



FROM THE EDITOR **GERALD FLURRY**

## Bible Prophecy Comes Alive in Ukraine

Vladimir Putin's dramatic invasion of Ukraine is not surprising. How and when will it end?

**R**USSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST earthshaking news events in recent years. Footage of missiles slamming into modern apartment buildings, tanks driving down streets, and office blocks turned to rubble have become a normal part of the nightly news.

"Peace in our continent has been shattered," said NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. "We now have war in Europe, on a scale and of a type we thought belonged to history." The Drudge Report headline the day of the invasion encapsulated what many are thinking: "Countdown to WW III."

How did this happen? Like NATO's secretary general, many people believed war in 21st-century Europe was impossible, that conflict of this magnitude and consequence "belonged to history." But here we are, experiencing what could be the most significant war since World War II!

Those who study and believe Bible prophecy are not surprised. If you know the Bible, you know that war of this nature does not belong to history. In fact, prophecy tells us that conflict and suffering much worse than this are coming.

Those prophecies have informed the *Trumpet's* analysis and forecasts for decades. Most people would ridicule the idea



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**Are We Too Good for War?**

of biblical prophecy being a useful tool for geopolitical forecasting. But events like the Ukraine war prove that it works! Because of prophecy, I have been warning for years that Vladimir Putin would be responsible for violent conquests and would set in motion some astonishing and historic events. In 2008, I asked: “Will a crisis occur over Ukraine? That area is the breadbasket of Russia, and surely it is willing to wage war over that as well” (*Philadelphia Trumpet*, October 2008).

The Bible told us to expect this! Let me explain why.

### **A Fearsome Prince**

Ezekiel 38 is an especially important passage about Russia. Verse 8 uses the phrase “the latter years”—this refers to the time just before the return of Jesus Christ. This whole chapter contains staggering understanding about the powerful Russian empire and its widely feared “prince.”

“And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him” (verses 1-2). The “son of man,” God’s human messenger, is responsible for identifying this “prince.”

The correct translation of verse 2 is “the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.” In Assyrian and Greek histories, Meshech appears as *Musku*, *Muski* or *Mushki*—all names related to the Russian spelling of Moscow. What about Tubal? On the eastern side of the Ural Mountains lies the city of Tobolsk, named after the Tobol River, a name derived from Tubal. Tobolsk was once the seat of Russian government over Siberia and was basically considered Russia’s Asian capital.

Rosh was the ancient name of Russia, once called Rus. Many encyclopedias and commentaries (such as the *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary*) recognize this. So who is this “prince” of Russia, Moscow and Tobolsk?

I strongly believe this “prince” is Vladimir Putin and have explained why for years. The alarming scenes coming out of Ukraine emphasize this view. Bible prophecy is being fulfilled this very moment in Ukraine!

This is what I wrote five years ago in my booklet *The Prophesied ‘Prince of Russia’*:

The use of all three names shows that this is an individual ruler of *all* the peoples of Russia, from the west to the east. The reference to the cities of Moscow and Tobolsk helps us see how vast Russian territory is in these latter days.

This giant swath of land indicates the prince will probably conquer more nations of the former Soviet Union. When you study these scriptures alongside current events revealing modern Moscow’s imperialist direction, you see that Russian President Vladimir Putin *could well be the prince of Rosh*.

Vladimir Putin has done more than anyone else to rebuild the colossal Russian empire. The Bible told us to expect the “prince of Rosh” to conquer more territory!

People would be surprised by how much the Bible tells us about geopolitics. As I wrote in that 2017 booklet, “If you add Bible prophecy to a good understanding of history, you can foresee the future with striking clarity.”

In 2008, after Putin invaded Georgia, I wrote: “This was the first military strike of a rising Asian superpower—and there will be more!”

In 2014, around the time of Putin’s annexation of Crimea, the late Charles Krauthammer made some insightful comments: “Ukraine is not just the largest European country, it’s the linchpin for Vladimir Putin’s dream of a renewed imperial Russia, hegemonic in its neighborhood and rolling back the quarter-century advancement of the ‘Europe whole and free’ bequeathed by America’s victory in the Cold War.”

Considering that remark in the context of Ezekiel 38 and other prophecies, I took this analysis even further. Here is what I wrote eight years ago, in March 2014:

Putin has long known that if Ukraine allies with Europe, it would significantly diminish his power. His goal is to

resurrect the Soviet empire. The architecture of that empire was built around Ukraine being a part of it. Ukraine is the breadbasket of Russia. To this day, Russia's largest military base outside its own borders is in Ukraine.

Putin applied all that pressure on Ukraine because that nation is the *linchpin* of his goal of a renewed imperial Russia! A linchpin is the pin in an axle that keeps the wheel from coming off. Mr. Putin was doing everything in his power to keep the wheels from falling off his dream of a new Soviet empire. And that meant applying intense pressure on Ukraine.

THE FACT THAT ONE MAN—*one man*—IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS HUGE GEOPOLITICAL SHIFT IS DEEPLY SIGNIFICANT.

## A Weak Superpower

As Russia has flattened Ukraine, the United States has done little in response.

America encouraged European nations to pass on their old MiG fighter jets to Ukraine. Ukraine's pilots are familiar with the MiG planes and could fly them without retraining. But then Putin said he would consider any transfer of aircraft an act of war. Poland was still willing to send them, but it wanted the U.S. to risk Putin's wrath alongside it. Poland announced plans to transfer the planes via a U.S. airbase. But America backed down. U.S. leaders said they didn't think MiGs would help Ukraine very much after all.

The world saw America capitulate to Russia. And this is just one example—there have been many in the course of the conflict.

In Leviticus 26:19, God warns, "I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass." America's broken will is just one of many curses now coming upon this nation, and this curse comes with some terrifying geopolitical consequences.

America sat idly by as Russia invaded Crimea and carved great chunks out of Ukraine. I wrote in 2017:

The Ukraine attack was an audacious move by Russia! America did nothing. Washington has become so weak that it wouldn't even support the Ukrainian protesters with strong words!

In 1994, America persuaded the Ukrainians to get rid of the Soviet nuclear weapons stored in their country. We promised to protect them. But we wouldn't even send them conventional arms to fight against the Russian invasion! This is the treacherous way we treat our allies!

Few Americans realize what a massive disaster this is for America and its future. As Russia, China, Iran and a German-led Europe expand their spheres of influence and grow in strength, American foreign policy has become an international joke!

Barack Obama was president in 2014. His weakness and refusal to stand by Poland and other East European countries led directly to Russia's invasion.

For years now, "Russia" has been a buzzword in America's media. There were endless reports of Donald Trump colluding with Russia, of Russia meddling in our politics and stealing our elections. We now know that the whole Russia collusion narrative was one gigantic hoax. Regarding Russia, our focus has been all wrong. We have been blind to what Russia is *really doing* in the world!

For years we have allowed Putin to get away with aggressive behavior. Our leaders, especially Barack Obama and Joe Biden, would not challenge him in a meaningful way. The fruits of our weakness are now on display in Ukraine!

This too is something prophecy warned would happen. Here's what I wrote in 2017:

The West has mostly been silent about the depth of this man's evil. Under his rule, Russia has become the world's most dangerous superpower at this time. America's military might is shrinking fast and its will is completely broken.

THE UKRAINE [Crimea] CRISIS EXPOSED U.S. WEAKNESS MOST OF ALL. IT DEMONSTRATED HOW THE AMERICAN SUPERPOWER HAS ALMOST DISAPPEARED FROM THE WORLD SCENE! Where is America providing any real leadership in the world? All we see is shameful retreat.

This means that one of those fierce, tiger-like empires will soon pounce on the U.S. and devour it. This is the lesson of history. But far more importantly, your Bible prophecies that it will happen.

President Putin has military might and the will to use it. America has the power but lacks the will to use it. That is why we grovel before this “evil empire”—as President Ronald Reagan once called it. No leader in Russia has equaled Putin’s diabolical evil since Joseph Stalin.

The Ukraine crisis continues, and America is sleeping through it. But EUROPE IS DEEPLY ALARMED! The changes this crisis provokes in Germany and Europe will SHAKE THE NATIONS!

These statements have proved stunningly accurate. That is not because of any great analytical acumen or strategic insight on my part—it is *purely* because of Bible prophecy! Prophecy is proving to be right again and again! When will we stop and listen to what God prophecies? Until we do, the wars will continue and intensify!

America’s weak will led to this crisis. Its weakness is leading Germany to take matters into its own hands. Europe sees it cannot look to America for protection, so instead it is looking to Germany! (article, page 10).

The Bible tells us that this European power will be the one to confront Russia. The same Bible that accurately prophesies a powerful prince of Russia also prophesies that an Asian superpower will do battle in a final world war, primarily against a German-led Europe.

(America, Britain and the Jewish nation will have already fallen at the same time; see Hosea 5:5.)

Bible prophecy tells us that war is coming between a Russia-China-led Asian alliance and a German-led Europe—war on a scale that is hard to imagine! HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of people will be killed. Nuclear bombs and other weapons of mass destruction will impact every nation on Earth! Many think this is impossible. But people thought the kind of invasion and war we are currently watching was also impossible!

Finally, the Bible also prophesies that at the end of all of these wars, the world will witness the greatest event in history: the Second Coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ! As Christ Himself said, if He didn’t return, NOT ONE PERSON would survive the warfare that would engulf the planet (Matthew 24:22; Moffatt). But before humanity annihilates itself, Christ will return and stop all this madness!

