

# PROPHECY



**Comes Alive!**

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# PROPHECY Comes Alive!

***Today's world news with  
the prophecies of  
the world tomorrow!***

**H**E SEEMINGLY appeared out of nowhere, this prophet. They called him a “prophet of doom.” He called himself Amos. He said he was a rancher—a herdsman—with good news, if only the nation would heed.

Then came that fateful day. He strode into one of the most important cities of the nation—Bethel—its religious center and seat of provincial government. It was a city filled with unhappiness, crime—and superstition. He planted his feet on the marble steps of the royal residence and began announcing a chilling message.

This man Amos claimed to be speaking in the name of God. He cried out:

“The city that goes out by a thousand shall have a hundred left,

“And that which goes out by a hundred shall have ten left to the House of Israel . . .

“Then it shall come to pass, that if ten men remain in one house, they shall die.

“And when . . . one who will burn the bodies, picks up the bodies to take them out of the house, he will say to one inside the house, “Are there any more with you?” Then someone will say, “None.””

The hearers winked at each other and tossed flowers at Amos’ feet. Funny man, they thought. But Amos bravely disregarded their thoughts and continued announcing his message.

On another day, this enigmatic man—this rustic from the hill country—stood up and thundered forth for all in the capital city to hear:

“Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom,

“And I will destroy it from the face of the earth. . . .

“Though they dig into hell [the dark depths of earth beneath], from there my hand shall take them;

“Though they climb up to heaven [so high no bird has ever flown there], from there I will bring them down. . . .

# Prophecy Comes Alive!

A prophecy for our day from the Old Testament book of Amos.

“Though they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea. . . .

“Though they go into captivity before their enemies, from there I will command the sword, and it shall slay them.

“I will set my eyes on them for harm and not for good.”

## A Daily Warning

Day after day this pestilent fellow, this chatterer, this “prophet of doom” was on the royal residence steps blaring forth his message. The trumpet-like voice began to irritate the local citizenry.

“Who is this man?” everyone was asking his neighbor. “Why is he saying these things?” people wondered. “Don’t the politicians, the authorities, the religious leaders know this babbler is here? We’re tired of listening to this—this crackpot.”

A delegation was dispatched to the local authorities. “Do they know what is going on?” everyone asked. The group looked out the window of the building they were in. And there was that character Amos. He was at it again, claiming to be speaking God’s words.

“I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies . . .

“Take away from me the noise

of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.

“But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream . . .”

The politicians at the window laughed and pointed their fingers at this strange fellow on the steps. They again winked at each other and said, “Let the fool rave on. We’ll deal with him later if need be.”

But this man Amos wouldn’t quit. Day after day, week after week, month after month he was there on those steps. His booming voice was heard throughout the square.

And again, the people said; “Why is he saying these awful things about our country?”

The times, admittedly, were bad. The nation was threatened by war and it was in a weakened condition. The future seemed uncertain. But why harp on it?

For months before the harvest a terrible drought hung over the farming communities. The crops finally failed. Water rationing became a fact of life. To add to the problem, a locust plague consumed what the drought failed to kill.

And this prophet Amos just

would not quit his polemics. His constant soliloquies, filled with alternating strains of horror and hope upon repentance, filled the air. Amos kept on and kept on, preaching with determination before the capital building. All this in God's name.

"'Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places;

'Yet you have not returned to Me,' says the Lord...

"'I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; your young men I killed with a sword...

'Yet you have not returned to Me,' says the Lord."

The listeners were now very angry. They shook their fists at Amos. "What is this 'haven't returned to the Lord' nonsense?" the spectators shouted back at Amos.

"We are God's people. Who gave you the right to make these accusations? This is God's country. Long live our blessed nation."

### State of the Nation

While Amos spoke, corruption flourished throughout the nation. Political leaders could be bought. The poor were being trampled and ground to powder economically. Few cared for their rights.

Vendors, greedy for every dime of profit, made a mockery of religious scruple. Crime and violence were rampant. It was a time of pride and overindulgence. A time of sexual permissiveness, even perversion. A time when ethics and values were sneered at.

While the nation sinned, Amos brought the warning:

"... the Lord God of hosts, the Lord, says this:

"'There shall be wailing in all streets, and they shall say in all the highways, 'Alas! Alas!...'"

Amos announced that God would raise up a nation that would afflict them from one end of the country to the other—and finally destroy them. The handwriting was on the wall, Amos insisted.

"'The end has come upon my people Israel...' says the Lord God—'Many dead bodies everywhere, they shall throw them out in silence.'"

The people were incensed.



"That's a lie! That's a lie!" the people shouted back. "We are God's people."

But Amos was undaunted. He once again issued the prediction that the nation would be destroyed and led away captive. He warned that the nation's ruler would also die.

The people listening became angrier yet. Their one thought was to kill this man Amos. But some inexplicable force prevented them from accomplishing their aim.

### Crisis at the Top

Meanwhile, an important religious leader in the community was bent on destroying Amos. He went before the ruler, saying: "Amos has conspired against you... The land is not able to bear all his words."

The religious personage then repeated Amos' direst predictions.

The ruler slammed his fist into the table. "Arrest this Amos. Drag him in here. I'll deal with him."

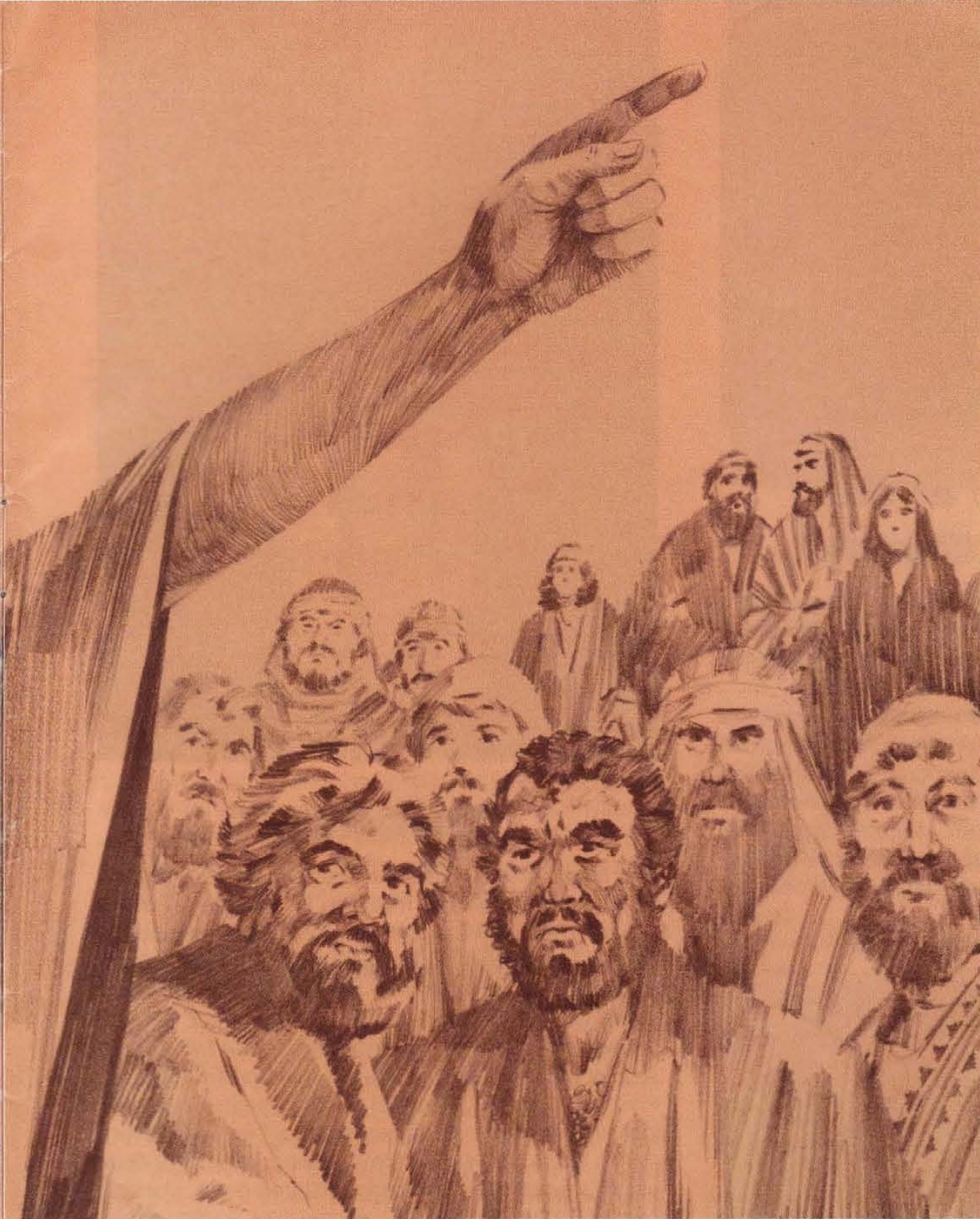
Amos was shackled and taken to the palace. At last, he was face to face with the ruler of the nation. The chief priest pointed his finger menacingly at the prophet.

"Get out of this country, seer. Never speak another word in this city. Otherwise you will die. This is the king's sanctuary and royal residence."

The political and religious leaders were stunned into silence by the words that Amos now spoke:

"I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet.

"But I was a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit.



sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it.' ”

### Prophecy Comes True

The words above were spoken by Amos to a powerful king of ancient Israel, Jereboam II. Within thirty years after the death of this king what Amos had prophesied came to pass.

During the intervening decades, the nation of Israel suffered horribly. It was invaded on two occasions by the Assyrian armies. Meanwhile, the House of Israel, with its capital at Samaria, also found itself at war with the southern kingdom of Judah, whose king reigned in Jerusalem.

A third invasion by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser occurred during the reign of Israel's last king, Hoshea. At that time, the remnant of the House of Israel was reduced to a vassal state. The Assyrians besieged its major political capital, Samaria, for three long years.

At long last, what God had prophesied through the prophet Amos had become a tragic reality. God had been patient for many years but now the grace period was over. The House of Israel went into captivity. The sad story is found in II Kings 17.

But there is a yet more sobering lesson for our day. Bible prophecy is dual. It has its first occurrence. But the emphasis is always on the *second* fulfillment, usually much greater in scope and intensity.

