

September-October 2001

^{The} Good News

A M A G A Z I N E O F U N D E R S T A N D I N G

Coming

An End to Suffering

How to Live on \$25 a Month • America's Astounding Destiny: Rise to Greatness
Darwinism in the Classroom • What Is the Gospel Jesus Christ Taught?

Many people have opinions about what the Bible says. Look around and you'll find plenty of them. The question, though, is whether those opinions are simply that—*opinions*—or are timeless truths based on sound, objective study of the Scriptures.

A primary purpose of *The Good News* is to present biblical teachings in an unbiased, unvarnished way. We continually focus on the *context* of scriptures, concentrating on what the original writers of the Bible meant when they wrote in their day rather than relying on the opinions of later authors and theologians 2,000 years and several cultures removed from the original.

We try to put ourselves in the shoes of the brave and faithful individuals who wrote the biblical books and inspired letters God preserved for us. Only then can we properly understand what the Scriptures really mean. (That's not to say that the Bible doesn't apply to *every* age and culture. Another continuing focus of *The Good News* is to show that the Bible is perpetually up to date, a timeless guide to the problems that confront us.)

At times the views we present aren't popular. This was certainly true of the biblical authors as well. As the writer of a letter published in this issue tells us: "Some of your teachings are good, others are controversial." He takes us to task on what we've written about one popular doctrine. We're glad he does. We don't ask readers to believe us without proof. We urge them to look into the pages of their Bibles to see whether what we say is true.

In the last issue we wrapped up one of our longest-running series, "The Bible and Archaeology." For five years we've gone through the Bible book by book to show that archaeological finds have illuminated the biblical record, confirming its startling historical accuracy while increasing our understanding of the background of the times in which its authors wrote. (Interested readers can review earlier articles in the series in our back issues on the Web at www.gnmagazine.org. Rest assured that we'll run similar articles on archaeology and the Bible in the future. We already have several planned.)

In this issue we start another series along similar lines, "The Surprising Sayings of Jesus Christ." In it we continue to present clear biblical truths as they were given and understood in the original context—in this case in the words and teachings of Jesus Himself. We explore what He said, what He did and what they meant against the backdrop of His life and times.

In the first article of this series we explore a central aspect of Christ's ministry that should be quite clear—but, regrettably, isn't. That aspect is the central message He brought and taught, popularly called *the gospel*.

Mark 1:14-15 tells us that "Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'"

What is this "gospel" Jesus proclaimed? What is "the kingdom of God"? What is it about His message that requires *repentance*—a total change in our outlook and behavior—and that we *believe* that message? Does His message affect our daily lives? Will it affect our future? If so, *how*?

These are crucial questions. If the gospel of the Kingdom of God is the heart and core of Christ's teaching, shouldn't we be sure we properly understand what it is?

This teaching is so crucial, and so improperly understood by many, that it is the focus of much of this issue. It is, as discussed in this issue's lead article, a message about how and when human suffering will be eliminated. It is a message of how disease, famine, war, violence and grinding poverty will finally vanish. It is a message about how peace, fairness, justice and prosperity will eventually be poured out over the world, as covered in other articles.

Above all, it is a message of tremendous hope and an awesome future for all. And that truly is *good news*.

—Scott Ashley

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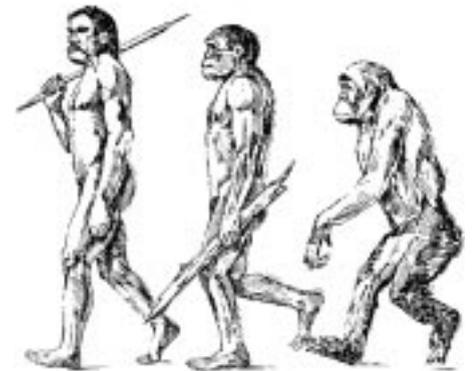
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Coming: An End to Suffering

by Larry Walker

An eerie silence hangs over the room. Chairs separated by curtains line the walls. Every seat is occupied. Men and women, old and middle-aged, sit quietly. Each patient is connected to a plastic tube that drips powerful chemicals into veins in his arm. Most of the people are bald. One has had a leg amputated just below the knee. An elderly man struggles to his feet, his spindly legs trembling. Another quickly takes his place.

The process is called chemotherapy. It is multiple biochemical drug therapy that doctors

Why is the world awash in suffering? How did the world come to be in such sad shape? Most important, what will bring the end to human misery?

routinely prescribe to destroy tumor cells after cancer surgery.

Chemotherapy destroys fast-growing cells throughout the body, including cancer cells, which keep reappearing as the disease spreads. Doctors monitor each patient's response and the growth of cancer cells to determine the details of appropriate treatment. Chemo, as it is called, is a fact of life for many cancer patients battling the disease.

Carol lives in a small town in Oregon. Her daughter drives her 150 miles for weekly treatments. The trip takes four hours one way. From 9 in the morning until 1 in the afternoon, Carol is hooked up to a device that trickles the chemicals into her system to fight her pancreatic cancer. Carol's treatment cycle calls for two weeks of treatment, then a three-week reprieve.

As with many forms of medical treatment, side effects are a problem. They include weakness, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, pain along the vein of infusion, anorexia, diarrhea,

constipation, fluke symptoms, fever, headache, inflammation of the mouth's mucous tissue and multiple lacerations and fissures in the mouth. Anemia and dermatitis are common delayed reactions.

Chemotherapy lowers the white-cell count and calcium levels and the platelets in the blood that normally enable clotting. Other side effects are destruction of functional liver tissue and bone-marrow suppression as well as harmful pulmonary, renal and central-nervous-system effects.

Loss of hair is another heartbreaker. Carol's long blond tresses are gone, replaced by short gray hair that has no chance to lengthen between chemotherapy sessions. She has good days when she feels well enough to spend time doing light work in her yard. Other times are more difficult and painful for her. The cancer, the chemotherapy and the other medications all cause discomfort and pain.

Diseases of the West

Cancer is a leading cause of death in Western nations. In the United States nearly half a million people die of cancer every year. Yet it is not the No. 1 cause of death.

Heart disease is the biggest killer, claiming 700,000 lives annually.

Worldwide, an estimated 400 million people suffer from mental or neurological disorders or from other problems such as alcohol and drug abuse. Many suffer in silence and alone. Besides physical symptoms, the emotions of fear, guilt and shame accompany these problems.

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), almost 13.8 million Americans over the age of 17 have problems with drinking. Alcohol is said to contribute to 100,000 deaths annually. The NCADD estimates that 43 percent of U.S. adults (76 million people) have been exposed to alcoholism by growing up with or being



“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

married to a problem drinker or alcoholic.

Epidemics in poor nations

Other diseases affect large segments of the population in poor countries.

AIDS continues to exact a staggering toll. Since AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) was identified 20 years ago, nearly 58 million people have been infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), also called the AIDS virus. Of those, almost 22 million have died and more than 36 million are still alive,

according to December 2000 figures released by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

The report reveals that AIDS deaths reached a record three million in 2000 and that new HIV infections continued mostly unchecked, with an estimated 5.3 million adults and children becoming infected last year. UNAIDS estimates that 34.7 million adults and 1.4 million children under the age of 15 live with the AIDS virus.

The report reveals that the steepest increase in AIDS in 2000 was recorded in

the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, where the number of new HIV infections, 50,000, surpassed all previous years’ HIV infections combined. In all of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the number of the HIV-infected rose by almost two thirds from 1999 to 2000, from 420,000 to an estimated 700,000.

In India estimates place HIV infections in the country at around four million, more than in any other country.

Will medical science eliminate disease?

The world is racked with suffering. People’s pain and suffering are documented daily on TV news and the front page of your newspaper. Crime, domestic violence, wars and terrorism inflict pain and death on millions of victims. Agonizing, crippling injuries and accidental fatalities on the job, in the home and on the highways add to the toll. Famine and hunger result in widespread agony, especially in poverty-stricken countries.

We’re all too familiar with suffering, from minor ailments to chronic, life-threatening conditions. Why is life fraught with pain? Will we ever see an end to suffering?

In recent years researchers have made much progress in pain relief. But such respites are not available to everyone, especially in poor nations. Even those who can afford pain medications experience only temporary, limited relief. Living with pain remains a daily burden for millions.

Recent medical breakthroughs offer some hope for victory over debilitating diseases. The highly touted Genome Project (*The Good News*, July-August 2000) offers

Diseases Take Their Deadly Toll

Up to a third of the world’s population is infected by soil-borne diseases caused by worms and parasites, with 300 million experiencing severe adverse effects. Such maladies are invariably more prevalent in the poorest sections of the poorest countries.

At the beginning of the 21st century, epidemics ranging from cholera and meningitis to Ebola and Lassa fever continue to pose serious worldwide risks to health. In the last four years the World Health Organization (WHO) claims to have verified more than 800 internationally significant outbreaks.

Preventable problems such as respiratory disease, diarrhea, malaria, measles and malnutrition account for more than 70 percent of child mortality in Africa. Medical researchers estimate that a million and a half of the 75 million children under age 5 in Africa die each year from pneumonia. The WHO estimates that each child in the region has five attacks of diarrhea per year and that 800,000 die annually from diarrhea and dehydration. Malnutrition and measles are often associated with these deaths.

In 1993 malaria affected some 90 countries or territories, almost half of them in Africa south of the Sahara. The world faces an estimated 300-500 million clinical cases annually, with tropical Africa accounting for more than 90 percent of that total. The vast majority of malarial deaths occur among young children in Africa, especially in remote rural areas with poor access to health services. About one million deaths among children under 5 years of age can be attributed to malaria alone or in combination with other diseases.

In Africa south of the Sahara, 70 to 90 percent of the population shows evidence of prior hepatitis-B infection. Hepatitis B is a major factor in liver cancer, which ranks either first or second among cancer deaths in males in many sub-Saharan African countries. Primary cancer of the liver is always fatal. The average age of death is 35-45 years, killing parents and wage earners at the most productive time of their lives.

fundamental information through genetic “mapping” that may lead to more-effective treatment and even prevention of disease.

However, this prospect presumes that learning how diseases form on the genetic level will lead to methods of prevention. At best this will take time. Even the most optimistic proponents admit that it will take years before any such results will be forthcoming. For the foreseeable future the costs of such high-tech treatments will limit the benefits to a small number of patients.

Man cannot end suffering

Many residents of big cities live in fear of violent crimes—murder, rape, robbery and other assaults. Though crime rates fluctuate widely, neither technology nor educational programs have eliminated its scourge. The same can be said for war. In spite of the proliferation of treaties and peace talks, wars continue, and terrorism remains a constant threat.

Some 2,700 years ago the prophet Isaiah predicted a time of peace when people “shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their

Neither science nor education, nor any human agency, can end suffering. The best man can offer is limited, temporary relief. The causes of pain are too widespread and deeply rooted to yield to the efforts of human endeavor. A world free from anguish would seem to be an impossible dream.

Good news from the Bible

The bad news for the world today is but a prelude to the good news of the world tomorrow, when that impossible dream will become reality.

In a lengthy prophecy recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, Jesus Christ warned that suffering and death from wars, famines, disease epidemics and natural disasters will continue to plague mankind and reach a crescendo at “the end of the age.” The book of Revelation gives vivid, detailed descriptions of unimaginable misery and death. But beyond this time of unprecedented suffering, the Bible prophesies a utopian world.

The scenario portrayed by the UN statue

“ . . . They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4).

spears into pruning hooks; [and] nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4).

In 1961 the United States and the Soviet Union announced a plan to achieve that goal. The Soviets introduced the idea at the United Nations General Assembly in 1959. On Sept. 20, 1961, John McCloy of the United States and Valerian Zorin representing the Soviet Union signed the Joint Statement of Agreed Principles for Disarmament Negotiations, which stated that “disarmament is general and complete and war is no longer an instrument for settling international problems.”

A garden at United Nations headquarters in New York City contains a sculpture called *Let Us Beat Swords Into Plowshares*, donated by the Soviet Union in 1959. Made by Evgeniy Vuchetich, the bronze statue represents the figure of a man holding a hammer in one hand and, in the other, a sword that he is beating into a plowshare. The statue symbolizes man’s desire to put an end to war and convert the means of destruction into creative tools for the benefit of all mankind. Yet it stands as a mute testimony to man’s inability to accomplish these lofty goals.



depicts only one part of the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 2. This chapter reveals that universal disarmament and peace will not come through human-initiated efforts, agreements and treaties, but as a result of learning and living by the laws of God (Isaiah 2:2-5). The prophet Micah echoes this prophecy and adds that “everyone will sit under his vine and fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid” (Micah 4:4).

God also inspired Isaiah to write, “They

shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). God’s people will dwell safely, with no need for protection (Jeremiah 23:6; 31:8-14; Ezekiel 34:25-28).

No longer needing to fear crime, war or terrorist attacks, “old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets” (Zechariah 8:4-5).

During Christ’s millennial rule on earth the surviving descendants of ancient Israel will enjoy a relationship with God that will inspire people of all nations (Ezekiel 36:33-36; 37:28), who will send representatives to Jerusalem to learn more about the laws of God that lead to such wonderful results (Isaiah 2:1-3). Then and only then will mankind “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks,” and “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4).

Universal healing and health

The many healings Jesus performed during His earthly ministry were only a forerunner of a great time of healing and health foretold in Isaiah 61. When Jesus read this passage and applied it to His ministry, He stopped short of quoting the entire prophecy (Luke 4:18). The other encouraging events detailed in the prophecy are yet to take place.

After Jesus returns to earth, He will fulfill the remainder of Isaiah’s prophecy. Cities will be rebuilt (Isaiah 61:4). Mourning will give way to joy (verse 3). Nations will rejoice in response to God’s abundant blessings (verses 7-11). God reveals that a time of peace, prosperity and happiness for His people is coming when He will “turn their mourning into joy” (Jeremiah 31:13).

This wonderful world will not simply appear instantaneously. People will have to learn the *way* of peace. They will come to realize that mankind’s woes from the beginning of time are the result of ignorance of, and disobedience to, the laws of God.

From the time that Adam and Eve chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man has followed a path that has led to suffering and death (Romans 5:12). Most of the problems that afflict the world are the result of sin. (To better understand this crucial truth, be sure to request our free

booklet *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*)

The gospel and the plan of God

God has a plan that will ultimately eliminate sin, suffering and death (Daniel 9:24; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26). That plan is an integral part of the message of good news—the gospel—that Jesus brought and taught.

Sin has long played a central role in human suffering and death. We can understand how sin will be defeated and eradicated when we properly understand Christ's ministry and mission. He died for the sins of mankind to make possible forgiveness of sin and access to God and His promises (John 3:16; Romans 5:1-2). But the message of the gospel goes beyond the death of Jesus Christ and our relationship with God in this life. As Paul said, "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:19).

The scope of the gospel reaches out to encompass the good news of future events in the plan of God that Jesus will accomplish. "... Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

After describing the horrendous plagues destined to strike the earth at the time of the end, the book of Revelation states that Jesus will return to earth as "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16). Prophecies in Daniel 2 and 7 speak of the kingdoms and governments of man being replaced and superseded by the Kingdom of God. Under the loving rulership of Christ, the suffering of mankind will be greatly diminished as men, women and children everywhere learn to live a way of life that leads to the wonderfully hopeful and positive results described in so many biblical prophecies.

The gospel Jesus preached focused on the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:1, 14-15; Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Luke 4:43; 8:1; Acts 1:3). This focus has been obscured over the centuries since the early Catholic theologian Augustine (A.D. 354-430) determined that "the millennial kingdom had commenced with the appearing of Christ and was therefore an accomplished fact" (*The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, Vol. 18, "Millennium").

The resurrection and end of suffering

This Kingdom of God will rule our physical world in the future (Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14). But in reality it is an eternal *spirit* kingdom. Paul says plainly that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"

(1 Corinthians 15:50). God is spirit (John 4:24), and He must change us from physical flesh and blood to immortal spirit that we may "inherit" that kingdom.

