is [Joseph’s] land, with the precious things of heaven, with the dew... with the precious things of the earth and its fullness... Let the blessing come ‘on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.’ His glory is like a firstborn bull, and his *horns* [i.e. fighting power] are like the horns of the *wild ox*; **together with them he shall push the peoples to the ends of the earth**” (Deut. 33:13-17).

Doesn’t it seem significant that, during both World Wars, American forces—aided primarily by Great Britain—*did* push their enemies to the very ends of the earth? The U.S. and British navies destroyed those of the Axis Powers throughout the oceans of the world. Likewise, American ground forces turned the tide of the Allied struggle against the German, Italian and Japanese armies.

In Moses’ day, a reluctant prophet named Balaam also foretold the military prowess of the Israelites—some of whose descendants are modern-day Americans! The Lord inspired Balaam to prophesy end-time victories: “God brings [Israel] out of Egypt; **he has strength like a WILD OX....** Look, a people rises like a lioness, and lifts itself up **like a lion; it shall not lie down until it devours the prey, and drinks the blood of the slain**” (Num. 23:22-24).

Balaam then repeated God’s pronouncement regarding Israel’s military might against future foes (24:8-9). God also foretold that those nations that *blessed* Israel would themselves be blessed, while all that *cursed* Israel would be cursed.

Another remarkable end-time prophecy of a strong and powerful Israel is found in the book of Micah: “Then the *remnant of Jacob* shall be in the midst of many peoples [i.e. through colonization], like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, that tarry for no man nor wait for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many peoples, **like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep**, who, if he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver. Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, **and all your enemies shall be cut off**” (5:7-9).

But when was this pivotal prophecy to have been fulfilled? It certainly never came to pass in the tiny kingdom of ancient Israel. Nor can it apply to Israel during the coming millennial reign of Christ on this earth—wherein *peace* shall prevail around the globe (Is. 11; Micah 4).

So the prophecies concerning Israel’s, and particularly *Joseph’s*, military dominance over his enemies can only apply to some time in between. And in fact, it is in these modern times when the United States—along with her chief British-descended allies—has attained the very pinnacle of wealth, power and prestige among the nations. These nations alone have dominated the earth both *economically* and *militarily*! And not surprisingly. For their supremacy is a direct fulfillment of the Almighty’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and, in particular, Joseph!

Only the Great God could have prophesied these major events and then have brought them to pass: “For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’” (Is. 46:9-10).

Why, then, does the United States remain as the earth’s only *superpower*? And why is this great nation recognized as the only legitimate *international policeman*? Because that’s what Almighty God *prophesied* would occur during this climactic time in which we are now living! Britain had its century of power in the 1800s. But we are now in the *American* century! The United States’ peacekeeping efforts in Western Europe and Japan after World War II, and later in Korea, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Bosnia and the Middle East, are in direct fulfillment of important biblical prophecies.

Will America Heed?

Yes, the United States has certainly been blessed with seemingly unlimited natural resources within the borders of its 50 states. In fact, no nation even comes close when comparing all the critical indices of seemingly unlimited wealth and unmatched military power. And this fact often causes some Americans to become overconfident and complacent. But as economic indicators continue to forecast smooth sailing ahead, we must remember that “pride goes before *destruction*, and a haughty spirit before a *fall*” (Prov. 16:18). In this mortal life, all that goes *up* must, sooner or later, come *down*! Such was the case during the “Roaring 20s,” which were followed by the colossal economic crash of 1929.


Indeed, looks *can* be deceiving. As this century draws to a close, all is not well in America. Nor are things

well in the British-descended nations, which by and large remain closely tied to the United States. The current headlong plunge into immorality, licentiousness, violence and moral depravity has caused many thoughtful people to ask: How much longer will a *just God* tolerate such widespread *ungodliness*? (cf. Gen. 6:1-13).

