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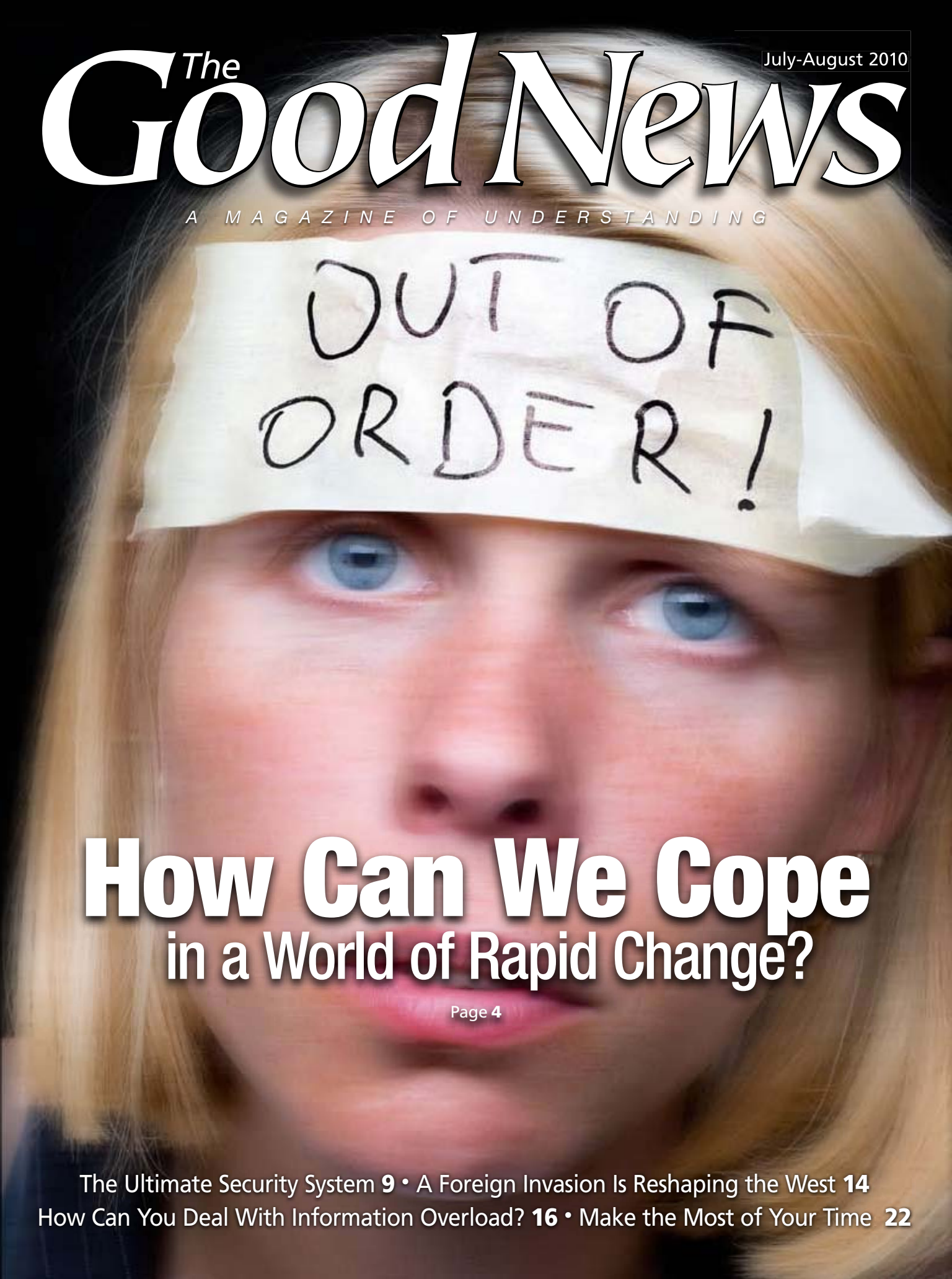
July-August 2010



How Can We Cope in a World of Rapid Change?

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The Danger of Distraction

Some 26 centuries ago an angelic messenger revealed to the prophet Daniel what would be a defining characteristic of our age. At "the time of the end," he said, *"many shall run to and fro,* and *knowledge shall increase"* (Daniel 12:4, emphasis added throughout).

In Daniel's day, who in his wildest dreams could've foreseen the huge changes in transportation and information technology that have so powerfully reshaped our world?

Consider what we've seen in just a century's time.

A few years ago my grandmother passed away. What changes she witnessed! Born in the days of the horse and buggy, she lived to see the invention of automobiles, airplanes, jet aircraft, television, computers, skyscrapers and men walking on the moon. In a single airline flight she traveled more miles than her parents had in a lifetime.

When it comes to information, many of us have access to thousands

In spite of all the information inundating society, *most lack the knowledge that's most important.*

of news sources all over the world via the Internet, not to mention entire electronic libraries at our disposal. In addition, we're deluged with information that pours down on us constantly from our TVs, radios, phones, computer monitors, laptops, books, newspapers and magazines.

Yet in spite of all the information inundating society, *most lack the knowledge that's most important.*

Have you ever considered how many great men of God spent considerable time alone in the wilderness? Moses spent 40 years as a shepherd tending flocks in the desert. David grew up in the outdoors as a shepherd boy; his many psalms reflect that formative part of his life. Elijah fled to the desert to escape the wrath of the murderous Jezebel.

Jesus Christ regularly went away into the wilderness to avoid the crowds and commune with His Father, just as He had done at the beginning of His ministry. The apostle Paul similarly went into the desert for three years to spiritually prepare himself for the work God had called him to do.

With all these men, something about the calm and quiet of the wilderness purged their minds of life's distractions. In their solitude God could fill them with purpose and passion. In the calm of quietness came conviction.

Is there a lesson here for us? In many ways today's information explosion is a great benefit. At our fingertips we have access to vast amounts and kinds of information previous generations could have scarcely imagined. But while this incessant flow of information is helpful in many ways, it can be quite destructive *when it distracts us from what is really important.*

With all of this information, so many are sadly lacking in the knowledge that's most crucial. God warned more than 2,700 years ago that people can be and are "destroyed *for lack of knowledge"* (Hosea 4:6). The all-important knowledge people lack is that of *how to live, why we are here and where we are going.*

That's why *The Good News* is so important. We're here to provide and point you to that knowledge you won't find elsewhere. We're here to help focus your mind on the timeless, eternal truths God reveals in His Word—the true words that make life make sense.

Don't let yourself be continually distracted by the trivial, insignificant things that will consume your time and leave you frustrated and empty. Focus on what's really crucial—the all-important good news of God's Word!

—Scott Ashley, Managing editor

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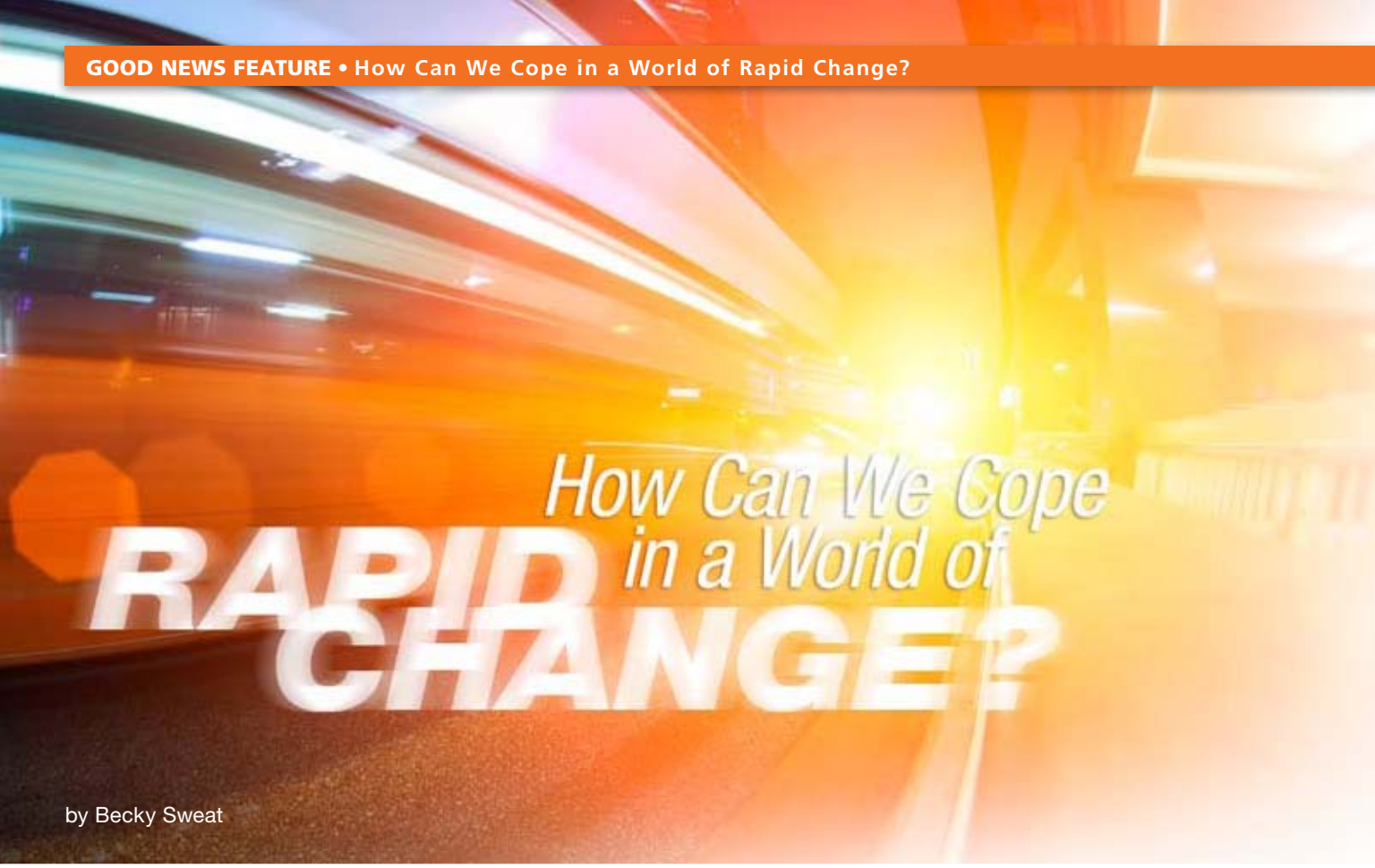

How Can We Cope in a World of RAPID CHANGE?

by Becky Sweat

Do you feel bombarded with change from every direction? Do you feel stressed, overworked, with too little time to appreciate and enjoy life? Do you find it difficult to keep up with everything you need to do? If so, you're not alone. Our rapidly changing world is rapidly stressing us out. What can you do to cope?

If you have children or grandchildren, chances are you can't help but notice what a different world they're growing up in compared to when you were their age.

If you tell them what life was like when *you* were young, they may be astonished at how different things were "back then." I know when I tell my 14- and 16-year-old sons stories from when I was their age, they have a hard time grasping the concepts of typing term papers on a typewriter, writing out letters by hand, only having four television stations to watch, and having to go to the library to get information for a school project.

Of course, we've come to expect that lifestyles are going to change somewhat from one generation to the next. Amazingly, though, my kids have also remarked on how much the world has changed just since *they* were born. Though they're only in their mid teens, they can remember a time when people didn't carry cell phones and PDAs with them wherever they went, and when there were no such things as iPods, Wi-Fi Internet, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook.

They'll often note how our "slow" computer we get frustrated with today was considered a "fast" machine just a few years ago. They can also think back to a time when we didn't have to wait in long security lines at the airport, and terrorism seemed like something that only happened in far-flung lands.

Change now exploding exponentially

It all underscores a vital point: While our world has always experienced change, *the rate of change is speeding up.* Many historians, sociologists and journalists have expressed concern in recent years about the rapid change in our society. They tell us that today's world is changing at an accelerated rate, unlike anything past generations witnessed.

In his 2004 bestseller *Margin,* physician and futurist Richard Swenson explains that change picked up momentum in the early part of the 20th century and has been rapidly accelerating ever since. The reason, he states, is that "the mathematics are different. Many of the linear lines that in the past described our lives well have now disappeared. Replacing them are lines that slope upward exponentially.

"Because there is little in our day-to-day lives that changes exponentially, we tend to think with a linear mindset. The sun rises and the sun sets. Twenty-four hours. Week after week, everything seems about the same. Meanwhile, largely unnoticed by us, history has shifted to fast forward. If linear still best describes our personal lives, exponential now best describes most of historical change" (p. 40).

In other words, as time progresses the world is changing at an exponentially increasing rate. Yet a century ago, historical change was linear (maintaining the same pace) and thus was much less noticeable.

This period of accelerating change we're now witnessing can and has put a strain on individuals and entire societies. In 1970, futurist Alvin Toffler described the effects of "too much change in too short a period of time" in his contemporary classic *Future Shock.*

At the time, he predicted that people

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exposed to these rapid changes of modern life would suffer from "shattering stress and disorientation." They would be, in his words, *"future-shocked."* He maintained that the need to constantly adapt to changing situations could lead to feelings of helplessness, despair, depression, uncertainty, insecurity, anxiety and burnout.

Four decades later, what Toffler wrote describes our world more than ever. Future shock is here!

More change than we can handle

"The fear of rapid change is big today," observes Gabe Ignatow, Ph.D., a sociologist at the University of North Texas. "Many people see the changes going on in the world around us and are worried and anxious. If they also have changes going on in their personal lives—maybe they lost their job or had to find a new place to live because their home was foreclosed—it can all be overwhelming."

"There's a case to be made that with the Internet and communication technology spreading around the world, it has really upset a lot of social patterns."

Most people can handle a certain amount of change, Ignatow says. The problem is, we are increasingly being *overloaded* with more change than we can handle.

Susan Silbey, Ph.D., is a sociologist with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with a special interest in technology and societal change. She also sees the intensifying problems of uncertainty and anxiety resulting from too much change.

She notes that mankind has always faced uncertainty, along with pain, hardship and tragedy. A few centuries ago, the uncertainty might have been: What's it like in the new frontier where we're headed to? Will this season produce a good crop? When will it rain again?

A big difference between previous times and today, she says, is that in the past people looked to God to help them through difficult times. "Several hundred years ago there were very few people who didn't have some religion, which gave them an explanation of the world. But for many people today, that doesn't exist as an answer anymore."

When the religious belief system erodes away, people generally do not cope as well with change and stress, she notes.

The root of change

So what has caused our world to change so rapidly in recent years? "Ultimately, it's due to technological advances," replies Ignatow. Case in point: With the advent of the printing press in the 15th century, there was certainly a paradigm shift (a change from one way of thinking to another), but it took a century for that shift to occur. Before that (with only word of mouth and slow travel), it may have taken several centuries for a major shift in societal views to occur. Now, with the Internet, such a shift may take only a few years. "There's a case to be made that with the Internet and communication technology spreading around the world, it has really upset a lot of social patterns," Ignatow says.

Certainly technological progress can lead to very positive changes. Inventions such as computers, the Internet, communications satellites and genetic diagnostic tools help improve our lives in many ways. Difficult tasks are made simple and can be done much more quickly.

However, technological innovation can also lead to other changes—some of them not so positive. "Throughout history, when new inventions were introduced into a society, it has impacted the society's customs, values and beliefs," Silbey says.

Since the Industrial Revolution, when the speed of change really started picking up, society has been transforming accordingly. It began with a shift from a rural, agrarian society to an urban, industrial society. Fewer workers were needed to cultivate greater crops, so more people moved to big cities to take factory jobs. That led to a whole range of changes in lifestyle, family structure, culture and values.

The computer revolution that started around 25 years ago sent the rate of change into its exponential rise. Today, scientific and technological changes are taking place at such a breathtaking pace that many have difficulty keeping up with them.

Seven kinds of stress-producing changes

Today we see at least seven major kinds of changes that are causing a great deal of stress and anxiety. Most of these changes are directly related to the digital revolution and have only become problems in the last 10 to 20 years. Some of the other changes have been occurring for a couple of generations now but have been exacerbated in recent years by technology.

All of these issues have played a significant role in making our era different from all those that preceded it. What are these seven areas of change, and how are they impacting our society, institutions and world?

1. The pace of life is speeding up.

We are a society in a hurry. For years we've been told that the "faster" computers are the "better" machines. Somehow that way of thinking has seeped into how we think we should live our lives. We have been cranking up the speed at which we operate, and life is becoming increasingly frantic.