The entire 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians explains that He will change us from corruptible flesh to incorruptible spirit by means of a resurrection from the dead. Paul describes the final victory over pain and death in verse 54: "So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain . . ." (Revelation 21:4).

pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

In Philippians 3:21 Paul writes that God "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body . . ." For those who become God's people in the present age, this momentous transformation will take place at the time of the sounding of the final "trumpet" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). John refers to this event as "the first resurrection" (Revelation 20:6).

Jesus said that ultimately all mankind will live again—most in the resurrection of judgment (John 5:28-29, Young's Literal Translation). This will be the time when their future for all eternity will be decided. Those who repent will enter into God's Kingdom. Those who hold fast to an obstinate heart will perish.

Ezekiel 37 graphically describes the resurrection to physical life of the house of Israel during that time. Jesus later explained that people of all ethnic origins will rise from their graves in the same resurrection (Matthew 12:41-42). God, in His mercy (Matthew 11:22-24), has built into His plan an opportunity for everyone to repent (2 Peter 3:9).

God's feast days outline His plan

The exciting story of God's plan to end pain and death is outlined in seven annual festivals that He first revealed to ancient Israel (Leviticus 23). Jesus and the apostles observed these days, as did the early New Testament Church (Matthew 26:17-19; Luke 2:41-42; John 2:23; 7:2, 8-10; Acts 18:21; 20:16; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8). These days offer "a shadow of things to come" in the plan of God (Colossians 2:16-17).

The months corresponding roughly to

September and October feature four of these seven annual feasts. The Feast of Trumpets anticipates the return of Christ at the last trumpet. The Day of Atonement pictures the putting away of Satan shortly after Christ's return so the world, which is deceived by the devil (Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4), can understand the plan of God and be reconciled to Him.

The seven-day Feast of Tabernacles offers an opportunity to enjoy a foretaste of "the powers of the age to come" (Hebrews 6:5),

when peace and prosperity, health and happiness will prevail throughout the world. The Last Great Day, immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles, looks forward to the time when all who have lived and died will live again and be given the opportunity to become vessels of the "living water" of the Holy Spirit.

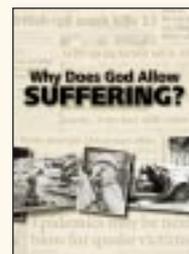
Members of the United Church of God, publisher of *The Good News*, observe these days, including the Feast of Tabernacles, in many locations around the world. We invite you to enjoy with us this coming foretaste of the world God is planning and preparing for mankind.

Of the future world God tells us: "I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in

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Recommended Reading

To get a more complete picture of how suffering will come to an end, be sure to request your free copies of the booklets *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*



You Can Understand Bible Prophecy and *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. You will learn much more about the truly good news of the future revealed in Bible prophecy.

All these booklets are free from any of our offices listed on page 2, or you may request or download them from our Web site at www.gnmagazine.org.

How to Live on \$25 a Month

by Melvin Rhodes

Try to imagine living on \$25 a month—less than \$1 a day. That’s how much the average worker earns in the West African country of Ghana. Yes, that’s the *average*, which means many people live on less. Because of the gap between rich and poor, and because many at the upper end of the income scale are extremely wealthy, it is accurate to say that most Ghanaians live on less than \$25 each month. Yet Ghana isn’t the poorest country in the region.

Ironies abound. I’m writing this on my laptop computer at a desk in one of Ghana’s relatively less-expensive hotels in Kumasi, capital of the Ashanti region and Ghana’s second-largest city. One night in the hotel, with tax, costs the equivalent of two months’ wages for the average Ghanaian, perhaps three months’ wages for a hotel employee. My laptop, moderate by American standards, cost the equivalent of more than four years’ wages for the average citizen.

It’s impossible to eat a meal in a restaurant in this country without thinking of comparisons. Most meals are reasonably priced by Western standards, but the cost of one would feed a Ghanaian family of five for two days.

So how do they do it? How do people here manage to live on such meager incomes? It’s no wonder Ghanaians have been called magicians.

Ghanaian realities

Let’s see how it works.

Rent is cheap—unless you insist on good accommodation. Westerners who move to Ghana on one- or two-year employment contracts can pay \$2,000 per month in rent for a Western-style home, money that goes to the wealthier members of Ghanaian society. For most Ghanaians rent is 30,000 to 50,000 cedis (pronounced “seedies”) per month.

Sound like a lot? Not really. Fifty thousand cedis is about \$7! There are 7,000 cedis to \$1. Go to a bank with a \$100 bill and you will walk out with 700,000 cedis for it.

What do people get for \$7 per month? One room and a chamber (hallway) is the norm in an old ramshackle house that saw

better days 50 years ago. Kitchen and bathroom facilities are shared with the other residents of the building. Although “only” 50,000 cedis per month, residents must pay at least six months’ rent in advance, and three



Two young Ghanaians prepare fufu for a meal. Made from cassavas and plantains, fufu is a staple of the typical Ghanaian diet.

or four years’ rent is becoming the norm before a family can move in. That’s as much as 2.4 million cedis. You don’t have to be a mathematician to realize that 2.4 million cedis on a salary of 175,000 per month is impossible for most people.

Added to the rent cost is the price of utilities, unreliable at the best of times. The average cost? About 50,000 cedis per month.

After rent and utilities, Ghanaians must still pay for food. A family of five needs about 30,000 cedis per day, enough for two meals. Breakfast is bread and porridge made from maize. The evening meal varies but usually consists of yams, cassavas or plantains or a popular local dish called fufu made from cassavas and plantains. These are pounded together to form a substance that feels like dried glue. Most of these staples are served with soup or stew made from

local vegetables and the occasional fish or other meat.

We haven’t finished yet. There’s transport to pay for. Most people rely on taxis to get them to and from work. Few hire a taxi for themselves. Taxis travel along popular routes and pick up people who are going their way. It can take two or three taxi rides to get to your destination, each one costing a few hundred or more cedis.

Then there are school fees. Even public schools charge students’ families for their services. About 40,000 cedis a month is needed per child.

We’ve still not added up clothing (often castoffs from people in rich countries), medical costs (the birth of a baby, without complications, costs at least one month’s wages), weddings and funerals.

Add all this up and you will find that the average couple with two children needs at least two million cedis a month just to survive at a minimal level. Two adults working full time earn an average of only one fifth that (an amount that is still taxable). So where does the other 80 percent come from?

Food is the greatest single expense. Some people can grow a great deal of their own food on ancestral land. But increasing urbanization has removed

that option for many.

Corruption is rife. Seemingly everybody wants a “dash”—a little extra payment—for doing his work. You can’t even get your own money out of the bank without tipping the teller. People in service industries all live off their tips. Foreign residents and visitors in particular are expected to be generous.

Many families have a close relative who emigrated to richer lands and is expected to send money on a regular basis to help his family back home. Some overseas relatives will even send back a car or some other expensive item so a family can start a business. Still, many people go hungry when their \$25 monthly average runs out, and many have to share accommodations with others.

What can we do to help?

Understandably appalled at such poverty,

many people in the West want to do something about it. Often misguidedly thinking that government programs have solved their own domestic inequities, they believe that giving money to other countries will solve theirs.

Foreign aid has been described as money taken from poor people in rich countries and given to rich people in poor countries. There is a great deal of truth in this. In rich countries some of the wealthiest people often escape taxes through loopholes in the tax system aided by offshore bank accounts, leaving the burden of taxation on others. In poor countries the officials who run the country are the ones who receive the foreign aid, which they are then supposed to disburse to those most in need.

This rarely happens. This writer is not the

only one who has paid exorbitant amounts for food items with the inscription clearly written on the side "A GIFT FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. NOT TO BE SOLD."

The book of Proverbs has these cautionary words for people who take advantage of the poor to increase their own wealth: "He that oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he that gives to the rich shall surely come to want" (Proverbs 22:16).

This ancient warning has proved true countless times in Africa as corrupt officials enrich themselves at the expense of the poor, only to be overthrown and killed later in a revolution or coup. In 1979 some learned a bloody lesson when every previous Ghanaian president was killed after a revolution brought on by the increased gap between

the haves and the have-nots.

Is debt forgiveness the answer?

Debt forgiveness is a currently popular concept. Many poor nations are heavily in debt to rich countries. They have to pay interest on top of the capital they owe. Although debt reduction could be helpful, we should realize that much of the debt was incurred by corrupt former leaders who stashed away the borrowed money in their own foreign bank accounts.

If such corruption were a problem only of the past, then it might make sense to cancel the debts and relieve the burden of heavy monthly payments. But, sadly, this isn't the case. If anything, corruption is getting worse in many poor countries. Cancellation of

Continued on page 16

New African Union Founded to Copy EU Success

People living in the West like to think that money can solve any problem. Ironically, poverty in the poorest countries cannot be alleviated that simply. Bad government and corruption are two of the primary causes of poverty. No matter how much rich nations donate to poor ones, poverty will continue until bad government and corruption cease.

In a seemingly farsighted attempt to copy Western success, 40 African leaders met in Lusaka, Zambia, in early July to replace the Organization of African Unity (OAU), founded in 1963, with the new African Union (AU), modeled on the European Union (EU).

More than 25 years ago some African political leaders formed the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to create a common market in West Africa that would replicate the success of the European Common Market (now the EU) in the region. More than a quarter of a century later it is difficult to point to any accomplishment of ECOWAS. The people are no better off, and in many cases they are in greater poverty now than they were in 1975. The only likely accomplishment of the new AU will be the creation of thousands of new jobs—in the bureaucracy that will run the new organization!

More government is exactly what Africa does not need. In a scenario repeated in dozens of countries in the first five years of independence, the numbers of people employed by government doubled while the tax base halved as the former colonialists were forced out. It doesn't take a degree in economics to realize that you can't double spending when your revenue is cut by half without creating major problems.

After five years, jobs in the bureaucracy would keep growing as politicians filled government departments with members of their extended families. This growth in government would, in turn, add to the burdens faced by private companies and discourage further investment through mountains of paperwork. Government would also be fueled by the spread of corruption as bureaucrats demanded bribes to do their jobs, issuing the licenses and permits necessary for private enterprise to function legally.

Botswana, one of Africa's few success stories, proves the point. This big country with a small population chose a different path. Democracy and private enterprise have flourished, and the nation

has averaged a 9 percent growth rate since independence in 1966.

A more recent success story was highlighted in the May issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. Somalia, in its death throes a decade ago, is experiencing fast economic growth. As Peter Maass's article was subtitled: "In the Absence of Government Bureaucracy and Foreign Aid, Business Is Starting to Boom." In short, Somalia grows because it has no government to hinder business and no free handouts to remove incentives to work.

Ghanaian author George Ayittey pointedly showed that much of the blame for Africa's ills lies with its postcolonial governments. In his 1992 book *Africa Betrayed*, Ayittey wrote that "in Africa there are two classes of people: the real people [the peasants] and the parasitic elites" (p. xvii).

Ayittey recounts Africa's three invasions. First came the Arabs, then the European colonizers. But the worst and most devastating was the third and most recent. "A third and far more insidious invasion began under black neocolonialism. Educated abroad and having assumed the trappings of foreign cultures and ideologies, a new wave of invaders struck Africa. They were actually returnees, sons of Africa who briefly left to pursue studies overseas or to go into exile. But they came back with a vengeance to denigrate, to enslave, to destroy, and to colonize by imposing alien ideological systems upon the African people.

"The economic exploitation and political repression of the African people continued unabated . . . Economically, politically, and culturally, Africans today are worse off than they were at the time of independence in the 1960s."

He adds: "Three decades of independence from colonial rule have produced nothing but economic misery and disintegration, political chaos, and institutional and social decay" (pp. 7-8, emphasis in original).

Africa faces enormous problems as wars plague a third of the continent's nations and the AIDS epidemic worsens by the day. Yet the last few years have seen signs of hope as new leaders have replaced the old and are trying to bring about much-needed reforms. Although democracy is not the answer to all of Africa's problems, the increased freedom that comes with it does help economic development.

America's Astounding Destiny

Rise to Greatness

In part 1 of this series we noted America's unlikely break from Britain to chart a new and independent course—in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Now we examine the foretelling of the United States' rise to greatness and its dramatic fulfillment.

by Melvin Rhodes

In the 40-year period from 1775 to 1815 the world changed dramatically. In 1775, when the first shots were fired in the American Revolution, no one could have foreseen the dramatic changes to come.

The fledgling American colonies not only emerged with their independence, but they did so in a vastly stronger position. British historian Paul Johnson writes that “the 1783 Peace of Paris [which ended the American Revolution] doubled the size of the United States, adding the western territories to the Atlantic states” (*A History of the American People*, 1997, p. 182, emphasis added).

Johnson explains this remarkable development: “At the peace talks, the French were surprised at the readiness of the British to make concessions to America. Vergennes [the French foreign minister] declared: ‘The British buy peace rather than make it. Their concessions exceed all that I could have thought possible’” (Johnson, p. 167). This “was [Benjamin] Franklin’s doing: he persuaded the British to be generous to America . . .” (ibid.).

The United States emerged from the war with impressive gains. Not only did the 13 colonies achieve independence, but Britain ceded her territories west of the original states and east of the Mississippi River, effectively doubling the size of the country. This vast area would later become Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi.

The new nation gained control of the Ohio River and access to the heart of the continent by means of the Mississippi River. The enormous territory the new country acquired was rich in fertile land. Selling these vast land holdings to its citizens helped enable the new government to pay off its war debts. Farmers even had a ready export market because the 1780s saw the beginning of the Industrial

Revolution in Great Britain, a transformation fed by a burgeoning population that was moving from the countryside into the big industrial cities.

Charting an uneasy course

Meanwhile, France had lost its preeminence to Britain in the 1815 battle of Waterloo. Britain, with significant colonial gains as the fruits of war, emerged as the undisputed master of the globe, the Royal Navy protecting and linking its scattered colonies and possessions that formed the prophesied “multitude of nations” (Genesis 48:19).

Having learned sobering lessons in America’s war of independence, Britain was well placed to be a progressive force in the world. In the War of 1812, between Britain and America, Canadians made it clear they did not want to be a part of the United States, paving the way for the future Commonwealth of Nations, or British Commonwealth.

By 1815 the United States of America was a recognized power in its own right, having won its independence during the Revolutionary War and later having fought a second conflict, the War of 1812, with the mother country.

Americans were now free to enlarge westward. This was to be America’s destiny in the 19th century, to expand from the 13 original colonies on the eastern seaboard until they reached the Pacific Ocean on the continent’s west coast. This was no easy task considering the new nation’s condition immediately after the Revolutionary War.

“The Americans suddenly found themselves in an unfriendly world. Britain closed its West Indies to American shipping, Spain closed its colonies entirely and also, by closing New Orleans, deterred development of the West, though frontiersmen spilled over

the mountains in great numbers. Even France imposed commercial restrictions, cutting New England fish and Virginia tobacco from profitable markets. In short, the tangible gains many expected from independence were simply not forthcoming” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, Macropaedia, Vol. 18, “United States History,” p. 956).

Internally the country also had its share of growing pains.

“Government under the Articles of Confederation and the new state constitutions was adequate to see the United States through to independence, but only after republicanism had been discredited by corruption and incompetence in 1781, after nationalists had seized unconstitutional powers under Superintendent of Finance Robert Morris, after Gen. George Washington’s army acquired military discipline and a most un-republican spirit, and after various British generals, notoriously the commander of the southern army, Lord Cornwallis, committed blunders that bordered on the preposterous” (ibid.).

By 1815 these problems were mostly resolved, though the issue of federal vs. state power was to remain a major problem until the Civil War.

America doubles again

In the meantime, Americans were free to expand westward. Here one of the most significant developments was the Louisiana Purchase, in 1803, which, during the presidency of Thomas Jefferson, again doubled the country’s size.

France, having acquired this massive territory from Spain in 1800, sold it to the United States for \$15 million. America thus acquired 828,000 square miles of what would eventually be the most fertile farmland in the world—the American Midwest—for less than 3 cents per acre!

The newly acquired land included territory that would become the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota as well as much of the territory of Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota.

The United States of America, barely a quarter century old, was now as large as all the countries of Europe put together. In the two centuries to follow it would help feed the populations of other nations as America became the breadbasket of the world.