The immortal words of Thomas Jefferson, America’s third president, inscribed on the walls of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., should cause us to reflect on our national depravity before it’s too late. He said, “God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? **Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever!**”

About 60 years later, while brother fought brother in the terrible fraternal carnage of the Civil War, a grim President Lincoln issued this somber warning to his fellow Americans: “We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven... we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. **But we have forgotten God.** We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, **and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.** Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become *too self-sufficient* to feel the necessity of [God’s] redeeming and preserving grace, *too proud* to pray to the God that made us.”

Today, we are living in “perilous times” (2 Tim. 3:1). It is, therefore, all the more incumbent upon us to beseech God to intervene in this world. His Word instructs us to pray for the leaders of all nations—“for kings and *all* who are in authority” (1 Tim. 2:1-2). To be successful in averting World War III—and the unleashing of horrific weapons of mass destruction—those leaders need vision and strength, which only an all-wise God can give. If the United States is to continue helping to maintain today’s fragile peace, then **our leaders need the guidance of the very hand of God!**

Sadly, however, it doesn’t seem, in this evil age, that most will accept God’s guidance. Prophecy instead reveals that, as events hurtle toward the close of this “age of man,” an indescribably horrible global war will burst forth upon an unsuspecting world (2 Thess. 5:3; Matt. 24:21-22). But all hope is not lost. Quite the contrary! For that final, titanic struggle will eventually lead to the collapse of this present *world system*, as a prelude to the establishment of the glorious millennial Kingdom of God, ruled by Jesus Christ, the true Messiah. May God Almighty speed that day! 

EUROPE (continued from page 17)

recent elections in Poland, the winning candidate combined *religion* and *politics* by appealing “explicitly to voters’ Roman Catholic religious identity” and their adherence to “Christian values” (Jan.–Feb. 1998, p. 13). The magazine also states that the election may have signaled the “emergence of Christian democracy as a significant political force in Central and Eastern Europe.... Catholic values [now] appear to have fresh relevance among people who feel that statist socialism created a *spiritual vacuum*.” This same approach may also find fertile ground in *Western Europe*. Perhaps this is why Pope John Paul II has emphasized that “there will be no European unity unless there is a community of the spirit,” and why he has repeatedly linked the “unification of Europe to a reassertion of its [Catholic] roots” (pp. 18, 13). Will religion *once again* play a central role in Europe’s destiny?

What Prophecy Reveals

The events unfolding in Europe today bear a striking resemblance to prophecies that have fascinated and puzzled Bible students and scholars for centuries. In the book of Daniel we find a vision of “*what will be in the latter days*” (2:28). The great human image (v. 31) represents four successive empires that would rule the Middle East and Mediterranean world until the return of Jesus Christ. The fourth of these (v. 40) is generally recognized to be the Roman Empire. Its final phase is pictured by the feet and toes of *iron* and *clay*—“partly strong and partly fragile” (vv. 41-43). These are precisely the qualities of the emerging European Union—a potential superpower made up of nations *seriously divided* by history, culture and language. What eventually appears in Europe promises to be imposing, but *weakly bonded* together. The significance of this configuration is that Jesus Christ is to return shortly after it appears (vv. 44-45).

In Daniel 7 we read of these same four empires, now depicted as “Beasts.” The fourth Beast (again,

the Roman Empire) has ten horns that arise successively, signifying ten revivals or resurrections of this empire (vv. 7, 24). The last seven of these revivals are dominated by another horn—a powerful *church* (vv. 8, 20). Secular history confirms this explanation, recording numerous revivals of this “Holy” Roman Empire. In fact, when the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, laying the foundation of European unity, the participants stated, “We felt like Romans on that day.... **We were consciously recreating the Roman Empire once more**” (cf. Grant Jeffrey, *The Signature of God*, 1996, pp. 190-191). The Bible indicates that the final revival will only last for a short time and will be followed by the coming of Christ and the Kingdom of God (v. 27). For more information on these amazing prophecies, please write for our free booklet, *The Beast of Revelation*.

In Revelation 17 we read of a seven-headed Beast with ten horns, ridden by an evil *woman*—that is, a great false *church* (cf. vv. 1-5). These seven heads are the last seven revivals of the fourth Beast in Daniel 7. The ten horns represent ten kings or leaders who will *voluntarily yield their sovereignty* to this final “Beast power” for a short time (Rev. 17:11-12). Is it mere coincidence that the common currency is designed as the *initial step* in “sharing” or surrendering national sovereignty? Is it just coincidence that several popes have promoted this very type of union by fostering a *revival* of Europe’s historic common Catholic faith?