Silbey believes that our faster pace of life stems from the fact that modern communications technology has "collapsed" distance and time. For instance, this allows an American lawyer to get a deposition from a client, e-mail it that afternoon to

workers in India who will transcribe it, and be able to have it back the next morning, all typed up. Effectively, day and night have been erased.

"When you collapse time and distance, everything speeds up, because what had been a physical, material limitation to human action is now gone," Silbey says. It then becomes expected that everything else in the workday should go just as fast.

Even if there's no need to hurry, "faster" has become the normative way we do things today. We may find ourselves getting impatient and angry with slower drivers on the highway even when there's no reason to be in a rush. We may groan when we realize the customer in front of us at the grocery store checkout is having an item price-checked, even though it's only going to take an extra minute. We walk fast and wolf down our meals.

Sometimes we don't even want to compose an e-mail message anymore because that takes too long. Some people now prefer communicating through texting and "tweeting" because the messages are shorter and faster to compose and read.

2. We are busier than ever.

As a society, we are busier than ever before. That's because while technology allows us to do our work faster and more efficiently, it also puts more demands on us. "Nowadays we're expected to accomplish much more with our time," says David Levy, Ph.D., professor at the School of Information at the University of Washington.

In an attempt to get more done, "we multitask, always trying to do two or three things at the same time," Levy says. So we may eat our fast-food lunch and conduct business calls while we're driving or checking our e-mail.

Another trend: Portable digital communication allows employees to be reached anywhere, anytime. "You can't get away from work anymore," Ignatow says. "Even when you're relaxing on the weekends, you're often bombarded with e-mails and calls from the office." It's not unusual to see people at the beach or park with their families while frantically working at their laptops or composing messages on their Blackberries.

More people are also bringing work home with them. Everyone is working longer hours—not only because there's a lot more work to be done, but also because of concerns about getting laid off if they don't put in extra hours. Working overtime, working weekends and being on call 24 hours a day are standard for employees at many companies.

3. Life is more complicated.

Our daily lives are becoming increasingly complex. Think about some of the purchasing decisions you make. In just about any product category, the number of choices are increasing. Whether you're buying pet food, selecting a cell phone plan, making airline reservations, choosing a doctor or setting up a retirement account, you may have more choices than you can realistically consider. Having so many options can be overwhelming.

The same thing is true when seeking out information. You can easily become overloaded with facts and figures. For instance, you might do a Google search on a particular topic and get 10,000 search results. "Now you have to decide which of them you are going to read and which you are going to ignore. The very act of choosing takes time," says Levy. A lot of times you'll come across conflicting information, which can be very confusing.

Ironically, another way our lives have become more complicated is by some of the technological innovations we bring into our homes that were intended to make our lives easier. Now it's certainly true that our modern gadgets *can* make our lives easier. But as complex as some of them are, they can really add to our stress levels.

Some of our modern-day "time-savers" can be really hard to figure out and use! I know professionals who don't know how to use important features on their Palm Pilots, digital cameras and cell phones. As frustrating as that is, they simply have not had the time to read the manuals carefully.

Actually, there are times when I miss my simple, old typewriter. Sure, it took a lot more time to type an article on it than it does on my computer. But the typewriter never crashed, it never bogged down because of spyware or viruses, and I didn't have to read a manual to figure it out.

4. Families are structured—and function—differently.

Family structure changed dramatically in the last half of the 20th century. The traditional nuclear family with Dad, Mom and kids has been largely replaced by new configurations, including "blended" families, single parents and unmarried couples with children.

The divorce rate in the United States peaked at around 50 percent in the 1980s, after climbing for two decades. Since then, it has remained at that level. "The stigma associated with divorce has largely disappeared, and marriage as an institution has been weakened," says William Doherty, Ph.D., professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota.

While divorce rates were climbing, more women were entering the workforce. During the 1950s, 20 to 30 percent of mothers were employed outside the home. These

Often in an attempt to get more done, we multitask—trying to do two or three things at the same time.

Photos: iStockphoto

were primarily poor women who needed to work out of necessity. By the late 1980s, *70 percent* of American mothers were employed outside the home, either full- or part-time. Unlike before, a lot of these were women in middle- and upper-income households who were working to sustain their lifestyles and to pay an increasing tax burden.

Today, three out of four households have two working parents, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In recent years, the American family has changed still further, albeit more subtly. Dads and moms are both working longer hours outside the home. Their commute times are increasing. At the same time, parents have been involving their children in outside activities such as music and sports. This is quite a shift from 10 to 15 years ago, when parents and kids spent most of their downtime relaxing at home.

"Now parents are busy all weekend shuffling their kids to all the different sporting events they're involved with," Doherty says. "That's in addition to running errands or catching up on housework that didn't get done during the week." As a result, there's much less time available for quality face-to-face time between parents and kids.

Of course nowadays, even when family members are home together, parents may be too worn out to talk and may instead simply "veg out" in front of the TV. Kids are either on the Internet or plugged into their iPods. "In the past, you had to talk to the people under your roof and spend time with them, whether you liked it or not," observes Ignatow. "Today family members can tune into their iPods or laptops and tune everyone else out and 'be with' whomever they choose to be with."

5. "Traditional" beliefs and values are being challenged.

As was mentioned up front, religion has been eroding in much of the Western world. Scientific developments have "invalidated" many of the assumptions underlying traditional systems of faith, Silbey says.

As a result, religion has lost a lot of its authority, and many people no longer hold to a system of ethics and concrete values. In its place is a secular view where everything is relative. This has reconfigured families, upset moral structures and devastated traditions.

We now live in a society where just about anything goes and nothing is certain. We see a tolerance and acceptance of promiscuity, adultery, couples living together outside of wedlock, homosexual relationships, lying, cheating, alcohol and drug abuse, use of indiscreet and explicit language—to name just *some* of society's ills we've grown used to.

This period of rapidly changing values started accelerating in the 1960s, about the time television gained a major foothold in society. TV proved to be an extremely effective medium to promote new values and new ways of thinking.

Today, this media blitz has intensified with around-the-clock exposure through satellite TV, MP3 players, laptops and smartphones—much of it challenging traditional beliefs and values. Probably most of us can think of music with lyrics that shouldn't be repeated or TV programs where the characters with traditional values are made to look like fools.

Regrettably, most of the new media is viewed or listened to in isolation (unlike TV, which can be watched together as a family, or music on the radio, which everyone within earshot hears). "More often than not, parents do not even know what their kids are listening to on their iPods or what sites they're checking out on the Internet," Doherty says, "so kids are not getting any kind of direction as to what's wrong with these messages, and they go unchallenged."

6. Our sense of community is disappearing.

In recent decades, Americans have become increasingly disconnected from friends and neighbors, and less involved with community organizations like parent-teacher groups, civic groups or recreation clubs.

Harvard professor and political scientist Robert Putnam discussed this social change several years ago in his book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.* This loss of "community," maintains Putnam, threatens educational performance, safe neighborhoods, everyday honesty and even our health and happiness.

Why the loss of community? One factor is certainly our busy lifestyles. With people working longer hours, often on the weekends, we have less time for chats with the neighbors or for neighborhood barbecues.

We're also changing residences more frequently than we used to, primarily due to divorce and job changes. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 37.1 million Americans changed residences in 2009, up from 35.2 million in 2008. In a five-year period, between 40 and 50 percent of Americans will change addresses. Increasingly, these are out-of-state moves. All this moving means many people no longer live in the towns they grew up in, further eroding the sense of community.

A third factor is that for many people, social networking sites, chat rooms and other online venues have become their "community" of choice. "Instead of socializing with others face-to-face, more and more people are spending their free time sitting in front of their laptop," says Deborah Barreau, Ph.D., associate professor at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Thanks to rapid transportation, what used to be local problems can quickly become worldwide concerns.

Such communication is "often much more trivial and superficial than face-to-face conversations," she says. "There's just not going to be the same kind of connections with others digitally that you would have in person."

7. The world is shrinking.

Technological innovations like the jet plane, satellite communication and the Internet have allowed businesses to expand across national borders and become global economic players. This process has integrated nations and peoples—economically, politically and culturally—and created a "global village" for the world's 6.8 billion residents.

But like so many of the areas of change already discussed, we are treading on uncharted ground. Globalization is a new phenomenon. Many are concerned about where it will take us in the months and years ahead and how it will impact the world.

On the one hand, globalization provides a global market for companies to trade their products, which can create economic growth for rich and poor nations alike. On the other hand, it could cause millions in Western nations to lose their jobs as work is outsourced to other countries where labor costs are cheaper. We may wonder whether our nation will remain competitive in the world marketplace and if we'll still have jobs in the future.

Because nations around the world are linked economically, a stock market crash or banking crisis in one country can quickly spread to other countries—something we witnessed several years ago after the U.S. housing bubble burst.

Broadly speaking, though, globalization means more than just economic integration. "What used to be considered 'localized problems' are now worldwide concerns," Ignatow says. New infectious pathogens that emerge in remote regions of the world do not stay there. Someone who has come in contact with a disease can get on a plane and carry it to the other side of the world in a matter of 24 to 36 hours, in some cases long before symptoms even appear. Air travel has made the world a smaller place.

Terrorism is another problem that used to be localized, primarily in the Middle East. Sadly, that is no longer the case. Terrorists have taken advantage of technology, such as the ease of international travel and the ability to communicate with their networks around the world, contributing to the spread of terrorism worldwide.

"It's the uncertainty of thinking about what *could* happen that has a lot of people feeling unsettled," Ignatow says.

Our "Island of Stability"

If you are old enough to remember "the way things used to be," that in and of itself can be disconcerting. Most of us don't enjoy having to deal with changes that are thrust upon us, especially if there's a lot of change all at once. We prefer to stay with the status quo. That's more comfortable.

Of course, even if we find all the technological changes exciting, it can be stressful trying to keep up with it all.

And then the changes themselves can cause us angst—having too many pressures on our time, seeing morals deteriorate all around us, seeing how "family" has been redefined in our modern world. Or perhaps we feel disconnected from the people around us and wish we had more of a sense of community. Maybe we grasp how change is speeding up and are concerned about what society will be like a generation from now. How can we possibly cope with these changes?

In *Future Shock,* Alvin Toffler wrote that when people go through times of rapid change, they need what he calls "islands of stability." Those are things that *do not change* in your life—sources of security, safe harbors and anchors for the inevitable storms.

You can probably think of some "islands of stability" in your life where you can find solid ground in challenging and difficult times—your spouse, longtime close friends, some sound advice that you were given long ago—to name a few.

Ultimately, though, our true source of stability is the one thing much of society has let go of in recent years—*God.* He tells us in Isaiah 45:5, "I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me." Jesus Christ similarly says in Matthew 28:20, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

No matter how tumultuous or volatile this world gets, *we can count on God to be our anchor and refuge.*

Malachi 3:6 assures us, "For I am the LORD, I do not change." We're reminded again in Hebrews 13:8 that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." God does not change. He is steady and reliable, His promises enduring forever.

Indeed, we can trust completely in God's Word. Of course, in our society today, what's "true" one year might not be the next. We hear of studies that document the health benefits of a certain food, and then a short time later we find that another researcher reports the same food to be harmful. This doesn't happen with God's Word.

In Isaiah 40:8 God says, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (see also 1 Peter 1:25). The Bible withstands the test of time. It will never be disproved and never goes out of date. God's truths are as applicable to our society today as they were to people hundreds or thousands of years ago.

It's also important to remember that God's plan and purpose for us will never change. Psalm 33:11 says: "His plans endure forever, his purposes last eternally" (Good News Bible, compare Proverbs 19:21).

We know that God the Father will be sending Jesus Christ back to the earth to establish His eternal Kingdom, and included in that plan is "bringing many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10). That should give us confidence and peace of mind. What a spectacular future to look forward to!

Of course, in the meantime, we will face difficult, even perilous, times ahead (2 Timothy 3:1). Yet God will give us the strength we need to make it through if we look to Him and His Word to guide us. He is our refuge and our strength (Psalm 46:1).

Moreover, God in His Word has given us a wonderful vision of a better world that's coming. His promises are sure (Hebrews 6:9-20). Indeed, we can face our rapidly changing, uncertain world with a truly positive and confident outlook—*if* we hold tightly to the God who does *not* change and whose eternal truths are utterly certain! ***GN***

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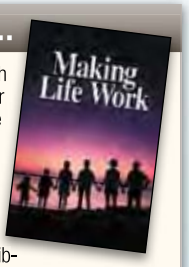

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Are You Protected by the Ultimate Security System?

by John LaBissoniere

We live in a dangerous world. Threats to our safety and security are growing. Is there a way to insure that you and your family are always protected?

Dateline: Dec. 18, 2009, WDTN TV Channel 2, Dayton, Ohio: "The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office arrested two men after a Jefferson Township woman called 911 as she hid in her bedroom from two men who were breaking in the back door.

"'They're outside, but I can hear them banging,' she told the dispatcher. 'Are they trying to break in?' he asked. 'Evidently, but I'm hiding in my bedroom . . . Hurry, please hurry,' she said. The woman stayed on the line as officers rushed to the home. When they arrived, police said they found two men inside the home.

"'You never know what a person's intention is; they might have just walked away, or they may have hurt her, you just never know,' said Captain David Hale, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office."

Dateline: Dec. 10, 2009, *The Buffalo News,* Buffalo, New York: "Niagara Regional Police are looking for four men who pulled off a home invasion robbery on Riverdale Drive Wednesday morning. Police said the four robbed residents of the home about 10:10 a.m., barging inside after ringing the doorbell.

"Two residents were found bound by the hands and feet when officers responded to a home intrusion alarm. An undetermined amount of cash was stolen and police said they believe the robbery was 'not a random act.'"

Dateline: Dec. 15, 2009, *The Sydney Morning Herald,* Engadine, New South Wales, Australia: "A 21-year-old man had a shotgun pointed at his head in a violent home invasion in Sydney's south last night, police say. The man heard three men trying to enter his home at Dunstan Place, Engadine about 11:40 p.m., police said.

"He went out to confront them and had a small shotgun pointed at his head. He was marched back into his house, where the gunman demanded money, police said. The man and two other housemates, aged 24 and 26, were forced to the ground before he was allegedly hit on the head with a blunt object. Police said the alleged robbers fled with some household items when they were unable to get any money from the residents."

While humanly designed security systems have their place, complete protection can only come from God.

123RF.com

A growing threat

These reports are actual news stories describing recent home invasions. A home invasion is the crime of entering an occupied private residence with the aim of carrying out a crime, whether assault, robbery, rape or murder. It's a legally defined offense in the United States, Australia, New Zealand and other countries.

Over the past decade, law enforcement officials have observed a marked increase in the number of home invasions. This may be due to many banks, convenience stores and fast-food restaurants, all traditionally targeted by criminals, installing advanced security and surveillance devices. As a result, criminals are now targeting less secure residential neighborhoods.

What can occur during a home invasion? Chris McGoey, a professional security consultant, discusses this subject on his Web site:

"The most common point of attack is through the front door or garage. Sometimes the home invader will simply kick open the door and confront everyone inside. More common is when the home invaders knock on the door first or ring the bell. The home invader hopes that the occupant will simply open the door, without question, in response to their knock. Unfortunately, many people do just that.

"Home invaders will sometimes use a ruse or impersonation to get you to open the door. They have been known to pretend to be delivering a package, flowers or lie about an accident like hitting your parked car. Once the door is opened for them, the home invaders will use an explosive amount of force and threats to gain control of the home and produce fear in the victims . . .

"Some home robbers have been known to spend hours ransacking a residence while the homeowners are bound nearby watching in terror . . . A major fear is that the robbers might commit more violence like sexual assault or even murder . . .

"If you can delay a home invader at

the point of entry then you have a chance of deterring them or have time to call the police . . . The weakest home security link is the home occupant who fails to lock doors or windows or who will open the door without question at the sound of a knock" (crimedoctor.com/homeinvasion.htm).

Are you at risk?

Obviously the thought of a home invasion or any crime is alarming. Could you and your family members be at risk? Becoming a crime victim is certainly a possibility. In the United States, for example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated that more than 9.7 million property crimes took place in 2008, the most recent year for which complete statistics are available, resulting in $17.2 billion in losses. The FBI also estimated that nearly 1.4 million violent crimes occurred that year, including murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault.

What can you do to make your home less susceptible to a home invasion? Security professionals encourage good safety habits and also advise installing solid core wood or metal outside doors with high-quality locks and deadbolt mechanisms. Many experts also recommend using window alarms, motion-sensitive outdoor lighting, video surveillance cameras, interior motion detectors and a two-way, voice-activated security monitoring system.