Vladimir Putin is literally a sign that Jesus Christ is about to return! This is one of the most inspiring messages in the Bible. What we are seeing from Russia ultimately leads to the transition from man ruling man to God ruling man! And it is just a few short years away.

We need to watch Vladimir Putin closely. I believe he is almost certainly the “prince of Rosh” whom God inspired Ezekiel to write about 2,500 years ago! We need to watch what is happening in Russia and how Europe responds. Daniel 11:44 talks about “tidings out of the east” troubling Europe. Putin’s tactics in Georgia, Ukraine, the Middle East and elsewhere are already deeply troubling to Europe and the world.

The most important nation to watch right now is Germany. How will it respond to Putin’s war on Ukraine? This Ukraine war will speed up the rise of the prophesied German-led Holy Roman Empire! It is happening already!

We have to realize that this is all good news because Jesus Christ is going to return to Earth at the end of the coming world war. The powers fighting the war are going to be destroyed by Jesus Christ Himself! ■

# Putin's War—on Russia

The eyes of the world are focused on the dictator's savagery against Ukraine. But a brutal crackdown is underway on the home front. **BY JEREMIAH JACQUES**

**D**ID YOU KNOW THAT UKRAINIANS HAVE been grossly overreacting? It turns out that, despite the rapidly rising body count and the rapidly growing piles of rubble in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, *Russia has not gone to war against the country.*

That, at least, is the situation according to the Russian government.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was asked by a reporter on March 10 if Russia plans to invade other countries after it's finished in Ukraine. "We do not plan to attack other countries," he said. "We did not attack Ukraine either."

Outside of Russia, virtually no one is buying it. Only the most conspiratorial or deranged Westerner believes Russian President Vladimir Putin's claim that he is waging only a "special peacekeeping operation." Or that his soldiers are heroically risking their lives to end Ukraine's "genocide" of ethnic Russians in the nation. Or that any civilian casualties are the result of evil Ukrainian Nazis shelling their own people. Or that Putin was forced into it all against his will due to the aggression of Ukraine and the United States-led NATO alliance.

Outside Russia, those kinds of lies are rightfully rejected. But inside Russia, it's a very different story. And that's because Putin is tightly controlling the narrative in the nation and using that to shape the outlook of his people.

## The War on 'War'

Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began on February 24. Just five days later, Russian educators began receiving government-issued manuals telling them precisely what to teach students across the nation about the development.

The main points are that Ukraine did not exist until the 20th century and never

should have been separated from Russia. The U.S. staged a violent coup there in 2014 and installed an American puppet government. After parts of Ukraine's eastern Donbas region declared independence from this puppet regime, "Nazified" Ukrainians spent eight years trying to murder them all. At present, Russia is "not at war with Ukraine," according to the teaching manuals, but is engaged in a noble campaign to "protect people who have been subjected to bullying and genocide."

These points add up to a classic DARVO spin: "deny, attack, and reverse victim and offender." But it is what teachers across the vast Russian Federation are required to methodically teach impressionable young minds, and they must provide proof that they are doing so.

Putin's regime has also cracked down hard on the few remaining vestiges of Russia's free press. The radio station Echo of Moscow went silent on March 1. The next day, the government's Internet censor, Roskomnadzor, announced it would block any website calling the war an "invasion" or "war"; it proceeded to block 32 sites. Just 48 hours later, a new law passed. Now, if a Russian media outlet or individual calls the war a war or otherwise contradicts Putin's narrative, they face up to 15 years in jail.

Vyacheslav Volodin, chairman of the lower house of parliament, said: "[T]his law will force punishment—and very tough punishment—on those who lied and made statements which discredited our armed forces."

The law prompted the independent TV Rain to immediately pull its plug, and numerous journalists from independent and foreign media began fleeing Russia.

Because of these measures, virtually all remaining media is serving up the same spin to older Russians that schoolteachers are dishing out to the young. "It's very hard ... to

find alternative information,” Russian journalist Marina Ovsyannikova told the BBC on March 17. As a result, she said, most Russians are “zombified” by Putin’s propaganda.

Putin knows controlling the narrative is vital. The average Russian would likely view the violence unleashed on Ukraine differently from Putin’s wars on Chechnya or Syria. In Ukraine, Russians are actually killing brother and sister Slavs, bound to Russia by a thousand-year history and a common religion. Some analysts have predicted that the resulting shame among Russians could be strong enough to bring Putin down.

But because Putin’s propaganda machine is operating in overdrive, any such pressure remains manageable. To Westerners, Ukraine is winning the information war: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is likened to Winston Churchill, and Putin is likened to Adolf Hitler. But inside Russia, Putin is the hero of the story.

For most of his 22 years in power, Putin has been gradually suppressing the press and rewriting aspects of history to sculpt the outlook of his people, augment his control, and attack enemies, domestic and foreign. His earlier measures may have seemed innocuous at the time, but they cleared the way for the current extremes. The result is that the majority of Russians believe and support him.

State-run pollsters show that as many as 71 percent of Russians back Putin’s invasion. Independent agencies still place the figure at 58 percent.

Political scientist Anton Shirikov told the *Washington Post* that Putin’s efforts have been so successful that many Russians are incapable of believing the truth, even when it’s coming from trusted relatives or friends. “They have this filter,” he said, so “they will just reject it.”

This all adds up to mean that even as Russian casualties rise and the Russian economy is pulverized by economic sanctions, the majority of Russians do not blame Putin. They blame NATO and stand behind Putin.

Some Russians pierce the propaganda bubble, learn the shameful truth, and protest the invasion. In late February, significant numbers

rallied against the war in cities from Moscow to Vladivostok. These were individuals who accessed unfiltered information and engaged in independent thinking. They called the war a *war*—unprovoked and unjustifiable. But the demonstrators were summarily arrested. Official Russian data says 3,500 people have been apprehended, but human rights groups in the country say the true number is as high as 13,000.

As the war entered its fourth week, protests dwindled and security measures tightened. A handful of bold Russian citizens adopted a new, more subtle approach: standing in a public place holding up a blank sheet of paper—no words, nothing. Shockingly, even this was too bold a statement for Putin to tolerate. Those Russians, too, were arrested and could spend the next 15 years incarcerated.

### **Is a Purge Beginning?**

On March 16, Putin’s forces stunned the world by bombing a theater in Mariupol, Ukraine, that was sheltering more than 1,000 displaced civilians, mainly women and children. The strike occurred despite the fact that Ukrainians had painted the Russian word for “children” outside the building, clearly visible to Russian pilots. In the days after the bombing, reports emerged that Putin’s troops were forcibly deporting thousands of Mariupol’s citizens to cities deep within Russia.

Many viewed this as a turning point on Russia’s part toward committing overt war crimes and pure terrorism. Even inside Russia, citizens who had learned of the news, many through the messaging app Telegram, expressed outrage.

Putin was mostly unfazed. He told the nation that women and children were killed not by his troops but by a far-right Ukrainian militia. Yet he apparently understood that a significant number of Russians would not believe him. During a televised videoconference the same day as the theater bombing, Putin unleashed not only his usual volley of invectives against Ukraine’s “pro-Nazi regime” but also a new one against any Russians who question Putin’s leadership.

These are “scum and traitors,” and the Russian people “will simply spit them out like a gnat that accidentally flew into their mouths,” he said. “[S]uch a natural and necessary self-purification of society will only strengthen our country.”

His supporters heard the message loud and clear. Within hours of Putin’s tirade, multiple houses belonging to Russian activists and journalists were vandalized. A message painted on one door read, “Don’t betray your country, [expletive].” Other journalists received similar messages that included the Russian regime’s “Z” symbol, showing support for the war.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov spoke to *Meduza* on March 17, confirming reports of intimidation of activists and journalists and reiterating Putin’s comments. “In such difficult times ... a lot of people show their true colors, and so many people show themselves as traitors,” he said, “and they disappear from our lives.” Some just leave the country, while others “violate the law” and must be punished: “This is how the cleansing [that Putin spoke of] happens.”

Peskov is right about many Russians fleeing the country voluntarily. Between 1.6 and 2 million people had fled even before Putin dramatically escalated his war on Ukraine in February. They were already fearful that they were in danger of arrest on false pretenses. Since the invasion began, more than a quarter of a million more have left, the largest exodus since just after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

For many who remain, the “purification” has already moved beyond petty vandalism. In addition to past purges and even poisonings, this year Putin has detained several high-ranking Russian officials, including Roman Gavrillov, deputy chief of the Russian National Guard, and Sergei Beseda, head of the foreign intelligence branch of the Federal Security Service, the successor to the notorious KGB. At least eight generals have also been relieved of their commands and, in some cases, arrested.

Putin is rewriting history to tighten his control, cracking down on media and speech, and “purifying” Russia of “traitors.” The picture is

becoming clear. Vladimir Putin is marching down the same path as one of history’s most brutal and psychotic tyrants: his predecessor in the Kremlin, Joseph Stalin.

## ‘Man of Steel’

The most infamous and ruthless of Russia’s dictators was born Joseph Dzhugashvili in 1878, but as a young man he gave himself the more fear-inspiring name Stalin, meaning “man of steel.” In his early years, Stalin read the works of Karl Marx and joined the revolutionary Bolshevik party to help bring down the czar. His first contributions to the party were raising funds by kidnapping children of wealthy families and murderous robberies.

In November 1917, the Bolsheviks violently seized control of the nation with Vladimir Lenin as their leader and Stalin as one of his main enforcers. Within months, they had shut down hostile newspapers, established a ruthless internal security service (the precursor to the KGB), and began slaughtering “enemies of the state,” which included clergy, former nobility and the wealthy.