For over fifty years the *World Tomorrow* broadcast and the *Plain Truth* magazine have been warning that the *descendants* of that ancient nation are also being faced with the same circumstances and warning.

That ancient prophet Amos, who spoke those words in towns such as Bethel was looking down the corridors of time at those of us reading these words. Today, we are the ones faced with the challenges thrown down in the book of Amos. □

“Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me,

“‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’

“Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord:

“You say, ‘Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not spout against the house of Isaac.’

“Therefore thus says the Lord:

“‘Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword;

“Your land shall be divided by survey line; you shall die in a defiled land;

“And Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land.’ ”

And so it was that Amos left the land of the House of Israel, never to be heard from again in the land. Then, many years later, when times came that tried men's souls and there was hope no longer, they remembered the words that Amos had spoken:

“‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord God, ‘that I will send a famine on the land.

“Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

“They shall wander from sea to

# THE STATE OF THE NATIONS

INTERNATIONAL STOCK—ELBERS



## The State of the Poor and Elderly

Economic injustices have occurred in every major civilization. Recent champions of civil rights have raised public awareness of the problems, but this has brought only incomplete solutions.

The wealthy are too often reluctant to give up unfair advantages or to adequately help the poor improve themselves. The poor have been cheated so often that they are too distrustful to believe good advice when it is given. Many, trapped by social, economic and governmental barriers, confined to urban slums and rural poverty, have become frustrated and angry.

In the Western world, the elderly in general—composed of both the well off and the poorest—are not by any means properly honored by a generation of selfish children who have reaped the benefits of the work done by those now grown old.

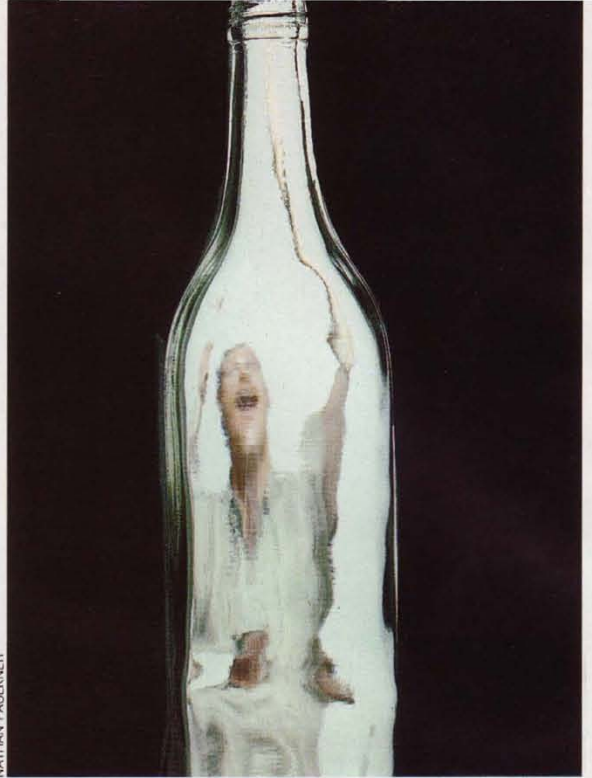
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## Courts and Jails

The prison populations of the English-speaking world are more than filled to capacity. New facilities are having to be built. In some cases prisoners are being released prematurely in order to make room for new prisoners. The poor, uneducated and minorities comprise the majority of this burgeoning population. And approximately 70 percent of the United States inmates and Britain's sentenced offenders are tragic repeaters. They are immersed in a prison culture where violence, homosexuality and now the threat of AIDS acquired in prison become a way of life.

NATHAN FAULKNER



## Alcoholism

The financial loss to society from alcoholism topped \$116 billion (thousand million in British usage) in the U.S. in 1983, while providing \$12.2 billion revenue in taxes. Ten million alcoholics, seven million alcohol abusers and an unknown number of casual users spent nearly \$50 billion on drinking.

Over 70 percent of alcoholics worldwide hold regular jobs, resulting in massive material damage and loss of productivity. Alcohol-related deaths are cheating victims out of over 15 years of life. Two out of every 1,000 births will suffer the crippling effects of fetal alcohol syndrome. As normal children grow, alcohol-related traffic fatalities will become their leading cause of death from age 16 to 24. Total alcohol related deaths exceed 23,000 even in good years. The young drink to feel older, while the old drink to feel younger. In short, alcoholism is hurting everyone.

## Political Corruption

Prolonged scandals command attention in the political arena. Far more dangerous though, is the chronic, cancerous corruption daily eating away at the foundations of government. The once occasional scandals like kickbacks, embezzlements, coverups, and frauds are now tolerated habits. The incalculable toll taken by these practices must be added to less obvious corruption such as time waste, influence peddling, misuse of funds, contract fixing, bloated expense accounts and gifts of persuasion.

Ultimately the price of a government fueled by such practices is passed down to the taxpayers. A yet even higher price is paid in citizens' minds as distrust builds into frustration and despair.



JOE CLAYTON

## Big Business Corruption

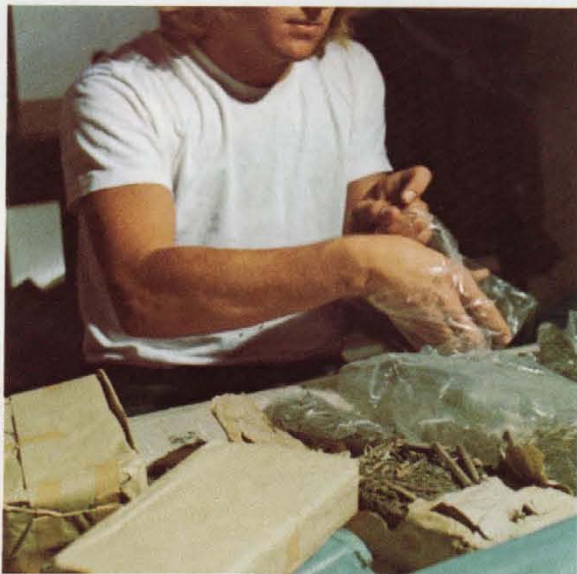
Recent scandals involving illegal insider trading on the U.S. Stock market have rocked Wall Street in New York and investment firms around the world. Britain's Guinness scandal has been linked to the twisted trail of financial improprieties relating to insider information and corporate takeovers. The results of arrests thus far have caused a near hysteria among traders who have been so involved in corporate takeovers they didn't bother to worry about what was right or wrong, morally or legally.

## Organized Crime

In the United States, stepped-up prosecution has led to dozens of convictions of top organized-crime leaders, but has only opened the door for gangs from other nations to set up shop.

In Colombia, global demand for cocaine has led to the shedding of blood as the government wages war against a literal army of drug processors and traffickers.

Because of its nearness to the heroin-producing areas of Asia, Australia has increasingly become a center for heroin distribution. Government commissions have discovered trafficking syndicates that reach to some of the most powerful levels of Australian business and politics.



PT PHOTO



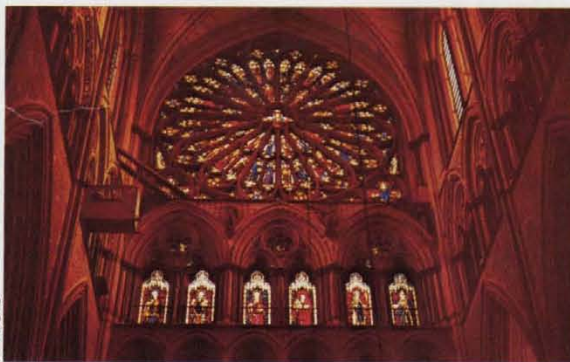
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## Crime and Violence

Crime is on the rise around the world. In Great Britain, according to the Home Office, crimes of personal violence rose 72 percent between 1974 and 1984.

In the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Crime Clock shows that one property crime is committed every three seconds, one murder every 28 minutes and one aggravated assault every 44 seconds.

Australians cite violent crime as the social problem that gives them the most reason to worry. Burglary rates are 20 percent higher than they are in the United States.



PT PHOTO

## Religion in Turmoil

Millions in the Western world insist they believe in God. They say they know he exists—but they do not obey him. Many go to church or temple yet live very empty lives. The Bible is the best-selling book, yet influential church leaders all too often encourage people to disobey some of the plainest commands the Bible teaches.

No one should be surprised, though, for meaningless religious ritualism is a tradition older than Christmas and Easter. Many Christians have pretended to worship God—or Christ—and completely or partially ignored what he taught. They have worshiped on holidays that the God of the Bible says he detests. The churches have served the conveniences of men more than the Creator of men.



# Christ the Revelator

How many realize that Jesus Christ predicted today's chaotic world condition in advance and foretold the outcome of it all?

**T**he first verse of the book of Revelation states: "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass. . . .*"

Jesus Christ was a prophet; Jesus Christ was a newscaster of future world events. Jesus Christ forecast the overall, general sequence of events that would characterize the world from his time to now and on into the future; Jesus Christ was an up-to-date *futurist* in the true sense of the term.

He talked not only of the mind-bending, fast-moving, sometimes horrifying events to presage his Second Coming, but also of a *wonderful world to come*.

## Blessings to Come

Go to the gospel accounts. In their contents, Jesus spoke directly of an altogether different kind of society that would envelop the earth in future ages.

The religious set of Jesus' day thought they had him cornered with a trick question about marriage and the resurrection. But he deftly answered their questions by informing them of the never-

before-heard-of conditions of tomorrow's world.

He forecast: "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain *that world* [Greek: *age*], and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: *neither can they die any more. . . .*" (Luke 20:35-36).

Have you ever before heard of a world in which part of the inhabitants—the *compassionate* ruling class as other scriptures make clear—can no longer die?

Visionary futurists of our day contemplate a fantastic world with a vastly lengthened human lifespan made possible by super-replacement parts for worn-out body organs. But how many envision the ultimate: "Neither can they die any more"?

Matthew's gospel account sheds still more light on conditions in this incredible civilization yet to come.

The benevolent, future spiritual rulers will be those who have executed justice and judgment in their personal lives. David said: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (II Sam. 23:3).

Some specific positions in this future world have been preassigned by Jesus.

To his apostles, Jesus promised: "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed

unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29-30).

The gospels are not the only biblical books whose contents reveal specific prognostications of Jesus Christ in his role as a prophet.