Now vast lands west of the Mississippi were open to settlement, though the new century was to see considerable conflict between American settlers and the original inhabitants of the land, the American Indians.

of complicated and dangerous world affairs. Ironically, this strategy was possible largely because of the Pax Britannica, the British peace imposed on the world by the supremacy of the Royal Navy and the strategic global dominance of British territories.

Crisis tests the country

The American Civil War, also known as the War Between the States, was to be a major turning point on the road to world power.

It has often been said that before the Civil War America was frequently referred to in the plural, as in “the United States *are* . . .” After the Civil War the accepted terminology became “the United States *is* . . .,” reflecting the increased unity and strength of the Union

of the Great Plains. In the last four decades of the 19th century the land under cultivation increased by four million acres. The wheat yield in that same period increased from 173 million bushels to 522 million, with similar increases in corn and beef production.

Along with these increases came further territorial expansion. Alaska became the first territory that was not contiguous to the rest of the United States. Bought from Russia in 1867 thanks to the efforts of Secretary of State William Henry Seward for \$7.2 million—about 2 cents per acre for almost 600,000 square miles—it was an even better bargain than the Louisiana Purchase.

At first ridiculed as Seward’s Folly, the purchase was thought unwise by most Americans. This was to change with the discovery of massive gold deposits in the Klondike in 1897 and 1898. Alaska’s vast oil reserves were to prove crucial to the United States in the 20th century, as they still are. The addition of Alaska increased the United States’ area by almost 20 percent. Income from its many resources—petroleum, timber, minerals, fishing and the like—amounts to tens of billions of dollars each year.

Winston Churchill, in his monumental work *A History of the English Speaking Peoples*, marveled about America: “The population west of the Mississippi rose in thirty years from about five millions in 1860 to almost eighteen millions, while the number of states in the Union increased from thirty-three to forty-four. By 1890 only four more states remained to be carved out of the West. These were Utah, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona, all admitted to the Union by 1912, when the political shape of the country became complete” (1958, Vol. 4, p. 318).

“The colonisation begun at Jamestown, Virginia, almost three centuries before,” concluded Churchill, “was now complete” (*ibid.*, p. 322).

A new international role

With the West settled and the country secure, with peaceful neighbors and territory that stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific, America was free to turn its attention outward. At a point when the idea of empire had taken hold of the major European nations, America was set to acquire an empire of its own. The catalyst was the Spanish-American War, in 1898, a 16-week armed conflict that catapulted the United States into world-power status.

This short war was notable for a remarkable succession of U.S. military victories. In the subsequent Treaty of Paris, Cuba gained



The United States doubled its size with the 1803 Louisiana Purchase and within a few decades expanded across the continent. In less than a century the young nation added some of the world’s richest farmland and most valuable natural resources.

In 1819 the United States acquired from Spain the territory that would become Florida and the Alabama and Mississippi panhandles. A quarter of a century later the annexation of Texas and war with Mexico resulted in the vast lands of the Southwest—including the future states of Texas, California, Nevada and Utah and major portions of Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona—becoming a part of the United States.

During this same era America negotiated with Britain for the territory that would later become the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming. In less than a decade the United States had grown geographically by half again as much. Each time America expanded, people moved west. As more people spread out to settle new territories, immigrants from Europe filled the gap.

During this rapid expansion America remained in many ways an isolated nation, a country that had turned its back on Europe and the rest of the world and tried to stay out

forces after the war and the realization that America had become one nation.

The North and South had fought the Civil War largely over the underlying issue of slavery. The immediate issue that brought the crisis to a head was whether states that wanted to retain slavery and extend it into new territories could do so, and, if thwarted, could secede from the Union. A bitter four-year civil war raged over this issue. The Union forces triumphed, and the federal republic was preserved. If it had ended differently, it is doubtful the United States would have gone on to be a world power.

Expansion and consolidation

“The world after 1865 became a banker’s world,” said historian Henry Adams of the years after the Civil War. Incredible expansion took place as the migratory move west continued and as the nation industrialized and urbanized.

Agriculture expanded with the settlement

independence while the United States acquired Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines, strategically located possessions that gave America a strong regional presence. This war also did much to unite North and South and bury some of the old antagonisms of the Civil War.

The next two years were to see the acquisition in the Pacific of Hawaii, part of Samoa and Wake Island. A few years later America built the Panama Canal, a crucial strategic waterway that allowed speedy passage of merchant and military vessels from one ocean to the other.

America approached the 20th century as an industrial and military power with colonies of its own. It had not yet achieved its destiny but was well on the way.

Two nations with much in common

Although America had spent a century busily expanding westward, the British had spread all over the world, colonizing territories on every inhabited continent.

The population and area of the British Empire was far greater than that of the United States. Canada alone was bigger than the United States, and Australia was an island continent as large as the 48 contiguous states. British possessions in Africa covered a landmass larger than the United States, and India was the home of the second-greatest populace in the world.

Many island possessions and other large territories added even more to Britain's strength. The empire had exported its system of government to almost all of its colonial possessions, each of which now had its own parliamentary form of government, with the rule of law and basic freedoms considered the right of every imperial subject.

In 1897, on Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (the 60th anniversary of her accession to the throne), the British celebrated the zenith of their power. Queen Victoria herself had done a great deal to promote British interests. Her children and grandchildren married into almost all the royal households of Europe, giving Britain considerable influence not only on the Continent but around the world.

The Pax Britannica—British peace—was this period of British dominance. During Victoria's 64-year reign not one day passed in which British soldiers were not in conflict somewhere maintaining this peace. The British people, as were their American cousins, were busy conquering and developing the areas of the world in which they settled, domesticating the wilderness and bringing unparalleled prosperity

to the peoples over which they ruled.

Remarkable prophecies of the last days

How can we explain the remarkable—some would rightly call it miraculous—rise of the United States and the British Empire?

As we noted in the first installment of this series (in the July-August issue), the Bible reveals several remarkable prophecies concerning "the last days" (Genesis 49:1) regarding the descendants of the biblical tribe of Joseph (one of the 12 sons of Israel). Many people assume that all prophecies regarding "Israel" or its descendants apply only to the Jewish people or the modern state of Israel. However, both history and the Bible show this view is not correct.

Both the Jews and the modern Middle Eastern nation of Israel are largely descendants of only *two* of the 12 tribes of Israel—

the customs of the peoples around them, lost their identity and seemingly disappeared, becoming known to history simply as "the lost 10 tribes."

A great single nation and a multitude of nations

Now let's go back to those prophecies of Israel's descendants. Joseph's sons were prophesied to become "a multitude of nations" and a great single nation (Genesis 48:19). These prophecies were never fulfilled in the ancient kingdoms of Israel or Judah. Nor have they been fulfilled in other nations—*unless they refer to the British Empire and Commonwealth and the United States.*

Looking more closely at this prophecy, we see that the "multitude of nations" would be greater than the great single nation. The British Empire and British Commonwealth



A great nation and a multitude of nations: *This ancient prophecy perfectly fits the United States and British Commonwealth. At the peak of their possessions, the British and American peoples controlled much of the world's most productive farmlands and mineral-producing areas as well as vital passages and ports controlling naval routes.*

Judah and Benjamin (along with some from Levi). These two tribes separated from the other 10 that comprised the kingdom of Israel to form the separate kingdom of Judah in 928 B.C. At that point they became and remained separate nations. In fact, the first time the term *Jews* appears in the Bible (2 Kings 16:6, King James Version), the Jews are *at war* with the kingdom of Israel. Clearly the Jews and Israel are not one and the same.

Both kingdoms were later defeated and taken into captivity—Israel by the Assyrian empire in 722-718 B.C. and Judah by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. In spite of their exile from their homeland, the Jews—the descendants of the kingdom of Judah—retained their identity. The northern 10 tribes, having abandoned God and adopted many of

were, at their peak, the greatest empire the world has ever seen. History shows us just how powerful it was. *One quarter* of the world's land and peoples were subjects of the British crown. The empire's wealth and power were enormous. Britain controlled four times the population and almost six times the territory of the mighty Roman Empire at the height of its power.

For the last two centuries the British Empire and the United States have brought prosperity to and kept the peace around the world. This dual role has been a direct fulfillment of the ancient biblical prophecies regarding the tribe of Joseph, favorite son of Israel, in the last days.

Notice Genesis 49:22-24: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his

branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob . . .”

Like a fruitful, well-watered vine, first Britain and then the United States spread far beyond their early boundaries to positions of world power and domination. Together they quashed countless small conflicts and saved civilization in two great global conflicts, then the United States held the line against communism in a decades-long cold war. Today the United States is the world’s undisputed military superpower.

A look at some statistics illustrates just how blessed the British and American people have been. In 1950 the two powers accounted for 60 percent of the world’s oil production, 75 percent of the world’s steel, nearly 95 percent of the world’s nickel, 80 percent of the

and freedom would have been destroyed” (*The British Empire, 1789-1939*, 1940, p. 358). Clearly, at this time, Americans still saw the empire and commonwealth as their first line of defense.

America had emerged as a world power after the Spanish-American War, but then pulled back into isolation. After a brief role at the close of World War I, Congress voted to stay out of the League of Nations, an indication that it did not want to involve itself in world affairs. Then in December 1941, with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, America was thrust into the war. President Franklin Roosevelt realized that Hitler’s Germany was the greatest threat to world peace. With Churchill and Stalin, he made the destruction of Nazi Germany a priority before concentrating on Japan.

Many historians view this as America’s greatest moment. The generation that won

President Theodore Roosevelt, the first president to realize America’s new role, put it well in his 1904 annual address to Congress: “Chronic wrongdoing . . . may . . . ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation . . . an international police power” (*A History of the American People*, Paul Johnson, 1997, p. 621). Roosevelt was to strengthen the U.S. Navy, building it up to be second only to Britain’s Royal Navy.

The United States emerged as the greatest single nation in history just in time to work with its allies to achieve victory in World War II. This was part of America’s destiny, the prophesied blessing to Israel, Joseph and Joseph’s two sons. As God told Abraham, Israel’s grandfather, in Genesis 12:2: “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.”

Abraham’s descendants were indeed to become a great nation and be a blessing to the world. America’s destined role, the fulfillment of the biblical prophecies, was to be the greatest single nation in history. It would be separate and distinct from the “company of nations” (Genesis 35:11) from which it broke, but with similar attributes and qualities that were to be a positive force in the world.

By 1945 America had reached the greatest fulfillment of its power. The United States had replaced the British Commonwealth as the strongest force on earth. With Germany and Japan defeated, it seemed as if the United States and the rest of the world would enjoy a Pax Americana as it had earlier basked in the Pax Britannica.

But it was not to be. After World War II much would begin to go wrong. Past mistakes would come back to haunt America, as we shall see in our next installment in *The Good News* about America’s destiny. **GN**

Like all empires, the British Empire came to an end. As it declined, America’s power rose, until the United States could shoulder responsibilities as the defender of the free world.

world’s aluminum and 75 percent of its zinc.

Interestingly, these blessings were greatly reduced with the loss of the British Empire in the 1950s and ’60s, and British and U.S. shares of mineral production are much smaller today.

Like all empires, the British Empire came to an end. As it declined, America’s power rose, until the United States could shoulder responsibilities as the defender of the free world. This happened gradually.

Role reversal

The 20th century is sometimes called America’s century. It certainly was the century of America’s coming of age. But it wasn’t until World War II that the United States dominated the world. Note a comment from American historian James Truslow Adams, written in 1940 when the nations of the British Commonwealth were already in conflict while the United States remained neutral:

“Different peoples may have different ideals of government but for those who have been accustomed to freedom of person and of spirit, the possible overthrow of the British Empire would be a catastrophe scarcely thinkable. Not only would it leave a vacuum over a quarter of the globe into which all the wild winds of anarchy, despotism and spiritual oppression could rush, but the strongest bulwark outside ourselves for our own safety

World War II has been described as the greatest generation in modern history. Although the United States did not enter the war until Pearl Harbor, more than two years after it started, without America’s full participation and all-out effort the Axis powers—Japan, Germany and Italy—would have won the war with disastrous consequences.

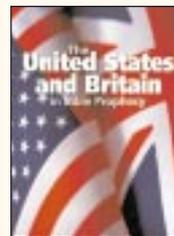
America assumes Britain’s mantle

After the war the United States did not withdraw from world affairs. Instead it took up the burden that previously had been carried by the British Empire, the role of world policeman it still plays. As the British dismantled and withdrew from their empire and then helped to convert much of it into a new Commonwealth of Nations, often the “wild winds of anarchy, despotism and spiritual oppression” did rush in. It often fell to the United States to help fill the gap.

It is instructive to note that the prophecy in Genesis 49 does not differentiate between the British Commonwealth and the United States. It simply refers to them as “Joseph.” Although there are differences between the two, their role in world events has been similar—investing in and developing other nations while trying to keep the peace. They haven’t succeeded perfectly by any means, but the alternative would have been global domination by one or more of the despotic powers of recent history.

Recommended Reading

Where does the United States of America appear in Bible prophecy? Does Bible prophecy neglect to mention major nations such as the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom? Request your free copy of *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* from any of our offices listed on page 2, or visit our Web site at www.gnmagazine.org.





World News and Trends

An Overview of Conditions Around the World

Riots erupt across the globe

This may be the year of the riot. Anarchists across the world have united in street conflagrations. Annual May Day celebrations deteriorated into fistfights. Macedonian Slavs rioted over NATO peace deals. On the island of Jamaica 23 died in riots. Violent protesters marred the EU summit in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Anticapitalist radicals tried to ruin the G8 meetings in Genoa. Three former mill towns in Lancashire, England, sustained three nights of race-inspired rioting. Riots occurred on the divided Mediterranean island of Cyprus. In Belfast 23 police officers were hurt in riots.

Much has been written about the human right to protest peacefully, but what begins as a peaceful demonstration often winds up as an old-fashioned riot, sometimes with severe injuries to rioters and police. Professional troublemakers travel the globe to protest against capitalism and other imagined evils.

A British journalist remarked on the enjoyment rioters seem to gain from bloody confrontations. Obviously, human nature has a violent downside. It had become so pronounced in the pre-Flood world of Noah that "the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11, 13). Much later Jesus Christ said that, just as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:37). Are our crimes and violence signs that we may be in the end time? (Sources: *The Times*, *The Observer* [London].)

Return to isolationism in the United States?

"As the U.S.-European rift widens, from missile defense and nuclear testing to land mines and global warming, some

Playing into the hands of anti-American European leaders are Americans who are increasingly calling for a reduction in the numbers of American troops based in Europe. Forgotten are the lessons of two world wars and countless other European conflicts.

European leaders . . . suggest President Bush is drawing America into a new era of isolationism," says a recent Associated Press report.

Differences between the Bush administration and European allies have mounted and are a cause of concern on both sides of the Atlantic. They include the Kyoto climate-change treaty, the Bush administration's planned missile-defense shield, the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (which the U.S. administration wants to scrap because the U.S.S.R. no longer exists), the 1972 treaty on germ warfare and proposed treaties on land mines and nuclear-weapons tests, all of which have

left the United States looking hawkish while Europeans see themselves as doves interested only in peace.

Differences also exist over an international criminal court, the death penalty and policies toward Iran and Iraq. Most frequently, disputes arise over trade, "ranging from duties on bananas to tax rates."

Why the seemingly sudden increase in tensions between Europe and America?

One factor is the changing balance of power between the two. Since the fall of the Soviet Union a decade ago, Europeans have not been so dependent on America's protection. Meanwhile, European nations are themselves coming together as an increasingly centralized European Union, set to be a rival superpower to America. What many Americans do not realize is that much of the drive for European unity is motivated by anti-Americanism, a desire on the part of many Europeans to be free of America's dominance and to restore the glory of Europe's golden age.

The Bible shows that there is to be yet another and final attempt to restore the Roman Empire. Built around "ten kings [or leaders] who have received no kingdom as yet," these leaders, probably from areas within the confines of the old Roman Empire, "are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast" (Revelation 17:12-13).