After Lenin’s death in 1924, Stalin outmaneuvered his Bolshevik rivals to become head of the party and of the nation. Once at the helm, he collectivized farming, greatly expanded the powers of the secret police, and established a system that encouraged Soviet citizens to spy on each other. He instituted the Great Purge, a series of campaigns to “cleanse” Soviet society of anyone seen as a threat, either by immediate execution or being worked to death in a gulag camp. Stalin murdered as many as 20 million people. Some 18 million entered his gulags; millions never left.

Putin was born into Stalin’s perverse Soviet system in 1952, five months before Stalin’s death. In 1975, he joined the KGB, where he spent 15 years as a Kremlin enforcer.

“Mr. Putin was shaped and molded by the infamous KGB—Russia’s ruthless, murderous secret service arm of the government made famous by Joseph Stalin,” *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote in January 2004. When Mr. Flurry wrote those words, Putin had been leading Russia for only four years,

and few analysts viewed him as a dictator in the making or a threat to global peace. But Mr. Flurry connected the dots between Stalin, the KGB and Putin, and said the “whole world should be alarmed.”

In 2008, Mr. Flurry compared Putin to Stalin again, stating that he believed the Russian president had signed a secret agreement with German leaders, similar to the one Stalin signed with Hitler in 1939 that helped bring about World War II.

In his 2017 booklet *The Prophesied ‘Prince of Russia,’* Mr. Flurry’s comparisons were even more pointed: “Putin has a long pattern of diabolical evil on the level of Joseph Stalin. An abundance of fruits prove that. ... No leader in Russia has equaled Putin’s diabolical evil since Joseph Stalin.”

In the years since that was written, and particularly since this year’s full-scale war on Ukraine began, those “fruits” have become even more abundant. Putin was shaped by the grotesque and ruthless system that Stalin built. And despite issuing some criticism of Stalin over the years, he believes that Stalin deserves a spot in the pantheon of leaders who strengthened Russia, alongside czars Peter I, Nicholas I and Alexander III. This is clear by how the modern Russian media, which Putin controls, has been systematically rehabilitating Stalin’s image.

To see Putin’s leadership becoming increasingly Stalinesque is sobering and ominous. If he continues down this path, the brazen lies, show trials, media control and crushing of protests may be just the start. Putin has already transformed Russia from authoritarianism to totalitarianism. Full Stalinization—gulags and all—may not be far off.

The history of Stalin’s bloody reign, which Putin is increasingly imitating, indicates a dark future for Russia and the world. When that history is placed alongside Bible prophecy, the indication becomes certain.

## **An Army of 200 Million**

The Bible warns that a great power will rise from the East in the modern era. Scripture calls this power “the kings of the east”

(Revelation 16:12). In Revelation 9:16, the Apostle John wrote that this force will have an army of 200 million men.

The Bible provides many vital details about this largest army ever assembled. Daniel 11:44, 12:1 and Matthew 24:21-22 show that this force will be one of the main belligerents in a nuclear World War III. Ezekiel 38 tells which specific countries will contribute soldiers to this mega-army and shows that it will be led by one nation—and one man.

Verse 2 states: “Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him.”

Bible scholars generally agree that “Gog” refers to Russia and “the land of Magog” includes the vast area where modern-day China is located. Meshech is related to the modern Russian spelling of Moscow: *Москва*. And Tubal refers to the Russian city of Tobolsk, to the east of the Ural Mountains.

Yet another name for all of Russia lies somewhat hidden in this passage. There is disagreement over how the Hebrew word *rosh* in this verse should be translated into English. The King James Version quoted above renders it as the adjective “chief.” But the correct translation renders it not as an adjective but a proper noun: Rosh. This is an ancient name for the people who became known as Rus—Russia.

So the identity of this “prince” of Russia, Moscow and Tobolsk begins to take clear shape: The listing of all three names confirms that this is one individual ruling over all the various peoples across Russia—from west to east.

The mention of Magog shows that this man’s leadership extends beyond the borders of Russia and into China. Verses 5-6 mention ancient names for the peoples of such nations as India and Japan, showing that these will also lend their military might to this bloc, led by Russia. Russia is already building a powerful alliance with China and India.

When these Bible passages are examined alongside current events in Russia, the identity of this “prince of Russia” becomes clear. In the September 2014 *Trumpet*, Mr. Flurry wrote: “I strongly believe Vladimir Putin is



going to lead the 200 million-man army. Just look at the power he already has. Can you think of any other Russian politician who could become so powerful and have the will to lead Russia into the crisis of crises? I see nobody else on the horizon who could do that.”

By the time he wrote *The Prophesied ‘Prince of Russia’* in 2017, Mr. Flurry was even more sure that Putin would personally fulfill this role. “His track record, his nationality and his ideology show that he is fulfilling a linchpin Bible prophecy,” he wrote. “The time frame of his rule also shows that nobody else could be fulfilling the Ezekiel 38 and 39 prophecy.”

On March 8, Zelenskyy pleaded for the world to help Ukraine stop Russia’s slaughter of their men, women and children, and he called Putin a “beast.” This term is not often applied to heads of state, but the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation actually use this same word to describe the ferocious nature of leaders who have ruled throughout much of history—and who are growing more powerful in the modern era.

“There is a reason God uses this terminology,” Mr. Flurry wrote in our July 2014 issue.

“When such men attain power, they become cunning, ferocious beasts. Throughout history they have routinely thought like wild animals, wanting to conquer, pillage, burn and destroy. ... God calls these leaders *beasts* for a reason [and] we haven’t even seen the worst of these beasts!”

A bleak future is coming for Russia, Ukraine and beyond. But Mr. Flurry says the fact that this beastly “prince of Russia” is on the scene proves that the most hope-filled event in mankind’s history is now close. “Vladimir Putin is a sign, literally a *sign*, that Jesus Christ is about to return!” he writes in his booklet. “This is one of the most inspiring messages in the Bible. What we are seeing in Russia ultimately leads to the transition from man ruling man to God ruling man!”

To see Putin leading Russia in an increasingly Stalinist direction is sobering beyond words, and it is a sign that global tumult is near. But this development is intimately tied to the best imaginable news: Jesus Christ will soon return to Earth and usher in an age of peace for the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and all the world! ■

## STALIN’S RUSSIA

Communist Party General Secretary Joseph Stalin ruled the Soviet Union for three decades (1924–1953). His name is synonymous with murderous tyranny: He subjugated a generation of Russians to his will and helped install oppressive Communist regimes in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, North Korea, Poland, Romania and elsewhere. His regime, by the numbers:

**20 MILLION** people murdered (conservative estimate)

**28 MILLION** forcibly deported

**18 MILLION** deported to prison camps

**7 MILLION** victims killed in Holodomor, the 1932–1933 Ukraine genocide

**2 MILLION** incarcerated in the gulags in 1941

**1.5 MILLION** victims killed in the gulags

# ERASING RUSSIA'S MEMORY

**T**HE RUSSIA-DOMINATED SOVIET UNION subjugated hundreds of millions of people for decades. Just over 30 years ago, it fell. A generation of Russians have grown up with far more freedom than their parents and grandparents, but under Russian President Vladimir Putin, tyranny is making a comeback. One chilling example is the convictions of Memorial International and Memorial Human Rights Center.

Memorial was created in 1989 as a decentralized association of organizations with the common purpose of exposing Russia's political crimes. Memorial International was founded to research and document historical injustices, especially the infamous gulags—camps where millions of political prisoners endured forced labor, reeducation, dehumanizing treatment and death. Memorial Human Rights Center was founded to address human rights abuses by the current Russian government.

At the time, the Soviet Union was in major decline. Its leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was experimenting with *glasnost* (openness), allowing ordinary citizens to go about their lives and even speak out against the government with reduced fear of being reported by their neighbors, surveilled, abducted from their families by secret police, and imprisoned or worse. Groups like Memorial formed to keep the jaws of tyranny from snapping shut again. No longer able to terrorize its people into submission, the regime collapsed.

Dmitri Volkogonov, defense adviser to former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, wrote in *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire*, “[G]lasnost more than any bombs, terror or orders by the omnipotent Central Committee, undermined Leninist totalitarianism by revealing the truth about the country and the world outside. It was perhaps a unique example in history of the truth alone achieving what was beyond the power of a mighty state.”

But Russia's current regime does not feel so powerless against the truth. It prosecuted these two Memorial branches, both located

in Moscow, under Russia's controversial 2012 foreign agent law. This law says that any organization with foreign funding that is involved in “political activity” is subject to government audits, freezing of assets and police raids, and excluded from working with state universities, museums and other institutions.

Irina Galkova, director for Memorial's museum in Moscow, told the *Trumpet*, “It was ... made clear from the beginning that this law will be used for repressions.”

Putin's regime had already used this law to push many smaller organizations out of existence. Then government prosecutors accused Memorial of rehabilitating the reputation of Nazi collaborators, some of whom were Soviet political prisoners. During the trial, Putin remarked to another human rights group that he respected Memorial but that it was guilty of justifying Nazis (which is easily disproved). Galkova said this accusation was accepted by the court and reflected in its ruling. In December, the court condemned her organization for portraying the Soviet Union as evil and Russia as needing to repent of its past crimes rather than celebrating its victories. There is no room, it seems, for preserving and publishing documents that, for example, show how Soviet tyrant Joseph Stalin sent 18 million people to prison camps and killed up to 20 million.