As was pointed out, the book of Revelation is unveiled by Jesus Christ himself. If you have a red-letter Bible—one in which the first-person quotations of Jesus are printed in red—you will be struck by the many prophecies spoken by your Savior.

Further revelation on the world to come unfolds as you progress into its exciting contents. Specific rewards are prophetically promised to specific churches (and the Church as a whole) in chapters two and three. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations [in tomorrow's world]" (Rev. 2:26).

Rulership—the reward for overcoming sin and doing Christ's Work—is promised to every Christian executing justice and judgment in his or her personal life.

The Bible is chock-full of prophecies about this wonderful world to come. One scripture that perhaps best sums up the general conditions of the wonderful world tomorrow, and *on beyond*, was spoken by Jesus in Revelation 21:5. "... Behold, I make all things new." That statement is all encompassing. Our fragile, uncomprehending human minds could never fathom the depth and breadth of that prophetic promise.

Following Jesus' example in his message to the seven churches, we have first presented Christ as the Revelator of these *good* things to come.

But he also is the Revelator of incredible prophecies of punishment to come on this sinning world in the relatively near future.

## Punishments to Come

Jesus was *both* specific and general in his futuristic forecasts of various types of punishment for the world's sins.

He directly foresaw the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The horrible picture was so vivid in his mind

that he made great lamentation for what he knew would befall that city (Matt. 23:37).

And on his painful path to the cross, "...there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

"But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, *the days are coming*, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us" (Luke 23:27-31).

This stark prophecy *was fulfilled* (at least in part) in less than four decades. The historian Josephus recorded a vivid account of the terrible famine which ravaged Jerusalem:

"It was now a miserable case, and a sight that would justly bring

tears into our eyes, how men stood as to their food, while the more powerful had more than enough, and the weaker were lamenting [for want of it]. But the famine was too hard for all other passions, and it is destructive to nothing so much as to modesty; for what was otherwise worthy of reverence, was in this case despised; insomuch that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths, and what was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do as to their infants: and when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives..." (*Wars of the Jews*, book V, chapter X, section 3).

"Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege, eleven hun-

dred thousand..." (book VI, chapter IX, sections 2, 3).

The horrible happenings of A.D. 70 are a type of the even more grueling events of the end time.

Perhaps the whole picture of these age-ending prophecies is best described and brought into proper focus in Matthew 24.

The disciples asked Jesus: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [Greek *aion*, meaning age]?" (Verse 3.)

Then Jesus proceeded to enumerate a series of general events and happenings that would characterize the times from the first century to now—actually intensifying to the extreme at the very end of the age.

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In AD 70 the Roman armies under the direction of Titus ravaged Jerusalem. The temple that Herod had constructed was looted and destroyed, the inhabitants of the city scattered.



Among the things Jesus specifically mentioned were religious apostasy, wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters here and there on the earth, and blatant religious bigotry finding its ultimate expression in countless brutal martyrdoms.

### Signs of Christ's Coming

Finally, the world would be so dominated by sin that even some Christians would begin to lose their first love and actually begin to betray, persecute, and cause to be put to death their own brethren. On the world scene, Jesus warned of several prophetic bench marks to precede his Second Coming—none of which has yet been fulfilled to the fullest extent.

1) *Publishing of the gospel*: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). When you see the *true* gospel beginning to be announced to the world's nations—when you see this prophecy in action on the world scene—you should increase your personal world watch and vigilance.

2) *The Abomination of Desolation*: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place . . . then let them which be in Judaea [the modern nation of Israel] flee into the mountains . . .

"For then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be [again]" (verses 15-16, 21).

Jesus spoke of the vital necessity of understanding this "abomination" in the parenthetical phrase, "whoso readeth, let him understand" (verse 15). It appears to involve a great religious leader who would make his world headquarters in the Holy Land. This event's great import lies in the fact that it is a sign signaling the beginning of *the great tribulation*.

3) *The Great Tribulation*: Jesus—the real Revelator of the Bible's last book—refers again to

this unique time in the world's history. Notice his message to the Church in Revelation 3:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the *hour of temptation* [trial], which shall come upon *all the world*, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

This Great Tribulation (an hour is a relatively short time in biblical prophecy) will not be a local upset done in a corner of Asia. It will be global in range—all the inhabitants of the earth will be affected.

4) *Jerusalem Surrounded With Armies*: The companion prophecy in Luke 21 gives us an additional prophetic waymark to consider. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (verse 20; cf. Zech. 14:1-4; Rev. 16:16).

But notice that this prophecy then parallels Matthew 24:16-20 as it describes the events just before the great tribulation: "Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto" (verse 21). Luke then describes The Great Tribulation in different words. "For these be *the days of vengeance*, that all things *which are written* [in the Old Testament prophecies] may be fulfilled" (verse 22). (Jesus often used the expression "it is written" when quoting or paraphrasing a passage from the Old Testament [Matt. 2:5; 4:4, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; Mark 7:6; 9:12, 13; 11:17, etc.] .)

The Bible simply does *not* clearly delineate all these eventful prophetic bench marks in easy one-two-three order. Nor are the ones mentioned the only ones; there are many more. The Bible is written "here a little and there a little," and therein lies one of the reasons Jesus continuously admonished his servants to watch (Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:33-37).

As world events unfold, Christians (and especially the ministry—

see Amos 3:7) should begin to match up the world scenario with the biblical prophecies.

Jesus Christ—the Revelator of all prophecy and the living Word that inspired the whole Bible—enjoins the following very big responsibility on all Christians: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things [the end-time events mentioned in the preceding verses] that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

Believe it or not, God is very concerned that his elect (any person or persons who will truly obey him and help perform his Work upon the earth) not suffer with a disobedient, God-rejecting world.

But the qualifications for physical escape are spiritual. Hoarding honey, soybeans and other food staples is not the right route to take.

"Seek ye the Lord, all ye *meek* of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger," cried the prophet Zephaniah (2:3).

A Sermon-on-the-Mount-type character is required. If you develop such Christlike character, the chances of your escaping the great tribulation are very good.

God's anxiety for the physical welfare of his people is recorded by the prophet Isaiah: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold [here is the reason for hiding], the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity . . ." (Isa. 26:20-21).

Notice that verse 21 ties right back into the Christian's prophetic responsibility: watching significant world events individually (and warning the world as a Church) as well as praying to be worthy to escape the punishments of God on this sick and dying world.

Watch! □

# “This Generation Shall Not Pass . . .”

**P**EOPLE HAVE been speculating on the return of Jesus Christ for almost *millennia*. There were those in the latter part of Paul's day who thought the return of Christ was imminent.

The apostle to the gentiles had to warn the Church in his day not to be deceived by unfounded and unreliable information concerning the return of the Messiah.

“And now, brothers, about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and his gathering of us to himself: I beg you, do not suddenly lose your heads or alarm yourselves, whether at some oracular utterance, or pronouncement, or some letter purporting to come from us, alleging that the Day of the Lord is already here. Let no one deceive you in any way whatever” (II Thes. 2:1-3, *The New English Bible*).

## Christ Will Return

But there is no doubt that the Messiah *will* return to this earth to set up the everlasting Kingdom of God! The Bible is filled with prophecies describing the second coming of Jesus Christ. The heart and core of the New Testament message concerns HIS RETURN to this earth to set up a world-ruling, governing kingdom.

The very first message that ever came back from

heaven—after Christ began to ascend to God's heaven—was that he was going to return to this earth.

In Acts 1:11, Christ's disciples were told: “Men of Galilee, why stand there looking up into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken away from you up to heaven, will come in the same way you have seen him go” (*The New English Bible*).

This scripture alone is conclusive proof of Christ's Second Coming to this earth. But, read just one more, this time in the *Authorized Version*. “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear *the second time* without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

So the question is not *whether* he will return, but **WHEN!**

Human speculation about this subject matters nothing. The truth must be revealed from God's inspired word, the Bible.

Peter, referring to the Church, said, “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed . . .*” (II Pet. 1:19). It is through this “sure word of prophecy” that we can understand the truth about the return to earth of Jesus Christ.

It is entirely possible that you, as an individual, may

live to witness this great event! Jesus Christ stated, “Verily I say unto you, **THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS**, till all these things be fulfilled” (Matt. 24:34).

## Which Generation

But how can we know Jesus is talking about **OUR GENERATION TODAY**? How can we be sure he wasn't talking about the generation of *his* day? Let's get the proper perspective.

Matthew 24 records what is commonly called the “Olivet Prophecy”. It is so named because it was on the Mount of Olives that the disciples of Christ came to him and asked about the prophecies concerning his *Second Coming* and of the *end of the world* [age—verse 3].

The whole prophecy is about the time of the end.

In answering the question about the end of the age, Jesus foretold a series of events that would *intensify just before his return*. He told about false prophets in this end time (verse 5). He talked about war and rumors of war, about world war (verse 6). He foretold famines, pestilences and earthquakes in different places (verse 7). (Most have been occurring for 2,000 years, but the intensity will increase.)

Then Christ explained that this gospel of the kingdom would be

“preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the **END** come” (verse 14). He foretold great tribulation and heavenly signs just before his return.

Then to make it abundantly clear what he was talking about, Jesus gave a parable of the fig tree. He said, “. . . When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see *all these things*, know that *it is near*, even at the doors” (verses 32-33).

Christ showed that when these great earth-shaking events begin to happen the time of the end of the age will be at hand. *Today, these events are beginning to intensify and come to a head.*

For the first time in history, we're in a generation when God must intervene, or there will be no flesh saved alive. Jesus was talking about our day today. He said true Christians would know when he is about to intervene in world affairs *by* world conditions.

And he said, “So likewise ye, when ye see *these things* come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, *This generation* [during which you see “these things” occur] shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled” (Luke 21:31-32).

We have the **SURE** word of prophecy and it says all these things must come to pass first, and they haven't all come to pass yet. On the other hand, that same “sure word of prophecy” says the generation which sees “*all these things*” occur will not pass until Christ returns to this earth.

# Watch World Events

How you can get a better grasp of this fast-paced world of ours.

**W**hich events and trends in the world are of most significance as we approach “the end of the age”—the end of 6,000 years of human misrule, and the dawning of the world tomorrow?