It is doubtful that such a development could take place with America's continued military presence in Europe. Playing into the hands of anti-American European leaders are Americans who are increasingly calling for a reduction in the numbers of American troops based in Europe now that European countries are wealthy enough to defend themselves. Forgotten are the lessons of two world wars and countless other European conflicts and that America's military presence on the Continent, together with the NATO alliance of North American and European countries, has given Europe the longest period of peace in 3,000 years of recorded history.

To better understand the long-term implications of such trends, request your free copies of the booklets *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* and *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*. (Source: Associated Press.)

Stresses in Australian life

According to the International Crimes Victim Survey 2000, published in *The Economist*, Australia is tops among the rich nations in violent crime and burglary and second only to Britain in car theft.

But crime is not the only problem afflicting Australians. A report from Keith Suter, a senior fellow at Global Business Network Australia, estimated that "one of 10 Australian small businesses will go bankrupt this year." He also said that "the rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming more numerous."

Mr. Suter mentioned "a lack of faith in the political system" and "a gap between mainstream politicians and the reality



experienced by ordinary people." Although statistically Australians have experienced a booming economy for several years, the average citizen complains of economic troubles. (Sources: *The Economist* [London], *International Herald Tribune*.)

The importance of sea gates

Most of the strategically located sea gates that gave the British Empire and the United States naval supremacy and global dominance have long since been handed over to other nations. But those that remain are also threatened.

The recent alleged rape of a Japanese girl by an American serviceman based on Okinawa has led to increased demands for the withdrawal of American troops from Japanese soil. Islanders were already demanding the withdrawal or the scaling back of the numbers of troops. Previous sexual assaults

During the 1990s the United States and Britain lost their bases and strategic territory in the Philippines, Panama and Hong Kong. Indications are they will suffer further strategic losses in the new decade.

and other antisocial behavior have led to bad feelings on the part of native Japanese who live on the island.

Meanwhile President George W. Bush announced, over the opposition of military commanders, that the U.S. Navy would cease to use the Puerto Rican island of Vieques as a practice-bombing range because of outspoken and increasing local opposition.

British bases in Cyprus and Gibraltar are also threatened. These bases, historically important in keeping both ends of the Mediterranean open to shipping during times of war, are less popular now as memories of their historic importance diminish with time. Recently 40 police were injured when crowds attacked a British base at Akrotiri, Cyprus. Angry Cypriots were rioting against new surveillance technology the British were introducing, fearing that it could cause cancer.

It has been more than a year since a crippled British nuclear submarine, HMS *Tireless*, limped into the colonial port of Gibraltar after suffering a small crack in the coolant pipe leading from its reactor. The submarine had been on routine maneuvers off the coast of Sicily when it suffered damage, necessitating the vessel to put in to the nearest British naval base, thereby emphasizing the continuing need for bases around the world.

After months of arguing between the United Kingdom, Spain (which claims Gibraltar), Gibraltar itself and the European Commission, the British decided to repair the ship in Gibraltar's naval dockyards, claiming it was too risky to send the vessel home by sea. The presence of the *Tireless* has angered Spain and given Gibraltarians cause for concern about the possible consequences to their health from the damaged submarine.

In 1967 citizens of the colony voted 12,138 to 44 to remain British and have continued to resist Spanish claims to "the Rock," as Gibraltar is often called, since. Although Spain claims the Rock, Britain has ruled it longer than Spain itself ruled it. British and Dutch troops captured Gibraltar during the War of the Spanish Succession in 1704, after only two centuries of Spanish control. The 1713 Treaty of Utrecht formally ceded it to Britain.

The colony's location at the mouth of the Mediterranean has made it a strategically important base for three centuries. During World War II Gibraltar was an important British air and naval base and was used by the Allies during the invasion of North Africa and in antisubmarine campaigns. It has more recently been used as a stopover for British troops in service in Sierra Leone.

The strategic bases that the British and Americans have possessed were part of the blessings promised to Abraham's seed in Genesis 22:17: "... Your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies." The loss of such strategic possessions is part of God's prophesied punishment for disobedience, that He would "break the pride of your power" (Leviticus 26:19).

During the 1990s the two nations lost their bases and strategic territory in the Philippines, Panama and Hong Kong. Indications are they will suffer further strategic losses in the new decade. (To better understand how these trends fit in with biblical prophecy, request your free copy of *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* from any of our offices listed on page 2.)

A shaky world economy

Economic downturns, including the current one, have been a part of the fabric of national and world politics since time immemorial. The biblical patriarch Joseph once forecast seven good years followed by seven bad years for the land of Egypt. He was unerringly accurate, but he had the distinct advantage of being led and inspired directly by the Creator God.

Today the economic situation is much more complex than it was in Joseph's time. Even with the benefits of modern computer technology, we are left with uncertain and unreliable economic predictions. Professional forecasters generally reject the Bible as a source of wisdom and understanding.

How bad will the economy get? The Bible confirms that a cause exists for every effect and that nations cannot indefinitely get away with trampling on God's laws. The big crash *will* happen, but we don't know when. The present economic realities are a timely reminder to Christians of the words of

How bad will the economy get? The Bible confirms that a cause exists for every effect and that nations cannot indefinitely get away with trampling on God's laws. The big crash will happen, but we don't know when.

Jesus Christ: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19-20.) He adds, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (verse 21).

Our relationship with God is far more important than whatever riches we can accumulate in this life. Whatever physical things we gain can always be lost, but the spiritual growth we achieve from living God's way can last forever. In the meantime, we can do our best to weather the storm by getting our own houses in order. You might want to write for our free booklet *Managing Your Finances*. (Sources: *International Herald Tribune*, *Newsweek*.)

—John Ross Schroeder and Melvin Rhodes

\$25 a Day

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debts would only lead to greater borrowing, with little or nothing achieved, the cycle simply repeating itself.

The G8 countries (the wealthiest seven nations in the world plus Russia) think they have a solution to this in the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The goal is to cancel so-called third-world debt but to ensure no further abuses. Money donated or lent will be for specific projects. Lenders will require proof that the money will go for the intended purpose. However, bureaucrats will have to do the verifying, which would surely lead to more corruption.

What about giving money through private charities? This is a better idea. Private operations do better at getting aid to people in need. Whereas an employee of a prominent Western governmental-aid organization admitted that 80 percent of the aid his country sent simply disappeared, one small church group claimed it loses only 5 percent. But charities are often hampered by governments that don't seem interested in helping their own people.

Jesus said the poor would always be with us (John 12:8). There will always be those who have less than we do. Also, poverty is relative. A book published this year noted that the minimum hourly wage needed just to pay for the basics in the United States is \$8.89, yet nearly 30 percent of Americans earn less than that (Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in Boom-Town America*).

When I pointed this out to a group of Ghanaians I work with, they agreed they could live quite comfortably on \$8.89 per hour. With a legal minimum wage of only 5,500 cedis per day (that's less than 80 cents *per day*) if a Ghanaian were to make \$8.89 per hour he would be an aristocrat.

Reflecting on Christ's words also makes us realize that poverty, traced to its roots, is caused by human nature, which is why we will not rid the world of poverty until human nature is changed. There would always be poverty, Christ said 2,000 years ago, because He knew that while man ruled himself without obedience to the laws of God there would be never-ending human suffering.

Nation's potential not realized

Ghana hasn't always been poor. Before independence, in 1957, Ghanaians enjoyed a per-capita income higher than that of some

European countries. Great Britain gave the Gold Coast (Ghana's former name) independence ahead of other African nations because it was richer and better educated than many of the others and because there seemed no reason this happy state of affairs could not continue. However, after Ghana gained independence, corruption and economic mismanagement proliferated. For 25 years the country continued a downward spiral from which it seemed impossible to free itself.

The last few years have seen some improvements, but much remains to be done.

The situation before independence illustrates that Ghana has the potential to take care of itself. No reason exists for people having to live in the appalling poverty that plagues so many. A few decades of good government that truly served the people could put the country back on its feet and enable ordinary citizens to live on their incomes.

Many people have confidence in the government of Ghana's new president, John Kufour. They have high hopes that his administration will move the country forward. His first priority is to stabilize the nation's currency. Ten years ago \$1 bought 300 cedis; now it buys 7,000. This means that items that cost 300 cedis in 1991 now cost 7,000—an incredible rate of inflation for Ghanaians who do not have access to American dollars.

Priorities also include improving the infrastructure, encouraging foreign investment and stamping out corruption. Abolishing visa requirements would encourage tourists to visit this country, which is rich in African traditional culture and one of the friendliest places on earth.

For the sake of the people of Ghana, we hope these goals will be realized.

Christians who are aware of history know that mankind has never established a perfect government and that men have always treated their fellow human beings badly. Only the establishment of a completely different government—the Kingdom of God—will put an end to the misery that exists throughout the world. To this end Christ told His followers to pray for the arrival of that kingdom and that God's "will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

The good news for Christians is that Jesus will return to establish God's Kingdom on earth. One of His priorities will be to end the suffering and exploitation of the poor. The prophetic book of Isaiah tells us that "with justice he will judge the poor and defend the humble in the land with equity" (Isaiah 11:4, Revised English Bible). **GN**

Suffering

Continued from page 7

what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying . . .

"They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them" (Isaiah 65:17-23).

The end of suffering

Carol, whom we met earlier, lives one day at a time in eager anticipation of this exciting future. She describes her disease as "a temporary thing, like this is a temporary world."

"God has a plan," she says, "and whatever it is I wouldn't want to be in any other situation."

Paul compares the suffering of this world to the pain of childbirth (Romans 8:22-23), and even God's people must endure some suffering (2 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Peter 4:19). This servant of God who experienced so much abuse and pain in his life (2 Corinthians 11:23-28) concludes, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Just as the joy of childbirth follows the pain of delivery, "the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now" (verses 21-22).

Our temporary physical existence is but a shadow of the real life to come, like "a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14) and grass that withers or a flower that flourishes for a while, then fades (Isaiah 40:6-8; 1 Peter 1:24).

Revelation 21-22 describes a transformed world in which every trace of sin and suffering, disability and death will be gone forever. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

May God speed that day! **GN**

The Coming Age of Grace

What will it take to rid the world of violence, prejudice and hatred? What will the inhabitants of the world have to agree on to create a climate of peace and cooperation?

by Howard Davis

Before dawn, I viewed the Temple Mount spread out below me, with the Dome of the Rock silently shrouded in the shadow of the hill behind me. Countless times I had seen pictures of this famous scene. Now for the first time (in August 2000) I stood overlooking Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives.

Accompanied by a rabbi friend, I set up my television camera to capture the drama of the first morning light on this amazing place, which is increasingly geopolitical ground zero of the planet.

City of peace, city of war

Two thousand years ago Jesus Christ looked down from the Mount of Olives and prophesied what would happen to the city and its fabulous temple within a generation (Matthew 24; Mark 13, Luke 21). Just as He foretold, it was wiped out less than 40 years later. Now 70,000 Jewish headstones tile the Mount of Olives' west hillside facing the Temple Mount, those buried there awaiting the resurrection to the time of God's judgment.

Hundreds of years before Christ, the

Although Jerusalem is surrounded by violence, it is there that the greatest prophets of peace proclaimed their messages. It is also where the greatest voice for peace was violently stilled.

Hebrew prophets also projected forward to our age, when Jews, after an absence of centuries, would again control Jerusalem in a tumultuous time. In biblical language perfectly describing our age—an unparalleled time of potential for terror—the prophets of old assure us the Messiah, Jesus, will come again. He will split the mountain on which I was standing. The



Jerusalem, considered holy by three faiths, has long been the focus of bitterness and bloodshed. The Bible, however, predicts a far different future.

returning Christ will bring the world a new spirit and transform humanity.

In only a few weeks it would be impossible for my rabbi friend and me to stand on that spot in the eastern part of the city. We could be shot, stoned or threatened by the violence growing out of the Palestinian intifada, a word that comes from the Arabic term for the uprising among Palestinians of the Gaza Strip and West Bank that began in 1987. The intifada began anew last September on the temple platform when enraged young Palestinians hurled rocks down on Jewish men praying below.

Jerusalem, an ancient and modern place

of interminable bloodshed, is one of the world's oldest inhabited cities. While empires wax and wane, it has seen more titanic upheavals than any other city still standing. It survives even while sources of terror and violence run deep under the veneer of civilization.

Over the centuries the worst of human nature has manifested itself in Jerusalem.

The Bible says God is love and Jerusalem is His city, the very place where Christ gave His life to atone for the sins of the whole world. Yet today its environs are engulfed by hate.

It is a paradox that, although Jerusalem is surrounded by violence, it is there that the greatest prophets of peace proclaimed their messages. It is also where the greatest voice for peace was violently stilled.

These men spoke of a coming time when God would give peace, love and harmony to Jerusalem and the rest of the world. But how and when and from where will this peace come?

The answer lies in the reason that Jerusalem and the modern nation of Israel are such geopolitical lightning rods. It is there that the deepest differences in cultures clash, doctrines about God collide, the aspirations of feuding peoples conflict, claims on major chunks of real estate compete, and the unforgiven grudges of centuries fester.

Little grace can be found in Jerusalem today. No divine spiritual favor works in the hearts of Arabs and Jews powerfully enough to bring these feuding cousins together and overcome millennia of divisive religious and historical differences. These ancient peoples who descend from a common ancestor, the biblical patriarch Abraham, are seemingly immobilized by the inertia of hate.

Jerusalem's anguish is a crisis of the heart, submerged under the law of defective human nature—conflicted, confused and confounded in its attempts at lasting peace.

Jerusalem is, in many ways, a microcosm of the world.

Destructive thoughts and deeds

People have always been stuck in

cultures that trap them, destructively molding their minds and opinions and distorting their sense of what is possible and appropriate.

Often evil captivates them; they begin thinking that something evil is good. Nations blindly but willingly follow deceiving and deceived rulers.

The Bible shows that our negative spiritual environment began with Adam and Eve under the influence of mankind's common enemy, Satan, a former "covering cherub" (Ezekiel 28:16) whose name (which means "adversary") implies his adversity to God and man. Jesus appropriately called him the father of lies (John 8:44, New International Version).

Satan's influence disrupted the first family and conditioned Cain, the firstborn son

son's suicide as a righteous act. He praised him as a martyr. He said he wished he had many more sons who would do the same.

These horrific and destructive actions flow from beliefs ingrained from early childhood. Tragically, conflicts are often kept alive and manipulated by political and community leaders who claim to be messiahs sent to conquer the enemies of the people. Their relentless agenda to sustain conflict is maintained to buttress their status as leaders.

They assert that murder and suicide are the way of God. They most assuredly are not.

Religion without excuse

Muslims, Jews and Christians cannot look to God to justify violence to further their own ends. For instance, the Koran is

Many Muslims are not in favor of suicide bombings, and some Muslim clerics have spoken out against them as an offense to the teachings of Islam. But hatred runs deep on both sides. An intelligent Jewish man studying at a Jerusalem religious school shocked me as we walked toward the ancient Western Wall, where hundreds of Jews prayed under the Friday-night floodlights. "A good Arab is a dead Arab," he told me.

He was as far from the truth of God as the Palestinian suicide bomber. Peace will not come while the hearts of men are blinded by prejudice and humanly perverted assertions about the will of God.

What will bring an end to the violence?

It may be too hard for cynical residents of the world to believe, but one day, hopefully soon, God will pour a divine blessing on humanity as a whole, starting with the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Let's consider in more detail what is necessary to bring about lasting peace, even though humanly impossible.

Religion must change

False teaching about God and His will inspires many wars, separates families and confuses billions of people. The competing doctrines, hierarchies of religious personalities and practices of Christianity, Judaism and Islam are a continuing cause of conflict. Add Buddhism, Hinduism, a vast array of philosophies, psychologies and even atheism and we have a world rife with spiritual divisions.

The hearts of the six billion people alive

What inner conflicts, beliefs, motivations and spirit grow inside people willing to commit suicide to bring nations to war?

of Adam and Eve, to murder his brother Abel. A world of violence and suffering has resulted and continues in our time.