The current Russian government wants to erase the memory of its past human rights atrocities because it is beginning to commit them more and more. Putin is reforging Russia into a superpower. That requires forcing Russians back into submission.

In the 1990s, Yuri Dmitriev, a researcher with Memorial Karelia, uncovered sites near the Finnish border where Stalin's regime murdered political enemies. The killing field there became a site of remembrance, visited by many people from Russia and other countries. But now Dmitriev himself appears to be a political prisoner, subjected to dubious charges, five years of pretrial detention, and after being acquitted, being tried again and

finally convicted. The day before Memorial's original court-ordered liquidation, the government announced it had extended Dmitriev's sentence to 15 years. After a failed appeal to Russia's supreme court, Memorial International was liquidated on March 22.

Looking back, will we see that by 2022, Putin had reversed *glasnost*? Galkova says yes. Memorial was possible in the late Soviet times, but now, she says, it appears "there is no place for us."

Vladimir Putin is not just a strong and cagey politician. He is a former agent of the very

same security, spy and secret police bureau that perpetrated millions of Soviet political imprisonments and deaths: the infamous KGB. He worked as a spy in East Germany and in other unverified capacities for 15 years, right up until the Soviets and the KGB lost the Cold War and their Communist empire collapsed.

In 2005, he famously said the collapse of the Soviet Union was "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century." Now he is reversing that "catastrophe" by tightening his iron grip on Russians and closing what *glasnost* briefly opened. ■

# Asia Still Stands With Putin

The West wants to isolate the Russian dictator, but most of the Eastern Hemisphere is linked to him. **BY GERALD FLURRY**

**R**USSIA'S WAR ON UKRAINE HAS EXPOSED Russian President Vladimir Putin as the authoritarian dictator that he is. He has forced 3 million people to flee their country, made East Europeans quake with fear, put NATO countries on alert, and caused many people to openly discuss the possibility of World War III.

Western nations see the war as a clear example of Putin's deadly despotism. But what about the East? Two of the largest, most populous, most powerful nations in the world are supporting Putin! This is a stunning fulfillment of a biblical prophecy!

Putin has been struggling to gain control of Ukraine for two decades. He is suspected of poisoning a presidential candidate there in 2004 and of sabotaging the signing of a 2013 agreement with the European Union, sparking an anti-Russia revolution. In 2014, he deployed Russia's military to forcibly annex Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and start a limited war in the eastern part of the country that killed more than 10,000 people over eight years, even before he launched a full-scale war in February of this year.

In many of his aggressions, Putin has benefited from support from the most populous, most economically powerful nation in the world: China.

In early February, Putin traveled to Beijing and met with China's authoritarian president, Xi Jinping. They released a lengthy statement declaring that Russia and China had "no limits" and no "forbidden" areas of cooperation. As the *Washington Post* reported, Putin gave Xi favorable terms for a 30-year gas supply agreement and apparently agreed to wait until the end of the Beijing Olympics to make his move. The day after the Olympics ended, Putin recognized two separatist regions in Ukraine. Three days after that, he expanded his aggression in Ukraine to all-out war.

Western media are focusing on the fact that China has called for peace talks and is declining to supply Russia with weapons for use in Ukraine. But as the *Post* admitted, "The timeline speaks for itself." China's gas deal gives Russia a new market for its oil and gas, helping it economically punish Europe and the West for their sanctions and other opposition

to Putin's latest war. And despite his calls for peace, Xi has refused to speak to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, sending the message that China supports Putin's way of resolving the conflict, not Ukraine's.

When nuclear-armed powers show such solidarity in wartime, what does this mean for the world? I tell you, it is woe to the world!

## First China, Now India

We have been looking for this alliance to solidify for decades. In 2014, when Russia invaded Crimea, I wrote "Asia Stands With Putin" (*Trumpet*, May-June 2014). At that time, the coordination between Russia and China had blindsided many in the West. Eight years on, at the prospect of a far more violent and deadly invasion, many analysts were looking for, if not expecting, China to support Russia.

Yet even many of these analysts were surprised when India took Russia's side. India is one of the top economies and military powers in the world. It is also a former colony of the British Empire, a top trading partner with the United States, and the world's largest democracy. Yet it has abstained from all United Nations votes condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Analysts are going to be surprised at how much India will come to support Putin and how closely it will ally with Russia and China. It already has important links to Russia (from which it imports an estimated 60 to 85 percent of its military equipment), but in the near future, these links are going to multiply beyond belief.

The December 1959 issue of the *Plain Truth* predicted this end-time Asian coalition with startling accuracy: "Russia's program is not to take Europe and to attack the United States, first. [It] calls first for the seizure of Asia. Lenin wrote that the way to Paris, London and New York is via [Beijing] and Delhi! ... [China's] constant dream for centuries has been ultimate world conquest! ... China knows, however, that in this highly industrialized age she can accomplish this dream *only as an ally of Russia*. ... [Russian leaders] will ultimately control not only the Russian states, but China ... and India as well!"

Russia, China and India, the giant nations of the Earth, all commanded by a fearsome "prince"! That was written 62 years ago, and it is now coming to pass! How could Mr. Armstrong have known that? Because it is prophesied in your Bible.

## Prophecy Is the Key

The *Trumpet* has been expecting China and India to ally with Russia. We and the *Plain Truth* before us have been anticipating it for more than 60 years. As I explain in *The Prophesied 'Prince of Russia'*, Ezekiel 38:2 foretold the Russian power we now see rising, led by a *rōš nāšī'* (or "prince of Russia"). This scripture also mentions "the land of Magog," which includes modern China and other nations. This indicates that this Russian leader will rally other Asian peoples behind Moscow.

The prophecy Ezekiel recorded was for the *end time*. It specifies that *Russia* will be the leader of this massive Asian alliance. That is a key to understanding today's geopolitics.

Other Bible prophecies strongly suggest that India will also unite with these Eastern nations. (Order a free copy of *Russia and China in Prophecy* to prove these truths for yourself from your own Bible.)

Another key scripture to understand is Revelation 9:16, a prophecy that the end-time "kings of the east" Asian power bloc will field the largest military in history. It comes from the same regions described in Ezekiel 38, and China, India and Russia have the only populations that could produce a combined army of 200 million troops.

China and India are increasing their support for Russia, even as it wages a war of aggression, the largest conventional military attack since World War II! This is a signal that Russia's 146 million people, China's 1.4 billion people and India's 1.4 billion people will soon provide Vladimir Putin with a virtually endless supply of manpower! Control over and organization of those masses will be key to the success of this Asian alliance. Western trading relationships and democratic ideals will be a thing of the past.

Because of what these prophecies mean, I

believe Europe is facing its most serious crisis since World War II!

Joe Biden and even some good analysts have said that a revived Russian empire would pose a danger to China and India, and therefore those nations will not support it. But they fail to recognize that India and especially China

regard the *West* as a far greater enemy. And they are ignorant of the prophecies of the Bible.

Even those who are closely watching the war in Ukraine fail to understand its importance and the importance of Eastern nations' reactions. Why? Because they don't understand *Bible prophecy*. This crisis is far from over. ■

# Germany Is Transforming Before Your Eyes

The Ukraine war sparked a leap forward in one of the most important end-time biblical prophecies! **BY GERALD FLURRY**

**F**EBRUARY 27 WAS A MOMENTOUS DAY IN world history. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced the return of a strong, militaristic Germany. His speech in the Bundestag was greeted with a standing ovation—with support coming from most of Germany's political parties!

Politico called Scholz's measures "nothing less than the most dramatic political shift in modern German history."

Andreas Kluth, former editor in chief of *Handelsblatt*, wrote: "If you had any sense of history and found yourself near the German Bundestag in Berlin on Sunday, you could have heard the sound of an explosion" (Bloomberg, February 27).

The whole Earth should be trembling at that explosion! Anyone who knows history should be deeply alarmed. But if you also know Bible prophecy—as every *Trumpet* reader should—you know this announcement is truly a calamitous explosion!

The moment Russia invaded Ukraine, if you know prophecy, you immediately looked to see how Germany would react. That very day, February 24, I sent an e-mail to readers of our daily *Trumpet Brief* that warned, "The most important nation to watch right now is

Germany. How will it respond to [Vladimir] Putin's war on Ukraine? This Ukraine war is going to speed up the rise of the prophesied German-led Holy Roman Empire!" It took mere days for that response to come.

Chancellor Scholz called a special session of parliament to announce a massive increase in Germany's military budget. Right now they spend €53 billion (US\$58.6 billion) a year on their military, and that's a record high. Scholz announced that Germany would create a new €100 billion fund this year to rapidly improve the army's equipment. He also announced that by 2024, Germany will spend *at least 2 percent* of its economic output on its military—up from its current 1.4 percent. By the time you factor in the growth of Germany's economy, this will *double* its military spending from here on.

This will make Germany the biggest military spender in Europe, by far. Once this is in place, Germany will be spending more on its military than Russia!

These are radical steps. And Bible prophecy warns where they are leading!

For decades the *Trumpet* has warned you to watch for a major change in Germany. When Germany stopped cutting its military spending

and started boosting it each year, we said this was an alarming change. When German think tanks and generals spoke out, saying Germany needed to become more robust militarily, we told you why this was concerning.

What happened in February, however, was not a *slight boost* to Germany's military. It wasn't just advice or recommendations. **THIS IS THE REAL THING: GERMAN MILITARISM IS BACK!** And what is even more stunning: Germany, and so much of the world, is cheering!

Mr. Scholz told the Bundestag that Germany was "living through a watershed era." Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine has shocked the nation, and Germany needs to be able to stand up to "warmongers like Putin," said Scholz. "That requires strength of our own."