However, while these devices can help reduce your chance of a home invasion, they cannot guarantee that you won't become a crime victim. No matter where you live, you are at risk in a dangerous world. So what can you do?

It comes down to a simple question: Are you protected by the ultimate security system? This system insures that no matter what trouble comes your way, you will be safe and sound. It is summarized in this statement by King David of ancient Israel: "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6).

A failed security system

While humanly designed security systems have their place and we should do what we can to shield ourselves from harm, complete protection can only come from God. Regrettably, most people have rejected this critical security arrangement. Too often they have placed trust exclusively in humanly-devised safeguards, which can and do fail.

For example, consider the infamous

Maginot Line. This massive security project, designed chiefly as a strong barrier against any future German invasion, was constructed by France on its eastern border during the 1930s. Named in honor of André Maginot, a World War I hero and French minister of war during the 1920s, its intricate network of forts and bunkers was intended to provide sufficient time for French armed forces to mobilize in the event of an attack.

Built between 1929 and 1938, the Maginot Line became a vast, state-of-the-art defense complex stretching more than 400 miles along the German and Italian borders. Most of the system's fortresses, which included miles of interconnected tunnels and railroads, were located underground.

The multiple thousands of soldiers who served throughout the intricate configuration were sealed behind reinforced concrete walls and heavy steel doors. There they trained, watched and waited for war. And war came on May 10, 1940.

As the key component of the German invasion strategy, Adolf Hitler's 19th Panzer Corps quickly sliced through the Ardennes region of the French-Belgium frontier and broke through near where the Maginot Line connected with Belgian fortifications. The French mistakenly believed the area's extensive forests and steep hills would pose a major impediment to the rapid movement of large motorized forces.

This failed strategy allowed Germany's main invasion forces to smash through to swiftly outflank and trap Allied forces that had advanced into Belgium and Holland. After expending enormous effort and resources on the Maginot Line, the security the French thought they possessed vanished nearly overnight. The German blitzkrieg overpowered and conquered the entire nation in just six weeks.

Absolute protection comes from one source

What lesson can we learn from this example? Even with a carefully calculated strategy designed to protect an entire nation, no security method is foolproof.

What if we applied this lesson to the most advanced electronic home security system? Here, too, we can find inherent vulnerabilities. A door or window could be inadvertently left open or unlocked, creating an opportunity for intrusion. And what about times away from home while driving, walking or shopping? A person's well-being could be compromised in these and other situations.

So is security even possible in this world? Where can we find the answer? A careful look into the Bible, the "instruction manual" for life, gives us the decisive answer. Throughout the Scriptures, we find that God offers His mighty protection to those who trust and obey Him. A number of passages confirm this important and comforting fact.

Israel's King David wrote of his profound confidence in God's pledge of security: "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.' Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence.

"He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by

Photos: Wikimedia Commons

The Maginot Line became a vast, state-of-the-art defense complex stretching more than 400 miles along the German and Italian borders.

night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you" (Psalm 91:1-7).

Beyond the physical

Just as a mother bird instinctively covers its fledglings during a threat, God carefully guards those who believe and obey Him. But does this mean that no evil will ever befall those who trust in God? No, it does not. Biblical passages confirm that God permits difficult trials to afflict His people.

David distinctly understood this reality: "For all day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning" (Psalm 73:14). Yet although he suffered, David knew God stood by him and would deliver him: "Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, *and afterward receive me to glory"* (verses 23-24, emphasis added throughout).

David recognized that there was life beyond his physical existence. He knew that "glory"—eternal, spiritual life with God in His Kingdom—awaited him. The truth is, physical security and survival in the here and now is not an absolute biblical promise. It is not without exception.

In fact, Jesus Christ carefully explained to His disciples that they would face harsh persecution and some of them would suffer martyrdom (Matthew 5:11; 24:9; John 16:2). The prophets of past ages had suffered the same. And even Christ Himself, though perfectly righteous, was viciously abused and then brutally murdered at the hands of malicious evildoers (Matthew 23:29-37; Luke 23:33).

A future focus

The long history of God's true servants is one of distress at the hands of Satan's human instruments. The time just before Christ's second coming will be no different.

Although God supernaturally protects His people in numerous ways and will ultimately spare many from the terrible martyrdom that is coming, He will nevertheless allow others among them to be the focus of Satan's fierce rage at that time, even to the point of facing death (Revelation 12:9-17). Yet for most, that prospect will not overthrow their faith! Why? Because their focus will then be on their future *spirit* life with God in His Kingdom rather than on this fleeting physical existence (Hebrews 11:35-38).

Just like those who preceded them in martyrdom in previous ages, they too will be more attracted to the promise of an *eternal* reward than a desire to extend their physical lives a few more days, months or years. "And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11).

Though some of God's people will die physically in this coming martyrdom, they will in the end be utterly victorious (Matthew 10:28-39). They know that God's promise of perpetual security is absolutely guaranteed (1 Corinthians 15:53-54).

While God regularly provides physical security to those who trust and obey Him, the protection of *our minds and hearts* is His foremost motivation and objective. The apostle Paul wrote, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, *will guard your hearts and minds* through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Physical safety is important, but our spiritual well-being ought to hold significantly more meaning and value to us. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:1-4).

Rescued from death

What then is the "ultimate security system"? It is our *eternal salvation.* Salvation simply means preservation, deliverance and rescue. And from what are we rescued? From the peril and threat of *eternal death.* Jesus Christ "has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10).

Through His suffering, death and resurrection, we have been given full access to never-ending life as spirit beings in God's coming Kingdom (John 6:51; Ephesians 2:22; Romans 6:23).

This salvation, which is our unending security, is only accessible through repentance from sin and our full acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf (Colossians 1:14). Once we have repented and been baptized, we must diligently labor at "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). We need to "fight the good fight of faith" in order to "lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:12).

Our faith and obedience will be rewarded at the second coming of Jesus Christ: "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12).

That is ultimate security! The question is, are you protected? ***GN***

To Learn More...

What does the Bible reveal about how we obtain God's gift of salvation? Are there multiple paths to salvation? Is simply believing in Jesus Christ all there is to it? Is anything else required? You need to know the answers, for it literally is a matter of life and death! Learn what the Bible really teaches in our free booklet *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion.* Download or request your free copy today!

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"Beating up on Israel"

It's hard to improve on *The Wall Street Journal*'s above title when it comes to accurately depicting the global siege directed against Israel for its enforcing of its naval blockade of terrorist-ruled Gaza.

Canada is one of the few countries left in the world whose government and press remains reasonably friendly to Tel Aviv. The Jerusalem-based correspondent for the Toronto *Globe and Mail* observed, "The speed and intensity with which governments around the world condemned the Israeli behavior appears unprecedented" (Patrick Martin, "Israel's Status Slips as Governments Around the World Condemn Raid," May 31, 2010).

Politicians and journalists ransacked their vocabularies for phrases deemed apt enough to describe their bias and ill-will towards tiny Israel. The Israeli action in stopping six ships was variously described as "piracy, banditry and barbarism," "the massacre of Gaza," "the true face of barbarism," "state terrorism" and "a blatant defiance of civilized values."

Longtime White House reporter Helen Thomas opined that the Jews should "get the hell out of Palestine" and return to Germany, Poland and the United States. While she was forced into retirement over these remarks, being almost 90, her sentiments are shared by many people the world over.

Few bothered to ascertain the crucial background facts—or willfully ignored them—for Israel's case before unleashing a storm of verbal criticism. Few seemed to recall the fact that Israel has already endured 3,300 rocket attacks since unilaterally and voluntarily departing from Gaza five years ago.

A pro-Palestinian demonstration suddenly materialized in New York City's Times Square. Similar gatherings occurred in Washington D.C., London, Rome, Athens, Oslo and Stockholm.

Trying to reason with people on behalf of the Israeli embassy in Washington, spokesman Jonathan Peled wrote in *USA Today,* "Israel is not at strife with the people of Gaza and goes to great lengths to organize the transfer of some 15,000 tons of humanitarian aid each week" ("Opposing View on battle in the Middle East: 'A Bloody PR Stunt,'" June 1, 2010).

Of course, the terror group Hamas, which rules Gaza with an iron fist, has many times taken active advantage of Israel's already battered global image to advance its relentless attack on the country's very existence. Yet according to London *Telegraph* reporter Adrian Blomfield, "Some [citizens of Gaza] in the battered enclave blame Hamas and its overlords for their depredations" (*The Sunday Telegraph,* June 6, 2010).

The Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara,* location of a bloody clash as Muslim activists tried to break the Israeli blockage of Gaza.

Peled further stated, "Hamas not only calls for the destruction of Israel and works hard to achieve it, but also deprives its own population of basic human rights and freedoms."

Telegraph columnist Charles Moore wrote: "Israel has fought so long, and usually so well, in real battles, but it seems to have forgotten how to fight in verbal ones. On the day of the flotilla incident, all the outraged governments were on the airwaves almost before anything had happened. But it took five and a half hours before the Israeli Ambassador in America appeared in public" ("Why Has Israel Disarmed Itself in the Battle for World Opinion?" *The Daily Telegraph,* June 4, 2010).

Daniel Henninger, reporting for *The Wall Street Journal,* summed up the disturbing lack of character and resolve among many in government for tackling difficult problems: "In any of the places where men discuss truly monstrous and dangerous plans, in Kim Jong Il's Pyongyang or Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Tehran, watching this hyperventilated criticism of Israel for a shoot-out on a boat must strike them as laughable . . . If the world's powers unload like this only on relatively small, isolated nations like Israel, then clearly the keepers of the world order find it easier to be blowhards than statesmen" (June 3, 2010). (Sources: *The Telegraph, The Spectator, BBC News* [all London], *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], *USA Today, The Wall Street Journal.*)

Anti-Semitism reasserts itself in Eastern Europe

Extremist politicians in Hungary, Poland and other Eastern European countries are reverting to blaming Israel and the Jewish people in general for their own national shortcomings.

The Fidesz Party, successful in recent Hungarian elections, launched verbal attacks on the "Jewish capital . . . which wants to devour the entire world." A Warsaw political professor stated: "Anti-Semitism is crucial for the Polish right. The number of Jews in Poland today is minimal, but the anti-Jewish prejudice serves as a code for a general hostility to diversity and to Polish liberal democracy."

One Polish member of the European Parliament went so far as to say that he "will apologize for the killing of Jews on Polish soil in World War II when Jews apologize for killing Poles."

Denis MacShane of *Newsweek* summed up serious concerns that all should have: *"To anyone with a half sense of European history, the parallels with an older Jewish-baiting politics can no longer be dismissed"* ("Europe's New Politics of Fear," April 16, 2010, emphasis added). (Source: *Newsweek.*)

A new age of rage?

The popular British historian Simon Schama is worried over where current trends are headed, declaring that "the world teeters on the brink of a new age of rage" (*Financial Times*, May 22-23, 2010). He explained, "Historians will tell you there is often a time-lag between the onset of economic disaster *and the accumulation of social fury"* (emphasis added throughout).

Dangerously alienated citizens brood on the dramatic disruption of their rising income expectations and materialistic lifestyles and the fact that the value of their property may have fallen through the floor.

Many, he says, come to believe that *"someone else must have engineered the common misfortune."* So scapegoats must be found and duly blamed. The state of Israel, for instance, becomes a universal whipping boy, with worldwide displays of irrational outrage directed against its alleged misbehaviors.

Reality bites in Europe, where "widespread social unrest grows." It's been predicted that "the new austerity [restrictive measures to alleviate the recent European sovereign debt crisis] will impose strains on social peace in southern Europe" ("Beyond the Door Marked 'Austerity,'" *New Statesman,* May 24, 2010). This has already happened in the streets of Greece.

Are we facing more and more populist furies around the world—further disrupting economic and political well-being?

The following headline emerged in Ireland: "Irish 'Mad as Hell' Over Banks and Cuts" (*Irish Independent,* May 22, 2010). In Thailand, one former parliament member now aligned with the "Red Shirts" (who maintain that the current government is illegitimate) observed, "People are filled with hatred and we must be prepared for a campaign of terrorism" ("Thailand: Raising a Red Flag," *Time,* June 7, 2010).

So, before this summer is even over, are we facing more and more populist furies around the world—further disrupting economic and political well-being?

The Bible cautions against ill-considered popular uprisings where rumor and accusation urge people to frenzied emotion and outbreaks of violence: *"You shall not circulate a false report.* Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. *You shall not follow a crowd to do evil"* (Exodus 23:1-2). (Sources: *New Statesman, Financial Times* [both London], *Time.*)

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Christian education on the wane in Britain

A lead editorial in *The Sunday Telegraph* summed up the sad state of Christian education in the United Kingdom today, betraying a rich historic legacy:

"The Christian religion is the foundation of most of Britain's culture and traditions. The history of our nation is incomprehensible without some knowledge of it. *And yet . . . the rudiments of Christianity are frequently poorly taught—if, indeed, they are taught at all.* A report by Ofsted [the education watchdog] has found that, although nominally required by the national curriculum, in many schools instruction is 'superficial,' and is treated less seriously than the study of other religions" ("the Foundation of Our Culture," June 6, 2010, emphasis added throughout). This is particularly true in secondary schools.

In the same issue of *The Sunday Telegraph,* education correspondent Julie Henry wrote in a separate feature article, "In non-faith state schools, Christian assemblies are being dropped in favour of multi-faith worship, despite a legal requirement for Christian collective worship, and children are no longer taught the Lord's Prayer" ("Schools Failing to Teach Children the Core Beliefs of Christianity, Says Ofsted" June 6, 2010). She rightly advises that "getting to grips with the key teachings of Jesus Christ and other core elements of Christianity are building blocks that will help our young people analyse and interpret the society they are growing up in."

The lead editorial previously quoted also said: "There is, as Ofsted euphemistically puts it, '*uncertainty' about what the teachings of Christianity should involve.*" This is the crux of the problem. Even traditional Christianity has missed out on truly understanding the basic teachings of Christ given in the four Gospel accounts and fleshed out in the rest of the New Testament, all solidly based on the fundamentals of the Old Testament (see 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

"The history of our nation is incomprehensible without some knowledge of it. *And yet . . . the rudiments of Christianity are frequently poorly taught—if, indeed, they are taught at all.*"

The largely unrecognized apostasy from the true faith is explained in our free booklet *The Church Jesus Built,* which you can request or download from our Web site. (Source: *The Telegraph* [London].)

Koreas at the brink?

At the end of the Korean War in 1953, the United States and the Soviet Union divided Korea at the 38th parallel (a narrow strip here becoming the Demilitarized Zone or DMZ). Nearly all Koreans were opposed to the separation. Their differences and antagonisms have since grown and deepened. Currently North Korea's absolute leader is the ailing Kim Jong Il, who is also head of the fourth-largest army in the world.

On March 26, 2010, the South Korean warship *Cheonan* was sunk by a torpedo apparently launched by a North Korean submarine, killing 46 of the 104 sailors aboard.

South Korea has now sought intervention from the UN Security Council, taking the strongest step ever toward bringing international punishment to the communist North.

"'North Korea must admit its wrongdoing' and 'pledge to never again engage in such a reprehensible action,' [South Korean President] Lee [Myung-bak] said. 'If the enemy continues to taunt us and think that they can do whatever they want they must understand that there is a limit. They 'must understand very clearly that they will have to suffer the consequences'" (Associated Press, June 5, 2010). North Korea, meanwhile, denies responsibility for the attack and warns that any punitive move against the country could lead to another war.

The story of the two Koreas is the story of the world—division caused by confusion. God says that the way of peace is not humanly inherent (Jeremiah 10:23). He promises humanity peace only at the return of the *Prince* of Peace (Isaiah 9:6-7). Then not only will the two Koreas be united, but so will all peoples on earth (Isaiah 11). (Source: Associated Press.)

Pirates plague the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa is a large peninsula of East Africa on which sits four countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. American soldiers are stationed in Somalia, a nation which has been in the international news quite a lot in recent times. This country has been plagued by the presence of some 1,000 pirates in the Gulf of Aden (situated at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula between Yemen and Somalia), one of the most important sea trade routes in the world.

Nations such as Russia, France and India have sent naval forces to both protect and rescue cargo ships from Somali pirates, being specially authorized by the United Nations Security Council to enter these waters. But there are huge sums for the taking at stake, and these risk-taking pirates have proved very persistent—making these waters perpetually dangerous for merchant vessels.