Most importantly, which news sources are most beneficial and reliable in the job we all have of watching world events (Luke 21:36)? What’s the best way to judge the value of a newspaper? And what is the overall approach of the news media in analyzing current events?

## The Correct Perspective

First of all, when studying world events from the viewpoint of Bible prophecy, one must know what to look for. We have not been left without guideposts in this vital area.

The 24th chapter of Matthew constitutes one of the most important prophetic passages in the New Testament. This chapter details the signs of Jesus Christ’s Second Coming and the end of this age.

Hallmarks of the end time, we have been taught, will be religious deception (verses 4-5, 11), “wars

and rumors of wars” (verse 6), famines, pestilences, earthquakes (verse 7) and religious persecution and martyrdom for some (verse 9). Through it all, the true Gospel of God will be proclaimed with ever-increasing power till—before the end—it will have a powerful impact upon all nations (verse 14).

In addition to focusing our attention on the broad outline of Matthew 24, we need to keep a sharp eye on events in Europe, leading up to the final, 10-nation revival of the Roman Empire. The Middle East also merits continuous news monitoring, especially the growth of religious radicalism.

Plummeting morals in the Western world, the decay of family life, environmental destruction and the threat of a global economic catastrophe show we are near the end of humanity’s profligate ways.

We need not go into detail at this point concerning these prophesied end-time conditions. The *Plain Truth* magazine continually devotes considerable space to these very trends. (If you are not already a reader of *The Plain Truth*, you may have a free subscription by writing to our address nearest you. See the back cover for a list.)

## Identity of America, Britain

There is another extremely important area that opens our eyes to

what to look for. This key is the national identity of the United States, the British people and the democracies of northwestern Europe. These nations are, in the main, the descendants of the ancient House of Israel—the so-called “lost 10 tribes.” (It’s clearly explained in our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.)

The modern-day self-appointed “shepherds of Israel” (Ezekiel 34:2) do not understand this vital key to prophecy, or they simply dismiss it. They have not “sought what was lost” (verse 4).

This understanding is so vital in comprehending world events that without it one is left prophetically rudderless.

Equipped with this understanding, we can readily grasp the portent behind one of the single most significant trends in the world over the past three or four decades—the decline of British and American power and the corresponding rise in the military might of the Soviet Union.

This major trend affects nearly everything in the world today, from the changed power relationships in the Middle East to the need for Europe to unite.

## Approach of News Media

No secular news analysts are going to look at the world from the above perspectives of Bible prophecy.

But some analysts are definitely better than others in helping us watch world events. Such analysts belong to what has been called the *realistic* school of international relations.

Generally speaking, realists look at the world the way it really is. They are not blinded to political and moral evils in this world. They can plainly see the various power struggles among the nations, the principal one being the East-West conflict centered in Moscow and Washington.

They believe that major powers act the way they do because of historical precedence and national character and are not likely to “change their spots” and moderate their policies.

Realists understand that in the world—which the Bible reveals is

not God's world but lies under the influence of Satan (Rev. 12:9, II Cor. 4:4)—lofty, abstract principles such as "social justice" and "human rights" are unattainable, even if all people and nations knew what these concepts really meant. To the realist, the lesser evil is preferable to some human-defined, absolute "good."

The second broad approach toward the world and society, taken by many political leaders and the majority of news analysts of the popular press of the Western world, is the *idealistic*, also called the *utopian* or *liberal*, approach.

Basically speaking, the idealistic school holds that human nature is inherently good and has infinite malleability. Those holding to this approach believe man has the power to make society better and better according to constantly changing (supposedly improving) human standards.

Regarding the moral basis of society, the idealistic or liberal school rests on a shifting ground of no absolutes. The results of this "enlightened" approach, cut off from biblically based or influenced tradition, are all too obvious: the New Morality, living together, feminism, gay rights and the drive to "unisex" society—even to unisex the Bible.

### Choosing a Newspaper

In general, the news media of the Western world hold marked liberal views, in almost reverse proportion to the public at large.

Knowing the two broad approaches to current events analysis should help us better select from the news sources available to us.

For some this is rather difficult, especially if they live in more closed societies. In these instances, choices of news sources are limited. Newspapers, radio and television are often either government controlled or heavily supervised to reflect official government positions.

In pluralistic Western societies, on the other hand, a wider selection of newspapers, magazines and electronic media is available.

In Britain and other countries in Europe, entire newspapers generally reflect a certain philosophy. The *Daily Telegraph*, for example, is conservative in tone, in both presentation of news and commentary. The *Guardian*, on the other hand, reflects a definite left-of-center viewpoint.

The *Times* of London is middle of the road, politically. The *Times*

United States presents more of a problem. With the exception of *USA Today* (a bit shallow on in-depth analysis of international news), the United States does not have national newspapers as does Britain. Two specialized newspapers, however, enjoy national circulation.

The business-oriented *Wall Street Journal* now has the largest circulation of any American newspaper. Day in and day out, its editorial pages contain some of the most sound-minded analyses of the news.

The small-circulation *Christian Science Monitor* presents perhaps the greatest scope of international news of any daily U.S. newspaper.

The highly informative (but editorially liberal) *New York Times* is steadily expanding its circulation nationwide.

Americans who do not regularly read the above sources are limited to local or regional newspapers. And far fewer of them exist now than before the advent of television. Television and nightly television news have all but destroyed the afternoon newspaper in America. Many cities are now one-newspaper towns.

When a choice between two or more newspapers is available, the

prime consideration in deciding which paper to subscribe to should revolve around the stable of columnists who appear on the newspaper's editorial-opinion pages. Newspapers of the same size will vary little, in general, concerning the hard news of the day. The difference in a newspaper's relative worth will usually show up on the opinion page. In this regard one should note how many syndicated realist columnists appear regularly.

Who are some journalists of the realist school? Here are a few notable names in the United States to watch for: William Safire, George F. Will, Evans and Novak, Patrick J. Buchanan, James J. Kilpatrick,

In addition to focusing our attention on the broad outline of Matthew 24, we need to keep a sharp eye on events in Europe, leading up to the final, 10-nation revival of the Roman Empire. The Middle East also merits continuous news monitoring. . . .

is regarded as the best-written, most informative newspaper in the English language.

Throughout Europe, another excellent news source is the *International Herald Tribune*, an American-style newspaper jointly operated by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

For their own experience, people in the United States should scan copies of the *Times* of London or the *Daily Telegraph* in their nearest big-city library, if for no other reason than to realize what they are missing on a daily basis in their newspapers. Reading the *Times* each day is an education.

Choosing a newspaper in the

Norman Podhoretz, Phyllis Schlafly and Georgie Ann Geyer.

One may not always agree with everything these journalists write, but more often than not they present topics worth reading.

### Beneficial Magazines

It also helps, budget permitting, to read a weekly newsmagazine in addition to a newspaper.

*U.S. News & World Report* concentrates on essential facts and figures, with helpful, readily understandable charts and graphs.

Regarding *Time* and *Newsweek*, personal preference is the key. These magazines are most helpful in covering major stories in depth. The overall slant, of course, re-

mains American and liberal, especially in *Time*.

Unfamiliar to many Americans but respected around the world is Britain's *Economist*, probably the most comprehensive newsweekly published anywhere, usually containing important news items that escape American eyes.

*Business Week* is another fine publication with a good "International Outlook" section on world affairs and excellent occasional in-depth reports. However, as a business magazine, it ranks below the fortnightly *Fortune*.

A leading journal of opinion today is *The New Republic*, which is published weekly. It often contains thought-provoking articles on a

wide range of political and social affairs topics, representing a fairly broad viewpoint.

Another supplemental news source worth mentioning is *Commentary*, a monthly published by the American Jewish Committee. *Commentary* is one of the most influential journals in America.

The fortnightly *National Review*, while essentially political in tone, often has articles of broad social significance.

A person may not wish to subscribe to any of the magazines mentioned above. But one should at least scan them, as well as the selection of other newspapers and periodicals available at libraries.

One might come across other in-

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## Television as a News Source

**T**elevision can be an informative supplement to your news diet, providing that the newscasts are selected properly.

Unfortunately, however, many people waste hours each day looking at what they *think* is news, and rarely watch those newscasts and special programs that could really help.

This is especially true in the United States, because of the overall dominance of the medium of commercial television.

It's a pity that Americans cannot view Britain's high-quality BBC news or similar first-class, noncommercial newscasts in other parts of the world.

In the United States, the most worthwhile regularly scheduled commercial newscasts on world and national affairs are the nightly 30-minute (actually 22 minutes of news plus the commercials and station breaks) ABC, CBS and NBC network programs.

Also seen in many areas is the so-called fourth network news program known as *International Network News*, or *INN*. In addition,

many viewers can receive the Cable News Network (CNN), on which prime time newscasts are helpful.

There are, in addition, supplemental television programs of value, such as Public Television's *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour* as well as specially scheduled programs. In these cases, let the *TV Guide* be your guide. Be cautious, however, of the newscasts in your area. They can be time wasters. All too often a local newscast is only entertainment disguised as news!

Local newscasts, such as the 5 to 6 o'clock or 6 to 7 o'clock "news hours" are big business in America, generating from a third to a half of a television station's income.

The ratings wars between the channels during these time slots are fierce. To stay at the top of the market, a station will do anything to make its local "news" juicier: scandals, exposés — anything to hook the unwary viewer.

Worst of all, the on-screen anchorpersons ("news readers" to our British readers) are hired more for their good looks than for their journalistic ability.

The local news game is now so competitive that TV news executives, frantic in their search for new talent, resort to high-powered consulting agencies (called "news doctors" in the trade) who maintain thousands of videotapes of prospective "news stars."

Are your ratings slumping? Is your present "news star" getting a little gray at the temples? Has he (or she) lost his (or her) sex appeal?

Go to the "news doctor" and find a new "pretty face"!

Knowing that this is the way TV news functions, concentrate on those newscasts that present world and national affairs. Take local TV newscasts with a huge dose of salt.

To those who feel that television places them on a starvation news diet, one remedy might involve the purchase of a relatively inexpensive portable shortwave radio receiver. The top-notch BBC World Service from London can be easily picked up nearly everywhere in the world, together with transmissions from Radio Australia, Radio South Africa and the English-language services of several other nations. □

formative English-language news-magazines, such as *Maclean's* from Canada, *The Bulletin* from Australia and *Asiaweek* from Hong Kong (which covers the whole gamut of Asian affairs).