More remarkable than Scholz's words is the fact that everyone agreed with him. He leads the left-wing Social Democrats, a political party traditionally skeptical of military spending. He governs in coalition with the even-further-left Green Party—yet they too are in agreement. His main opposition, the Christian Democrats, also supported the announcement.

In the debate that followed, "one speaker after another rose to find similarly clear and moving words," wrote Kluth. "Let the world take note: Owing to Putin's naked aggression, **GERMANY HAS CHANGED ALMOST OVERNIGHT**" (op cit; emphasis mine throughout). For decades Germans have shied away from talking about the need for strength in this world. No longer.

As important as the boost in defense spending is, **THIS CHANGE IN RHETORIC AND ATTITUDE COULD BE EVEN BIGGER.** For the first time since the end of World War II, we could soon see an **OPENLY** aggressive Germany. Germany has certainly been aggressive: Look how it led the world in breaking up Yugoslavia (request a free copy of my booklet *Germany's Conquest of the Balkans*). But it has operated *cautiously*. Scholz's speech marks the nation emerging from the shadows and becoming far more open.

Many in Germany are already urging bolder steps. Manfred Weber, chairman of the EPP Group in European Parliament, wrote an

article in Germany's *Welt* on March 7 titled "Europe Needs Its Own Nuclear Umbrella" (*Trumpet* translation throughout). Germany already has access to American nuclear weapons, but it's talking more about getting its own. Weber wrote: "We must create our own European missile defense shield ..."

"The basis of real European sovereignty is the ability for Europe to defend itself," he wrote. "At some point this includes nuclear weapons."

And beyond this militaristic transformation in Germany, Russia's attack on Ukraine is prompting all of Europe to unite *quickly!*

## Europe Unites

"Vladimir Putin just achieved the impossible: genuine European unity," wrote *Politico*. "From Sofia to Stockholm, Europe's internal divisions over how to react to Putin's aggression have melted away in recent days as the historic dimensions of the invasion—the greatest challenge to the West's security architecture in decades—sank in" (February 27).

AP News produced an article titled "By Invading Ukraine, Putin Loses Allies in Eastern Europe." It shows how all the strongmen in the region who were once friendly to Putin are now turning their backs on him.

"The attack on Ukraine marks the end of an epoch," wrote *Der Spiegel*, Europe's largest newsmagazine. "The European order, which brought the Continent three decades of relative security and stability following the end of the Cold War, is in the process of collapsing. A new, more dangerous era is beginning" (February 25).

Other European countries are following Germany's lead. Even before Russia's invasion, Poland was arming rapidly. In October 2021, it announced plans to double its number of soldiers and boost its military spending from 2 percent of its annual economy to 2.5 percent by 2024. Then on March 3, they sped up—promising to spend 3 percent of its annual economy on its military by next year. Polish Defense Minister Mariusz Błaszczak said he wanted Poland to have "one of the strongest armies in NATO."

"Our fatherland needs such a Polish Army,

especially now when the evil empire is trying to be reborn on our eastern border,” he added.

Denmark has announced plans to almost double its military spending in the next two years. Until now, Denmark has opted out of working with the European Union on defense and security matters. But after Russia’s invasion, it scheduled a June referendum on ending that opt out. Polls indicate voters strongly support ending this opt out, meaning Denmark could soon work with the EU to develop weapons and deploy troops.

Finland, Sweden, Italy and Spain are all developing plans to boost their military spending.

The French paper *Libération* wrote on March 19 that Russia’s invasion was another “opportunity for great community integration”—like many past crises. Thanks to the invasion “massive investments in defense ... are at the top of the agenda of the heads of state and government.” In other words, Russia’s invasion is an “opportunity” for Europe to push toward becoming a military superpower!

The *Telegraph’s* Ambrose Evans-Pritchard gave some excellent insight, writing: “Some seem more interested in using this ‘beneficial crisis’ as a federalizing catalyst, a chance to force the pace towards EU fiscal and defense union, whether or not these architectural ambitions have any relevance to the slaughter before the world’s eyes” (March 10).

## **Bible Prophecy Lives!**

Herbert W. Armstrong warned for decades that Germany would reemerge as a strong military power, leading a united Europe. “The Germans are coming back from the destruction of World War II in breathtaking manner,” he wrote in 1956. “Germany is the economic and military heart of Europe. Probably Germany will lead and dominate the coming United States of Europe.”

Mr. Armstrong believed Russia would play a major role in the creation of this new military power. “Now one of the great things that is urging Europe on, and perhaps the greatest thing that will cause them to hurry and get together on this, is their fear of what’s going

on in the Kremlin and the Soviet Union,” he said in November 1982. “And [Soviet leader Yuri] Andropov is frightening them, and that is going to rush them. They are losing confidence in the United States as having a military umbrella over them to protect them, and they want their own military force to protect themselves. That’s the way they feel over there. Now that is a chief incentive to unite them and that is taking place.”

Mr. Armstrong was reading Bible prophecy and watching for it to be fulfilled. He saw the way the Bible said this European power would come about. Some of the names have changed, but this European power is emerging exactly the way he forecast.

Because of these prophecies, *every time* Mr. Putin has taken a major step forward, I have told you to watch for Germany and Europe’s response.

Vladimir Putin first assumed office in 2000. But he took a big step toward authoritarianism in the December 2003 elections. “Russian elections have recently moved President Vladimir Putin much closer to becoming a dictator,” I wrote in January 2004. “This strikes intense fear in Europe. The Europeans still remember how violent Russia was in World War II, and Russia is a close neighbor with massive piles of nuclear weapons” ([theTrumpet.com/1049](http://theTrumpet.com/1049)).

Now Putin is threatening to use those nuclear weapons!

“The Russian election is triggering a fear that will hasten the uniting of the European Union,” I continued in that article.

Then in 2008, Putin shocked the world by invading Georgia. In an article shortly afterward, I discussed Bible prophecies of that European empire, led by Germany, being made up of 10 kings. “Mr. Armstrong often taught that a political or economic crisis would spark these ‘ten kings’ to strongly unite very quickly. The fact that Russia has launched a war shows just how easily such a crisis could occur! Will the Georgia strike actually spark European unification? Will a crisis occur over Ukraine? That area is the breadbasket of Russia, and surely it is willing to wage war over that as well” (October 2008; [theTrumpet.com/5453](http://theTrumpet.com/5453)).

“Watch Europe to see how it responds to these dramatic developments in Asia,” that article said.

Then in 2014, Russia grabbed a chunk of Ukraine, invading Crimea and eastern parts of the country. “Europe’s dreadful fear of Vladimir Putin—its next-door neighbor—is going to help shape and form the Holy Roman Empire rather suddenly,” I wrote soon after (May-June 2014; *theTrumpet.com/11530*).

How could we know this would be the outcome of these events? Let’s look more specifically at prophecy.

### ‘Tidings out of the East’

The main prophecy these events bring to mind is in Daniel 11. Verses 40-41 prophesy of a “king of the north”—a united Europe—that attacks the Middle East (our free booklet *The King of the South* explains). This power is going to dominate the Middle East and then the world!

The great powers of Asia, which are already coming together in many ways, will coalesce behind Russia and China. They will know they are next on the hit list of the world’s new number one superpower, Europe, which likes to attack without warning. So Russia and China will gather their armies on the borders of Europe. This move will make Europe intensely nervous! And how will it respond?

“But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (verses 44-45).

This is where the rise of Europe and Russia is leading. It is building now even as I write!

“Tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him [united Europe].” These alarming “tidings” come from the northeast. Look on a world map and see who is located northeast of Europe: Russia and China, which are uniting even today.

As I wrote in 2004, “Europe’s becoming very nervous about the outcome of the Russian election gives us a flash of light into a

terrifying Bible prophecy. It is building now—at this moment—to a spectacular fulfillment! All of these events in Russia and Europe are working out according to God’s master plan.” And in 2008, I wrote, “You can already see the fulfillment of this prophecy occurring in embryo today! Europe is deeply troubled by developments in Russia and China.”

Today, because of Russian aggression, Germany is dramatically changing course on its military, and all of Europe is shifting to war-time footing. But there are still more dramatic changes ahead!

### A German Strongman

In 2014, I wrote: “A second major prophecy that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine will bring about is the arrival of a strongman in Europe. A new leader is coming—a kind of Vladimir Putin. This is what Europe needs in order to bind together, to have the strength and unity of purpose needed to confront Russia.”

This man is certain to come on the scene very soon!

All Europe clearly sees the need for a strongman. The Austrian paper *Der Standard* wrote on February 10: “The EU finally needs a leader who can deal with Putin and [Joe] Biden on an equal footing.”

In negotiations, France took the lead in talking with Russia. “As commendable as it is that French President Emmanuel Macron is standing in for the EU—it needs to change. The EU finally needs a face, a voice, a ‘head of the Union’ who will act at eye level with Putin and U.S. President Joe Biden. That can only happen if there is deep EU reform and further democratization—and if the direct election of a president of the EU comes. Plans for that have been around for a long time. It is time to implement it” (ibid).

Daniel 8:23 tells us that “in the latter time,” we should expect “a king of fierce countenance” to arise in Europe. “And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people” (verse 24).

As I wrote in that 2014 article, “Europe’s new



fear of Russia is going to play a major role in hastening the fulfillment of that prophecy!”

In addition to the prophesied strongman, the Catholic Church will also play a major role in uniting the disparate European nations.