The Horn of Africa itself remains no stranger to violence and continual conflict. As the global affairs magazine *North-South* states, the Horn "is one of the most complex and deeply troubled regions of both Africa and the world and over the last 50 years it has suffered some of the continent's most brutal and enduring conflicts while the antagonisms aroused by these conflicts reach back generations and have become the basis for continuing rivalries and suspicions: They include wars between Eritrea and Ethiopia, Ethiopia and Somalia and civil wars in Ethiopia and Somalia" (*North South,* June 2010). (Source: *North-South.*)

Greatest U.S. oil catastrophe continues

Media reports have amply revealed the devastating results of an oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico, which killed 11 oil workers and has led to millions of gallons of oil gushing from a broken pipeline almost a mile below on the ocean floor. This far-reaching disaster is the worst oil catastrophe in U.S. history.

BP (formerly the British Petroleum Company), owner of the well, has acknowledged its responsibility for this ecological tragedy, but as of this writing it appears that it could be months before the well is plugged. Meanwhile, the American states along the Gulf coastline are pleading for help to save their beaches, marshlands and natural bird sanctuaries.

As gooey tar blobs wash up on the once-pristine white beaches of Alabama and the Florida panhandle, human mistakes are taking a direct toll on the livelihood of fishermen and tourist industries alike.

Who knows where or how this will end? The Bible foretells far greater catastrophes for the United States and for humankind in general if we don't turn to and obey Him. To learn more, request or download our free booklets *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*

How Can You Make Sense of the News?

So much is happening in the world, and so quickly. Where are today's dramatic and dangerous trends taking us? What does Bible prophecy reveal about our future? You're probably very concerned with the direction the world is heading. So are we. That's why we've created the *World News and Prophecy* Web site—to help you understand the news in the light of Bible prophecy. This eye-opening site offers you a perspective so badly needed in our chaotic and confused world—the perspective of God's Word, the Bible. Visit us at **www.WNPonline.org** today!

Immigration: How a Foreign Invasion Is Reshaping the West

In the last 50 years, millions of people from the Third World have moved into the Western democracies. Many have contributed to the welfare of these nations, but others lack work skills, proper education and democratic convictions. What will it mean if and when these ever-growing minorities begin to constitute the majority in several key countries?

Suddenly, immigration is becoming a bigger issue throughout the Western world. Governments around the globe are very concerned about potential problems that massive immigration may bring.

The American state of Arizona, which borders Mexico, recently passed a law authorizing police to inquire of people they've stopped for other legitimate reasons if they are in the United States legally, should there be sufficient reason to suspect otherwise, and to ask for proof of their legal status in such case. Illegal immigrants have contributed to mounting crime, increasing health and educational costs and other problems in the state.

Most of Arizona's citizens support the law, though some organizations outside the state have announced boycotts, which could cost it a great deal. Even the federal government is considering filing lawsuits to prevent the law from being implemented.

Immigration reshaping Western countries

A car bomb placed in New York City's Times Square on May 1, 2010, was the 11th attempted terrorist act in the city of New York since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The bomb—which, thankfully, failed to go off as planned—raised some deeply troubling questions about even legal immigration.

How could a young Pakistani immigrant who lived the American dream possibly want to kill hundreds of his fellow citizens? The United States and other Western democracies, still coming to terms with radical Islam, are finding it hard to fathom. It just doesn't fit into the multicultural ideal!

France, Belgium, Italy and other European countries are passing laws to block Islamic women from wearing full veils in public. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel is insisting the country's large Turkish population should assimilate, while the Turkish prime minister insists they should have their own separate schools to protect their Islamic identity.

Meanwhile, a Danish cartoonist whose cartoon depicting the prophet Muhammad led to riots in a number of countries was threatened by an ax-wielding intruder, and a Swedish cartoonist was physically attacked by protesters shouting "Allah is great!" as he gave a lecture on free speech. Muslims insist that freedom of speech, long cherished in the West, has its limits.

In Britain, the issue of immigration may have cost Prime Minister Gordon Brown the recent election. When a 65-year-old supporter of his own party approached him during the campaign and expressed concern about all the immigrants from Eastern Europe flowing into her neighborhood, Mr. Brown was overheard in his car describing her as a "bigoted woman." Leaders clearly don't like the sensitive issue of immigration being brought up.

But it's not going to go away.

Majorities becoming minorities in their own land

People are feeling increasingly threatened by the changing demographics in their own nations. The ethnic composition of Western countries is rapidly altering due to massive immigration in the last few decades. The United States alone took in 10 million more immigrants in the seven years following Sept. 11, 2001—many of them from countries rife with radical Islamists. To many citizens, this just doesn't make sense.

An increasing number of Americans are aware that these demographic changes will lead to a majority nonwhite population in their own lifetimes. How they handle this will determine the country's future. As *Time* magazine put it: "How the current majority reacts to its incipient minority status is the most crucial socio-demographic issue facing the country" (Gregory Rodriguez, "The White Anxiety Crisis," March 22, 2010, international edition).

In an amazing break from tradition, many Western nations changed their immigration policies after World War II and welcomed millions of people from the Third World. Even the United States, often deemed a cultural "melting pot," had an immigration policy prior to 1965 that favored maintaining the racial status quo.

The late Senator Edward Kennedy's 1965 immigration bill deliberately changed earlier policy, welcoming a big influx of immigrants from the world's poorer nations. At the time, Americans were assured it would not alter the ethnic mix and social fabric of their nation.

Now it's evident this assurance was false. One could easily make the argument that the election of America's first African-American president would not have happened without the reality of changing demographics.

Immigration leading to unrest

The issue of immigration was briefly discussed on NBC's *Chris Matthews Show* on May 9, 2010.

During the program, John Heilemann of *New York* magazine observed: "We're going through one of these once-in-a-century transformations that cuts across a lot of different things—cultural change, there's big demographic change, there's big economic change, and technological change, and it makes people really nervous. It's been going on for about 15 years in America—the sense of anxiety, the sense we've lost control of our lives."

Also on the show was Cynthia Tucker,

a columnist with the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution,* who offered this perspective: "I've always thought that this great melting pot or salad, however you want to describe this diverse nation, works as long as the economy is good, as long as the pie is growing and every American believes he or she has an opportunity to get a piece of that pie, we're all pretty happy."

However, now that the economy is not doing so well, the United States could be in for a more stressful time when it comes to assimilating the various ethnic groups that now live in the country.

The same applies elsewhere, of course.

Immigrants march for amnesty in downtown Los Angeles on May Day, 2006.

Wikimedia Commons

Some of the eurozone countries are on the brink of financial collapse due to decades of overspending. Severe government spending cuts are inevitable. The nations have already seen unemployment rise. Without jobs, many are already blaming immigrants for their situation.

In the latest election in Britain, the anti-immigrant British National Party almost tripled the share of the vote it received in the 2005 election. In fact, anti-immigrant parties are seeing growing support in a *number* of European countries.

The perceived threat applies on several different levels.

Security a growing concern

Besides feeling that their way of life is threatened, both culturally and economically, people are also becoming more concerned about security as radical terror movements increasingly recruit homegrown terrorists. Commenting on the recent attempted bombing in Times Square, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies professor Fouad Ajami wrote the following in the May 10, 2010, *Wall Street Journal:*

"'A Muslim has no nationality except his belief,' the intellectual godfather of the Islamists, Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, wrote decades ago. Qutb's 'children' are everywhere now; they carry the nationalities of foreign lands and plot against them. The Pakistani-born Faisal Shahzad [who set up the car bomb] is a devotee of Sayyid Qutb's doctrine, and Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter, was another.

"Qutb was executed by the secular dictatorship of [Egyptian President] Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1966. But his thoughts and legacy endure. Globalization, the shaking up of continents, the ease of travel, and *the doors for immigration flung wide open by Western liberal societies* have given Qutb's worldview greater power and relevance. What can we make of a young man like Shahzad working for [the cosmetics company] Elizabeth Arden, receiving that all-American degree, the MBA, jogging in the evening in Bridgeport, then plotting mass mayhem in Times Square?

"The Islamists are now within the gates. They fled the fires and the failures of the Islamic world but brought the ruin with them. They mock national borders and identities. A parliamentary report issued by Britain's House of Commons on the London Underground bombings of July 7, 2005, lays bare this menace and the challenge it poses to a system of open borders and modern citizenship.

"The four men who pulled off those brutal attacks, the report noted, 'were apparently well integrated into British society.' Three of them were second-generation Britons born in West Yorkshire. The oldest, a 30-year-old father of a 14-month-old infant, 'appeared to others as a role model to young people.' One of the four, 22 years of age, was a boy of some privilege; he owned a red Mercedes given to him by his father and was given to fashionable hairstyles and designer clothing . . . Two of the four, rather like Faisal Shahzad, had spent time in Pakistan before they pulled off their deed.

"A year after the London terror, hitherto tranquil Canada had its own encounter with the new Islamism. A ring of radical Islamists were charged with plotting to attack targets in southern Ontario with fertilizer bombs. A school-bus driver was one of the leaders of these would-be jihadists.

"A report by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service unintentionally echoed the British House of Commons findings. 'These individuals are part of Western society, and their "Canadianness" makes detection more difficult. Increasingly, we are learning of more and more extremists that are homegrown. The implications of this shift are profound'" ("Islam's Nowhere Men: Millions Like Faisal Shahzad Are Unsettled by a Modern World They Can Neither Master nor Reject," emphasis added).

Prophecy warned of consequences for national sins

The modern descendants of the ancient Israelites include many of the nations that make up today's Western world. In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, God promised tremendous physical blessings if they would obey Him, but He also warned them of the dire consequences of disobedience. The promised blessings for obedience are awe-inspiring; the assurances of punishment for sins are deeply troubling.

These chapters make for sobering reading

Continued on page 27

How Can You Deal With Information Overload?

by Becky Sweat

We're often bombarded with information of all kinds from every direction, leaving us stressed, anxious and fatigued. How can we better cope with this ongoing information explosion? How can we sort the helpful from the wasteful?

Do you have a stack of journals, magazines and books on your desk that you really should read, but haven't gotten to?

Ever feel frustrated because you don't know how to use features on your cell phone, laptop or PDA?

Are you concerned that your job marketability is declining because your industry knowledge is getting out of date—but you just don't have time to take the classes to stay current?

Do you often find yourself in conversations with others who bring up events in the news you're unaware of—and you feel embarrassed admitting you don't know what's going on?

If you answer "yes" to any of the above questions, you're experiencing information overload!

It's a common malady these days, stemming from the rapidly increasing quantities of information being produced and published.

Let's consider the ever-widening scope of this problem, its impact on us and some ways to deal with it in our personal lives.

An explosion of information

According to researchers at the University of California at Berkeley's School of Information, mankind has produced more information in the last 30 years than in all the previous 5,000 years combined. They estimate that in just the last decade, the total of human knowledge has doubled every two to three years. Soon researchers believe knowledge will double every year.

As the amount of available data expands, managing the information becomes more difficult. "Most people today have more information coming at them than they can ever assimilate and process," observes

Deborah Barreau, Ph.D., associate professor at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"If we're trying to make a decision, we often have so much information that we get confused, and we don't know what to do. At the same time, we're expected to be knowledgeable about more and more things to function in our society."

This state of having too much information to digest is known as *information overload.* Almost everyone suffers from it to some degree. It can cause stress, anxiety, fatigue, frustration, reduced productivity, an inability to concentrate and feelings of being overwhelmed and overburdened—eroding work efficiency as well as personal health and family life.

"There are only so many details in anyone's life that can be handled comfortably," Dr. Barreau says. "When that limit is exceeded, circuits begin to shut down. We refuse to process any more."

Information overload is not a totally new phenomenon. Ever since the printing press was invented in the 15th century, making it possible to distribute written information to the masses, people have been complaining that there are too many published materials to get through.

"By the late 19th century, there were already more books in the average American library than anyone could possibly read," notes David Levy, Ph.D., professor at the School of Information at the University of Washington. However, he adds, "information overload is a far greater problem today than it ever was in the past." This, he says, is directly related to technology—in particular, the advent of the computer.

Information overload—21st-century style

Before the invention of modern computers in the 1950s, information was produced in very sedate increments. Once computers became available, data could be compiled and analyzed at speeds never dreamed of before. Modern computers also allowed scientists to utilize computer modeling and simulation techniques, which greatly accelerated the scientific discovery process. Scientists could now conduct their research on the computer, which yielded faster results than doing traditional laboratory experiments. This caused information production to soar.

But that's not technology's only impact. The modern computer, and accompanying growth of the Internet starting in the mid-1990s, have allowed information to be duplicated, published and accessed by just about anybody. "The World Wide Web has provided us access to billions of pages of information, increasing the number of people whose thoughts we encounter and exposing us to more ideas than ever before," says Lark Birdsong, an information professional and Web search trainer in Denver, Colorado.

Anyone who wants to can start a blog or Web site or share their perspectives on

Photos, from left: iStockphoto, 123RF

online forums and chatrooms. If it's information you want, you can sit down in front of your computer and do a Google or Yahoo search and, within seconds, be presented with hundreds, thousands or even millions of search results to weed through. Of course, a lot of the electronic information we're being inundated with isn't information we're necessarily seeking.

And our home or work computer's stationary Internet connection is not the only way this inundation comes to us. Modern communications technology has given us cell phones, PDAs, MP3 players and wireless Internet connections for our laptops, allowing us to be connected to information sources wherever we go and whenever we want it. Each day you may have potentially hundreds or even thousands of e-mail messages, instant messages, RSS feeds, podcasts and audio clips, YouTube downloads, text messages and posts on social and professional networking sites to read, watch or listen to—all competing for your attention.

"All of the computer-mediated communication—instant messaging, chatrooms, social networking sites, text messaging—while they're not 'information' in the traditional sense, have really intensified the problem of information overload in recent years," Dr. Barreau observes. "Much of the social messaging is relaying really trivial information, like your friend posts a status update on Facebook about where she is going for lunch today or what movie she is going to see. But it can be so easy to get caught up in all that."

Facebook is the largest social networking site, with more than 400 million active users worldwide, who share more than 25 billion pieces of content (news stories, Web links, notes, photos, posts, etc.) each month. Hundreds of other such sites are targeted to specific life stages or interests.

Anthony Rotolo, professor at Syracuse University's School of Information Studies, specializes in social media. What he finds particularly interesting is that "more and more people are accessing this information 'on the go' from their mobile devices, rather than being tied to a computer. That information is coming at us 24/7 and being integrated into our daily routines."

Not only that, but, he adds, "whether it's academic or work information, the news, or seemingly irrelevant social information from friends, it's all happening in one spot—your mobile device. This constant bombardment is adding tremendously to the feeling of information overload."

Efforts to cope with the uncertain quality of our information supply and conflicting "facts" can result in information anxiety, fatigue and confusion.

In addition to electronic communication, all the "traditional" information sources continue to vie for our attention. That includes magazines, newsletters, journals, newspapers, reports, books, letters, direct mail, faxes, memos, video teleconferencing, phone calls, voice mail, radio and television programs, DVDs and CDs. Considering this tidal wave of data coming at us, it's clear that the concept of keeping up with it all is illusory.

"The sheer volume of information being published today far outstrips our capacity to deal with it," Dr. Levy says.

The road to overload

Excesses of either type of information—the factual kind ("book knowledge") or the social information coming from electronic communication—can lead to information anxiety. Exactly how does it happen?

First off, it's important to state that information in and of itself is not a problem. It can be wonderful to connect with friends on social networking sites. And obviously we need information to be able to earn a living, make wise decisions and take care of our families.

Proverbs 18:15 tells us, "The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge." Proverbs 24:5 similarly says, "A wise man is strong, yes, a man of knowledge increases strength." God wants us to use our minds and develop our abilities.

The stress comes in when we feel like we're not well enough informed about the various situations we confront on a daily basis, or when we try to keep up with all the information coming at us and can't. So you may feel nervous discussing certain business topics with your boss if you haven't had time to keep up with all the trade magazines and books recently published related to your field.

You may be upset with yourself for not making the move you should have with your stock portfolio, and the reason you didn't is because you didn't have the time to watch the financial news to keep up with the latest statistics. Or perhaps you are having difficulty staying on top of the technology you need to use at work or at home, and that is causing you angst.

The demand to be informed is relentless. "Changes are continually being made to technological innovations, adding to the pressure of what else we need to learn about," observes Dr. Levy. "The rate of technological change has never been faster. If you're going to use technology, you have to always be learning in order to stay up on it."