Prophecy indicates that this end-of-the-age, church-dominated Beast will be an *economic superpower* with global connections (18:11-13). Its sudden appearance will take everyone by surprise! (Rev. 17:8). And there’s more. A wicked leader is prophesied to gain control of this system by cunning and deceit—perhaps by providing decisive leadership that is so noticeably lacking today (Dan. 8:23-25). He will exalt himself and *militarize* the union as a tool for aggression (11:31-39). However, this Beast system will be short-lived and will collapse at Christ’s return (Rev. 18:8, 17).

The Storm Clouds Gather


As Europe moves toward a common currency and political union, a host of potentially incendiary problems lie in wait. Sooner or later, these problems will *demand* attention! And yet, neoconservative author Irving Kristol notes that this “slowly emerging crisis in Europe’s economy and society garners very little attention” (*The Wall Street Journal Europe*, Feb. 2, 1998). Although the crisis is real and has serious implications

for both Europe and the United States, the State Department appears to be “supremely uninterested,” while most Europeans seem to be in “a state of denial.” In fact, most of us are “asleep at the switch”! This, too, was prophesied long ago (cf. Matt. 24:38-39).

Kristol notes that across Europe, “youth unemployment is on its way to becoming an explosive social issue [that]... could in the end *rip the European Union apart*.” He adds that Europe’s shrinking and aging population “will put an *intolerable strain* on the economy and the welfare state.”

It is feared that if monetary union doesn’t quickly improve employment and economic conditions in Europe, the governments that promoted it could be ousted (*Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 29, 1997). If the move to a common currency falters or other problems emerge, the beneficiaries will be “populist demagogues and right-wing extremists”—whom Europe and the world at large have already witnessed twice in this century (*Washington Post*, June 23, 1997). In fact, more than one observer has noted the **ominous parallel** between the situation developing in Europe today and the conditions that preceded World Wars I and II (Newhouse, p. 4; Robert Jackson ed., *Europe in Transition*, p. 74).

Today, Americans and Europeans are basking in the triumph of capitalism and democracy over socialism and communism. But there could yet be dramatic changes. Some analysts suggest that “today’s preoccupation with the virtues of the market may... prove to be as short-lived as the Thousand-Year Reich” (*Daedalus*, pp. xi-xii). In the century that preceded World War I, the international community was heady over democracy. Yet in the space of a decade or two, this same democracy was snuffed out throughout most of Europe. And the dangerous forces that led to the atrocities of European totalitarianism are smoldering just under the surface of these same currently democratic societies (cf. *Washington Post*).

A European common currency and the march toward European unity may be early steps in some incredibly significant events announcing the imminent return of our Savior Jesus Christ. However, government leaders, political pundits and news commentators—often the movers and shakers of public opinion—are not attuned to divine revelation, and “are not likely to anticipate the next fundamental shift in global political, strategic and economic alignments” (Jackson, p. 74). This is why Jesus Christ said to “watch” world events in the light of Bible prophecy (cf. Matt. 24). If you do, you won’t be taken by surprise at the events that will mark the end of this present age. 

PROVE ME (continued from page 11)


yet to be fulfilled give us a reason to live, a sense of urgency about this world’s ills, and a hope and firm belief in God’s promise to remove all suffering and evil, and replace it with happiness and prosperity.

But God promises one additional benefit and blessing to those who are alive at the end and have understanding of Bible prophecy.

A Way of Escape

Jesus Christ warned us that just prior to His return, the institution of the family would be collapsing. He said these days would resemble the time of Noah, when marriage and relationships were terribly abused (Matt. 24:37-38). He also described a world rife with false teachers, war, famine, disease and a Great Tribulation such as has NEVER happened before (v. 21). And just as Noah and his family were protected by God in the ark during the destruction of his day, Christ also promises protection for those who are watchful and obedient during the *coming* time of destruction: “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that Day come upon you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. **Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man**” (Luke 21:34-36). So even though Jesus did not give us many more details of this protection, we have His sure promise that there *is* a way of escape.