So much of what God prophesied through Mr. Armstrong has already been fulfilled. Watch closely for the final fulfillment of these prophecies! “Ten kings” will arise. The 27 nations currently comprising the European Union will be pared down to 10. They will be led by a strong Putin-like dictator and unified by the Roman Catholic Church. At that point, they will emerge as a power even greater than Russia or the United States!

Consider the power the EU already has. Look particularly at Germany’s clout. The Germans already lead Europe and dominate economically. Soon they will begin calling the shots militarily for nine other European kings.

The growing necessity to protect themselves will drive European leaders to reduce the number of nations in their union and empower a strongman. That man will then use the clout and power of Europe to take on Vladimir Putin and what the Bible calls “the kings of the east” (Revelation 16:12).

Putin is helping create a power that will prove greater than his own! And the clash between these two powers will cause more suffering than the world has ever known!

Most Americans are oblivious to these events. Yet those in America who are paying attention are *cheering* this dramatic shift in Germany! They are glad to see Germany finally standing up militarily. That demonstrates a dangerous ignorance of Bible prophecy.

In the days after the extra spending was announced, German Economic Minister Robert Habeck visited Washington. Spiegel Online wrote that Habeck was “welcomed with open arms” and “showered with goodwill” from America’s leaders. “At the German Embassy in Washington, diplomats could hardly believe

the number of people who wanted to meet with Habeck: the secretaries for commerce and energy as well as security and energy advisers,” Spiegel Online wrote. “And then Habeck also rushed to Antony Blinken on Tuesday afternoon for an hourlong conversation. Habeck’s people hadn’t even asked to meet with the secretary of state—the request reportedly came from the U.S. side” (March 2).

But prophecy tells us that this European military power is going to turn against Britain, America and the Jewish state in the Middle East in an act of unparalleled treachery! God says He is raising up this nation to punish us!

These prophecies are dark, but the Bible shows they all have a positive ending. Daniel 8:25 tells us this European strongman will “stand up against the Prince of princes”—he will try to fight Christ Himself—“but he shall be broken without hand.” The Messiah will come and stop these disastrous wars and destroy that man. The 10-nation military superpower will be destroyed at the same time.

Daniel 2 contains another critical prophecy of this power. It concludes with the image being smashed by a stone from heaven and blowing away in the wind as dust—then the stone growing into a mountain that fills the Earth (verses 34-35). Daniel explains the meaning with this inspiring verse: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (verse 44). That will be the end of the Daniel 2 image and all the repressive human empires of this world. God is going to smash that image forever!

The rise of a German-led European power is a towering sign that Christ’s return is close. The time of evil, human empires invading their neighbors is nearly over. God’s rule is about to begin! ■

# HE WAS RIGHT ABOUT EUROPE

**M**ILLIONS OF PEOPLE HAVE HEARD THE voice of Herbert W. Armstrong, analyzing the news of the day and actually forecasting the news of the future on his radio and television program, *The World Tomorrow*.

“[T]he outlook from here is for a continued drift at Washington—tough talk, but **NO TOUGH ACTION**,” he wrote in his characteristic emphatic style in the March issue of his news-magazine—“the nations of Europe, directly in the very shadow of the great Russian bear, are becoming disturbed, distrustful of America, and thinking more and more about uniting themselves into a **UNITED STATES OF EUROPE**.”

He wrote that all that was lacking was a supreme leader to take command, and that that man would appear suddenly. This man, probably from Germany, would establish a stunning new political system, but based on a very old one: a European bloc, a “union of church and state,” united by Catholicism—a modern Holy Roman Empire.

“Ten dictators in Europe will unite, in a gigantic European combine, turning their united military power and resources over to the new leader of Europe! Not only this, but a great **RELIGIOUS LEADER**—the pope at Rome—will also emerge, in a world-shaking pact with the military leader ...!”

These 10 European nations, he said, would “include Germany and Italy, probably Spain and Portugal and France, Greece, and probably some of the Balkan nations .... Definitely Britain will not be in it.”

This seems like a good analysis for a March 2022 magazine issue. It would be even better if it had been written in March 2020, truly impressive if written in March 2000. But it was written in March 1950.

“Now one of the great things that is urging Europe on ... is their fear of what’s going on in the Kremlin and the Soviet Union,” he said in a Nov. 27, 1982, sermon. “They are losing confidence in the United States as having a military umbrella over them to protect them, and they want their own military force to protect themselves. ... [T]hat is a chief incentive to unite them and that is taking place.”

On Feb. 8, 1980, he wrote: “Germany, along with other European nations, has no military force capable of defending against such Russian attack. The European nations have relied on U.S. military might to protect them from the Russians who are right at their eastern frontier, and now massing heavy troops there! It seems NATO has about fallen into discard. ... You may be sure the West European leaders are conferring hurriedly and secretly about *how* and *how soon* they may **UNITE** and provide a united **EUROPEAN MILITARY FORCE** so they can **DEFEND THEMSELVES!** And so they will no longer have to give in meekly to Russia! And who will they blame for their humiliation and their necessity now to have a United Europe, with a united **GOVERNMENT**, a **COMMON CURRENCY**, and a **COMMON MILITARY FORCE AS GREAT OR GREATER THAN EITHER THE U.S.S.R. OR THE U.S.A.?** They will blame the U.S.! And when they are strong enough to assert themselves, they will first attack Britain for standing firm with the U.S., and then they will return a lot of hydrogen bombs the U.S. has stored now in Europe!”

Mr. Armstrong said he did not know *when* Europe would unite into a superpower, but for decades he maintained, without wavering, that it *would*. He was delivering the warning of Bible prophecy, and you are reading that same prophetic warning right now, in 2022. ■

# GERMANY'S PHONY WAR ON RUSSIA

**A**T THE SAME TIME GERMANY ANNOUNCED its massive military transformation, it appeared to change course on Russia.

Berlin has been heavily criticized for its strong relationship with Moscow. While 200,000 Russian soldiers were surrounding Ukraine's borders, Germany's newest pipeline with Russia awaited certification. Berlin blocked NATO allies from sending weapons to Ukraine. As the United States and others tried to discourage an invasion by promising crippling sanctions, Germany argued against them and undermined them.

One of the world's most ruthless dictators was preparing to conquer Ukraine. And Germany was on his side.

In late February, this appeared to change. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced Germany wouldn't merely be sending helmets and field hospitals to Ukraine; it would send weapons and would stop blocking its allies from doing likewise. Days earlier, Germany suspended the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

But has Germany really broken with Russia? The evidence tells a different story.

There was a real risk that Eastern Europe would abandon Germany for cozying up to Putin. So Germany implemented enough changes to remain inside the Western alliance. Since then, it has worked to undermine sanctions from within.

Britain and America have promised to stop buying oil and gas from Russia. Germany and Europe have not. Ukrainian Ambassador to Germany Andriy Melnyk called Germany's decision to continue importing energy from Russia "a knife in the back of Ukraine."

In a meeting between European Union leaders in Brussels on March 10 and 11, Germany led the whole EU to reject an oil and gas boycott.

This energy trade is literally funding Putin's invasion. When Russia launched its invasion, Europe was sending Russia about €200 million (US\$220 million) per day for natural gas alone. The invasion spiked gas prices, and *now that figure is €600 million*. This spike in gas prices

means that since the war began, the EU is sending more money to Russia, not less.

Cutting off Russian energy altogether would be tremendously painful for Germany, but Berlin has easy ways to *reduce* its dependence on Russia. Just this year it closed three nuclear reactors that it could easily reopen, but it won't.

It's the same story with SWIFT, the interbank payment system. Newspaper headlines give the impression that Russia is almost totally cut off from the global financial system. The truth is, America said it wanted to cut Russia off completely from SWIFT. The EU wasn't ready to do that. Initially it agreed to cut 70 percent off. The final figure was 30 percent.

EuroIntelligence wrote: "What this means is that the SWIFT ban falls into the SINO category: sanctions in name only. The EU is cheering on the Ukrainian side from a safe distance, watching from warm living rooms, heated by Russian gas" (March 3).

The weapons Germany promised Ukraine have yet to arrive. NATO allies wanting to send weapons find that their shipments are being held up by German red tape.

Germany, the U.S. and all the West pretend they're going toe-to-toe with Putin and boast about how powerful these sanctions are. But the gap between reality and rhetoric is huge. By scuppering every threat of repercussions, Germany practically encouraged Russia to invade.

When Russia followed through, Germany quickly announced a massive rearmament program and has since worked to unite Europe. Yes, in beefing up its own military, Germany and Europe are all action—though none of that helps Ukraine. But in standing up to Russia, it's mostly optics.

Ambassador Melnyk was present in the Bundestag for Germany's dramatic announcement that it would remilitarize. "There was a strange feeling," he said, "as if the deputies were freeing themselves from a burden. They were rather celebrating themselves with standing ovations. Ten days have passed since

then. But we, as Ukrainians, hardly feel a thing. No help that would do justice to the level of brutality and despair in my homeland.”

Instead of siding with Ukraine, Germany gives the impression it is hoping for Ukraine to lose quickly so the awkwardness of its position will go away.

Germany’s actions clearly show it is not standing with NATO against Russia. Why? “History shows that in between wars, Germany and Russia often work together,” *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry noted in his January 31 article “Why Germany Just Betrayed America.”