Throughout history destructive patterns of thought, beliefs and actions have been mankind's greatest blocks to growth and the cause of conflicts even among nations. The sad history recorded in the Bible is no different from the events of the last 2,000 years.

Why are people so destructive in their thinking and actions?

What was in the head and heart of the 21-year-old Palestinian Arab trained in engineering who blew himself up, along with 21 Jewish teenagers and young adults, in June as the Sabbath evening darkened on Tel Aviv's Mediterranean beach promenade?

What inner conflicts, beliefs, motivations and spirit grow inside people willing to commit suicide in an effort to bring nations to war? What opposing spiritual power must be added to reverse such an environment of hatred, conflict and war?

For years the extreme elements of the Palestinian Authority have approved school textbooks that teach Palestinian children and teenagers that it is a great honor and the will of God for them to martyr themselves by committing the "righteous" act of killing Jews for the liberation of Jerusalem. As a result, many are willing to go to their deaths with the promise given them by political and spiritual leaders that they will gain a heavenly reward.

On hearing of his son's martyrdom, the Palestinian father of the youthful perpetrator of the Tel Aviv mass killing extolled his

acknowledged as the most sacred text for more than one billion Muslims. It recognizes the law God gave Moses as universal, the Old and New Testaments as sacred texts and Jesus as a prophet.

The Bible condemns murder. The Ten Commandments state, "You shall not murder." The teachings of Jesus of Nazareth go much further. He said: "... Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the sons of your Father in heaven..." (Matthew 5:44-45).

Four Requirements for Peace

Lasting peace and success for the world's inhabitants can come only when four changes are made in the way we all operate.

- 1 A unity must come through a set of teachings direct from God about the purpose for man and the way of life that will lead to success in achieving that godly purpose.
- 2 All peoples must accept a universal authority from God, submitting themselves to His higher power.
- 3 Human beings must willingly surrender their selfish natures to receive a divine nature of love for other people. Such love will be based on principles of godly character.
- 4 God must remove the supernatural source of evil before the world can move ahead to solve its spiritual division.

These necessary changes to society are impossible for humans to achieve on their own. People refuse to agree about God, submit to a universal godly authority or fundamentally turn from their selfish words and deeds. The world is powerless to permanently remove the spiritual adversary of the human race. None of these necessary changes to the world will come about by human initiative.

The Bible explains how raw human nature brings so many problems to society and shows how God will impart to people the power to make the necessary changes. It takes divine power for humans to overcome the selfish, destructive tendencies of their nature and the force of negative patterns of behavior ingrained in their character. God has the power to give us peace, but that power originates outside the physical realm of society.

today cannot agree on the most profound level about the most important issues of life. Religions claim to yearn for unity, brotherhood and a collective higher purpose. But organized religion of every stripe and hue gives the world confusing humanly devised traditions and doctrines passed off as divine truth. These divisions foster bigotry, hatred and wars.

For humanity to overcome prejudice and become as one, religious divisions must be abolished through acceptance of a common God-inspired set of doctrines and teachings about God, good and evil and the purpose of human life. Everyone must accept the same godly truth; it must become the reality for everyone.

All people must be taught the same values and religion through their schools and other institutions and popular culture right down to individual families.

But the world is hopelessly divided on religious grounds. The problem is that a universal religion cannot be universally adhered to without a universal spiritual *willingness* to agree. For all to agree requires that all have a willingness to change—to give up false and harmful teachings and practices they've previously accepted as true.

Beliefs are among the most difficult patterns of the mind to change. People will have to admit they were wrong and be corrected for their errors. There is the rub.

To admit that your religion is fatally flawed and your actions fundamentally evil and that you are your own worst enemy is an admission that human nature universally resists. Because human vanity can be so virulent, it's common for humans to refuse to acknowledge their sins, false beliefs and attitudes even to the point of death and suicide.

Consider the extreme case of Hitler's Third Reich. Many Germans were willingly deceived by the Nazis, but not all. Nonetheless, Hitler removed Germans who opposed him, imprisoning and murdering them right under the noses of the German people. The systematic persecution and elimination of the Jewish people proceeded within view of parts of the general population. As Hitler systematically destroyed Germany, he refused to acknowledge his lies and eventually committed suicide rather than admit to the unfathomable evil he had perpetrated.

Although much less dramatic, men and women of every culture stick to their prejudices every day in countless ways. We refuse to admit where our wrongs have led us or to make the changes we need to make.

We make excuses, pointing to others who are even worse than we are. We blindly justify actions and behaviors that hurt others and ourselves.

It will take an act of God to transform human hearts to be willing to extend universal forgiveness to one another. It will take an act of God for humanity to practice the way of loving concern toward all without prejudice. It will take an act of the Creator for all to accept the one true God and the purpose and truths of His Word. These things are humanly impossible, but with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

Recognizing a common authority

After so many failures, we shouldn't be surprised that people have grown cynical about the ability of human leaders to appreciably change the realities of humanly devised governments. And with good reason! Yet the peoples of the Middle East and the world must ultimately respect and accept a common authority they trust and believe for global peace and prosperity to flower. That is why the biblical promise of the Kingdom of God is so significant.

People want to be governed with governments and leaders that will benefit them and allow them opportunity to prosper. Yet peoples of differing religions, races and cultures do not wish to be under anyone who has hurt them in the past. Residents of one nation don't want others to control their nation. A universal government to which all peoples voluntarily submit for the good of all is humanly impossible.

It will take an act of God to grant perfect government for *all* people. Such a government must be devoid of selfish leaders driven by ignorance, sectarian interests and hidden agendas. The prophets, Jesus and His apostles all agree that such a government *will* come, but it will *not* lie in the hands of man.

Grace pouring out

Mankind's greatest challenge is for the heart, the inner being, the deepest motivation, to change from its innate selfishness, self-absorption and hostility against the law of God. The challenge is to accept and live by that law, which is the expression of God's righteousness and love.

Arab and Jewish Israelis, Palestinians, Americans, Germans, Russians, Chinese and all other peoples have attitudes and actions of underlying selfishness. Although all say they care about the welfare of others,

the reality is that all nations function under a fundamentally selfish philosophy. Arrogance suffuses human religion. Christians, Jews and Muslims all believe they are inherently closer to God and have divine rights as the superior group in God's eyes.

God will not leave mankind alone in its helplessness to change its most fundamental motivations. In His own time, according to His own schedule, He will transform mankind—abolishing the selfishness and traditions that divide Jew and Arab and all humanity. God will begin this change in Jerusalem, the capital city of global contention.

"Behold," says God through the prophet Zechariah, "I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples . . . The LORD will save the tents of Judah first . . . And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication . . ." (Zechariah 12:2-10).

I quoted this passage to my rabbi friend on the Mount of Olives on that silent dawn before the current intifada began. Looking down on the Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock, I said: "The spirit of grace will begin to be poured out here. Humanity has never experienced this. The Jewish people have never been converted in this way. Christianity has never been converted in this way, otherwise Catholics and Protestants wouldn't have been killing one another and Jews for centuries."

I continued: "When it happens, this grace will establish the law of God in the hearts of humanity for the first time. The population of the world will be systematically converted to God, nation by nation, and it will begin right here for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This grace will transform the world."

"You are right," my rabbi friend said as we watched the rays of the morning sun begin to strike the Temple Mount.

The prophecy of Zechariah continues: ". . . Then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn" (verse 10).

"Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations . . . And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives . . ." (Zechariah 14:3-4).

As sure as the rising sun, the age of grace—in the Kingdom of God—is coming. **GN**

The Feast of Prosperity

by Jerold Aust

King Solomon was one of the richest and, during his younger years, one of the wisest men in history. He prospered because He obeyed God and promoted peace through his wisdom. In fact, his kingdom had so much gold that “silver was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon” (1 Kings 10:21).

The Queen of Sheba paid a visit to Solomon to verify what she had heard about him, his wisdom and his wealth. These were her parting words: “It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw it with my own eyes; and indeed the half was

But it need not always be this way. At a time yet ahead of us, all human beings will have the opportunity to enjoy a prosperity unequalled in history.

Let’s take a closer look at why and how this transformation will take place.

God outlined the major steps in His plan for mankind through a series of festivals, recorded in Leviticus 23, that He revealed to the ancient Israelites. (To understand the significance and symbolism of these observances, or “feasts,” as they’re called in the Bible, be sure to request your free copy of the booklet *God’s Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*.)

In this article we focus on the meaning of one of the commanded observances, the

God commanded the Israelites to save a tithe—a 10th—of their “increase” during the year and, at His festivals, to “eat [it] before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses . . . that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always” (Deuteronomy 14:23).

God’s feasts were a time of celebration and abundance. He instructs His people in how to observe them: “And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household” (verse 26).

We see from God’s instructions that this feast was to be an observance that involved whole families so each family could “learn to fear the LORD your God always” (verse 23). He commanded that the Israelites were to generously share in their abundance with the less fortunate and to make offerings in recognition of God’s blessings (Deuteronomy 16:13-17).

Sharing the wealth

The kind of abundance Israel enjoyed during the Feast of Tabernacles helps us understand what God has in store for all mankind—a blessing for all humanity characterized by peace and prosperity. God—who is infinitely generous and wealthy—promises mankind will share in His wealth.

Revelation 20:4 reveals that Jesus Christ, at His return to earth, will begin a 1,000-year reign, an era commonly known as the Millennium (from the Latin words for “thousand years”). For 1,000 years the inhabitants of earth will live in unprecedented peace.

This is not the kind of peace that human

Our world is wracked by poverty, injustice and turmoil. But a little-known biblical festival reveals how a new world of peace and prosperity will dawn.

not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard . . . Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness” (1 Kings 10:6-9).

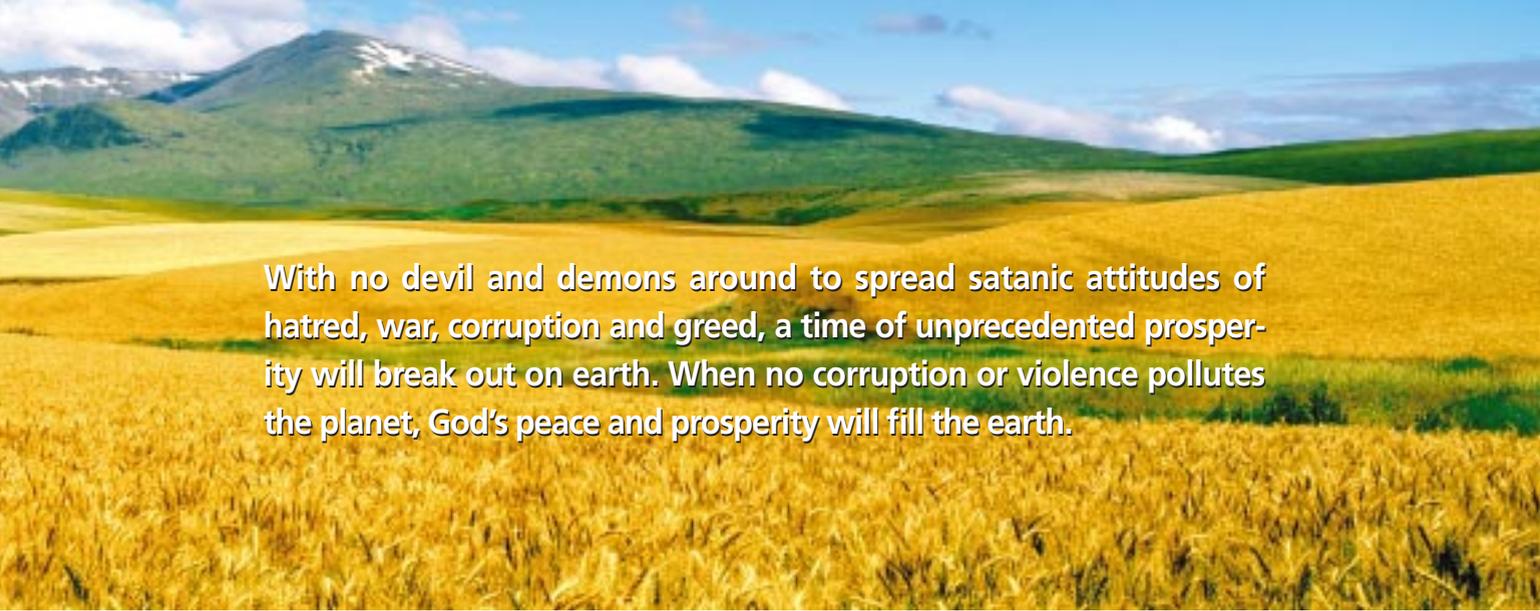
Wisdom, wealth and peace abounded in Solomon’s early reign. But his time was only a foretaste of an era of unprecedented peace and unparalleled prosperity that God promises will in time envelop the earth!

A feast of abundance

Wealth and affluence abound in the Western nations. Yet simultaneously millions suffer grinding poverty and thousands die every day for lack of food and malnutrition-related illnesses.

Feast of Tabernacles. This one is kept in the autumn of the year (in the northern hemisphere) and is based on the agricultural seasons of the Promised Land. The Feast of Tabernacles coincides with the final ingathering in the final months of the year, marking an end to the harvest of all the bounty God has given His people and figuratively picturing a future harvest of human beings for God’s Kingdom during Christ’s reign on earth.

Also called the Feast of Ingathering, this festival was to be observed “when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field” (Exodus 23:16) and “when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress” (Deuteronomy 16:13). This festival was meant to be a time of great abundance.



With no devil and demons around to spread satanic attitudes of hatred, war, corruption and greed, a time of unprecedented prosperity will break out on earth. When no corruption or violence pollutes the planet, God's peace and prosperity will fill the earth.

beings in the present age can experience. Our kind of peace simply means an absence of war. But God's peace far eclipses man's peace.

Godly peace means safety, a well-being characterized by happiness, friendliness and cooperation. Through the prophet Micah, God describes the kind of peace Christ's reign will bring to earth: "... Everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid..." (Micah 4:4). God's peace means no fear. It promotes good health, physically, mentally and emotionally.

Through the prophet Amos, God fills in the picture even more. "'Behold the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them'" (Amos 9:13-14).

Ezekiel shows that the earth will again become like the Garden of Eden: "So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited'" (Ezekiel 36:35).

Isaiah adds that "the wilderness and the wasteland 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... They shall see the glory of the LORD, the excellency of our God" (Isaiah 35:1-2).

A dramatic change

Ironically, for Christ to institute this time of peace He must first put down, by force,

the armies—led and peopled by misguided human beings—that will resist Him (Zechariah 14:1-4, 12; Revelation 17:14; 19:11-21).

The prophet Isaiah tells us that when Jesus returns He will forcefully subdue all opposition to Him, His government and God's Kingdom (Isaiah 11:4). To institute this time of peace, God will incarcerate Satan and the demons for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:7). Even wild animals will manifest a tame spirit (Isaiah 11:6-9).

When Christ initiates this millennium-long era with His second coming, the earth will have already been reduced to shambles (Isaiah 24). The prophets' words make this clear in this and other predictions of divine intervention.

From Christ's arrival onward will come a great time of restoration and renewal that He will lead while supported by God's faithful and obedient followers. At Christ's second coming God will have given these followers immortality (Revelation 20:4; Acts 3:19-21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). The survivors of this period of "great tribulation" (Matthew 24:21) will begin a monumental process of rebuilding the world (Isaiah 58:12).

With no devil and demons around to spread satanic attitudes of hatred, war, corruption and greed, a time of unprecedented prosperity will break out on earth. When no corruption or violence pollutes the planet, God's peace and prosperity will fill the earth.

In Isaiah 11:9 God promises of this wonderful era: "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." Inhabitants of the earth at last will learn and remember God's ways and put them into practice—the key

to a long-awaited world of peace.

In this peaceful and prosperous setting children will play in the streets without fear of accident, injury or abduction (Zechariah 8:3-5). Parents will sit and visit with each other without fear of muggings or any other unwanted intrusion. Families can grow old together, and grandparents can enjoy their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days," reveals the prophet Micah, "that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

"He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Micah 4:2-4). This is the world God has in store for us!