An excellent source covering events in Europe, especially the Common Market countries, is *Europe*. It is published every other month by the European Economic Community Commission's office in Washington, D.C. Similar magazines are available in all member countries of the Common Market.

Also take a look at *World Press Review*, a supplemental American news source that reprints news articles and editorials from the international press, representing a wide spectrum of viewpoints.

Why not make a trip to the library a monthly or semimonthly habit?

Remember that time is precious—we are counseled to “redeem” it (Eph. 5:16). Don't waste time on the scandal tabloids sold in grocery stores, nor on most of the many popular personality magazines (*People* is probably the best of the generally poor lot).

### **Have Sound-minded Approach**

One last area should be addressed:

This is the fascination with theories that purport to explain world events as a grand conspiracy.

There are variants of the conspiracy theory of history, but they nearly all revolve around an elite cabal of bankers, financiers and wealthy capitalists who are said to be manipulating events internationally with the goal of subjugating the United States and Western nations to the control of a totalitarian, one-world government. The conspirators, it is claimed, not only manipulate Western-world leaders like puppets, but secretly control the governments of the Soviet Union and mainland China.

Conspiracy theory literature is, in general, very negative, accusatory and often anti-Semitic.

There is undeniable evidence of similarity of thinking (internationalist, moderately left of center) on the part of the majority of members of certain organizations often accused of being part of the conspiracy, such as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission.

Yet the fact that such organizations exist and that the viewpoint of most of their members is similar does not itself prove deliberate, calculated conspiratorial intent.

Knowing the fruits of the flesh—“contentions, jealousies,

outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies” (Gal. 5:20)—it is illogical to believe that the alleged conspirators could pursue such a unified, single-minded course of action for any length of time.

America and Britain are going down not because of the willful machination of unseen manipulators but for a compendium of national sins spelled out in Isaiah 1:4-6: “Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. . . . The whole head [government] is sick, and the whole heart [national morale and morality] faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head [meaning the entire society and all its components], there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.”

The English-speaking world is suffering the national curses of disobedience (Lev. 26, Deut. 28).

Let's keep a sound-minded approach (II Tim. 1:7).

In this way, and by using the steps outlined in this article, we'll know better what to look for—and how to look—as prophecy unfolds before our eyes. □



# Keys to Bible Prophecy

God's message in the prophecies of the Bible has been cloaked from the world at large. Why? How can we peer behind that cloak?

**S**ometimes menacing, sometimes sublime—yet always vivid and arresting—Bible prophecy speaks across the centuries.

The eternal God of Israel, himself an author (Hebrews 5:9), so infused his prophets with his message that in his hands they became powerful, eloquent instruments (II Pet. 1:21).

"A lion has roared! Who will not fear?" cried Amos. "The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8, *New King James Version* throughout).

Some passages of Bible prophecy are, like Lincoln's or Churchill's oratory, grammatically simple yet deeply profound.

And often God inspired his servants to use dramatic, artistic techniques in recording his prophecies, powerful literature, much of it sealing its messages until God's time for revealing them (Dan. 12:9, I Cor. 2:7, Rev. 5:3, 10:7).

"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter," wrote Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, "but the glory of kings is to search out a matter" (Prov. 25:2).



With this background, let's look at seven important principles that help clarify the "living oracles" (Acts 7:38).

## Duality

Bible prophecy—yes God's entire plan of salvation—is a prime example of the first principle, that of duality. The apostle Paul explained this dual aspect in I Corinthians 15:45-46:

"And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual."

The physical creation is only the first phase in God's plan; the spiritual phase comes later and is far more significant.

So we have the duality principle: Old and New Testaments; Mt. Sinai and the Sermon on the Mount; the "congregation in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38) and the Church of God (I Cor. 1:2), physical circumcision and circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16).

Isaiah 41:22 states this principle directly: "Let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them."

**G**od inspired his servants to use dramatic techniques to record prophecy. Here, an artist's view of prophetic symbols.

Some prophecies have dual fulfillments, with the secondary fulfillment more significant than the first.

Malachi 4:5 illustrates this point. Malachi predicted that an Elijah-like figure would precede the first appearance of the Messiah; Christ interpreted that this prophecy referred to John the Baptist (Matt. 17:12-13).

But notice verses 10 and 11 of Matthew 17: "And



His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Elijah truly is coming first and will restore all things.'

So although John the Baptist was the prior fulfillment of Malachi 4:5, there is to be a latter-day fulfillment, in our time!

### Typology

Certain events and personalities in the Old Testament foreshadow or symbolize those in the New Testament. This is the doctrine known as typology.

In Hosea 11:1, for example, the

nation of Israel stands as a symbol of Jesus Christ himself: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son." Matthew 2:15 applies this verse to the time Joseph and Mary sojourned briefly in Egypt to protect the infant Jesus.

Strange? Not if we remember how nations can symbolize people and vice versa ("Uncle Sam," "John Bull"). Winston Churchill personified the "bulldog spirit" of Great Britain in 1940, and many times the nation of Israel personified some of Christ's actions (Isa. 49:3-6).

In the same way, David's ago-

nized cry of "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Ps. 22:1) directly foreshadowed Christ's sufferings on the stake. Many of the Psalms reveal David as a type or symbol of the Messiah (verses 6-8, 16-18, Ps. 2:7, 12).

This principle clarifies many prophecies about the future. Daniel 11, the longest prophecy in Scripture, time-wise, is a good example. Daniel 11:1-20 surveys various political trends from the sixth century B.C. to the second century B.C. As most commentaries show, however, beginning in verse 21 a new figure predominates. This was King Antiochus Epiphanes of the Seleucid Empire in Syria (176 to 164 B.C.).

For more than three years Antiochus forbade the Jews' daily sacrifices in the Temple, and commanded swine's flesh to be offered instead. This was preceded by the slaughter of many of Jerusalem's citizens. Daniel 11:31 refers to this as "the abomination of desolation."

Incredibly, though, Jesus Christ warned his disciples of a future event with these words: "'Therefore when you see the "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place,' (whoever reads, let him understand), 'then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains'" (Matt. 24:15-16).

Jesus Christ reveals, then, that Antiochus Epiphanes and his despicable actions in 167 to 164 B.C. are only a type or foreshadowing of

a still more nefarious event yet to occur in Jerusalem in “the time of the end”—this pulsating 20th century (Dan. 11:40-45). This makes Daniel 11:31 a key to prophesied events in the Middle East. Typology thus helps us understand the future (Dan. 12:10).

### Time Lapses

Travelers who see on the horizon two mountain ranges, one range behind the other, often think the two ranges are close together. By

**J**esus Christ will smash a group of 10 nations (in prophecy, the toes of a metal image) at his Second Coming.

the time they reach the first mountain range, however, they see that dozens or even hundreds of miles lie between the ranges.

Similarly, in Bible prophecy time measurements are often compressed. It is not unusual for prophecies to span thousands of years, yet be constructed in such a way that they seem limited to one time period.

Isaiah 9:6 is an interesting example of the time-lapse method in Bible prophecy. The first phrase in this verse states: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” This is a well-known reference to Jesus Christ’s birth in Bethlehem. Now notice the next phrase: “And the government will be upon His shoulder.” In just one phrase, Isaiah’s prophecy has jumped ahead almost 2,000 years, from Christ’s First Coming as a humble infant in Bethlehem to his dramatic Second Coming in power and majesty to rule this earth (Rev. 11:15).

Genesis 40:9-11 is another illustration of this prophetic time-lapse principle. In the butler’s dream, the vine thrust forth its blossoms, grapes shot forth and the juice turned instantaneously into wine.

The parable of the 10 virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) epitomizes the history of the true Church of God, for those who understand the symbol-

ism of God’s Church as a young virgin (II Cor. 11:2).

The bridegroom in the parable obviously represents Christ himself (Matt. 9:15). So Matthew 25:5 relates the condition of the true Church following the energetic first century apostolic era: “While the bridegroom [Christ] was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.”

pear at the wedding supper (Rev. 19:7-9).

### Understanding the Historical Background

The future thrust of many prophecies is often evident once the historical background and past fulfillments are considered.

Take Daniel 2, for example.



Yes, God’s true Church became a footnote or, at most, a chapter in history! But notice verse 6: “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him.’”

Now the prophecy has jumped ahead to our day, a vivid example of time-lapse technique in Bible prophecy! After a lapse of more than 1,800 years, the Church of God is taking on new life, reinvigorated to announce that the Bridegroom, Christ, is soon to ap-

Here Daniel explains to King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon the meaning of a resplendent metal image about which the king had dreamed. The head was gold, the breast and arms silver, the belly and thighs brass (verse 32).

These symbols are interpreted for us in verse 38: “You [Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire] are this head of gold.” How clear!

Here we see the Bible interpreting itself.

Verse 39: "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth."

Most historians record this clear progression of empires from the sixth century B.C. onward: the Chaldean-Babylonian Empire (625 to 539 B.C.), the Medo-Persian Empire (538 to 330 B.C.), and the Greco-Macedonian Empire.

This historic sequence sets the stage for vital end-time prophecies. How? Because Daniel lists no other empire after the fourth or Roman Empire that succeeded the Greeks. The fourth system must thus hold sway until the end time and be readily identifiable today—and it is. History proves it.

By 31 B.C. the Roman city-state consolidated its rise to empire. From then until A.D. 476 it dominated world politics. It was a divided empire after Constantinople became the eastern capital around A.D. 330 (hence the two iron legs of verse 33).

The 10 toes are to be smashed by Christ, the Rock (Dan. 2:34, I Pet. 2:8), and sure enough, Rev. 17:12-14 shows the "Lamb" (the prophetic code word for Christ) putting an end to the domination of a group of 10 nations at his return.

Clearly, the availability of historical records to help us plot out how far we have come in prophecy is part of the knowledge explosion predicted for these last days (Dan. 12:4). History is a useful tool that helps bring us up to date and let us know how far we have come in God's plan.

#### "Here a Little, There a Little"

Isaiah 28:9-10 states a cardinal principle of effective Bible study strikingly relevant to the field of prophecy:

"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line

upon line, here a little, there a little."

This principle is restated in verse 13.