Of course, Levy adds, if you buy the newest version of your word processing software, it can seem like a waste of time to read the manual and learn about all the features because the next version will probably be considerably different.

You've got (too much) mail

Some people become stressed because of the dozens or even hundreds of e-mails they receive each day (and that's after their spam filters deleted the ones that were junk!), and each one needs to be answered.

I know one parent who feels guilty because she doesn't have time to read the 30 or 40 e-mail updates she gets on average each week from her kids' teachers. She has two teenage sons, each with seven teachers.

"Every teacher sends out at least one e-mail a week explaining what they're doing in class. Usually there are study

guides and handouts sent as attachments that the teachers want us to go over with our kids," this mother related. "But I am already so busy with my job. I don't have time to deal with extra e-mails, so I don't usually read them. But I do worry that I'm letting my kids down, because they're not getting the extra help from me."

One other cause of overload is that so much of the information we encounter, particularly on the Internet, is either irrelevant, simply personal opinion, or outright false. Trying to filter through all the "fluff" to get to the information we really need can be an overwhelming task.

It can be difficult to discern bias and point of view, know which Web sites are trustworthy and which ones aren't, and assess the validity of information being presented. Not everyone has the skills to devise effective Internet searches. You can end up with a lot of duplicate or conflicting information, or you might have to go through many, many pages of search results before you find something useful.

You encounter some of these same challenges in other media too. Consider television, for example. It's become a much more complex medium than it used to be.

"A quarter century ago there were only a couple of TV channels, and people would tune in every night to listen to one source, Walter Cronkite, and he would tell you the way it is," says Rotolo. "But in this environment, with hundreds of cable and satellite TV channels broadcasting around the clock, there is no longer one trusted source of information. And when you have urgent and sometimes conflicting messages coming in from multiple TV channels, how do you know which one to believe? More often than not, you can't know."

Efforts to cope with the uncertain quality of our information supply and conflicting "facts" can result in information anxiety, fatigue and confusion.

The time factor

Some believe the real problem with information overload is lack of time. If we *do* attend to everything directed at us (because we think that's what is expected of us!), or if we allow ourselves to become addicted to the Internet or to the endless pursuit of information (it *does* happen!), that can take away time from more important priorities.

"There is a lot of pressure to stay informed about what your friends are doing, what's going on in the world and what's happening in your profession," Dr. Barreau observes, "but there is not so much pressure anymore for people to have time to sit down and quietly think and reflect."

She takes her dog on a walk every morning, and says she "can't help but notice all the people who are talking on their cell phones while they're walking. We don't even feel free to be able to take a few minutes away from our technology." Having some downtime is important for our emotional and mental health, not to mention to be able to think deeply about the larger issues of life, such as why we are here and where we are going.

Barreau is also dismayed when she sees people dining out, with several either on their cell phones or focused on their Blackberries rather than conversing with their friends or family members at the table. "It makes other people feel like you are shutting them out—and you are," Barreau says.

She says people are spending increasing amounts of time "interacting" with their technology (during their downtime, away from work), which is coming out of time that used to be allotted for socializing with friends and family. Compare this trend to a generation ago, when sociologists were expressing concern about family members spending their evenings staring at the TV. Now the concern is that family members are at their own laptops, surfing the Web and reading e-mail, with each one in their "own little world."

Dr. Levy shares the same concerns. Additionally, he's worried about what all the technological interruptions are doing to our workdays. "All the e-mails and text messages are very distracting, waste a lot of time, and are destroying our productivity at work," he states.

In recent years, he's met with many professionals from various fields, who tell him they feel dissatisfied with their careers. In a nutshell, it's because they feel they don't have enough uninterrupted time to do as quality a job as they would like.

There's a similar trend in academia. Dr. Barreau's students often send "tweets" (posts on Twitter) and text messages to each other while she lectures the class. She says not only is that behavior disrespectful, but "their attention is divided, and they're not getting as much out of class."

"Most people don't multitask very well," she notes. "We generally deal with things better sequentially rather than trying to do three or four things at once." However, she adds, for many people, multitasking and having constant interruptions is becoming the "normal" way to function.

It's vital that we have frequent time alone with God in prayer and studying His Word.

123RF

Our most important priority

Ultimately, information overload can distract us from the most important priority in our lives—*our relationship with God.* Indeed, a healthy relationship with other people, especially our family and fellow Christians, is an important part of our relationship with God Himself. And, of course, it's vital that we have frequent time alone with God in prayer and studying His Word.

Nearly 3,000 years ago, King Solomon, whom the Bible states was gifted with wisdom more than any other person, understood mankind's proclivity for information overload. In Ecclesiastes 12:12 he cautioned, "Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh."

While there were no mass-market publishers back in Solomon's day, still a good number of books were being written. As is true today, there were some back then who let the pursuit of secular knowledge become their top priority. Solomon saw that you could study countless numbers of books and still feel unsatisfied with your life—if you let the pursuit of physical knowledge steer you away from God's

truth and a relationship with Him.

About 500 years later, the prophet Daniel was informed through an angel that an unprecedented knowledge explosion would occur in the last days. He wrote, "Many will rush here and there, and knowledge will increase" (Daniel 12:4, New Living Translation). The Hebrew word used here for "increase" implies not just an *addition* of knowledge, but a *multiplication* of knowledge that is *growing exponentially*—certainly a fitting description of our day.

This prophesied knowledge explosion, however, was referring to an increase in *secular* information, not a better understanding of God's truths.

In 2 Timothy 3:7, the apostle Paul told Timothy that in the last days many people would be "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." How aptly that describes our society! While there has been a boom in physical knowledge, the knowledge of God and His way of life certainly appears to be decreasing!

In recent years, Gallup and other polling organizations, along with the American Bible Society, have conducted surveys about Bible readership. All have reported that Americans and other Westerners are not reading the Bible as much as they used to—and consequently know less and less about it. Yet that is the kind of "information" this world needs most! It is only God's eternal truths that can solve the enormous problems facing our world.

There are probably many factors leading to the decline in biblical literacy. This article has alluded to one of them: As a society, we have become so overloaded with the "cares of this world" that they are choking our spiritual lives. Mark 4:19 describes this condition in the parable of the sower, and the person so afflicted "becomes unfruitful."

God's warning to the nation of Israel more than 2,700 years ago is another that rings true today: "My people are destroyed *for lack of knowledge"* (Hosea 4:6). Again, the destruction was a matter of the people lacking and not seeking *spiritual* knowledge. With the amount of stress, frustration and fatigue so many people are contending with today, we can already see this destruction happening to some degree. These are certainly sobering warnings, for very serious times.

The antidote to information overload

The crucial thing to remember is that while information overload is a widespread problem in our society as a whole, it need not take control over *your* life. So what can you do?

• For starters, take an honest assessment of your priorities. Are you so wrapped up in pursuit of secular knowledge or an online social life that you have no time left to dig deeply into God's Word? Are you routinely using your PDA or laptop when you are with friends and family? If your priorities are misaligned, be willing to make the necessary changes.

• Plan for only one time each day to check e-mail, social messaging sites, chat rooms, etc. Don't allow yourself to check multiple times—unless you truly are waiting for an important e-mail. Each time you go online, you run the risk of being pulled in, and that eats up your valuable time.

• If you are being barraged with too many electronic interruptions during the weekday, ask people to call or text you during work hours only if it's a genuine emergency. Otherwise they—and you—end up stealing time from your employer.

• When you need to do some Internet research, be willing to ask your reference librarian for help. Most librarians are happy to educate people about Internet search techniques, which will help you get better refined search results and waste less time.

• Remind yourself that it's okay to not know everything. In fact, it's impossible to keep up with the pace of the information superhighway. The sooner you accept that, the happier you'll be. Know what's worth knowing and what isn't, and be willing to fall behind on the information that really doesn't matter.

• If there are critical features of your computer or other technology that you don't know how to use, look up the appropriate information online, get help from the tech support desk at your local computer store or sign up for a workshop at your local community center. Don't worry about the applications you don't use.

• Set aside a regular time each week where you and other family members do not use *any* kind of electronic media technologies, including television. It could be something you do every Sabbath, or perhaps an hour or two every evening. "'Unplugging yourselves' will give you time for family, for reflection or to just unwind," Dr. Levy says.

• Finally, no matter how busy you get, make time for some Bible study every day. Keeping your mind focused on God's Word will help you to filter all the information that's coming at you on a daily basis—and to know what's important to address and what isn't! ***GN***

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Germany and the Euro: What Will Be the Ultimate Outcome?

by John Ross Schroeder

A severe crisis often results in economic and political disaster, but it can also foster an opportunity for exercising much greater control, especially for an economically strong and dominant country like Germany. Does the Bible indicate where the current crisis (and others like it to follow) could eventually take Europe?

Three died in this bank in Athens, Greece, after the building was firebombed during riots in May.

The euro, the shared currency of 16 nations in the European Union (EU), came into being some 11 years ago. But the economic and monetary union it represents has met with a dire situation, calling the currency's survival into question.

A former president of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, recently declared: "When the euro was born, everyone knew that sooner or later a crisis would occur. It was inevitable that, for such a bold and unprecedented project, in some countries mistakes would be made and unforeseeable events occur" (*Financial Times,* May 21, 2010).

As with any chain, that of the euro is only as strong as its weakest link—which in this case turned out to be Greece.

Heavily in debt, it was in danger of default and being forced off the euro—which would lead to many investors losing confidence in other overextended eurozone countries and abandoning euro holdings. The EU and the International Monetary Fund decided to bail out Greece to maintain the eurozone and buoy up faith in the currency. And political integration has been pushed forward in order to impose stricter financial discipline on member states.

Mr. Prodi went on to say: "I was warning years ago that . . . extraordinary events could occur that would force joint co-ordination of fiscal policies. Then the Greek crisis arrived—serious in terms of the sins that caused it, but easily solvable considering the modest size of the country's economy."

Most European observers would probably take issue with his statement about an easy solution, as the situation remains precarious for Europe and the global economy. But his overall assessment about closer integration seems to be pretty much on target.

European political integration or eventual meltdown?

Daily Express columnist Leo McKinstry analyzes the current situation more bluntly: "The moment of truth has arrived for the European Union. The debt crisis has brought the single currency to the brink of meltdown. Leaders of the EU now face a stark choice.

"They can either allow the eurozone to fall apart through the withdrawal of hopelessly indebted member states such as Greece and Portugal, *or ruthlessly press ahead with full economic and political unification, creating a new European nation that will impose fiscal discipline throughout its territory"* (May 21, 2010, emphasis added throughout).

Hamish McRae, chief economics commentator for *The Independent,* offers his own assessment—embedded in the title of his recent article: "The euro should survive this crisis; but it won't get through the next one" (May 21, 2010).

A Stratfor Global Intelligence report stated: "The euro and the European Union will probably survive this crisis—although their mutual failure is not nearly as unthinkable as the Europeans would have thought even a few months ago—but this is not the only crisis Europe will experience" (May 25, 2010).

Romano Prodi, in his piece quoted above, expressed his own assessment: "We are therefore at a crossroads. The only alternative to greater co-ordination of economic policies is dissolution of the euro."

The German and British roles—and their mutual relationship

Berlin took a calculated risk by banning short selling of euro-area government sovereign credit-default swaps and 10 German financial stocks until March 2011. Whether boldly or foolishly, it made this decision *unilaterally,* without consulting France or

Photos: Wikimedia—Piazza del Popolo, Sebastian Zwez

any other member country of the eurozone. Though the action has invited immediate backfire, being generally condemned as ill-judged, this German government rarely acts without careful calculation.

One observer speculated about the possibility of "a smash-and-grab attack on the future of the eurozone that could transform the dynamic of the European Union" (Bill Jamieson, "Germany Pushes the Issue Too Far," *The Wall Street Journal,* May 21, 2010).

"'If we don't avert this danger, then the consequences for Europe are inevitable,' [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel said. 'Because if the euro is failing, then Europe is failing . . . This will all remain in place until other rules [other than those in Germany] are established on a European level'" (Andrew Thomas, "Germany's Merkel: Failure of Euro Means Failure of Europe," *The Wall Street Journal,* May 19, 2010). Clearly Berlin, as key paymaster for Greece and other weaker economies, expects the eurozone members to follow its leadership.

The Stratfor Global Intelligence report commented: "As we have seen during the current crisis, *Germany is clearly the economic center of gravity in Europe,* and this crisis has shown that the economic and political issues are very much one and the same. Unless Germany agrees, nothing can be done, and if Germany so wishes, something will be done" (May 25, 2010).

Partially through the efforts of dislodged Labour Party Prime Minister Gordon Brown (while he was still chancellor of the Exchequer), Britain has retained its pound sterling and so far avoided joining the eurozone. While on board a ferry crossing the Irish Sea from Britain to Ireland, I watched on TV the newly elected British Prime Minister David Cameron in a joint news conference with Angela Merkel, ostensibly in support of German efforts to stem the current crisis. Apparently they had a 90-minute meeting as well.

But the night before (May 20), as reported by *The Guardian,* Mr. Cameron had apparently confided to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, "I always had concerns about the euro on a fundamental level" (May 22, 2010). The same article states, "Cameron's footwork looked impeccable—until he used the V-word with Merkel."

During the news conference with Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Cameron "declared that the support of all 27 EU countries was needed to change the Lisbon Treaty to stiffen the rules for the single currency, something Merkel stressed might be necessary to revive the euro." Calling her attention to the "V-word," Cameron said: *"The United Kingdom has a veto.* Those are very important points to understand."

"If we don't avert this danger, then the consequences for Europe are inevitable. Because if the euro is failing, then Europe is failing."

—German Chancellor Angela Merkel

Tensions between Britain and Brussels

The new British government's plans for Europe have been summed up in a white paper published in *The Daily Telegraph.* It says: "Britain should play a leading role in an enlarged European Union, but no further powers should be transferred to Brussels without a referendum . . . Britain will not join the euro in this Parliament and the possibility of a United Kingdom sovereignty bill stressing the 'ultimate authority' of Parliament will be explored" (May 21, 2010).

Well-known British author Frederick Forsyth, also a columnist for the *Daily Express,* starkly stated: "Once again Brussels has come up with a new decree aimed at afflicting more damage on our country. Like it or not London's Square Mile absolutely dominates the world of the hedge fund [an investment fund to protect against losing money] . . . The funds generate a huge amount of wealth and they are overwhelmingly based here.

"So Brussels has come up, impelled by the Franco-German alliance, with a series of measures to cripple them . . . It is just a ploy to hound them [the hedge funds] out of London where they contribute billions to the British economy." This particular piece was titled, "Humiliating Britain Is Still Top Item of Brussels Agenda" (May 21, 2010).

John Griffing asked the question in his article in *The American Thinker:* "How did independent nations with separate identities and divergent cultures allow themselves to be bullied into submission by a gaggle of European bureaucrats in Brussels?"

All human aspirations and failures aside, the ultimate answer appears to lie in the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. With all of its ups and downs, and whatever the eventual fate of the euro, the European Union has set up a complex infrastructure of bureaucratic government that could well be used by a future charismatic dictator reminiscent of Adolf Hitler. According to the biblical book of Revelation, many people will actually come to worship this man and the empire over which he will rule. Scripture calls both the man and the empire "the Beast."

Jesus Christ urged His followers, "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). You need to be sure you're regularly reading *The Good News* to properly comprehend what we are told to watch! ***GN***

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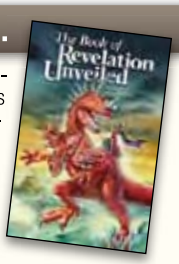

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Time Flies—How to Make the Most of It!

by Don Hooser

Benjamin Franklin said: "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of." The Bible also has many things to say about time and life—things we very much need to hear!

Time Flies. That's the title of a very funny book comedian Bill Cosby wrote when he turned 50. With nostalgia, he reflects on his bygone days of youthful vigor and the often-comical realities of growing older.

Bill Cosby's book illustrates how a sense of humor can help us cope with the trials of life. With it, 50 can be pretty nifty after all.

After finishing *Time Flies,* I thought about what Cosby did *not* say. He never expressed *regret* for *time wasted!* That's largely because he has lived a very goal-oriented and productive life.

One of life's saddest feelings is major regret—regret for bad things that happened or for good things that didn't happen. As Ben Franklin said, "Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late." How most people wish they could turn the clock back and redo part of their lives! It's our hope to steer you in the right direction so you can avoid future causes for regret!