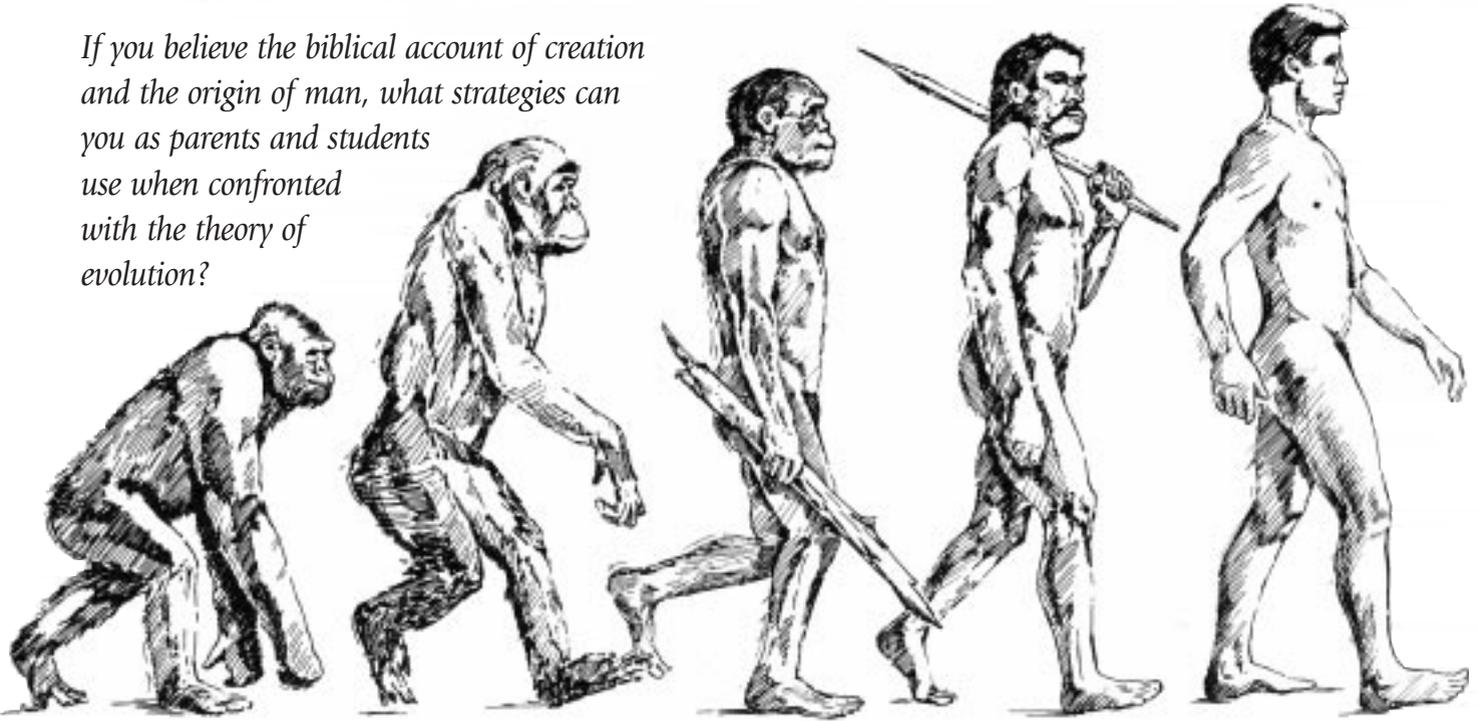
The Feast of Tabernacles today

Members of the United Church of God, publisher of *The Good News*, will gather in dozens of locations around the world in October in obedience to God's command to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. There they will observe this feast by worshiping God and learning more about the age when Christ will rule the earth. The Bible reveals that eventually all nations "shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of

Continued on page 31

Coming to a School Near You: Darwinism in the Classroom

If you believe the biblical account of creation and the origin of man, what strategies can you as parents and students use when confronted with the theory of evolution?



by David Treybig

Every academic year many high-school and college students encounter teachers and courses that advocate the theory of evolution to explain the origin of mankind. Although some schools may permit a brief mention of the biblical account as a competing explanation, many instructors teach the theory of evolution as though it were a proven fact.

If you believe the Bible's explanation of the origin of the universe and mankind—that God made humans in His image—what should you do as a parent or student? What can you do to deal with teachers who require students to learn Darwinism?

From the outset it is important to do your homework, so to speak. Understand that proponents of the theory of evolution often pit the Bible against science. They describe science as the logical, intelligent, rational choice because of its systematic attention to observation and experimentation. The contrast they imply is that the Bible is merely a fable generated by primitive peoples to explain their existence. Some will subtly, but mistakenly, imply that science disproves the Bible.

Actually, between the Bible and Darwin-

ism, the evidence is decidedly in the Bible's favor. Darwin and his early supporters admitted that they lacked hard evidence, but they believed that evidence would eventually be discovered to support their beliefs.

For example, they believed that fossil evidence would be discovered that would show the mutations that had allegedly evolved various species of animals into new species. But, in spite of more than a century of diligent searching, such "missing link" fossils are still missing. The flaws in Darwin's theories, some of which Darwin acknowledged himself, remain. His hypothesis has remained unproven ever since it was first proposed.

Meanwhile, during the century since Darwin, many scientists—including Louis Pasteur (developer of pasteurization and vaccines for anthrax, chicken cholera and rabies), Wernher von Braun (NASA director) and Sir Ernst Chain (cowinner of the 1945 Nobel Prize for isolating and purifying penicillin, as well as director of Rome's International Research Center for Chemical Microbiology)—have publicly attested to their belief in the Creator.

Some of them have plainly stated that

Darwinism is impossible, that the theory is based on nonexistent evidence and is therefore incompatible with the scientific facts.

Other scientists have tried to support Darwinistic reasoning by offering new, equally unprovable theories. Although the credibility of Darwin's theory has languished at best, the Bible's credibility has steadily increased.

Continuing archaeological discoveries confirm the Bible's validity. Critics who claimed the Bible is full of fictionalized stories have repeatedly been proven wrong as archaeologists made discoveries that confirm historical figures and cities previously known of only from the Bible. (If you would like to learn more about archaeological discoveries confirming the Bible, read the series of articles titled "Archaeology and the Bible" in past issues of *The Good News*. You may download back issues from our Web site at www.gnmagazine.org.)

A popular argument

One of the most popular arguments to supposedly disprove the Bible is the claim that scientific research shows the earth to be millions of years old while the biblical

account would indicate that the earth is only 6,000 years old. Yet, under careful scrutiny, we can easily reconcile this apparent discrepancy.

Genesis 1:1-2 says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void . . ." The Hebrew phrase translated here "The earth was without form, and void" can also be properly translated "The earth *became* without form, and void" (see the footnote to Genesis 1:2 in the New International Version).

This explanation allows for a gap in time

between verses 1 and 2 and permits recognition that the earth may be much older than the approximately 6,000 years of recorded human history, of which a 4,000-year span is outlined in the Bible.

Although many creationists believe the earth is only some 10,000 years old and reject the idea of a time gap between the first two verses of Genesis, at least a few biblical scholars have noted this understanding for almost 2,000 years—long before Darwin formulated his theory of evolution. (If you would like to learn more

about the validity of the Bible and the explanation alluded to here of the earth being older than 6,000 years, request our free booklet *Is the Bible True?* It's available from our office nearest you or from our Web site at www.gnmagazine.org.)

Defining evolution

Understanding *definitions* of evolution can be helpful to students facing Darwinism in their studies. Such varied definitions are why many times in this article we use the term *Darwinism* for the theory rather

Drawings Faked to Support Evolution?

Ever since Darwin wrote his famous book on evolution, *The Origin of Species*, evolutionists have pointed to examples they claim support the theory of evolution. But how good is that evidence?

Darwin relied on the work of others to demonstrate his theory. One famous example, still found in virtually every textbook promoting evolution, is what is commonly called "Haeckel's embryos."

Ernst Haeckel, a German biologist, had supposedly shown that embryos from various animals were identical to each other

in their earliest stages. Darwin had written that "it is probable, from what we know of the embryos of mammals, birds, fishes and reptiles, that these animals are the modified descendants of some ancient progenitor" (*The Origin of Species*, Great Books of the Western World series, p. 224).

Darwin also wrote that, since humans and all other vertebrates apparently were so similar in the early stages of

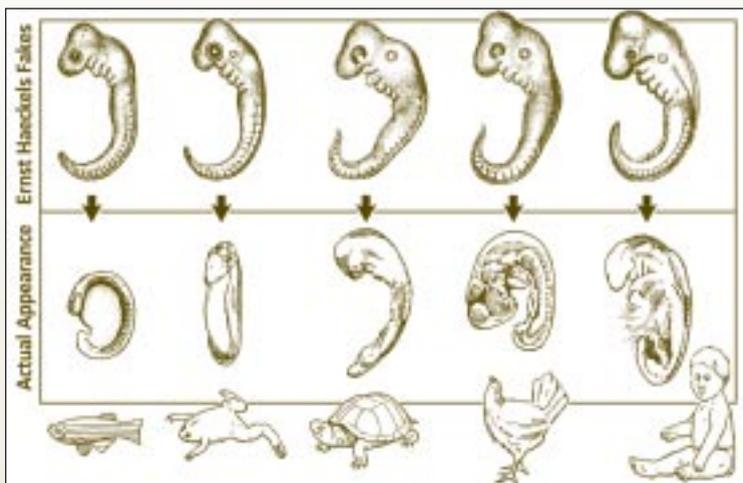
their development, "we ought frankly to admit their community of descent" (*The Descent of Man*, 1952, Great Books of the Western World series, p. 265). He wrote to a friend that similarities in early embryos were "by far the strongest single class of facts in favor of" his theory (*The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, 1896, Vol. II, p. 131).

Darwin and others promoted this idea even though other experts in the field, such as Karl Ernst von Baer (at one time Europe's most famous embryologist), disagreed. Von Baer stated that "the embryo of the higher form never resembles any other form, but only its embryo" (as quoted by Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth?*, 2000, p. 84). However, Darwin cited von Baer in support of his theory even though von Baer did not believe in Darwinism and strongly objected to it.

Today, however, biologists recognize that Haeckel *faked* his drawings to support his theory that embryos in essence reenact their species' evolutionary history as they develop.

Biologist Jonathan Wells writes that Haeckel's illustrations

"show vertebrate embryos that look very much alike at their earliest stage . . . In fact, the embryos look *too much alike* . . . He [Haeckel] was more than once, often justifiably, accused of scientific falsification . . . In some cases, Haeckel used the same woodcut to print embryos that were supposedly from different classes. In others, he doctored his drawings to make the embryos appear more alike than they really were . . . Haeckel's contemporaries repeatedly criticized him for these misrepresentations, and charges of fraud abounded in his lifetime" (Wells, pp. 90-91, emphasis in original).



Comparing Haeckel's drawings (top row) with actual embryos (middle row), it becomes apparent that his illustrations were distorted to support his proevolution ideas. Here we find a classic example of how the prejudices of those examining scientific evidence affect their conclusions. Haeckel, as many other evolutionists over the years, saw only the evidence he wanted to see and apparently believed that the ends (what he believed was the truth of

evolution) justified the means (erroneous and even fraudulent supposed proofs of the theory).

British embryologist Michael Richardson, along with an international team of experts, conducted a 1997 study comparing Haeckel's drawings with actual embryos. His conclusion? Haeckel's work "looks like it's turning out to be one of the most famous fakes in biology" (Elizabeth Pennisi, "Haeckel's Embryos: Fraud Rediscovered," *Science* 277, 1997, p. 1435). In spite of repeated discrediting, however, Haeckel's ideas and drawings still appear in many recent textbooks and are presented as fact.

The truth is that embryos at an early stage are demonstrably different from each other. Haeckel tried to show, through falsified drawings, that the embryos were similar. This supposedly meant that all creatures descended from a common ancestor. However, the development of embryos, rather than demonstrating evolution, shows that each species is distinct. Instead of supporting evolution, embryology points to creation.

—Bill Jahns

than simply *evolution*.

The word *evolution* can mean many things. Although many people are familiar with its most common meaning, the changing of simple life-forms to higher life-forms as theorized by Darwin, this word can also refer to the process of change and adaptation within a species—or even a progression of knowledge or understanding that has nothing to do with the origins of species.

The latter definitions of *evolution* describe processes and phenomenon that do, in fact, take place. For example, because of temporary environmental conditions such as smog or pollution from burning coal, one color of moth may become predominant (lighting conditions make one color of moth easier for birds to see, so the birds eat more moths of that color).

Another example is bacteria and drugs. Certain medicines are designed to kill harmful bacteria and viruses. But occasionally a few cells of a bacterium or virus are found to have developed an immunity to a drug. When these particular cells reproduce, they can be said to have evolved into a drug-resistant strain. Although this limited form of evolutionary change does occur, it does not mean these bacteria or viruses could eventually become elephants or humans.

to real evidence that Darwinism is true.

Why Darwinism lives

When rational people consider the intricacies and perfect balance of nature in the world around them, it should become strikingly obvious to them that the marvelous creation requires a Creator. As King David put it: “The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship” (Psalm 19:1, New Living Translation).

In light of the lack of physical evidence for Darwinism, and abundant evidence against it, why does Darwinism survive? Why hasn’t it been discarded like other empty, inaccurate, failed theories?

The apostle Paul answers this question in Romans 1:20-22: “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools” (New International Version).

This passage tells us that the fundamental reason many people reject the biblical

3:15-16; 2 Corinthians 6:18).

The biographies of some proponents of Darwinism freely explain why they reject God: They don’t want to be subject to God’s laws. They want to be free to do whatever they want to do, even act like animals if they so choose. Such thinking leads to and promotes sexual immorality including homosexuality, envy, murder, strife and hatred of God, just to name a few items of a long list of negative qualities inspired by this kind of perspective (Romans 1:28-31). By contrast, those who aspire to be children of God strive to practice righteousness (1 John 3:10), which means respecting and living by God’s instructions.

(If you would like information that conclusively demonstrates God’s existence, be sure to request your free copy of *Life’s Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?* If you would like to learn many surprising scientific truths about Darwinism and the Bible, request *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?* Both booklets are free from any of our offices or from our Web site at www.gnmagazine.org.)

Strategies for overcoming

Now that we have reviewed a few of the fundamental issues of Darwinism and the Bible, what can a student who believes in God do when he takes classes that teach Darwinism? Here are a few strategies:

Realize that you are studying a *theory*. Theories are simply attempts to explain something people don’t understand. Darwin didn’t understand how human beings came to exist. *The Origin of Species* was his attempt to explain how humans and thousands of perfectly designed species

When people believe they are part of the animal kingdom, they reject an extremely important concept that gives humanity our unique identity and destiny. We are called to become part of the **God Kingdom**—not the **animal kingdom**.

They will always be bacteria or viruses.

As our body of knowledge on a variety of subjects continues to increase, it is correct to say our knowledge base is evolving. Here again this definition does not prove Darwin’s theory regarding how humans came into existence.

The reason it is important to understand these varied definitions is simply that, when some scientists say evolution is a fact, not an unproven theory, they are referring to these latter definitions. By implication they would like to have you believe that Darwinism—the theory that new species can evolve and have evolved from others over time—is also true.

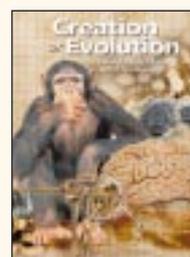
However, that is simply not the case. Intellectually honest scientists will admit Darwin’s theory is still an unproven attempt to explain life without a Creator. In spite of decades of effort, they can nowhere point

account of creation is that they in fact reject God. Although such people may be intelligent and understand many things, when it comes to acknowledging God their thinking is foolishly unsound. The Bible explains, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

People who believe we are merely a part of the animal kingdom reject an important concept that gives us our unique human identity and destiny. The Holy Scriptures reveal that God created us in His image, the “image of God” (Genesis 1:26-27), and gave us the opportunity to become His children (John 1:12). God calls us to become part of the Kingdom of God, not the *animal* kingdom. God’s purpose and plan for humanity are to give every human being the opportunity to acknowledge Him as Creator (Psalm 14:2) and live forever with Him as members of His family (John

Recommended Reading

What are they not telling you about the theory of evolution? We’ve covered only a few of the high spots in this article, but you can learn more in your free



copy of *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What you Believe?*

Also be sure to request your free copy of *Life’s Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?* Simply contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or visit our Web site at www.gnmagazine.org.

could have come into existence apart from God. You can read his work and study his arguments without agreeing with them. On a test or paper you can write, “Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution says . . .” or a similar statement that verifies you know what the teacher or textbook has taught.