Jesus said to "search the Scriptures" (John 5:39), an activity for which the Bereans were commended (Acts 17:10-11). The point is that it is wise to survey all the particular prophecies bearing on a subject instead of rushing in with a snap judgment or some instant pet interpretation (II Pet. 1:20).

Not grasping this principle, some interpreters have fallen into theological quagmires in the "beast chapters," Revelation 13 and 17.

Speculation abounds! Pseudoscholars have authoritatively elected Germany as the leopard, Russia as the bear and Great Britain as the lion.

Why is this erroneous? Let the Bible interpret the Bible. The symbols of the leopard, bear and lion are explained in another beast chapter—Daniel 7. Yet Daniel 7 is amplified by Daniel 2, where the four great gentile empires are outlined, beginning with Babylon (Dan. 2:32, 38) and following through to Persia, Greece and Rome (Dan. 2:39-40).

Thus the composite beast of Revelation 13 and 17 is a code that can be cracked by the "here a little, there a little" principle.

There is logic, consistency and internal structure in Bible prophecy. We must allow the Bible to interpret itself and clarify vague scriptures with clearer ones.

#### Poetic Devices

Approaching the thought patterns of 2,500 years ago in the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament in translation sometimes presents problems for modern readers.

**D**isease epidemics shall come on the heels of war and famine, as portrayed by the horseman of Revelation 6:7-8.

An age such as ours expects a straightforward presentation in literature. Extraneous material is of-



ten deleted to fit the time constraints of today's reader. Hebrew writing, however, depends more upon context and various degrees of emphasis and repetition. Such poetry consisted of matching, reversing or balancing thoughts.

While these literary devices enhance the weight and force of God's message to man, they are also a means whereby God is hiding, for a time, that message from the world as a whole, while revealing it to a few who have submitted themselves to a way through which they can understand that message.

Daniel 9:26-27 is a pertinent example. Here the prophet has arranged two separate themes in "layer-cake" style—A, B, A, B. This is a common device in classical music, where major or minor themes are alternated, restated and recapitulated.

Notice the first thought (A) in Daniel 9:26: "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself."

This messianic reference is completed in the first phase of verse 27:

"Then he [the Messiah] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering."

Not grasping the poetic structure here has caused some interpreters to force thought B ("the people of the prince who is to come") in verse 26 together with thought A. They have tried to make the prince who destroys

Jerusalem identical with the Messiah. This does not fit.

### Blending

Seemingly obscure passages often contain interesting literary patterns. This helps us appreciate blended prophecies like Isaiah 7 and 8.

Here the prophet announces to King Ahaz of Judah that his (Isaiah's) own son will prophetically foreshadow the doom of the neighboring kingdom of Israel (Isa. 8:18).

Yet embedded in these prophecies relating to Israel and Judah in the eighth century B.C. we find one of the great themes of all the prophecies—the Messiah, specifically Christ's birth to a young virgin (Isa. 7:14).

So we have two births, two sons, two themes occurring in the same prophetic chapters. Blended here also are prophetic references to Christ's rejection by his own people (Isa. 8:14), his disciples, and the preservation and perpetuation of the Bible (verse 16).

Yet Matthew 1:23 is sure proof that Isaiah 7:14, the passage about "Immanuel," refers directly to Christ's birth, not the birth of Isaiah's son. The blending of major and minor themes here has masked, to a certain extent, the prophecy of Christ's birth to a virgin.

This approach is "plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge" (Prov. 8:9). Psalm 111:10 tells us that those who keep God's commandments will have a "good under-

standing." That is precisely where most people err. Not approaching the prophecies prayerfully, carefully and humbly—seeking to act on the knowledge revealed—totally short circuits most people's understanding.

One major reason God inspired these subtle but skillful techniques in prophecy was to ensure that a right attitude would have to precede understanding (Matt. 18:3-4). The childlike willingness to act on revealed truth is one of the first rules of effective Bible study. Unless the willingness to obey is there, the prophecies will remain a mystery (Isa. 29:11).

God's dynamic inspiration of his writers often flowed into creative, artistic channels. These devices help cloak the true message from those not yet called to understand and those unwilling to heed and obey it.

"Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden" (verse 14).

Yet we who have been given the precious gift of understanding these truths (Dan. 12:10, Prov. 1:7) can marvel at the variety and diversity in God's revelation to us. Bible prophecy is replete with treasures that God wants his chosen people to dig out and examine (Prov. 2:1-5).

Surely David's exultant cry should be ours: "I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure" (Ps. 119:162). □

If today's Christianity really understood and taught the true Gospel—and the word *gospel* means "good news"—then this world would know that the kingdom of God is soon to be established on this earth.

The book of Revelation shows us what happens when Christ returns to rule this world: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years [the Millennium] should be fulfilled" (Rev. 20:1-3).

One of Christ's first acts at his Second Coming will be to bind Satan so that the devil can no longer deceive the world (Rev. 12:9).

Then what will happen?

"And I saw thrones, and they [the saints] sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years [Millennium]. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection [the resurrection of the saints, who will rule with Jesus Christ during the Millennium]. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign [on the earth] with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6).

Jesus promised that the saints—those who, today, allow themselves to be ruled by God's law, who overcome and who endure to the end—would be given power over the nations (Rev. 2:26-27, 3:21) and that they would reign with him on the earth (Rev. 5:10, Dan. 7:27, 2:44).

# UTOPIA AT LAST! The Coming Millennium

Good news is about to fill world news headlines. Jesus Christ will soon return to usher in, on earth, his 1,000-year reign of peace, happiness and prosperity.



Jesus will then be "Lord of lords, and King of kings" (Rev. 17:14). Zechariah prophesied that "the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9). Jesus' headquarters will be in Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17), from which he and his saints will rule the world.

## At last—utopia!

God's kingdom—God's family—will rule this earth in true peace,

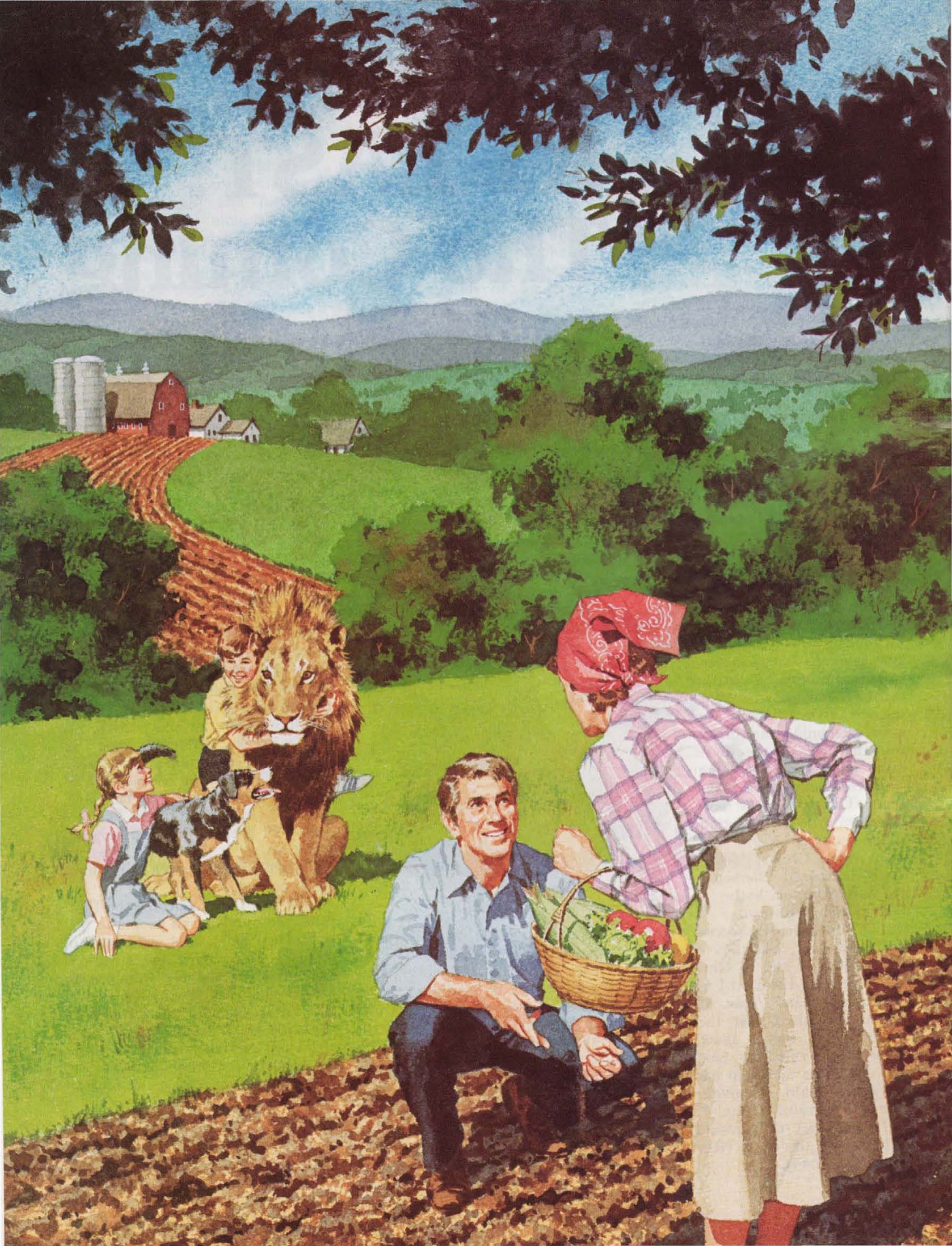
prosperity and happiness. Let us notice some of the many scriptures that describe the coming wonderful world tomorrow.

With Satan bound—put in an abyss and restrained, for 1,000 years, from deceiving the nations—what will happen?

"He [the political ruler used by Satan] who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing" (Isa. 14:6-7). Yes, the nations will break forth into singing when Satan is bound. The earth will finally know peace—no more strife or war.

God will then open, for the first time, the minds of all people to his truth (Isa. 25:7). God will begin to offer his Holy Spirit and salvation to mankind as a whole. Man's very nature—his carnal, selfish orientation toward *getting* instead of *giving*—will be changed to God's way of giving, serving, sharing, of having concern for others equal to or greater than concern for self (Jer. 31:31-34).

At last, God's law will be written in the hearts and minds of all mankind, and crime, war, sickness and violence will vanish. Man will



learn that obedience to God's law pays big dividends.