Realize the value of the time you have

It's sobering to read how often the Bible emphasizes the brevity and fragility of life. King David wrote: "Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You. Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor" (Psalm 39:4-5).

Moses indicated that the typical lifespan in his day was only 70 years, with 80 being fairly common as well (Psalm 90:10). With the brevity of life in mind, he made this request of God: "Teach us to *number our days* aright, that we may gain a heart of *wisdom"* (verse 12, New International Version, emphasis added throughout).

We should all pray as David and Moses did for God's help to understand the great value of our limited time and how to make the most of each day.

Are godly people rewarded with longer lives? Not necessarily. It's true that people who avoid sinful and risky behavior naturally tend to have healthier and longer lives. And sometimes God rewards a righteous person with a long life, relatively speaking (Psalm 91:16; Ephesians 6:1-3).

But God often allows good people to die young and evil people to live long. When the Bible promises "long life" to God's people, it ultimately is referring to life after death—*eternal* life!

Wisdom: Waste not your time

It seems that most people waste an awful lot of time. That means each one is wasting a huge chunk of his or her life. How we use our time says a lot about our character and priorities!

The Bible places heavy emphasis on seeking wisdom. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom" (Proverbs 4:7). And a big part of wisdom is knowing the value of *time* and learning to make the most of it.

The lack of wisdom in most young people—and many immature older people—is evidenced by their improper priorities—not yet realizing what really matters. Some people spend much of their lives in pursuit of trivia, entertainment and self-indulgence. They're loitering their lives away!

However, both the Bible and history offer many examples of great accomplishments by people who used their time well.

Life's satisfaction and joy is derived largely from productive work (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13). One of God's first commands to Adam in the Garden of Eden was "to tend and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). The Bible clearly teaches a strong work ethic.

However, God doesn't want us to be workaholics. We need balance as we budget our time. We need time to stop and smell the roses! The proper amounts of sleep, exercise, good nutrition, time with family and time worshipping God all help us to be more productive in the long run. "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

God revealed the weekly schedule man is supposed to follow in the Fourth Commandment: "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work" (Exodus 20:9-10).

Good time management

Good "time management"—using one's time efficiently, effectively and productively—is an issue of great importance in business and industry.

Time is valuable. "Time is money!" Yet many people "kill time." Wasting small fragments of time adds up to lots of time that is forever lost.

Making the most of every minute is not a new idea. Rudyard Kipling's famous poem "If," published in 1910, ends with these lines:

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

For example, a person will accomplish much more in life if he learns to put *in-between times* and *wait times* to effective use instead of just fuming or daydreaming. For example, when you know you might have to wait in line—say, at the post office or barber shop—bring along something to

Both the Bible and history offer many examples of great accomplishments by people who used their time well.

read. Another good option is silent prayer.

When you're doing something physical that doesn't require much concentration, you can be listening to a recording of something educational.

You can find many books on time management. Reading one will give you lots of useful ideas.

Many great accomplishments have been achieved by people who were using their "spare" moments.

A biblical perspective on using our time

Managing your time well becomes highly important when you recognize that God has called you to a life of serving Him and serving others. Jesus said, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear *much fruit;* so you will be My disciples" (John 15:8).

To produce fruit for God and others to enjoy, we must be willing to unselfishly sacrifice our time. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (verse 13). Jesus Himself personified these words—not just in His final hours of supreme sacrifice, but throughout His earthly ministry in constantly giving of His time to help and teach others.

To the Christians of his day, Paul emphasized the seriousness of *"redeeming* the time"—making the most of your time and opportunities. "So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days" (Ephesians 5:15-16, New Living Translation).

In Colossians 4:5-6 he similarly wrote: "Live wisely among those who are not Christians, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and effective so that you will have the right answer for everyone" (NLT).

Jesus was certainly on fire with zeal and urgency for doing God's work! "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). He also said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34).

Today, Christ wants followers who have that same kind of zeal for doing His work!

No one knows how long he will live

No matter how young and healthy you are, don't be overconfident about living a long time. "For man also does not know his time" (Ecclesiastes 9:12).

James warns us: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit,' whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, *'If the Lord wills,* we shall live and do this or that'" (James 4:13-15).

"For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

James points out here that declaring future actions without considering that we are not in ultimate control of what will happen is "arrogance" and "boasting" (verse 16). He is referring not so much to exact wording as to our need for a humble attitude. Therefore, when talking about future plans, you don't necessarily need to specifically add the words "if the Lord wills" or "God willing." Instead you could say, "I plan (or expect) to do such-and-such," realizing that God may cause or allow things to work out differently.

As an example, Jesus told a parable about a cocky and covetous rich man who felt sure he had plenty of time to "eat, drink, and be merry," but he died that very night (Luke 12:15-20). Then Jesus said, "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (verse 21).

Be ready and stay ready to meet your Maker

Jesus repeatedly promised that one day He will suddenly return to the earth to set up His Kingdom (Matthew 24:23-36). And He warned that when that day approaches, most people will be spiritually unprepared—like the people in the days of Noah "until the flood came and took them all away" (verses 37-39).

He said, "Therefore *you also be ready,* for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (verse 44). Those who are spiritually ready will receive eternal life. Those who are not will not.

The need to stay spiritually prepared is illustrated by the well-known parable of the 10 virgins, picturing 10 bridesmaids accompanying the bride on a nighttime procession to meet the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1-13). Having an ample supply of lamp oil represents being prepared. The bridegroom represents Jesus Christ returning to marry His bride, the Church. The five foolish virgins represent Christians who will be unprepared for Christ's return.

Now what if you somehow knew the date when Christ will return? Consider: What difference would it make if you died *before* He returns? So we need to be spiritually prepared *always*—for the end of our lives could be moments away. Of course, we are not to live in anxiety over such a possibility. Rather, we need to get our spiritual houses in order now—and there will be no cause for worry.

"The end" for each person is Christ's coming or the person's death, whichever comes first. Jesus warned that when a person thinks the end is far off, he tends to procrastinate and compromise and let down spiritually (Matthew 24:48-51; Luke 21:34-36). Let us not make that tragic mistake!

Rest assured, God is on our side. He is pulling for us. He wants no one to perish, but "desires all men to be saved"—for all people to receive "everlasting life" (1 Timothy 2:4; John 3:16).

Joyous everlasting life! Just think! No more shortage of time. No more running out of time. No worries about time. Time will no longer fly by too fast.

We'll have *plenty* of time. Time that goes on and on and on. Forever. Everlasting time!

In the meantime, *time flies!* Make the most of each and every day! ***GN***

123RF

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UNITED STATES
BROADCAST TV

Illinois
Peoria — ch. 19, Sun 10 a.m.

Indiana
Indianapolis — ch. 23, Sun 10:30 a.m.

Ohio
Cincinnati — ch. 64, Sun 10 a.m.

CABLE TV

Nationwide
WGN America — Sun 8:30 a.m. EST, 7:30 a.m. CST, 6:30 a.m. MST, 5:30 a.m. PST

Alaska
Anchorage — ch. 18, Fri 4 p.m.

Arizona
Prescott — ch. 13, Sun 5 p.m.; Sat 3:30 p.m.
Prescott Valley — ch. 13, Sun 9 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.
Tucson — ch. 72, 120, Sun 9:30 a.m. ch. 73, 98, Sat 9:30 a.m.

Arkansas
Fayetteville — ch. 18, Sun 10 a.m.; Wed 6 p.m.; Sat 9 a.m.

California
Alameda — ch. 28, Tue 10 p.m.
Anaheim (west) — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Clayton — ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Concord — ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Costa Mesa — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Cypress — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Danville — ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Eureka — ch. 12, Fri 8 p.m.
Fountain Valley — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Fremont — ch. 29, Tue 10 p.m.
Garden Grove — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Hayward — ch. 28, Tue 10 p.m.
Huntington Beach — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Lafayette — ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Livermore — ch. 26, Fri 5 p.m.
Los Alamitos — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Los Angeles — ch. 36, times vary
Marin County — ch. 26, Wed 7 p.m.; Thu 1 p.m.
Martinez — ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Midway City — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Modesto — ch. 26, Fri 6 p.m.
Monrovia — ch. 16, 98, Tue, Thu and Sat 4:30 p.m.
Novato — ch. 71, Tue 9:30 p.m.
Orange — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Orinda — ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Pasadena — ch. 56, Sun 6 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Petaluma — ch. 26, Sun 9:30 a.m. & 3 p.m.; Wed 6 p.m.; Sat 2:30 p.m.
Pleasant Hill — ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Rossmoor — ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Sacramento — ch. 18, Mon 6:30 p.m.
San Diego — ch. 18, 19, 23, Mon 5 p.m.
San Francisco — ch. 29, Sun 9:30 a.m.
San Jose — ch. 15a, Sun 10:30 a.m.
Santa Clara — ch. 15a, Wed 4:30 p.m.
Santa Rosa — ch. 30, Sun 11 a.m.; Mon 4:30 a.m.; Wed 9 p.m.; Thu 12:30 p.m.; Fri 6 a.m.; Sat 7:30 p.m.
Stanton — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Walnut Creek — ch. 26, 2nd & 4th Mon 8 p.m.
Westminster — ch. 3a, 6, Sun 12:30 & 9:30 p.m.

Georgia
Cornelia — ch. 4, Sun 6:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.

Hawaii
Hilo — ch. 53, Sun 10 a.m.; Thu 7:30 p.m.

Idaho
Boise — ch. 11, Sun 3:30 p.m.; Wed 7:30 a.m.

Illinois
Arlington Heights — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Bartlett — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Brookport — ch. 2, Sun 2 p.m.
Buffalo Grove — ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Chicago — ch. 36, times vary
Des Plaines — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Elkgrove Village — ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Glenview — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Golf — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Hanover Park — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Hoffman Estates — ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Lincolnwood — ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Metropolis — ch. 2, Sun 2 p.m.
Morton Grove — ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Mt. Prospect — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Naperville — ch. 17, Sun 10 a.m.
Niles — ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Normal — ch. 20, Sun 9 p.m.
Northbrook — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Palatine — ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Park Ridge — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Prospect Heights — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Rolling Meadows — ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Romeoville — ch. 6, Sun 9 a.m.
Schaumburg — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Skokie — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Springfield — ch. 4, Wed 12 a.m., 8 a.m. & 5 p.m.
Streamwood — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Wheeling — ch. 35, Wed 6:30 p.m.
Wilmette — ch. 19, Wed 6:30 p.m.

Indiana
Bloomington — ch. 3, Sun 9:30 p.m.
Evansville — ch. 7, Mon 5:30 p.m.; Tue 6:30 p.m.
Ft. Wayne — ch. 57, Sun 9:30 a.m.
Valparaiso — ch. 99, Tue 8:30 p.m.

Iowa
Des Moines — ch. 17, Sun 11:30 a.m.

Kentucky
Owensboro — ch. 72, Sun 8 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Paducah — ch. 2, Sun 2 p.m.

Massachusetts
Cambridge — ch. 22, 23, 83, Sun 7 a.m.; Wed 10 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.
East Longmeadow — ch. 5, Sun 11:30 a.m.
Fall River — ch. 95, Wed 2 p.m.
Greenfield — ch. 17, Tue 6:30 a.m.; Sun 6 p.m.
Palmer — ch 12, Tue 11 p.m.
Worcester — ch. 13, Thu 10 a.m.

Michigan
Ann Arbor — ch. 17, Thu 4:30 p.m.
Cadillac — ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Charlevoix — ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Cheboygan — ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Grand Haven — ch. 22, Mon 4 p.m.
Grand Rapids — ch. 25, Tue or Wed 11 a.m.
Kalamazoo — ch. 95, Sun 9 & 9:30 a.m.
Mackinaw City — ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Manistee — ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Michigan City — ch. 99, Tue 8:30 p.m.; Thu 7 p.m.
Midland — ch. 99, Tue 5:30 p.m.
Mt. Pleasant — ch. 3, times vary
Petoskey — ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Redford — ch. 12, Mon 6 p.m.
Traverse City — ch. 2, 97, 992, Sun 11:30 a.m.; Wed 6:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.
Ypsilanti — ch. 17, Thu 4:30 p.m.

Minnesota
Albert Lea — ch. 13, Sun 10:30 a.m.
Austin — ch. 13, Sun 10 a.m.
Blaine — ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Bloomington — ch. 16, Wed 10 p.m.; Thu 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.
Brooklyn Center — ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Brooklyn Park — ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Centerville — ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Circle Pines — ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Crystal — ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Eden Prairie — ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.
Edina — ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.
Golden Valley — ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Ham Lake — ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Hopkins — ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.
Lexington — ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Lino Lakes — ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Litchfield — ch. 10, Sun 2 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 7 p.m.; Wed 3 a.m., 8:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.
Maple Grove — ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Minnetonka — ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.
New Hope — ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
New Ulm — ch. 72, Sun 5 p.m.; Thu 10 a.m.; Fri 7 p.m. ch 14, Thu 9 a.m.
Osseo — ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Plymouth — ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Richfield — ch. 15, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Thu 5:30 p.m.
Robbinsdale — ch. 19, Sun 6 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sat 10 p.m.
Rochester — ch. 10, Sun 10 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.; Sat 10 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.
St. Charles — ch. 20, Sun 2 p.m.; Wed 3 p.m.
Spring Lake Park — ch. 14, Sun 1 & 9 a.m.; Sat 5 p.m.
Wabasha — ch. 20, Sun 2 p.m.; Wed 3 p.m.
Winona — ch. 20, Sun 2 p.m.; Wed 3 p.m.

Missouri
Cape Girardeau — ch. 5, daily 5 & 9 p.m.
Jackson — ch. 5, daily 5 & 9 p.m.
Jefferson City — ch. 3, Wed 6 p.m.
Poplar Bluff — ch. 54, Tue 4 p.m.
Springfield — ch. 26, Sun 8:30 a.m.; Wed 7 p.m.

Montana
Helena — ch. 11, Sun 3 p.m.
Missoula — ch. 7, Sun 11 a.m.

New Mexico
Santa Fe — ch. 16, Sun 10 a.m.; Mon 6:30 p.m.

New York
Binghamton — ch. 4, Thu 5:30 p.m.
Bronx — ch. 70, Mon 3 p.m.
Brooklyn — ch. 56, 69, Sun 10 a.m.
Canandaigua — ch. 12, Sun 2 p.m.
Long Island — ch. 20, Mon 10 p.m.
New York — ch. 57, Sun 7 a.m.
Oneonta — ch. 23, Mon 6 p.m.; Wed 9 p.m.
Queens — ch. 35, Tue 8 p.m.; Thu 3 p.m. ch. 56, Thu 3 p.m.; Sat 12:30 p.m.
Woodbury — ch. 20, Sat 8:30 p.m.

North Carolina
Charlotte — ch. 21, Sat 1 p.m.
Durham — ch. 18, Wed 7:30 a.m.
Hickory — ch. 10, Sun 11 a.m.
Raleigh — ch. 22, Tue 6:30 p.m.

North Dakota
Bismarck — ch. 12, Sun 2:30 p.m.
Fargo — ch. 12, Tue 10:30 a.m.

Ohio
Athens — ch. 23, Sun 7 p.m.; Wed 7 p.m.
Brunswick — ch. 21, Tue 7 p.m.; Wed 12:30, 4:30 & 8:30 a.m.; 2:30, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.
Bryan — ch. 4, Sun 11:30 a.m. & 8:30 p.m.; Mon 5 p.m.
Cincinnati (Union Twp.) — ch. 8, Sun 2:30 a.m.; Tue 9:30 a.m.; Wed 11 p.m.; Sat 2:30 p.m.
Dayton — ch. 12, Tue 11 a.m.; Sat 3 p.m.
Defiance — ch. 5, Sun 12 noon; Thu 6 p.m.
Fairborn — ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Greenville — ch. 3, Thu 8 p.m.
Huber Heights — ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Oberlin/Wellington — ch. 12, Sun & Sat 9 a.m.
Springfield — ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Trotwood — ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Urbana — ch. 1, daily 6 a.m., 10 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Vandalia — ch. 6, Sun 5:30 p.m.
Wash. Court House — ch. 3, Wed 2 p.m.; Sat 10 a.m.
Xenia — ch. 23, Sun 5:30 p.m.