It isn’t necessary for you to publicly debate teachers or professors who believe in evolution. Through greater experience, they usually have clever, though erroneous, arguments to smooth over the weakness of Darwinism or to make disbelievers in the theory appear ignorant. Remember, the Bible reveals that those who reject God are

the ones who are truly foolish and ignorant (Psalm 14:1; Romans 1).

If someone genuinely wants to know what you believe on this issue, tell him (1 Peter 3:15). But you don’t have to set yourself up for public or private ridicule. Thinking out your strategy in advance can be quite helpful. Often silence is golden.

If you are asked to do additional research on this subject, consider several possibilities. You might want to read Darwin’s book or works on modern variations of his theory and draw attention to the areas in which he and others acknowledge flaws in the theory. Another possibility is

to write a book report on material written against evolution (see “The Case Against Evolution” for a list of books written from this perspective).

Use this opportunity to strengthen your relationship with God and your convictions that He is your Creator. Compare the ultimate rewards represented by belief in Darwinism with belief in God. According to the former, when you die you’re permanently dead, having no hope of living again. With God you have the marvelous opportunity to live forever in His Kingdom. Don’t throw away that opportunity just to fit in with what is currently popular in today’s culture. **GN**

The Case Against Evolution

Many excellent books have appeared in recent years detailing scientific findings and conclusions that compellingly demonstrate the impossibility of evolution as an explanation for the existence of life on earth. It is helpful to remember that evolution cannot offer an explanation for the origin of our magnificent universe; evolution seeks to explain only how life might have begun in a universe that already existed. If you would like to dig more deeply into the case against Darwinism, we recommend the following books, many written by authors with backgrounds in the sciences:

Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution, Michael Behe, associate professor of biochemistry, Lehigh University (Pennsylvania), 1996. Demonstrates that the tiny building blocks of life—cells and their myriad components—are far too complex for their codependent parts and processes to have evolved without an outside, intelligent design at work.

Mere Creation: Science, Faith & Intelligent Design, edited by William Dembski, 1998. A collection of academic writings from physics, astrophysics, biology, anthropology, biology, mechanical engineering and mathematics that challenge Darwinism and offer evidence supporting intelligent design in the universe.

Evolution: A Theory in Crisis, Michael Denton, senior research fellow, University of Otago, New Zealand, 1996. Examines features of the natural world that mutation and natural selection cannot explain and shows the impossibility of transitional forms required for Darwinian evolution to have taken place.

Creation and Evolution: Rethinking the Evidence From Science and the Bible, Alan Hayward, 1985. Written by a British physicist, an insightful book on the pros and cons of the evolution-vs.-creation controversy.

The Neck of the Giraffe: Where Darwin Went Wrong, Francis Hitching, 1982. Points out many of the problems in the traditional view of evolution.

Darwin on Trial, Phillip Johnson, professor of law, University of California, Berkeley, 1993. Examines scientific details that argue convincingly against the theory of evolution.

Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law & Education, Phillip Johnson, 1995. Discusses the cultural implications of belief in evolution; that is, that the philosophy behind Darwinian evolution has become in effect the dominant established religion in many societies.

Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds, Phillip John-

son, 1997. Written specifically for older students and their parents and teachers to prepare them for the antireligion bias inherent in most advanced education.

Objections Sustained: Subversive Essays on Evolution, Law & Culture, Phillip Johnson, 1998. Compilation of essays ranging from evolution and culture to law and religion.

Bones of Contention: A Creationist Assessment of the Human Fossils, Marvin Lubenow, 1992. Documents the serious problems with the supposed links between man and apes.

What Is Creation Science?, Henry Morris and Gary Parker, 1987. Two creation scientists provide a critical examination of the major arguments used to support evolution.

Shattering the Myths of Darwinism, Richard Milton, 1997. Mr. Milton, a science journalist and noncreationist, reveals the circular reasoning Darwinists must rely on for their arguments while discussing data widely acknowledged in scientific circles.

Tornado in a Junkyard: The Relentless Myth of Darwinism, James Perloff, 1999. A self-professed former atheist offers an easy-to-read view of evidence contradicting Darwinism, including many quotations from evolutionists and creationists. (The title is taken from a British astronomer’s assessment that the likelihood of higher life-forms emerging through random mutation is comparable to the chance of a tornado sweeping through a junkyard being able to build a Boeing 747 airliner.)

Not by Chance: Shattering the Modern Theory of Evolution, Lee Spetner, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1998. Dr. Spetner shows that one of the fundamental premises of neo-Darwinism—that random mutation created the kinds of variations that allowed macroevolution to take place—is fatally flawed and could never have happened as Darwinists claim.

Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth?, Jonathan Wells, Yale University and University of California at Berkeley, 2000. Dr. Wells, a postdoctoral biologist, documents that the most-used examples Darwinists call on to support evolution—including those commonly found in recent textbooks—are false or misleading, raising the question of whether evolutionists deliberately misinform students and suppress scientific evidence that contradicts their theory.

Although the publishers of *The Good News* do not agree with every conclusion presented in these books, we think they present a persuasive and compelling case that the theory of evolution is fundamentally and fatally flawed.

What Is the Gospel Jesus Christ Taught?

If we are to understand the point of Jesus' teachings, message and mission, we need to be sure we understand the gospel—the good news—that He taught.

by Scott Ashley

What is the message Jesus Christ brought and taught?

It seems like a simple enough question, but most people don't give it much thought. They know Jesus preached a "gospel"—which comes from the Old English *god-spel*, meaning "good news" or "good message"—but what is that message?

This is where things can get a little murky. Many think that the gospel of Christ is a gospel exclusively *about* Christ. In doing so they focus almost entirely on the *messenger* while neglecting the *message* He brought. Is the distinction that important? Absolutely. If we fail to understand His central message, we will fail to grasp the whole point of His teachings, the reason for His coming and why He promises to come again to earth.

We will also fail to comprehend dozens of vital prophecies throughout the Bible. Jesus' message ties all of these things together in a theme that is truly *good news* that has great implications not only for your future but for that of the entire earth.

So what was Jesus' message? Let's go through some of His statements to be sure we understand it.

The gospel of the Kingdom of God

We find Christ's message summarized in Mark 1:14-15: "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching *the gospel of the kingdom of God*, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel'" (emphasis added throughout).

Jesus' teaching, we see, centered on the gospel—the good news—of the *Kingdom of God*. He also taught that people must *believe* that message and *repent* of their sins. Repentance is a *prerequisite* to entering the Kingdom of God.

Other verses confirm that the Kingdom of God was at the heart of Christ's message.

Matthew 4:23 tells us that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, [and] preaching *the gospel of the kingdom* . . ." Several chapters later Matthew adds, "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, [and] *preaching the gospel of the kingdom* . . ." (Matthew 9:35).

After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, He appeared to His disciples, "being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to *the kingdom of God*" (Acts 1:3). Luke 4:43 records Jesus saying, "I must preach *the kingdom of God* to the other cities also, *because for this purpose I have been sent*."

Confusion about the Kingdom of God

It's clear from the Scriptures that Jesus' teaching focused on the Kingdom of God. As Luke recorded, Christ said God sent Him to proclaim this specific message.

There should be little doubt about what Jesus taught. Regrettably, that isn't the case. People have differing ideas of what the Kingdom of God is. Some believe it is all of Christianity. Some view it as the sum total of all that is good and right in the world. Others think that the church is the Kingdom of God.

Regarding the latter, notice how *The Catholic Encyclopedia* explains this common perception: ". . . The 'kingdom' means not so much a goal to be attained or a place . . . It is rather a tone of mind . . . At one time the 'kingdom' means the sway of grace in men's hearts . . . As men realized that this kingdom stood for a certain tone of mind, and saw that this peculiar spirit was enshrined in the Church, they began to speak of the Church as 'the kingdom of God' . . . The kingdom of God means, then, the ruling of God in our hearts; it means those principles which separate us off from the kingdom of the world and the

devil; it means the benign sway of grace; it means the Church . . ." (1908 edition, "Kingdom of God").

Continuation of messages

Did Christ intend for us to be confused about the central theme of His teaching? Can it be whatever we want it to be? Can we find a clear biblical explanation?

Christ's teaching about the Kingdom of God becomes clear when we understand that Jesus was *building on* the message God had revealed centuries earlier through the prophets of Israel. God inspired these men to write of a coming world-ruling government—a physical, literal kingdom—in which the Messiah would administer God's laws and way of life to bring peace and prosperity to humanity.

The prophet Daniel, for example, saw a vision in which the Messiah receives this Kingdom: "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. *Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him*. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14; see also Daniel 2:44).

Isaiah also wrote of the coming Messiah and His Kingdom: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. *Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever . . .*" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

The plain meaning

Did Christ's followers understand that His teaching about God's Kingdom concerned a literal, world-ruling kingdom?

Indeed they did. Notice this promise He gave to His disciples: "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28; see also Luke 22:28-30).

After God resurrected Jesus from the dead, the disciples had a burning question for Him: "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time *restore* the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority'" (Acts 1:6-7).

They obviously understood that a part of Jesus' mission involved a restoration of a literal kingdom, with Christ as ruler and the disciples reigning under Him. Jesus told them, however, that the timing of the establishing of that kingdom is known only to God the Father (Matthew 24:36).

In Revelation 11:15 we read that this kingdom will be established at the seventh prophetic trumpet: "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'"

The Kingdom and you

What does this kingdom have to do with you and me? It concerns us a great deal in every way.

Jesus Christ explained that He will return at a pivotal time in history—when humanity staggers on the brink of annihilation. In His remarkable prophecy in Matthew 24, He tells us He will intervene in a period of world crisis, "a time of great distress, such as there has never been before since the beginning of the world, and will never be again." Conditions will be so grave that "if that time of troubles were not cut short, no living thing could survive . . ." (verses 21-22, Revised English Bible).

Reading the rest of His prophecy (and parallel accounts in Luke 21 and Mark 13)

is remarkably like reading today's headlines. Yet most people are unaware of the seriousness of the times in which they live.

The time of His return, Jesus said, "will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21:35). He makes it clear that this will be the most horrifying and deadly epoch in mankind's history, one that few would live through. Only after human beings have learned painful lessons will they be humbled enough to willingly submit to Jesus' reign as the Messiah.

Your invitation to the Kingdom

Jesus had much more to say about the Kingdom of God. In the first passage we read, Mark 1:14-15, a vital part of Christ's message was an exhortation to "*repent*, and *believe* in the gospel."

Two millennia later those words are just as important and meaningful as ever. Although the good news of Christ's coming world-ruling kingdom is truly good—in that humanity will at last see a world of peace, happiness and purpose and an end to war and other violence, starvation, disease and every other form of suffering—there's more to the story. (To learn more of how the world will be transformed by the Kingdom of God, be sure to read "Coming: An End to Suffering," "The Coming Age of Grace" and "The Feast of Prosperity" in this issue.)

The ultimate purpose of this literal, world-ruling government of which Christ spoke—and the ultimate purpose of our learning and surrendering to God's laws and ways in this life—is to enable us to enter God's eternal spiritual Kingdom as His children, resurrected to eternal life in His family. God says, through the apostle Paul, "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:18).

To enter that Kingdom, God must transform us from physical and mortal to spiritual and immortal. As Paul explains: ". . . Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead

will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:50-53).

Jesus says of those who are transformed in this way: "Then the righteous *will shine forth as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43). Jesus the Savior, glorified and immortal, now shines as the sun at full strength (Revelation 1:16). If we are willing to repent and believe, as He commands, He extends to us the opportunity to be glorified as He is (1 John 3:2).

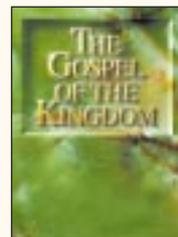
Those to whom God gives eternal life will live and reign with Christ in that Kingdom (Revelation 20:4, 6). They will be "kings and priests to our God . . . reign[ing] on the earth" to teach and bring others into this eternal Kingdom (Revelation 5:10). Jesus promises us, "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21).

As the prophet Daniel had written centuries earlier: "Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Daniel 7:27).

This is an overview of the wonderful news of a future of awesome power and purpose revealed in the gospel of the Kingdom of God Jesus Christ taught. Would you like to share in that future? The choice is up to you! **GN**

Recommended Reading

This article has only briefly surveyed the central theme of Christ's teaching. To learn more, please request the free booklets *The*



Gospel of the Kingdom and *What Is Your Destiny?* Contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download them from our Web site at www.gnmagazine.org.

Planning for Life

Part
Four

Two Crucial Keys for Success

by Ken Treybig

What steps can you take to make your life a success? How should you begin?

In the first three parts of this series we saw the importance of developing a career plan. You shouldn't rely on others to do your planning. In fact, when others chart your course (such as when parents decide a career for a child), your plans often don't fit the circumstances. The person whose life is being micromanaged can end up feeling trapped and unhappy.

It's best if *you* take the time to take stock of your own assets, then create your plans for a career based on godly spiritual principles—including due consideration of how your life's work can benefit the world in the age to come after Jesus Christ returns.

In this concluding installment we take a look at two final principles to help you along your journey: building a network of support, and not automatically accepting limitations others may place on you.

The value of support

First we'll consider the advice of Ecclesiastes 4:9-10. The New Revised Standard Bible translates King Solomon's words this way: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help."

Life is a journey, not a destination. Any long trip holds the potential for surprises, snags, delays and other challenges. So it is with life in general.

Even when we follow an overall strategy as we should, things don't always go our way. The variables are almost endless. They might involve health—your own or that of a family member. They could include finances or involve conflicts with scheduling or problems with a class if your plan includes college or trade school. They might even be psychological, prompting you to lose your focus and slip into a counterproductive frame of mind.

Regardless of the nature of the challenges

we face, they can inspire us to build a support network to provide the kind of help the Bible describes—friends to lift you up, literally or figuratively.

That same passage in Ecclesiastes 4 notes that a rope of three strands is strong and not quickly snapped (verse 12), reminding us of the benefits of more than one person cooperating to help us along our path.

Networking: An ancient principle

In books and articles about business matters, much has been written about *networking*, the technique of making connections, acquaintances and friendships with many people. The practice is a modern adaptation of a timeless biblical principle recorded thousands of years ago.

Someone who is a friend indeed will support and help you through your problems, even when they may be self-inflicted, such as those that come from losing sight of your career goal. At those times you need someone who cares enough about you to tell you the truth.

Truth may not be what you want to hear at the time and may in fact hurt, but a friend who tells you the truth so you can return to the right path is the best kind to have. Proverbs 27:6 tells us that the "wounds"—the painful corrections—that come from true friendship are "faithful." Such a friend has our best interests at heart. That's the kind of friend who can stick closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24).

So choose your support network well. It's good to have many friends, advisers and even mentors. However, it is probably *most* helpful when these people have the same spiritual values you have. They can likely give you

the best guidance along your career path.

Networking, building a support group, is just as important when you're *beginning* the process of developing your plan for life as it is later on when you are implementing your plan. As you develop your life plan and goals, discuss them with others who know you well. Parents, counselors, pastors and other advisers can be a great source of help as you begin the walk down the path you've chosen.