Mankind will actually begin to seek God—will want to learn of and live by God's way:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law [of God], and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:2-4).

The prophet Micah adds this interesting detail: "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Mic. 4:4).

Today people live in constant fear of violence and crime from fellowman; nations live in dread of the nuclear mushroom cloud. But in the wonderful world tomorrow, "None shall make them afraid"!

Man will not only be at peace with his fellowman, but with nature itself. God will change the disposition of animals also:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed [together]; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9).

What a wonderful, utopian age is about to dawn on this planet!

What will be some specific effects of applying God's law worldwide?

Then will be "the times of restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21). Jesus Christ will open the way to the tree of life—the way of peace—to everyone (Rev. 22:2, 14). God's Spirit of love will be poured out all over this earth (Joel

much imagination to see how this law of love will bring peace. Without murder, war is virtually impossible.

The Seventh Commandment reads, "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). Again God emphasizes the family as the way to peace. Adultery has shattered the peace of numerous marriages, ending in violence and divorce.

In the world tomorrow, hus-

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Man will not only be at peace with his fellowman, but with nature itself. God will change the disposition of animals also . . . What a wonderful, utopian age is about to dawn on this planet!

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2:28). Love and peace will be everywhere, because the love of God will be poured out in the hearts of people by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

The world will be ready to learn and live the way of peace.

#### The way to peace

*Love and peace* will no longer be empty words. Almighty God will fill them with substance—with action. For peace will never come by words alone, but by every act of love. God will teach people how to love one another through his law.

The first law that brings peace between people through love is the Fifth Commandment, which tells us to honor our parents (Ex. 20:12). Today parents and children are further apart than ever before, and we are further from world peace than ever before.

Parents raise dictators and warmongers. Children grow up dishonoring and disobeying all authority, even God's. The result is crime and international terrorism. Children become the leaders who plunge the world into war.

In the world tomorrow, children will honor and obey their parents. These children will grow up to be peace-loving leaders.

Now notice the Sixth Commandment: "You shall not murder" (verse 13). It doesn't take

bands and wives will remain faithful to one another. They will love each other so much that adultery will be unthinkable. Families will reap the peace of this law.

"You shall not steal," reads the Eighth Commandment (verse 15). How many times has peace been stolen by the breaking of this law? One nation tries to steal (get) the possessions of another, and war ensues. Once you help teach people to give rather than get, stealing will be eradicated. Once stealing is eradicated, peace will be given to the world.

Notice the Ninth Commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (verse 16). Imagine a world where people kept their word—a world free of accusations and propaganda.

"You shall not covet . . . anything that is your neighbor's," says the Tenth Commandment (verse 17). This is the law to end all wars. James asked, "Where do wars and fights come from among you?" The answer? "Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?" (James 4:1). The desire to get is at the root of all sin.

The nations will learn to praise God for his bountiful blessings—to rejoice with their neighbors rather than covet. The whole world will rejoice in thanksgiving to God.



God's law of love will form the foundation of world peace.

### **A world of abundance**

Revolutions will take place in agriculture and construction. Man will no longer be occupied with war and trying to harm his fellowman. Under the direction of Christ and the immortal rulers, man will be able to devote his energies to food production and rebuilding—prop-

ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water... And an highway shall be there, and a way... of holiness" (verses 1-2, 5-8).

No more will thousands starve to death daily, while millions of others suffer malnutrition because of lack of food (Amos 9:13-15).

What a time of prosperity! Man will have abundant reason to rejoice (Jer. 31:12-13, 30:19).

Mankind will begin to keep all God's laws, which will include observing his Sabbaths and Holy Days (Isa. 66:23-24, Zech. 14:16-19). Individuals who rebel against Christ's rule will be dealt with swiftly and surely.

In addition, there will be no more confusion of tongues—the whole earth will be united with one language (Zeph. 3:9).

And during the Millennium Jesus Christ—God himself—will dwell on earth, at Jerusalem, with mankind (Isa. 33:17-20, Joel 3:20-21). Jerusalem will truly become the "City of Peace" during the Millennium.

### **The whole world will rejoice**

This earth cannot know true, lasting peace (Isa. 59:8) until the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6-7) returns to this planet and establishes his world-ruling government.

God's Word has much more to say about what God's kingdom will be like than we have been able to cover in this article. If you would like to know more, please write for our free book *The Wonderful World Tomorrow—What It Will Be Like*.

When God restores his law and his way of life—his divine government—to this war-weary earth, then we shall have unprecedented peace, happiness, abundant health and worldwide prosperity. This wonderful world tomorrow—the 1,000-year rule of the kingdom of God—will be a time of supreme rejoicing for all nations.

What a world that will be! □

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## **When God restores His law and His way of life—His divine government—to this war-weary earth, then we shall have unprecedented peace, happiness, abundant health and worldwide prosperity.**

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erly—civilization. God will even change the weather and landscapes to promote man's physical prosperity (Isa. 30:23-25).

Isaiah 35 gives further details about the Messiah's reign: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing... Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched

During the Millennium, God's people will show the nations of this earth how to build and how to restore, unlike today, when so many are bent on tearing down and destroying (Isa. 61:4).

### **Right religion and education**

Under the training of Christ and God's immortal, spirit-born children, man will finally learn and practice God's way—the way to every abundant blessing. Religion and education will be inextricably intertwined (Isa. 30:20-21).

The immortal saints will be able to suddenly appear and rebuke anyone who goes the wrong way.

True religion will be enforced.

**W**HY SHOULD A UTOPIA BE IMPOSSIBLE? Why shouldn't we have a world at peace, filled with joy and prosperity, racial harmony and genuine love?

God has allowed a six-thousand-year period for mankind to rule himself apart from God if man so chooses. During this time, God has, in a sense, kept hands off the affairs of this world. Man has pursued the course that "seems right" to him.

But the new order—THE HAPPY WORLD TOMORROW—will soon be here. A thousand years of peace and prosperity are just around the corner.

It is time you knew about the coming Utopia—a MILLENNIUM of abundant and happy living—free from the fears of war, sickness and poverty.

#### What Do We Mean "Millennium"?

Actually, the word "millennium" is derived from the Latin which simply means *a thousand years*. Instead of finding the word "millennium" in the Scriptures, you will read of the "thousand years." The *only* scriptures in all the Bible defining the numerical limits of this period of time are in Revelation 20:1-9.

Here is the *time setting* for the coming Utopia or Millennium.

The apostle John wrote that he saw an angel who "laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years . . . and set a seal upon him, that *he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled*" (Rev. 20:2-3).

During the Millennium (the thousand years), the devil does not deceive the nations. This age we are now in couldn't be the Millennium, because the devil *is still deceiving the nations*. Therefore the Millennium must still be in the future.

Notice what else the apostle John says about the thousand years. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of

# The Wonderful World Tomorrow

It is just around the corner—universal peace and prosperity, a world bubbling over with joy and happiness!

God and of Christ, and *shall reign with him a thousand years*" (Rev. 20:6).

So the Millennium is a time when the saints reign with Christ. The saints help create the millennial Utopia. Who are the saints? Those who are qualifying now by obedience to the Law of God through faith in Christ.

Did you ever notice before that those *in the first resurrection* will reign with Christ a thousand years? (Rev. 20:4.) This means that the Millennium can't begin until AFTER the first resurrection, because it is those *in the first resurrection* who do the ruling.

#### When Will the Millennium Occur?

Now when does the first resurrection occur?

I Thessalonians. 4:14-17 declares that the first resurrection occurs at the Second Coming of Christ. "...The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. . ."

This first resurrection occurs

"... *at the last trump*: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Cor. 15:52).

Since the saints do not rise *until* the Second Coming of Christ, and since *they* rule with Christ during the Millennium, then the thousand years must occur *after* the second coming of Christ, and NOT before. This is vitally important because there are some who teach that Jesus does not come until the end of the thousand years. But your Bible says Jesus comes *at the beginning* of the thousand years.

But what else occurs when the *last trump* sounds? In Revelation 11:15, when the last or seventh trumpet is blown, the dead are raised AND "the kingdoms of *this world* are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever."

This is when that promised time of peace and prosperity begins! Christ is beginning his reign and the saints are already resurrected to rule with Christ.

But where shall the saints rule?

#### Where Will the Millennium Be Spent?

The last phrase of I Thessalonians 4:17 tells us. After all the saints

meet the Lord in the air, they shall "ever be with the Lord." Since the saints shall always be with Jesus Christ, then any scripture that tells us *where Christ will be*, will also explain *where* those resurrected saints *shall be* during the thousand years. Also a verse that says where the saints shall rule during the thousand years, explains the place where Christ must be ruling, too!

Now consider this. In order to reign during the Millennium, there must be someone for the saints to reign *over*. Over whom does Christ give the saints power and authority to rule?

Notice Revelation 2:26-27. Jesus promises: "And he that overcometh... to him will I give power *over the nations*: and he shall RULE them with a rod of iron." So the saints will rule *over the nations*. And these nations will be ruled with a rod of iron.

In the last days of the kings or rulers of this present civilization, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people [not to human beings, rather to the sons of God], but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).

Notice, that it is "in the days of these kings," not a thousand years later, that God sets up his kingdom under Christ—pictured by the stone that smote the image (Dan. 2:34, 35)—which "became a great mountain, and FILLED THE WHOLE EARTH." It doesn't fill heaven, *but it does fill the earth*.

To say that these nations are in heaven is absurd. Are there such sinful nations in heaven that the saints have to rule them with an iron rod? Of course not. These are the nations *of this earth*.

Many scriptures tell us that Christ WILL rule on this earth. In Revelation 3:21, Jesus said: "To him that overcometh will I grant to

*sit with me in my throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." So the resurrected saints will sit with Christ *on his throne* while ruling the nations.

At the present moment Christ is sitting on his Father's throne in heaven (Rev. 3:21). He is NOT sitting on his own throne. But when Jesus leaves heaven (Acts 3:21) to come for the saints, they are promised a place with him *on his throne*.

Where will Jesus' throne be?

The Millennium is the reign of the Kingdom of God on this earth... When Satan and his demons are restrained from their work of deception, the earth shall at last have its millennial "sabbath of rest." The resurrected saints will judge the world with Christ...