Oregon
Eugene — ch. 29, Tue 2 p.m.
McMinnville — ch. 11, Sun 5:30 p.m.; Wed 8 p.m.
Medford — ch. 15, 95, Sun 5 p.m.
Monmouth — ch. 17, Sun 11 a.m.
Portland — ch. 22, Fri 4:30 p.m. ch. 22a, 33, Sun 7:30 p.m. ch. 23, Mon 6:30 p.m.
Salem — ch. 23, Sun 12:30 p.m.; Fri 2 p.m.; Sat 9 a.m.

Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh — ch. 21, Wed 2 p.m.

Rhode Island
Entire state — ch. 14, Fri 10:30 a.m.

Texas
Austin — ch. 11, Mon 8:30 p.m.
Del Rio — ch. 19, Sun 9 a.m.; Wed 5 p.m.
El Paso — ch. 15, Mon, Fri, Sat 1 p.m.
Fort Worth — ch. 28, Tue 5:30 p.m.; Thu 1 p.m.
Longview — ch. 26, Tue 2 p.m.; Sat 9 p.m.
San Antonio — ch. 20, Mon 10:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Virginia
Charlottesville/ Albemarle County — ch. 13, 14, Mon 5:30 p.m.; Wed 10 p.m.; Thu 4:30 p.m.
Hampton Roads — ch. 71, 74, Sun 10 a.m.

Washington
Bainbridge Island — ch. 12, Sun 9:30 a.m., 6:30 p.m., 11 p.m.; Sun-Sat 1 a.m.; Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat 5 a.m.; Tue & Thu 5:30 a.m.
Everett — ch. 77, Wed 5 p.m.
Kennewick — ch. 13, Sun & Tue 8:30 p.m.
Olympia — ch. 22, 29, Sun 9 a.m.; Thu 10:30 p.m.
Spokane — ch 14, Sat 5:30 p.m.
Vancouver — ch. 11, Sun 11 p.m.; Mon 5 p.m.; Sat 11 a.m.

West Virginia
Morgantown — ch. 3, Mon, Wed & Fri 6:30 p.m.; Sat 10 a.m.

Wisconsin
Beloit — ch. 96, Thu 6:30 p.m.
Eau Claire — ch. 96, Sun 2 p.m.
Kenosha — ch. 14, Sun & Mon 7:30 p.m.
Madison — ch. 4, Sun 12:30 p.m.
Milwaukee — ch. 96, Mon 2 p.m.; Tue 7 p.m.; Wed 2 p.m.
Omro — ch. 19, Sun & Sat 1 p.m.
Stevens Point — ch. 96, 984, 984-1, Mon 5 & 9:30 p.m.; Tue 10 a.m. & 3:30 p.m.
West Allis — ch. 14, times vary

CANADA

Nationwide
Vision TV, Sun 10 p.m. EST, 9 p.m. CST, 8 p.m. MST, 7 p.m. PST
Star Choice Digital ch. 399, Sun 10:30 a.m. EST, 9:30 a.m. CST, 8:30 a.m. MST, 7:30 a.m. PST

Alberta
The Christian Channel Telus ch. 158, Sun 8:30 a.m.

British Columbia
The Christian Channel Telus ch. 158, Sun 7:30 a.m.

Manitoba
The Christian Channel MTS ch. 21, Sun 9:30 a.m.

New Brunswick
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sun 11:30 a.m.

Newfoundland and Labrador
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sun 12 noon

Northwest Territory
The Christian Channel Northwestel ch. 226, Sun 8:30 a.m.

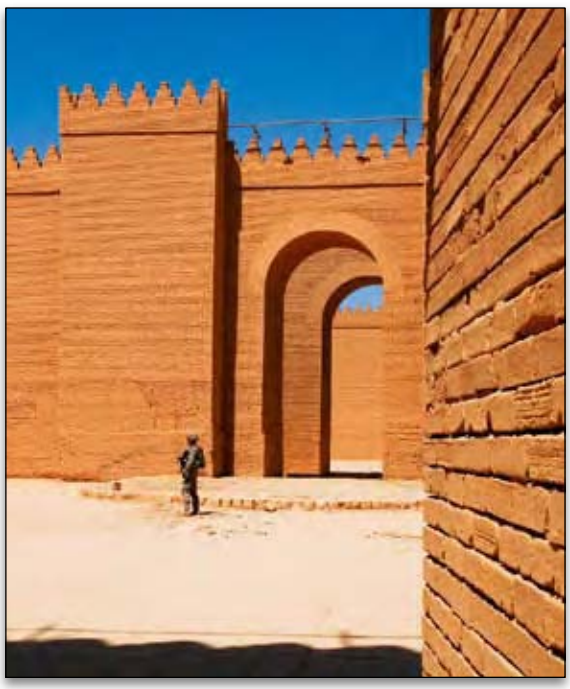
Ontario
The Christian Channel Rogers ch. 396, Sun 10:30 a.m.
The Christian Channel Cogeco ch. 186, Sun 10:30 a.m.

Saskatchewan
The Christian Channel SaskTel ch. 282, Sun 8:30 a.m.

The Decline and Fall of Nations: A Prophetic Perspective

by ***Beyond Today*** host Darris McNeely

Ancient Babylon fell in one night after having been "weighed in the balance and found wanting." Can modern empires fall just as quickly? History and the Bible provide an answer!



A U.S. soldier stands guard within the walls of the ancient city of Babylon. Some of the city's ruins were reconstructed by the late Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in a vain attempt to restore the fallen kingdom's grandeur.

iStockphoto

Harvard historian Niall Ferguson, writing in the March-April 2010 issue of *Foreign Affairs* magazine, presents an analysis of how empires can quickly collapse into chaos. Rather than a slow decline over centuries, Ferguson shows that many large nations of the past were gone in a few short years. While seemingly strong and viable, they faded virtually overnight.

Conventional wisdom assumes that the economic challenges to America's global dominance are long-term threats. It is pointed out, for instance, that demographics alone will over time increase the debt to unmanageable proportions.

Ferguson himself cites long-term predictions of China overtaking America in economic size and output by 2027 or 2040, but then he asks: "What if history is not cyclical and slow moving but arrhythmic—at times almost stationary, but also capable of accelerating suddenly, like a sports car? What if collapse does not arrive over a number of centuries but comes suddenly, like a thief in the night?" ("Complexity and Collapse," p. 22).

Sudden shifts like a thief in the night

A thief in the night? Sounds biblical! The New Testament tells us: "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes *as a thief in the night.* For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then *sudden destruction comes upon them,* as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3, emphasis added throughout).

What the Bible says about end-time events culminating in the Day of the Lord applies to the sudden collapse of powerful nations and empires throughout history.

Ferguson looks at the collapse of the Soviet Union over a short period of five years, from the time Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. Although the CIA overestimated the size of the Soviet economy, the Soviets did have nuclear superiority over the United States. It looked as if the Soviet Union would be around to challenge America for many years to come.

"Yet less than five years after Gorbachev took power, the Soviet imperium in central and Eastern Europe had fallen apart, followed by the Soviet Union itself in 1991. If ever an empire fell off a cliff—rather than gently declining—it was the one founded by Lenin" (p. 30).

Ferguson's thesis is that empires are large, complex systems that can be turned upside down in short order by the insertion of even one event that is more than the system can handle. Lack of confidence in a nation's future, even while it is strong, can be such an event. When other nations lose confidence in the sustainability of an economic model, events can be set in motion to quickly change the balance of power.

Other smaller, seemingly insignificant events can trigger a chain reaction leading to massive upheaval. The assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in June 1914 was the fuse that lit the powder keg of World War I. No one saw it at the time, but events quickly raced out of control, and a worldwide conflict ensued.

An example from the recent economic crisis

We have the recent example of how the complex world economy went from boom to bust when a lot of Americans began defaulting on what are commonly called "subprime loans." Because thousands of large financial institutions were set up to depend on the performance of those loans, they suddenly found themselves insolvent or quite near the brink. The reverberation brought down large Wall Street financial houses and had repercussions across Europe and Asia.

The world financial system approached meltdown one week in September 2008. The global economy is still recovering. It

is an object lesson in how quickly events, even relatively small ones, can turn the world upside down.

Ferguson concludes by observing that "empires behave like all complex adaptive systems. They function in apparent equilibrium for some unknowable period. And then, quite abruptly, they collapse . . . It is sudden" (p. 32).

What Ferguson and other historians typically leave out of the discussion is what can be called the *missing dimension* in world affairs. That missing dimension is *the hand of God* in the rise and fall of nations and empires.

The Bible is a chronicle of ancient nations that rose and fell according to God's plan and purpose. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome—all are mentioned in the narrative. All played key roles in interacting with the nation of Israel and the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Even today, the lessons of empires embedded in the Bible apply as we watch the modern world move toward what Christ said would be the end of the age of human governments.

The lesson of ancient Babylon

The prophetic book of Daniel lists Babylon as the first in a line of empires that would impact the world from the time of the fall of Jerusalem in Daniel's day to the end of the present age of human misrule. Daniel found himself at the seat of the empire dealing with a succession of rulers beginning with Nebuchadnezzar. While explaining the significance of the king's dream to him, the prophet told him that God "removes kings and raises up kings" (Daniel 2:21).

Here is a crucial first principle to understand about world affairs. *God* determines the course of nations. He can set up or remove a leader when He wills. That doesn't mean He is involved in every small nation's affairs when these don't impact the course of His plan. But clearly He is involved in seeing to it that all the prophecies He has given about various nations and the world at large are fulfilled. Many of these prophecies are warnings of judgment.

Babylon found itself facing God's prophetic warning on the night when a subsequent ruler, Belshazzar, "made a great feast" (Daniel 5:1). This event occurred as the Persian armies massed outside the city gates. During the banquet the disembodied fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the wall of the king's palace (verse 5). King Belshazzar was troubled at the sight and asked for anyone who could interpret what the writing said. Word came that Daniel was the only one who could possibly interpret the handwriting, so he was brought into the banquet room.

Daniel related some of what the former ruler Nebuchadnezzar had learned through his experience with God, including the fact that "the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses" (Daniel 5:21).

Daniel's interpretation of the handwriting highlights another fundamental dimension in world affairs. The message on the wall was, "God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it . . . You have been . . . found wanting; . . . Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:26-27).

It is God who judges the time an empire is allowed to persist and when its time is over. A key is when the nation and its people are "found wanting"—not measuring up. In other terms, this is speaking of sin, breaking God's laws and not acknowledging Him.

The Babylonians worshipped false gods who neither saw nor heard nor knew anything. They did not acknowledge the "God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways" (verse 23). Their problem was the same as virtually all other great nations that rose and fell throughout history: They did not worship the true God. They practiced what the Bible calls idolatry, worshipping as God that which is *not* God. The problem remains with us today.

That very night the Persians captured Babylon and Belshazzar was killed. As a power, Babylon ended—absorbed into the Persian kingdom. The transition was over suddenly, like a thief in the night.

A modern-day "Babylon" to rise and fall

In the Bible, the name "Babylon" refers to more than just that ancient city. It is also used to describe a religious and political system that traces its roots back to pagan Babylon. When we go to the book of Revelation, we see a modern version of this ancient system dominating the world scene. Revelation 17 shows a woman sitting on a scarlet beast with this name on her forehead: "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (verse 5).

This system controls the world for a brief but significant time prior to the coming of Jesus Christ. The world will be lulled into a sense of peace and security by this system that will come together in the guise of safety and security.

While this system will impact the entire world, there are signs it will be weak in its foundation. Its size alone will make it a complex system. Many nations, ethnicities, cultures and languages will be in play. It will be an unstable mixture that, after a brief supremacy, will quickly unravel.

Revelation 17:16 shows that the economic and military power aligned with this end-time Babylon, prophetically called the "beast," will turn on this system symbolized by a fallen woman. Revelation 18:8 tells us: "Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine . . . 'For *in one hour* your judgment has come'" (Revelation 18:8-10).

Once again, judgment comes quickly—unexpectedly. Whether it is days or months is unclear, but it will likely not be much longer, given the time frame of prophecy in this period. Like ancient Babylon falling in one night, we see that sudden change can come on a nation even as life appears to be normal.

Christ's warning not to be caught unaware

Jesus Christ said people would be going about a normal life and would be caught unaware by the momentous changes occurring: "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing,

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drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For *it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth"* (Luke 21:34-35).

Once again, we see the warning that events will occur suddenly, like a thief in the night. What Niall Ferguson observed in his article about the decline and fall of nations is supported by both history and biblical prophecy. But there is a difference. Ferguson and most modern historians focus on demographics and economic factors. As already pointed out, they typically leave out the *spiritual* dimension of God's intervention.

To ignore and deny the hand of God in history is to miss the real meaning of history and current world events. And to deny God is what lies at the heart of any decline and fall.

The problem of idolatry

Nebuchadnezzar had to learn this lesson the hard way. He looked at the kingdom he ruled and thought it was all established and built through his wisdom and cunning. Like any despot in history, he was pretty high on himself; and when he surveyed the splendor of Babylon in a pride-filled boast, he came face to face with reality.

Scripture says He went mad for seven years. His mental state made him a prisoner in his body, with no ability to act or think rationally. And then, just as suddenly, he returned to normal and resumed his position in the kingdom. He learned a lesson—that God's control of leaders and nations is the critical factor in world affairs. The last few verses of Daniel 4, where this part of the story is told, form a final word on the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

The words of the prophets, including Jesus Christ, teach us the critical lesson we need for understanding why nations can suddenly collapse when the normal signs say otherwise. When a people fail to acknowledge God and lapse into idolatry, putting themselves first, they set out on a road to collapse.

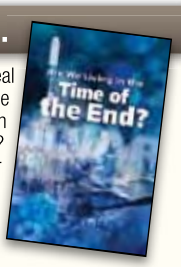
That collapse may take several generations, but it is inevitable apart from national repentance. The fall can take a few decades or only a few years. But when God's time is ready, what He has foretold *will* happen.

This is why the present state of affairs in America and its role in the world is so critical. Since the end of World War II, America has been the defender of what has been called the "free world." Its nuclear shield protected Europe during the Cold War, allowing European economies to rebuild. The U.S. Navy has kept the sea lanes of the world open to commerce. Its armies have fought terrorism, responded to genocide and been a deterrent to rogue nations like North Korea and Iran.

America's rising debt will one day—perhaps very soon—cause it to retreat from the historic role it has played as a global protector. When that day arrives, it will signal a change, perhaps a collapse, in America's role as a superpower. What follows will likely be quick and sudden, "like a thief in the night."

When the day comes that America and the English-speaking peoples relinquish their historic and biblically predicted role in the modern world, the world will become a vastly different place—with much darker days to follow. ***GN***

To Learn More...



What does Bible prophecy reveal about what it calls the time of the end? What is it the end of? Can we really know and understand? To learn more, download or request your free copy of the booklet *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* A free copy is waiting for you!

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Foreign Invasion

Continued from page 15

when we consider trends in recent years. In Deuteronomy 32, verse 25 warns of "terror within"—a prophecy clearly being fulfilled now, with an even greater increase in the problem likely still to come.

The apostle Paul spoke of how God created "from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings" (Acts 17:26).

Of course, this passage does *not* mean that correctly controlled immigration is inherently wrong, seeing that when the Israelites left Egypt the door was opened for a certain number of non-Israelites to dwell among them. However, they had to leave their culture behind and abide by the same laws God gave the Israelites. We are now learning the negative consequences of the multicultural society that has been propagated for the last 50 years.

Mixing cultures, and especially religions, can be volatile! We should have known that before the change in immigration laws just by looking at history and at other societies where mixing religions has led to serious tension and conflict.

The people of Europe feel particularly threatened. With higher population densities than the United States and closer proximity to the volatile Middle East, many West European nations have significantly high Muslim populations. Add to this Europe's low birthrate in contrast to the high Islamic birthrate, and the potential for violent conflict only increases.

And as we've seen, it's not just security that is threatened. Economics also play a major role. God Himself warned of serious consequences for the native peoples as a result of immigration: "The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail" (Deuteronomy 28:43-44).

In other words, the strangers—those of foreign cultures and religions—will end up on top, in control and in time possibly dictating a way of life foreign to the indigenous population.

This is, of course, exactly what happened when European settlers started arriving in North America, Australia and elsewhere—they ended up on top and in control, displacing the native populations. Now, two or three centuries later, they are the ones losing control to newer arrivals.

Immigration trends and birthrates show that sometime in this century the peoples who currently dominate most of the Western nations will be minorities in their own lands. Whatever you may think of the ethnic mix, the reality is that significant change is underway, and it's threatening no less than the future of Western civilization. ***GN***

To Learn More...