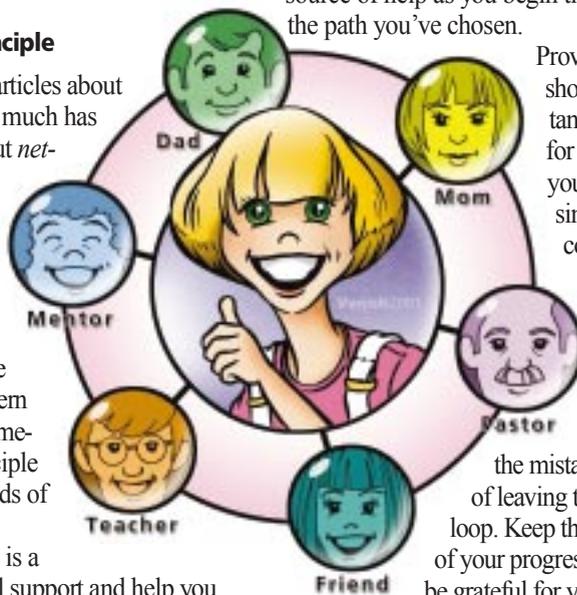
Proverbs 15:22 shows the importance of asking for help with your approach, since without counsel "plans go awry . . ." If you avail yourself of the help of others, don't make

the mistake of leaving them out of the loop. Keep them informed of your progress. They will be grateful for your continued contact, and you will gain the benefit of their support and encouragement as you make your way step by step.

Never give up

If you're like most young people, you'll probably get more advice than you want—and often from sources you haven't pursued. Although such advice can be helpful, don't always assume that everyone who gives you advice should be part of your permanent support network. If you received sound advice when you originally chose your career, don't casually cast it aside and change it. Just because someone questions whether you can persevere in a certain direction, or predicts you will never achieve your goals, don't quickly abandon your plan and become sidetracked.

Naoko Takahashi ran track at a junior



high school in Japan. She loved to run, but she wasn't winning any big races at the junior-high level. Still, running was one of her goals, and she worked hard at it.

Naoko didn't stand out in senior high school or college, either. After college she wanted to join her employer's running team, but company officials told her she wasn't good enough for the company to pay her way to its running camp.

Naoko was determined to pursue her passion for running, so she paid her own way to the camp and continued her quest to follow her dream of winning a big race.

In 1997 she switched from 5,000- and 10,000-meter races to marathon training. In 1998 she set a new national record, and last September she won the Olympic marathon in Sydney, Australia, to become the first Japanese woman to win a gold medal in the marathon.

The lesson? If Naoko Takahashi had accepted the advice of friends and associates who told her she wasn't good enough, she would not have achieved her success.

Be positive but realistic

It is a fact of life that you will probably have many people place limitations on you because of your economic status, education, a handicap or other factors.

When this happens it's easy to allow other people's negative words, and then your own negative thoughts, to dissuade you from your goals. But don't automatically accept people's comments as valid. In Philippians 4:13 Paul notes that we can do "all things" through Christ. With God's help you can accomplish more

than you ever thought possible.

On the other hand, even while we're thinking positively we need to be realistic. Don't take Paul's words as a promise that God will back you up in anything you decide to do. Note that the context of Paul's advice, judging from the wording of the previous verse, is that he learned to deal with hunger as well as prosperity.

Paul does not promise that God will make us successful in any area we happen to choose. A person who is color-blind cannot properly cite Paul's words here to believe that God will help him become a successful artist, interior decorator or auto-body repairman. Those vocations require the ability to work with shades of color. God does not promise success to someone whose eyes cannot detect those distinctions.

How can a person know, then, whether an imagined limitation imposed by someone else is spurious and to be ignored or if it represents the faithful "wounds of a friend" (Proverbs 27:6) who happens to know you're color-blind but are ill-advisedly pursuing a field that requires working with shades of color?

Sometimes it can be difficult to tell. This is where your knowledge, wisdom and network of friends again become important to you. If someone wants to limit you, consider his words carefully. If he sounds as if he may have a valid point, go to another trusted friend or adviser. Discuss the basis of the objection and ask for an honest evaluation. Someone who has your long-term best interests at heart can help you decide if this is indeed a reason to change your career goal or simply another obstacle that persistence and hard work can overcome.

Success requires effort

Success rarely falls into anyone's lap. It requires work. Keep in mind a saying that appeared in the first article in this series: People who want milk should not seat themselves on a stool in the middle of a field in hopes that the cow will back up to them.

To find a successful career, you have to dream. But don't *just* dream. *Plan* how you can achieve what you'd like so your dreams can come true. Ask for advice so you can make sure the career path you choose fits with your aptitudes, abilities and skills as well as with God's goals. Then pour yourself into your pursuit, remembering to build and draw on your network of advisers and friends who can help you surmount whatever obstacles life may place in your way. **GN**



Want to Learn More?

If you like our youth features in *The Good News*, take a look at our new E-magazine, *Youth United*, at www.youthmagazine.org.

This magazine is specially written for our younger *Good News* audience. Each issue is packed with helpful, eye-opening articles to help today's teens and young adults get the most out of life—both now and in the future.



You'll uncover lots of fascinating facts, meet many interesting people, discover what's really going on behind the scenes in our world, learn answers to your questions and find practical, down-to-earth guidance on all kinds of subjects.

Check out www.youthmagazine.org today—you'll be amazed at the many fascinating things you'll discover!

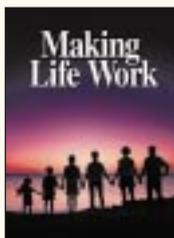


Recommended Reading

You may not realize it, but you probably already own the best self-help book ever published. It's loaded with practical, down-to-earth advice to help you be successful in your career,

marriage, family relationships, finances, friendships and every other major aspect of life. That book is your Bible.

Ask for your free copy of *Making Life Work* to discover the Bible's principles for success. Contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download it from our Web site at www.gnmagazine.org.



Letters From Our Readers

“Lessons from Two Resurrections”

After reading Bruce Gore’s article, “Lessons from Two Resurrections (March-April issue), I sat and let what I had just read sink in. Never before had I given much thought to the yards of linen cloth Jesus’ body had been wrapped in or how the disciples saw a “neat, collapsed cloth form” when they peered into the cave where His body had been laid. But the kicker of the article was reading [that the resurrection was] “as if the body of Jesus had simply evaporated out of them (the linen cloths).” Like John, I think that I would have been made a believer, too, if I had seen with my own eyes what he saw.

Mrs. F.M., Miami, Florida

Views of heaven and hell

Thank you for your every effort to send me magazines, courses and booklets. Some of your teachings are good, others are controversial. For instance, the articles related to heaven and hell seem to portray that there is no hell at all. In the March-April issue’s letters, one of your readers writes: “The Bible really does teach that God is a merciful and loving God who would never sentence any human being to an eternal punishment of fire, causing sorrow, crying and pain. This truth seems to have eluded the belief of some Christians,” and he quoted Revelation 21:4 to support his view.

What he called a truth is a real lie from the heart of the devil, I say. Dear friends, you are doing a good job encouraging people to read the Bible, but, please, do not lead us to the hell you think does not exist.

Truly, God is a merciful and loving God; on the other hand He is an awesome God and punishing God. Why not read the following verses of Revelation 21 up to verse 8 and see the contrast! Let me tell you: Hell really exists. It exists for both non-Christians and the evil angels. If you do not believe it, it’s your choice, but do not impose your choice through your tricky teachings. Get this piece of advice: Pray sincerely to God and ask Him whether hell does exist. If so, whom does it exist for? May my Lord and God guide you.

E.A., Lomé, Togo

Revelation 21:4 describes the lake of fire, which will be real and will be the fate of unrepentant evildoers, as “the second death” (verse 8). As is pointed out in our articles and booklets on the subject, death is not eternal life in another place, as presumed by the traditional view of hell.

I would like to send a heartfelt thanks for all the wonderful literature I have received. Having been raised in another faith, I was taught as a child that I would go straight to hell or heaven at death. This fear was embedded in my mind. As I studied your booklet, a picture began to emerge. I went through it microscopically and analyzed every page, first to last. What I came up with was a clear picture—a telescopic view—of what happens at death. This literature has opened my eyes to a lot of things about the Bible. It is a part of my daily study.

J.R.H., Phelps, Kentucky

Others may like to request Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach? and What Happens After Death? These free booklets are available by contacting our office nearest you listed on page 2.

Truth about the Trinity

Thank you very much for your response to my question about the Trinity. For many years I thought I had the answer. But the source of my information totally lost credibility when I began spending serious time checking the Bible against what I was previously taught. Your answer appears to be the Bible answer I was looking for. This is the first response to the Trinity question that agrees with what I read in the Bible.

S.D.M., Concrete, Washington

Harry Potter in, Bible out

Your magazine is the best ever. I am 11 years old and in the fifth grade. I don’t understand why they don’t have Jesus Christ in public schools. We are not allowed to say any of Jesus Christ’s names or we would get suspended from school. We are not even allowed to have Bibles or godly magazines and books in school. But you can have Harry Potter books. In his books Harry Potter goes to witchcraft

school. People need to clean up the world.

K.S., Ellenswood, Georgia

A good example

I recently met a man and we became good friends. In a recent conversation I asked him why he is so different. He said there were several factors, but the most important by far was some specialized knowledge he had been privileged to get. When I asked what knowledge and about its source, he listed eight of your publications and told me if I wanted to know I would have to ask for them myself. He also said all of these would be free and that if I did not like something I could just ask for it to be stopped. So, trusting his word, I make this request.

E.B., Chicago, Illinois

Our literature is indeed free thanks to the generosity of others.

Letters from around the world

A recent mailbag contained letters from around the world. They are an encouraging reminder that the gospel of the Kingdom reaches near and far, even into remote corners of the globe.

Thank you for sending me your excellent magazine *The Good News*. It is full of interesting and topical articles with biblical references. I fully agree that television is getting sleazier as sexual content crops up in all sorts of programmes. Sadly, writers, producers and those in charge of TV channels must think they have to include smutty and disrespectful sexual references to sell their programmes. Unfortunately, *Temptation Island* has just appeared on a British TV channel. I will not be watching it.

Ms. J.H., Market Harborough, England

Thank you for sending me a copy of *The Good News*. After reading the magazine I noticed that you offer to send free booklets on certain subjects. May I ask if you worship on Saturday? If so, would you send me your literature about it?

P.P., Leicestershire, England

Concerning the Sabbath issue, could I please have an answer to the question

that, if we are to keep it from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, what about when it is Friday here and in another part of the world it is Saturday? How does this work?

B.J., Nova Scotia, Canada

Yes, we do observe the seventh-day Sabbath, and we simply keep it as it comes to us in whatever part of the world in which we live. Further information is freely available in our booklet Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest.

I am enjoying *The Good News* magazine. It has encouraged me to read God's Word more and gives me a sense of hope, faith and love.

S.S., British Columbia, Canada

I am a Christian Baptist and a foreign student from Haiti in the Caribbean Islands. I am very pleased to express my sincere feelings about how I really enjoy your precious magazine. Please continue to send in English *The Good News* and other literature while I am in Haiti.

H.N., Port-au-Prince, Haiti

My mum saw your daily newspaper ad and told me to write to you straightaway. I am a very young person 19 years of age. We love your magazine and literature. Keep up the good work.

K.G.M., Trinidad

I just received the five booklets I requested in June. Thank you for the kindness of sending them free of any charge. As soon as my personal economic situation improves, I'll try to send some money to help you as you've helped me in spirit.

A.D., Argentina

I received *The Good News* magazine and liked it. There is much good information in it. I am studying English, and that is the reason to be long reading the booklets. However, I am learning fast both English and the Holy Bible. I've read the booklet about the Sabbath and I'm impressed. I should tell you that I have kept the Fourth Commandment since 1993 because I've understood in the Bible's pages that it always has been part of the Ten Commandments. I'd like to know how I can buy some Bibles in English (even secondhand ones). The reason is I'd like to study the Bible in the same language as the booklets. English Bibles are hard to find here.

W.F., Brazil

Several groups distribute Bibles around the world. Examples are the International Bible Society, the American Bible Society and Gideons International. If you have Internet access, you can easily contact them.

Whenever I receive your magazine I always want to learn what changes it will make in my life. The fact is that each issue always has a message for me and my pastoral ministry. The article about Timothy—Paul's son in the faith—is a great blessing to me while archaeology and the epistles enlarged the border of my scholarship. Please kindly accept this letter as my subscription renewal for both *The Good News* magazine and the *Bible Study Course*.

B.B., Nigeria

I live in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. Yesterday I received lesson one of the *Bible Study Course*, "Why the Bible is the Word of God." Every day I read the Bible, meditate on it and study it by heart.

L.T.L.H., Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Please find a cheque as a donation for your organisation. I am immensely benefiting from your *Good News* magazine. May God bless you richly for this service.

Reader from Melbourne, Australia

Thank you very much for your good, useful work. Our world today needs people like you. My friend gave me your magazine, and I liked it. I am looking for God's Church. I have read the Bible but have found nothing about Sunday, icons and many other things. I was surprised that nobody in other churches pays attention to the Bible. Now I believe I am not alone. Please, if it is possible, send me more information about your church doctrines. I would like to be a subscriber. It's a pleasure to read *The Good News*.

M.M., Moldova

A packet of free literature is on its way, and you are now a subscriber to The Good News. Along this line, one particular booklet that might be helpful to many readers is The Church Jesus Built.

Published letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address your letters to The Good News, Box 541027, Cincinnati, Ohio 45254, U.S.A., or E-mail gninfo@ucg.org (please be sure to include your full name, city, state or province, and country).

Feast

Continued from page 21

hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

If you would like to observe this festival with us, we'd be delighted to have you join us. Visitors are always welcome at services of the United Church of God. To learn more about this annual feast and the sites of its observance, see the information below.

To learn more about God's feast days in general, be sure to request your free copy of the booklet *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*. You may contact any of our offices listed on page 2, or request or download it from our Web site at www.gnmagazine.org. **GN**



Join Us for the Feast Jesus Kept!

Jesus of Nazareth never kept Christmas or Easter. But He did keep the Feast of Tabernacles, a biblical festival that celebrates His coming reign over earth. You can keep it, too, Oct. 2 through 9 at any of these locations:

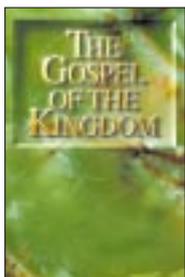
Australia (Frederick Henry Bay, Tasmania; Merimbula, New South Wales; Noosa Heads, Queensland); **Barbados; Benin; British Isles; Cameroon; Canada** (Kelowna, British Columbia; Mont-Sainte-Anne, Quebec; St. John's, Newfoundland); **Chile; France; Germany; Guatemala; Guyana/Brazil; Italy; Jamaica; Kenya; Mexico; New Zealand; Nigeria; Peru; Philippines** (Baguio City; Davao City); **St. Lucia; Southern Africa** (Uvongo, South Africa; Mumbwa, Zambia; Harare, Zimbabwe); **Tonga; United States** (Bend, Oregon; Branson, Missouri; Breckenridge, Colorado; Corpus Christi, Texas; Escondido (San Diego), California; Gatlinburg, Tennessee; Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; Jekyll Island, Georgia; Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii; Panama City Beach, Florida; Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin). For more details, visit www.ucg.org/feast/feast01/

Will the World Ever See a Time of Lasting Peace?



Photo illustration by Shaun Venish/Corel Professional Photos; © 2001 PhotoDisc, Inc.

Today's headlines are filled with bad news—war, famine, natural disasters, governmental scandals and the like. With all this bad news, what kind of future can we look forward to?



Almost 2,000 years ago, a prophet came bringing a vital message for this world. That prophet was Jesus Christ, and His message was "the gospel of the kingdom of

God" (Mark 1:14). The word *gospel* means *good news*. But what was the good news Jesus Christ brought? What is the kingdom of which He spoke? And does it have anything to do with

the problems that threaten us today?

Most people don't understand the truth about the Kingdom of God. Yet it is the central theme of the Bible—and truly the best news the world can hear!

In *The Gospel of the Kingdom* you can discover the truth of the surprising message Jesus Christ brought. This booklet shows you, from the pages of your Bible, exactly what that message is—and what it means for you. For your free copy, visit our Web site or contact any of our offices listed on page 2.

United Church of God
an International Association

Visit us on the Web: www.gnmagazine.org