#### The Throne of David Is Not in Heaven!

The throne of Jesus Christ could not be *in heaven* because the angel Gabriel said that "the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne of his father David*" (see Luke 1:30-33). So Jesus' throne will be *the throne of David*. David's throne is on this earth! (Jer. 33:17.) The Father's throne is in heaven. During the Millennium, the saints shall sit with Christ on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

The Psalmist says: "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee *the heathen* for thine inheritance, and

the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a *rod of iron*; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. 2:7-9).

Here the Bible says that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will rule in virtually the same manner as the saints.

If all these scriptures are not proof enough that we shall reign with Christ *on this earth*, and not in heaven, during the Millennium, then turn to Revelation 5:9. The proper translation of this verse,

from the original Greek, is that Christ purchased with his blood "men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them a kingdom and priests to our God; and *they shall reign upon the earth*." (See the *Revised Standard Version*.)

#### How and When Jesus Returns to Earth

In Acts 1:9-11 the account of Jesus' departure over nineteen hundred years ago is given. "While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men... said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from

you into heaven, *shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*."

How did Jesus leave? He ascended from the Mount of Olives and was received by the clouds of heaven. And he is going to return *in like manner*.

In Revelation 19 we read that, at the Second Coming of Christ, military contingents of all nations are gathered to battle against Jerusalem. This same time, the Second Coming of Christ, is described in Zechariah 14:1-3. It is in the Day of the Lord, when all nations are warring against Jerusalem.

"THEN shall the Lord go forth,

and fight against those nations. . . and his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" (Zech. 14:3, 4).

Notice it. Jesus is coming in the clouds of heaven (Rev. 1:7) and shall fight against the nations and his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is on this earth. It does not say that Jesus will stand on the mount a thousand years later, but in that day as he returns to receive the throne of David and to rule the nations with a rod of iron.

### He Remains on the Earth

When Jesus returns to earth, the saints will be with him—they will "ever be with the Lord." He comes in the clouds of this earth's atmosphere wherein they meet him and then accompany him to this earth. That is where the saints shall be.

Let's continue reading what Zechariah wrote. "And it shall be in that day [notice, it is still the same general period of time, not a thousand years later], that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem . . . in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over ALL THE EARTH . . . all the land shall be turned as a plain . . . and inhabited . . . And men shall dwell in it, and there

shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (Zech. 14:8-11).

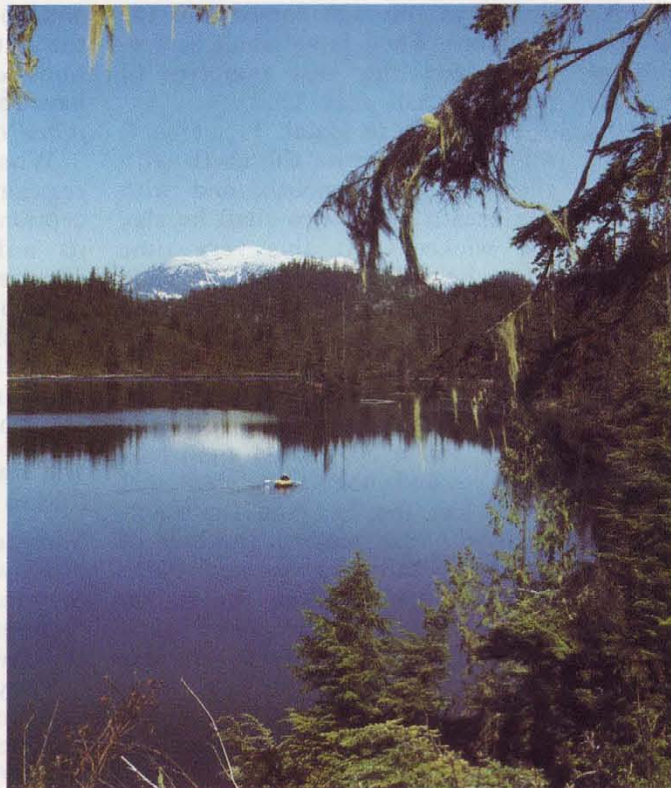
In the day (same general period) that Christ returns, not a thousand years later, the land shall be inhabited and men shall live there. And the gentile nations, after their entire armies have been destroyed (Zech. 14:12-15), shall come to serve Jesus Christ. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16).

The people that shall be left are

going to worship the Lord year by year in Jerusalem, which is on this earth, not in heaven. The Lord shall be King over all the earth (Zech. 14:9). Verses 17 to 19 show him punishing nations for disobedience. As they sit with Jesus on his throne, the saints are also going to judge and correct the nations.

None of these events can occur before the thousand years, and none can occur in heaven, because there are no disobedient nations there.

And except for a brief period at



the conclusion of the thousand years (Rev. 20:7-9), neither will disobedient nations be in the New Earth after the Millennium. Therefore these events must happen during the Millennium and on this earth.

### The Earth Is Not to Be Desolate

Some misinterpret Isaiah 24 in a feeble effort to contradict the gospel and the plain statements of Scripture. The time setting of this chapter is just prior to the beginning of the Millennium. The first verse is often quoted as: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down. . . ."

Just quoting this much, one is left with the impression that there are no inhabitants on the earth, that the Millennium will be a period of complete desolation. But why not quote the whole verse? What does God mean by the earth being made empty? Did he mean that there are no inhabitants?

Not at all! Let's not stop at this verse, but continue reading this entire chapter.

What will God do? He "scattered abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest, as with the servant, so with his master. . . . The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled . . . the haughty people of the earth do languish . . . they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and FEW MEN LEFT."

Read this entire twenty-fourth chapter of Isaiah. It shows the punishments to be meted out on this earth just prior to the beginning of the thousand years—the complete destruction of civilization and "few men left."

Remember also what Zechariah said about those who shall be left. They shall go up to Jerusalem from year to year and worship the Eternal, who shall be

King over all the earth. Isaiah says that those few who are left "shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord [Isa. 24:14]. . . . When the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem" (verse 23). Yes, Christ will reign on earth from Jerusalem, not heaven, and there will be inhabitants who shall repopulate the earth.

Again, Jeremiah 4:23-31 is also lifted out of its historical context and misapplied to the thousand years. If you will study the book of Jeremiah from the beginning, you will notice that these verses are NOT referring to the thousand years. The prophet warns Judah

that Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is coming "to make *thy land desolate*; and *thy cities* shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant" (verse 7). This is speaking of Judah, not the whole earth. "*The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end*" (verse 27).

This prophecy is NOT referring to the Millennium.

This chapter shows that there are gentiles on the earth who will *not* be allowed by God to make a full end of Judah, even though they desolate the *land* completely. Verse twenty-nine shows that not a man shall dwell in the cities. Why? Because there are no human beings on the earth? No! But because *whole cities shall flee* before the horsemen of the gentiles.

Together with these two misquoted texts, some turn to II Thesalonians 1:8 and 2:8.

The first of these verses is speaking of angels who will take vengeance on those that know not God and obey not the gospel. It is *assumed* that this text says that *all people* will be destroyed, but it *doesn't say that*. It is *only* those who refuse to obey that will perish.

The other verse often mentioned (II Thess. 2:8) nowhere speaks of ALL THE WICKED. It mentions "THAT WICKED" whom Christ shall destroy, "even HIM, whose coming is after the working of Satan" (verse 9). So it is not all wicked people but *one specific individual* that is to be destroyed.

*None* of the preceding texts describes an earth without inhabitants for a thousand years.

### What Will the Millennium Be Like?

Isaiah 11 tells of the Millennium. The gentiles are going to seek God (verse 10), and Israel and Judah are going to be gathered *the second time* from the heathen nations (verse 11). This could not be speaking of any "spiritual Israel." The last verses in this chapter speak of men crossing rivers and highways as they leave the gentile nations and return the second time to the land of promise.

This is the time spoken of by Paul. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:25-27).

Here is GOOD NEWS! Here is part of the gospel message. Blindness is happened to Israel, *not forever*, but *until* the full number of gentiles who are to be converted in this age comes into the kingdom. Then Israel shall be forgiven and the vast majority of gentiles shall seek God.

Returning to Isaiah 11, verse 4: Christ "shall smite the earth with the *rod* of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." At this very time *when* he is punishing the wicked and "reproving with equity the meek of the earth"—at this very time, notice it—"the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid . . . and a little child shall lead them . . . and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the *sucking child* shall play on the hole of the asp, and the *weaned child* shall put his hand on the cockatrice' [adder's] den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9).

This is a real Utopia. This can't be in heaven. There are no human beings in heaven. Children are not being suckled and weaned in heaven.

*And this can't be in the New Earth because there will be no wicked persons there* (Rev. 21:1-4, 8, 27). These events must occur *on this earth* during the Millennium. It can't happen in heaven, nor in the New Earth, nor during this age before the Millennium begins. Who is going to tame wild, carnivorous animals so they eat straw like the ox before the 1000

years? This prophecy is for the Millennium. What a wonderful world! And each of us can have a part in preparing the way for this glorious age.

### Satan to Be Bound

The Bible teaches that the Millennium is the reign of the kingdom of God ON THIS EARTH. The Millennium is not the kingdom; it is merely the first thousand years' reign of that kingdom on this earth. Physical people will populate the earth during this new age.

Satan is taken from the people and bound LEST he should deceive the nations. If there were no nations left to deceive, he would not have to be *bound and shut up in a place of restraint* (Rev. 20:1-3).

When Satan and his demons are restrained from their work of deception, the earth shall at last have its millennial "sabbath of rest." The resurrected saints will judge the world with Christ, and all nations shall finally have peace, because they will for the first time be following that law which "shall go forth out of Zion."

### Will the Dead Be Resurrected During the Millennium?

Some understand that the Millennium will occur on this earth. But they teach that there will be resurrections during the entire period. Is this true?

They have on occasion claimed that Revelation 20:5 is not a part of the Bible. This verse says: "*but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.*"

This text belongs in the Bible. It is found in the overwhelming majority of Greek manuscripts. Serious Bible scholars do not even question its authenticity.

It is *after* the Millennium (Rev. 20:11-15) that the rest of the dead are raised. If they were raised from their graves during the Millennium, there would be no need of a time of resurrection after the thousand years. A Utopia is coming—the wonderful World of Tomorrow is just around the corner. □