Revelation, the final book of the Bible, is replete with prophecies that chronicle the chain of events that are to befall the earth. It begins with a blessing pronounced on those who read this book and are able to understand it! These are obviously “the wise” spoken of by Daniel and those good servants “counted worthy to escape” spoken of by Jesus Christ. Listen carefully to this wonderful promise: “**Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; FOR THE TIME IS NEAR**” (1:3). This prophecy applies to our day more than to any other time in history and should cause us to carefully study God’s Word.

May our Eternal God in heaven grant to each one of us the “testimony of Jesus,” which—as Revelation 19:10 tells us—is the “spirit of prophecy.” 

REVIVAL

(continued from page 7)

the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement” (vv. 4-6). So she is a powerful, persecuting CHURCH. Yet she is pictured as riding or *controlling* a European politico-military power that the Bible calls the “Beast” (vv. 3, 7). Its evil ruler is referred to by the same name. To really *understand*, please write for a free copy of our vital booklet, *The Beast of Revelation*.

After thoroughly describing this wicked system soon to arise yet once more, God Almighty commands those who are willing to listen, “COME OUT of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (18:4-5).

Will *you*, personally, HEED this inspired warning from the God of creation—the God of the Bible?

The Little Flock

As explained in the booklet on the Beast offered above, an earlier chapter in the book of Revelation tells a different side of the same story. In chapter 12, we find a description of the *true* Church. We can see that it existed during the Middle Ages—small and persecuted, having to flee to a place of safety (v. 6).

Then at the time of the end there is to be a war in heaven: “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” (v. 9). Here Satan is clearly described as *deceiving this entire earth!*

Can we believe that the Bible really *means* what it says?

Following is a description of how God’s *true* Church—the “little

flock” that Jesus referred to (Luke 12:32)—will again have to be taken to a place of safety to be protected from the final tribulation, the worst time of persecution there will ever have been! Satan is *angry* with this small, but obedient, Church. For its members *obey God’s law!* “And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS

“Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”

—Revelation 18:4-5

of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17).

Now really notice this: The Church that will be *protected* by God from the coming hellish tribulation is an OBEDIENT Church—obedient to the *commandments* of God!

But the description obviously implies that this Church is small and persecuted—not some huge denomination or movement bringing about a great, world-shaking revival.

Yes, there will be a great resurgence of interest in religion as the end time draws ever nearer. But this “revival” will NOT be a growing awareness of God’s Truth or greater obedience to His law. In fact, unless people REPENT of breaking that law, we will see the greatest excesses of *sin* and *degradation* in the entire history of this earth!

The “Beast”—that is, the *world leader* mentioned earlier—will wield totalitarian power and will astonish the world by his *cruelty* and *ferocity*. He will be joined in an “unholy alliance” with the coming great False Prophet—the “man of sin” we spoke of earlier—who will gain popular appeal as a savior from the religious

confusion and hedonism associated with the United States, Canada and Britain.

You need to *watch* for this religious leader. For he will wield great influence over the revived Roman Empire (Rev. 13:12). Moreover, “he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he DECEIVES those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he

was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived” (vv. 13-14).

Watch world events (Luke 21:36). Notice and *heed* these warnings as prophecy unfolds! As Christ warned, “he who has an ear, *let him hear*” (cf. Rev. 2-3).

This coming “revival” will bring PUNISHMENT upon the United States, Canada and Britain because we have *forsaken* our God and His commandments! It may feel good to think sweet thoughts and hope for “revival in our time.” But what you *need* to do is face up to the TRUTH! It is high time you realized that **something is terribly WRONG with what is being palmed off as Christianity today!**

We must realize that modern religious philosophy denying God’s *law* and *authority* is condemned in the Bible as EVIL. It’s a clever and *counterfeit* religion of Satan—the great DECEIVER! For a more in-depth study of this subject, please write for our free booklet, *Christianity’s Greatest Deception*. 