“Many elite Germans feel their nation has now gotten all it can from the U.S. and are ready to move on,” Mr. Flurry wrote. “Some powerful Germans are thinking more and more about the Holy Roman Empire, and they want modern Germany to assume more power of its own in the spirit of that empire. They want to establish Europe as a mighty, German-led superpower.” Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has given Germany the perfect opportunity to rapidly rearm. It is also demonstrating America’s weakness and causing Europe to look elsewhere for help. A rearmed Germany would be the perfect candidate to replace American leadership.

Mr. Flurry referenced Jeremiah 1:13, in which God gave a prophetic vision of “a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north.” “This symbolic language is describing modern Germany,” he wrote. “Beneath the surface, that nation is full of simmering dissatisfaction with the current world order. Germans are angry at the U.S. The imperialistic

ambition that prompted Germany to start both world wars is alive and well. It is ‘seething’!”

Prophecy warns that a German-led Europe is about to boil over, spreading its power across the world.

In May 1962, the *Plain Truth*—the *Trumpet*’s predecessor, led by editor in chief Herbert W. Armstrong—wrote: “Once a German-dominated Europe is fully established, Germany will be ready to negotiate and bargain with Russia—and behind the backs of the Western allies if necessary.”

Germany has a history of not just making deals with Russia but making *secret* deals. In 1887, the two concluded an agreement known as the Reinsurance Treaty, where each agreed to be neutral if the other got involved in a war. If such an agreement had become known, it would have destroyed Germany’s other alliances—so only a few people at the very top knew about it.

In 1922, Germany and the Soviet Union publicly concluded the Treaty of Rapallo. But secretly Russia helped Germany rearm after World War I while Germany helped Russia industrialize. This was 17 years before Russia and Germany covertly divided up Eastern Europe between the two of them on the eve of World War II.

Some may think that modern 21st-century nations don’t secretly conspire together. But people also thought nations no longer invaded their neighbors and that Europe was free of large-scale war. The alliance Mr. Armstrong forecast decades ago is here—and so many other Bible prophecies stand on the brink of being fulfilled.

**RICHARD PALMER**

# America's Naive Trust in Germany

The nation that launched two world wars will now receive top-of-the-line stealth nuclear fighters. What could go wrong? **BY GERALD FLURRY**

**T**WO WEEKS AFTER GERMANY ANNOUNCED ITS big spending boost, it revealed what it planned on spending a large amount of the cash on: American-made F-35A Lightning II jets.

These are America's most modern fighter jets, chock-full of America's top technology. Only the United States' closest allies are allowed to buy them. To be getting such jets is a major military advancement for Germany. For the first time, the German Air Force will have a stealth jet. This will also be its first "fifth generation" fighter. But most significantly, this jet is designed to carry nuclear weapons.

In Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Turkey, the U.S. stores about 150 to 200 thermonuclear bombs. It originally deployed these bombs and more to NATO nations in Europe during the Cold War. Are these bombs still necessary? Is it still worth the risk to leave nuclear weapons in nations that were America's enemies as recently as World War II? These questions apparently don't concern American leaders, who are now giving Germany the ability to put these bombs on a stealth jet.

Does anyone remember the destruction these nations caused or the devastation nuclear weapons have wreaked?

Nuclear weapons are a horrific menace. Just one can vaporize a city full of people. Two hundred of them are enough to destroy the whole world! Yet America has given those bombs to these five nations—two of which were our bitter enemies just 75 years ago!

In the minds of many people, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has made nuclear war a real possibility. Russian President Vladimir Putin placed his nuclear forces on high alert in February. He threatened "consequences greater than

any you have faced in history" to any nation that interfered with his conquest of Ukraine.

Now Germany is thinking about nuclear weapons too. The only planes Germany currently has to carry the B61 nuclear bombs stationed there are Tornado jets. The Tornado took its first flight nearly half a century ago and is now obsolete.

America is also upgrading the B61 bombs stationed in Germany and elsewhere, making them more accurate and modifying them to fit the F-35. The upgraded bombs will have GPS guidance and a variable yield—meaning they can be dialed up or down to create a range of explosions, from 50 times smaller than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima to one three times larger. Director of the Nuclear Information Project Hans Kristensen described it as an "all-in-one nuclear bomb on steroids."

America is giving Germany access to its most-advanced and deadliest weapons. The crucial question is, does the United States really have control over those bombs?

Tactical weapons are usually carried by short-range delivery vehicles like cruise missiles or fighter or bomber aircraft with ranges under 850 miles. They cannot be launched intercontinentally, but they are small enough to be shipped wherever needed in the back of a truck!

Another horrifying possibility is the risk these smaller devices have of being stolen by rogue nations or terrorists. These are immensely powerful weapons! Can we really trust other nations with such firepower?

## How Secure Are These Weapons?

These weapons technically belong to Washington, but do they really? They remain under

U.S. control unless permission is given to hand them over to the host nation in times of war. However, following a series of blunders over the years, the security of these nukes has been called into question.

“According to a Blue Ribbon Review set up by the U.S. Air Force in 2008, most U.S. nuclear weapons storage sites in Europe do not meet U.S. Defense Department security standards,” wrote Tom Sauer and Bob van der Zwaan in a May 2011 report for the Harvard Kennedy School, titled “U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe After NATO’s Lisbon Summit: Why Their Withdrawal Is Desirable and Feasible.”

The Kleine Brogel Air Base in Belgium is one base that hosts America’s tactical nuclear weapons. In 2001, this base was the target of an al Qaeda extremist named Nizar Trabelsi. In 2010, the same base was penetrated by peace activists. The activists climbed the perimeter fence and wandered around the base for more than an hour, videotaping their escapade. When they were finally caught, base security didn’t even confiscate the videotape!

It is appalling that the U.S. is so careless with something so deadly dangerous! This is the kind of mistake that will have terrible real-world consequences.

Do you think the European nations that host these weapons are as indifferent about them as America is?

Think about the potential for a nuclear debacle. Little could stand in the way of those nations taking over those bombs and using them however they choose. Those weapons could conceivably be turned back on America!

How naive America is to entrust this immense firepower to nations that so recently—and throughout history—have proved to be enemies of the free world!

Giving Germany the F-35 shows a monumental level of trust. This would allow Germany to carry out a stealth nuclear attack. The plane is also designed to be the backbone of the U.S. Air Force. It’s an impressive aircraft in many ways, but it has been plagued with some huge weaknesses—especially when it comes to cyberwarfare. The F-35 has been called a flying

supercomputer, and it is shockingly vulnerable to being hacked. Germany and others that operate the plane will be in a perfect position to explore all these weaknesses.

Right now, Germany seems to be an ally of the United States. But what if this nation—our archenemy in World Wars I and II—turned against us in the next war?

Germany claims to be an ally. Yet Europe is sending Russia more money now than it was before the Ukraine invasion! Germany has led all of Europe to refuse to boycott Russian oil and gas. They’re not even taking simple steps to *reduce* the money they send Russia. Is Germany really acting like an ally, especially one America can trust with the most destructive weapons ever produced?

America trusts Germany, but history screams that it shouldn’t!

The trust America is placing in Germany is absolutely condemned by the Bible. Why? Because it is trusting other nations rather than trusting God.

## **Friend or Foe?**

When Germany announced its rearmament, America welcomed the decision with rapturous applause.

In the Bible, God condemns America and Britain (and other modern descendants of ancient Israel) for forsaking Him and for doting on their “lovers.” And today, what do we find ourselves doing? Arming two warlike nations, our historical enemies, with nuclear firepower! This is an appallingly dangerous mistake!

In the end-time book of Ezekiel, God says, “And Aholah [speaking of the modern nations of Israel] played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours ... Wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted” (Ezekiel 23:5, 9). This whole chapter concerns Israel, here called Aholah, and the Jews, called Aholibah, setting themselves up for one of the most shocking betrayals in history!

The Assyrians are the forefathers of the modern Germans, and one of the names used in biblical prophecy to refer to Germany today.

(We prove this in our article “Is Germany in Bible Prophecy?”, [theTrumpet.com/17944](http://theTrumpet.com/17944).)

Ezekiel’s prophecy continues, “She [America and Britain] doted upon the Assyrians her neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men” (verse 12). Germany is a very militaristic country, a nation with impressive soldiers. Now, as this country dramatically expands its military, America is celebrating.

“And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea. And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them” (verses 16-17). In our time, “the Babylonians” refer to the Holy Roman Empire, which has Germany, Italy and the Vatican at its core.

God has a strong view about cozying up to such “lovers”! It is a matter of trust. America has no trust in God for protection, so it is trusting another nation—in this case, one with a terrifying history! We have put human beings ahead of God. God condemns modern Israel—especially America, Britain and the Jewish state—because they have “forgotten me” (verse 35). That is a serious mistake these nations are going to regret.

This is an insane policy, even by normal standards of common sense. But God sees it for what it really is. He says America and Britain are worse than a prostitute: We are like a woman who has forsaken her husband and become a prostitute who pays the customer to come to her (Ezekiel 16:33-34). That’s how abominable this is to God!

The sobering reality is that any one of the countries that have those bombs could take control of these weapons by force and use them against the U.S. Two hundred nuclear bombs are sitting in European countries—enough to destroy the world—and the proliferation is spreading!

But the awesome news is that Christ will return! He will let us experience the suffering we have brought upon ourselves because of our sins. But just as sure as those seven resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire have come on the scene exactly according to prophecy—and just as sure as the prophesied World War III is about to come—we can be absolutely confident He will return.

When that happens, these bombs and all the destruction they wreak will be destroyed forever. Jesus Christ will bring the solution to this terrible problem. You can prove that truth straight from your own Bible.