Why do so many troubles continue to mount up for the major English-speaking nations? Why do they seem to be plagued by crisis after crisis? Why is their power and wealth diminishing so quickly? Could we be missing out on some crucial biblical understanding? Be sure to request or download your free copy of *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* to learn more!!

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Letters From Our Readers

"What's Behind Islamic Terror?"

What an excellent issue! I have read it a couple of times now to make sure I didn't miss anything. Finally, a publication takes a stand and tells all who read it that Islam is not a religion of peace, rather one of violence, perfidy and false doctrine. It is imperative that Christians be aware of what Islamists stand for and, ultimately, die for.

Their fundamentalism is not just in the Middle East, it is worldwide, and it is just a matter of time until we in North America are faced with the fanatical choices they deliver. We have already experienced transported tragedy on a huge scale, i.e., the Trade Towers, but Jesus told us we should expect persecution for our faith. Where do we get the arrogance to say that it will not come from our own backyards, that Islam is a belief system "somewhere else"?

I applaud the fact that you did not sugarcoat their objectives. I pray you will continue with another series of like articles.

M.J., Canada

"The Middle East: Ground Zero of Bible Prophecy"

We just received our copy of the issue with the article "The Middle East: Ground Zero of Bible Prophecy." The bottom has been cut off, and we can't get the full benefit of the magazine. Could I please get another copy sent? You have been the turning point in our true understanding of the Bible and prophecy that God wants us to understand. Thank you for opening our eyes to the truth.

Mr. & Mrs. S.B.L., Derby, Kansas

Thanks for the comments, and we have mailed a replacement copy of this issue.

World News and Trends

Your article "America, Britain and Israel" does not mention the recent events in 2008-2009 when Israel broke a six-month cease-fire with Palestinian leaders who were elected in free and fair democratic elections in 2006. The Palestinians were subsequently shelled, reducing 25 percent of their buildings to rubble, killing over 1,400 of them, including children, with the aid of white phosphorous bombs. Such actions by Israel are bound to break up this relationship.

J.H.G., Isle of Man

Read the item "Beating up on Israel" in the World News and Trends feature on page 12 of this issue. The one-sided summary of the situation as presented in your letter illustrates how Israel has long been a victim of grossly biased reporting and the omission of key facts that present a very different picture.

"How Can You Receive the Transforming Power of God's Spirit?"

Having read many interesting articles in your May-June 2010 *Good News* magazine, I reached page 20. Here I read your column "What Does God's Spirit Do for Us and in Us?" I found that the Holy Spirit is referred to 13 times as "it." I am sorry to read this, for as the third member of the Godhead He is truly God. Jesus Himself in John 14:17 and in other places refers to the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, as "He" and "Him."

I shall be interested in your comment on this as I am a new reader of your magazine, having only recently returned to England after many years abroad. I have found the few editions of *The Good News* I have read very scriptural and informative.

B.J.C., Rickmansworth, England

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to explain. We have mailed our free booklet Who Is God? *to you. It contains two chapters about the Trinity doctrine. The first one explains why the Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to with the pronouns "He" and "Him." Greek, as do the Romance languages (Spanish, French, Italian, etc.), invokes a specific gender for every object, animate or inanimate. Each is designated as either masculine, feminine or neuter.*

For example, objects such as books and tables are referred to as either masculine or feminine (even though they are totally inanimate), while in English we would use the neuter pronoun "it." These personal pronouns are grammatically correct in Greek, but to translate them into English as "he" or "him" is grammatically incorrect. Our booklet Who is God? *shows that there are many biblical proofs showing that the Holy Spirit is not a person or individual being.*

Information on Web site

As a former Lutheran pastor, I am enthralled with the plethora of Bible interpretation that you provide on your Web site. Frankly, after reading many valuable pages on a number of seriously important Bible subjects, I recognize the dearth in my education and I'm about to ask my seminary for a refund.

W.S., Clearwater, Florida

Beyond Today TV program

I viewed the *Beyond Today* program for the first time. Today I have spent considerable time on the Web site. Wow, it is packed with information—a lot for me to take in all at once. I just registered for a copy of the magazine. Now I will delve into program archives.

P.D.P., Internet

I just caught your show this morning. Thank you. I have been a Christian for 40 years now and out of the church for 15 years. I am sick of the deception of the organized church. Your show, however, cut to the chase and told the bare truth as I understand it from God's Word. I am an out-of-church Christian. My faith has not suffered, only my attendance to organized religion.

J.T., Internet

To understand the deceptive apostasy that has occurred in the mainstream churches, request or download our free booklet The Church Jesus Built. *However, attending a congregation of faithful believers true to God's Word (where geographically possible) is instructed in the Scriptures (see Leviticus 23:3; Hebrews 10:25).*

Letters from various countries

Thank you for sending me *The Good News.* My understanding of the Bible has increased so much that I can defend my religion and Christ if someone says things that are false and ungodly. I really appreciate all the godly people who are putting in their best articles and pray that God will bless them abundantly. I will be praying for all of you who are taking the time to publish this wonderful magazine and the free booklets.

Mrs. E.S., South India

I don't have the time to adequately thank you for helping me know the true God, the true gospel and our loving Father's plan and purpose for His people. A great source of pain and emptiness has been removed from me. I am eager to learn and grow, to transform my mind and life. My first priority is to please God and to do His will. I've been ill for a period covering three decades, but am enjoying a strong recovery and am filled with hope and possibilities. The truths I've learned have inspired me greatly.

G.M.M., Londonderry, Northern Ireland

Your *Good News* magazines are very enlightening. I am grateful to God for this service to humanity in drawing my attention to the God who created and controls everything. It will be to our benefit to pay attention to the messages in your magazines and booklets.

S.A., London

I have been receiving *The Good News* for some time now, and I wish to congratulate all those involved in publishing such an informative and thought-provoking magazine. Irrespective of one's personal views and beliefs, I can't help but be impressed with the standard of your coverage on various global issues and topics, which provides much food for thought.

I have found such topics as "America's Economic Meltdown," "Are America's Superpower Days Numbered?" and various reports on Darwinism most concise, informative and easy to read and understand. Many thanks for the *Good News* team, and I wish the publication continued success in the future.

C.I., Brisbane, Australia

Published letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address your letters to *The Good News,* P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, Ohio 45254-1027, U.S.A., or e-mail **gninfo@ucg.org** (please be sure to include your full name, city, state or province, and country).

God, Science and the Bible

News from the world of science about God and the Bible

By Mario Seiglie, Tom Robinson and Scott Ashley

Has Noah's ark been found buried under ice on Mt. Ararat?

Over a span of more than 150 years, there have been at least a hundred eyewitness accounts of people claiming to have seen an arklike structure high up on Mt. Ararat in eastern Turkey. But bringing convincing evidence to the fore has proved elusive.

However, on April 25, 2010, a team of Chinese explorers from Hong Kong–based Noah's Ark Ministries International (NAMI) along with Turkish climbers and authorities held a news conference in which they announced the discovery of what they believe are large sections of Noah's ark found above the 13,000-foot level on Mt. Ararat.

Yeung Wing-Cheung, a member of the NAMI team, says the wooden structure has several compartments, some of which may have been used to house animals. "It's not 100 percent [sure] that it is Noah's Ark, but we think it is 99.9 percent that this is it," he told the press.

They revealed photographs, film footage and wood specimens that, according to them, were dated by carbon-14 tests to 4,800 years ago. The film showed the explorers entering various compartments that they said they think are sections of Noah's legendary ship.

Of course, extraordinary claims demand extraordinary proof. Further exploration and testing by a broader spectrum of researchers is needed. The photographic and video evidence presented as of this writing is impressive but could conceivably be part of an elaborate—and rather expensive—hoax. Yet what if the find proves to be genuine?

If true, the fallout would be mind-boggling. Gilbert Grosvenor, the first editor of *National Geographic* magazine, once said that "the discovery of Noah's Ark would be the greatest archaeological find in human history, the greatest event since the resurrection of Christ, and it would alter all the currents of scientific thought."

So what are we to make of all this?

The story of the discovery as it has been presented begins in, of all unlikely places, Hong Kong. There a Chinese evangelical billionaire, Thomas Kwok, and associates founded the Chinese exploration group NAMI. It's reported that the organization's first team climbed Mt. Ararat in 2004 and that they made a number of ascents and spent months searching during the years following but didn't find anything of significance.

Then in June 2008, they tell us, they made a breakthrough. A Turkish guide they had hired in the past told them his team had discovered a wooden structure at an undisclosed location. So in October 2008 he took his team of Turkish climbers and a Chinese professional mountain climber sent by NAMI to the site, where they claimed they had found a large structure high on the mountain.

Panda Lee, the Chinese mountain climber on the expedition, gave this account at the April press conference: "In October 2008, I climbed the mountain with the Turkish team. At an elevation of more than 4,000 meters, I saw a structure built with plank-like timber. Each plank was about eight inches wide. I could see tenons, proof of ancient construction predating the use of metal nails.

At left, Chinese climber Panda Lee points to an exposed part of a wooden structure covered by many feet of ice and rocks. Above, an expedition member descends a tunnel through ice to reach what is claimed to be a large buried wooden structure on Mt. Ararat in eastern Turkey.

"We walked about 100 meters to another site. I could see broken wood fragments embedded in a glacier, and some 20 meters long. I surveyed the landscape and found that the wooden structure was permanently covered by ice and volcanic rocks."

It was further explained that with winter closing in, it was too late in the year to do much follow-up exploration. In October 2009 the 15-member team, including a Chinese film crew, purportedly reached the site, where most were able to descend through tunnels in the ice and rock to enter parts of the structure.

They report finding massive wooden construction spanning, as far as they could tell, about 150 feet (about one third of the length the Bible records for the ark). The explorers state that they went from room to room, sometimes though crude openings or even small doors. In the video footage they point out frozen white pellets littering the floor, which could possibly be grain used to feed animals or seeds for future planting.

In one room they saw wooden stairs that apparently led to another floor. Another room even had a wooden hatch in the ceiling that they said they couldn't pry open, but which also presumably led to an upper level. Video footage also shows the explorers finding shelves, pottery and remains of ancient ropes.

Obviously a great deal more research and scientific testing needs to be done, though conditions on the mountain make further exploration incredibly difficult. It was stated that further investigations and scientific expeditions are planned for later this year when climbing conditions on Mt. Ararat are at their optimum.

In a telephone interview with John McIntosh, a longtime U.S.-based ark researcher, he expressed mixed feelings about the find. While he is impressed with the overall evidence presented, he still has concerns such as the relatively modern appearance of some of the wood shown, possible discrepancies of the carbon-14 dating, no filming of the outside or exposed sections of the ark (NAMI says this is to keep the location concealed until it can be protected) and persistent rumors from Turkish guides that some wood had been transported up the mountain.

In a May 11 press conference in Holland he commented: "Presently, to me, it seems nearly impossible that the large wood wall areas and very large timbers could have been planted as has been suggested by some of the local people at the mountain. The compartments are at such an inaccessible and difficult location, with different levels evident, it seems to me that it is unlikely that they are related to any explainable normal mountain construction such as for shelter or animals.

"All that has been discovered, filmed and photographed needs independent verification. It is my understanding that the Chinese researchers are planning to coordinate their research with Turkish scholars so that this can be done. In my opinion, other wood samples need to be taken and tested, along with other materials from the site. This site might indeed be some of the remains of Noah's ark—but further exploration and research needs to be done to be certain what is here."

Again, there is no way to know right now if this find is genuine or a fraud. Time will tell whether an elaborate hoax is underway or if the ark of Noah has actually been found.

Photos courtesy Noah's Ark Ministries International

The Difference Between Infatuation and Love

by Jeremy Lallier

In the heady world of male-female relationships, how can one know the difference between love and infatuation?

"But I love him!"

Those four words (along with "But I love her!" for the guys) have probably served as the justification for more life-altering decisions than can be counted. But have we stopped to ask ourselves what those words really mean?

"What," in the immortal words of Alexander Nestor Haddaway's 1993 hit song, "is love?"

A tragic misunderstanding

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has often been hailed as the greatest love story ever told. Two young lovers, in their desire to be with one another against the wishes of their feuding families, ultimately take their own lives, each unwilling to endure the cold, hopeless wasteland of a life without the other.

And it's all very touching and sentimental until you take a second look and realize that the whole story unfolds over the span of a whopping *four days.* Did the two teenaged "star-cross'd lovers" really have a chance to get to know each other? They marry the day after they meet, and two days later they are willing to kill themselves over the loss of a person who, to their knowledge, didn't exist just five days before.

It's hard to disagree that Shakespeare's lines about love are beautiful: "With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls; for stony limits cannot hold love out," for example. But it's even harder to argue that his leading characters ever understood what these statements really meant.

We should consider that the approach Romeo and Juliet took toward "love" in Shakespeare's play bears a striking resemblance to the approach many take today, if slightly exaggerated.

The Bible's love chapter

The apostle Paul, under inspiration from God, wrote a passage in a letter to the Christians in the city of Corinth that has come to be known as the "love chapter." It provides an explanation of what true, godly love is at its core. Among other things, we are told: "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud . . . Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance" (1 Corinthians 13:4, 7, New Living Translation).

Does that sound like what Romeo and Juliet had? Was Romeo really thinking about what was best for Juliet when he decided to secretly marry the 13-year-old? By the biblical definition, what they felt wasn't love. It was something else.

How many real-life examples of the same thing have you seen? The words "I love you" are tossed around like a crumpled

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piece of paper and carry about the same weight for most people. All the expressions of love are there, but so many throw in the towel in a relationship when things stop going the way they want.

That's not love.

Love "does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil . . . Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:5, 8).

The disconnect

So it seems that what most people are calling love *isn't* love. Just what is it then?

The simple truth of the matter is that our modern world has confused love with *infatuation.* Think about it: Almost every time we hear love referenced in popular culture, it's something people *fall* into. Unexpectedly. Accidentally. All of a sudden your heart is aflutter and you feel an intense attraction to another person. That pounding in your chest sounds like "love at first sight" rather than "raging hormones."

But the Bible makes it clear that godly love is a *conscious choice* one makes—an action, not an accident.

Jack Scruggs, a mental health therapist in the United Church of God with degrees from both the University of Oregon and Oregon State University, declares the dividing line between love and infatuation as simple as one word—*feelings.*

"Infatuation offers the possibilities of *feeling* good when affections are returned in kind, *feeling* bad when those affections are spurned," Scruggs says. "Infatuation is mostly concerned with feelings."

So what does this mean about love versus infatuation? Scruggs continues: "The direction of infatuation is inward. The direction of love is outward. Infatuation is most often temporary and depends on reciprocation to survive. Love stands alone, depending on nothing for its survival. Love is an imitation of God, while infatuation is a recognition of our attraction for the opposite sex. Love is a way of life."

Time and place

Infatuation is, as Scruggs notes, a "natural attraction for a young person to feel for a member of the opposite sex." In other words, it'll happen whether you want it to or not.

The tough part we face, as Christians, is knowing what to do with that attraction. Experience has likely already taught each of us that such a feeling can easily blind us to reality, keeping us from seeing another person as he or she actually is and causing us to miss important warning signs.

It takes wisdom to be able to acknowledge an attraction to another person while at the same time keeping that attraction in check. (That's another article for another time.) While there's nothing wrong with being attracted to someone, we must be sure to handle that attraction responsibly, without giving in to its foolish desires or recklessness.

After we've taken the time to get to know the other person, to understand his or her values, personality and character as objectively as possible, to seek and consider God's guidance as well as input from trusted friends and family members, and after we've come before God to commit ourselves to that person for the rest of our days, *then* comes the time to get swept up in mutual attraction.

The book of Proverbs contains these happy instructions for the married man: "Rejoice with the wife of your youth, . . . and *always be enraptured* with her love" (Proverbs 5:18-19). It's worth noting that the Hebrew word translated "enraptured" can literally mean "intoxicated" as well. A husband and wife are then finally able to let their guards down completely, each *always enraptured* with the love of the other.

A time for love?

While being enraptured has a proper time and place within marriage, the Bible is clear that another type of love—that directed toward others—is to be timeless and without boundary. So important is true, godly love that Jesus Christ Himself emphasized it as the defining characteristic of Christians everywhere: "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Our love—our outgoing concern for others—should be such a part of us that it *defines* us in the eyes of those around us. Love is not to be directed at just one individual or a select few, but the entire world.

What, then, is the real difference between love and infatuation? Infatuation is about pleasing the self. But love—love is all about becoming like God! ***GN***

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