Thank God for that endless hope! ■

# War Sparks Food Crisis

Blocked ports and fallow fields in Ukraine will affect an already volatile region. **BY ANDREW MILLER**

**R**USSIAN TANKS ARE NOT ONLY THREATENING Ukraine's people; they are threatening the global food supply. Russia and Ukraine together grow large percentages of the world's wheat, corn and other agricultural products, but Ukraine has stopped shipping their produce. Its Black Sea ports are closed until the Russian invasion ends.

Consequently, corn futures have risen 18 percent, and wheat futures have risen 40 percent—the fastest price increases in at least 60 years. More than 5 percent of Ukraine's population has fled the country already, and supply chain problems are making it hard to get fertilizers. If Ukrainian farms are not planted this spring because the farmers are fighting and their fields are war zones, prices could go much, much higher.

“Ukraine has been brutally disturbed,” Ukrainian farmer Kees Huizinga told Brownfield Ag News. “I just this morning got a message from our agricultural association that Ukraine farmers need 200,000 tons of diesel to do the spring planting. The same story goes for seed materials, for spare parts for machines and labor. A lot of guys went to the army, so there's a shortage of tractor drivers. Fertilizers are extremely expensive and hardly available, as they're not being produced now.”

Huizinga says if Russia's invasion continues, it will create huge grain shortages in southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Egypt, for example, gets about 85 percent of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine. The Egyptians are now desperately looking for alternative supplies. In early March, a member of Egypt's national chamber of commerce told Bloomberg that in the greater Cairo area, a pack of five flatbread loaves increased in price by 50 percent over the course of a week. This is an urgent issue for the Egyptian government,

and beyond: The mass protests, deadly confrontations, overthrow of the Mubarak regime and temporary seizure of the country by the radical Muslim Brotherhood all began with a surge in the price of bread. War in Ukraine could lead to another revolution in Egypt, and a revolution in Egypt would affect other nations in the Middle East and beyond.

“Remember, bread riots are what started the Arab Spring; bread riots are what started the French Revolution,” said Teucrium CEO Sal Gilbertie. “It is a biblical event when you run low on wheat stocks.”

Government lockdowns and the resulting supply chain disruptions shot food prices to a 10-year high before the first Z-embellished Russian tanks began clattering across Ukrainian wheat fields. In America, groceries are about 8.5 percent more expensive than they were a year ago, but the situation is much worse in other countries. The United Nations Food Agency reports that, worldwide, the price of food has increased 20.7 percent and is still rising.

Two millennia ago, the disciples of Jesus Christ asked Him for a sign “of the end of the world.” He confirmed that the end of human civilization would come and would be preceded by certain events: “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:4-8). Among other signs, Jesus Christ Himself specifically prophesied religious deception, wars and food shortages.



And war in Ukraine could lead to the fulfillment of even more imminent, even more specific prophecies. Watch for the food crisis to benefit Islamic movements like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and al-Shabaab in Ethiopia. The Prophet Daniel foretold that Egypt and Ethiopia would align with an Islamic radical leader (Daniel 11:42-43). In his booklet *The King of the South*, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry identifies Iran as the “king of the

south” and forecasts that pro-Iran movements will take control of Egypt and Ethiopia. Watch for food insecurity and economic turmoil from the war in Ukraine to destabilize these two nations, giving radical Islam and Iran incentive to spark a revolution.

Wars causing food shortages and food shortages causing wars are indeed going to become an increasingly tragic “biblical event.” These are the days we are living in right now. ■

# The Worst American Foreign-Policy Blunder 2

A sequel far worse than the original. **BY ANDREW MILLER**

“**T**HE WORST FOREIGN-POLICY BLUNDER IN American history.” That is how the *Trumpet*’s editor in chief described the Iran nuclear deal—the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreement—that went into effect on Jan. 16, 2016. The agreement gave one of America’s fiercest adversaries immediate access to over \$100 billion, \$1.8 billion of which was in cash. It permitted Iran’s development of ballistic missile technology, which it will develop to eventually hold a nuclear warhead. And astoundingly, it gave Iran a legitimate path to obtaining a nuclear weapon in little over a decade.

Gerald Flurry warned that this signature foreign-policy initiative by President Barack Obama was more than a naive mistake. It was a deliberate attempt to empower the fanatical Islamic regime, putting in grave danger America’s allies, most notably the Jewish state.

President Donald Trump withdrew from what he called the “terrible Iran nuclear deal” and for four years attempted to restrain Iran and support Israel’s defense.

But now with Joe Biden in office, six years after the original deal was initiated, America is

leading the great powers into a new agreement with Iran on nuclear technology. Shockingly, there is nothing substantially “new” about this new deal. Those who have followed the negotiations are feeling a sickening sense of déjà vu.

In fact, this may prove to be the *new* “worst foreign-policy blunder in American history.”

## The Remake

Many of the characters have remained the same. Robert Malley leads the negotiations for the United States, just as he did in 2015. Other Obama-era carryovers involved in the new deal include Richard Nephew (who recently left the team due to “differences of opinion”) and Wendy Sherman, serving as deputy secretary of state under Antony Blinken.

This time around, the horror-show ending is clear from the beginning. In the original, Iran’s radical, terrorist-sponsoring, nuclear-ambitious regime was about to collapse under Western sanctions. Yet Obama, president of what Iran calls “the Great Satan,” intervened to *save* that regime and its nuclear program.

Now, Obama’s former negotiators and his former vice president, Joe Biden, are as

determined as he was to strike a deal with Iran at any cost.

Biden's team has pushed U.S. negotiators to cave in to Iran to such an extent that at least three members of the U.S. negotiating team have resigned in protest. Former U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton said, "The concessions that were made to the mullahs in Tehran to get the deal put back together make it even worse." He called it "a terrible mistake for the United States and anyone who believes in peace and regional security."

According to a draft of the agreement leaked to Reuters, the framework for this new deal is the original deal, including its expiration dates. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said this means that if the Iranians agree to restrictions, whether heavy or light, they could legally pursue nuclear weapons in less than 2½ years.

But at least there are mechanisms or incentives to bring Iran back to the negotiating table in the future, right? Apparently not. The deal reportedly expires in 2025 and leaves it at that.

The stated goal of the new deal is simply to bring Iran back into compliance with the nuclear provisions of the old deal, including reducing the purity of its enriched uranium from its current 60 percent to 3.67 percent. The regime will reportedly reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium in phases, but many of the deal's benefits will take effect immediately.

A more important and touchier subject is the matter of Iran's advanced centrifuges, illegal under terms of the original deal. When Donald Trump pulled out of the deal, Iran began building as many of them as it could, and now it does not want to give them up.

If you understand the motivation of the Obama-Biden team, you'll find their response unsurprising: *No problem*. The new deal allows Iran to place its illegal advanced centrifuges in storage rather than destroying or otherwise forfeiting them. This means that the worst-case scenario for the people at Iran's Atomic Energy Organization is to wait until 2025 and then start cranking out highly enriched uranium.

## The Take

As part of the original nuclear deal, Iran

received about \$100 billion in unfrozen assets and sanctions relief—equivalent to the 100 top-grossing films of all time, doubled. This saved Iran's struggling economy and its struggling regime. The mullahs of Tehran used this money to pour vast resources into funding its terrorist proxies.

The new deal will do the exact same thing and provide almost the exact same amount of money. Upon signing the deal, the Iranian regime will gain access to more than \$100 billion in currently inaccessible assets.

"If we lift the sanctions, how are those dollars likely to be spent?" asked U.S. Rep. Ritchie Torres. "I have no reason to think those dollars will be spent on an Iranian Build Back Better Act. I have every reason to think those dollars will likely finance acts of terrorism and proxy warfare." Torres and others have seen this before: This is exactly what Iran did after implementation of the original deal.

But the new deal will produce even larger flows of cash. Iran's economy depends heavily on oil exports. With this deal, experts predict Iran will more than double its oil exports within months. S&P Global estimates that within nine months, it could be shipping 1.5 million additional barrels of oil every *day*. A source in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries told Reuters that it will seek to re-include Iran if a deal is signed.

According to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, "Iran's economy is poised for solid, if not spectacular, growth in the coming months. Before the recent changes in world oil conditions, the International Monetary Fund forecast its GDP growth for 2022 at 2 percent. Combined with an average of 3 percent growth over the previous two years, this would put Tehran at 95 percent of where it was before the Trump administration's 'maximum pressure.'" Since that forecast, the price of oil has shot up from \$76 to \$113 a barrel at the time of writing. Shipping an extra 1.5 million barrels a day will sharply increase Iran's revenue.

## New Costar

The U.S. and Iran have agreed on Russia as the main mediator of the new negotiations.

When Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and was condemned for it by the U.S., you would expect this to significantly stall negotiations. Well, yes and no.

The deal has been delayed by Russia's war on Ukraine and by the fact that a whole new set of demands has been placed on the table—not by Iran, but by Russia. It is demanding that the U.S. lift the sanctions it has implemented for its invasion so that it can trade with Iran after the deal is completed.

Russia has proposed that it be allowed to carry out nuclear work in Iran as per the original deal, enabling it to fulfill a \$10 billion contract to expand Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant, to help redesign Iran's Fordow nuclear facility, to swap out uranium, and to furnish Iranian reactors with Russian nuclear fuel.

Biden predictably caved in to Russia's demands just as he did Iran's. U.S. State Department Spokesman Ned Price said America would not impose sanctions on "Russian participation in nuclear projects" as outlined in the new deal.

British journalist Melanie Phillips wrote, "So the Biden administration is now accepting Putin—the man who Biden himself calls a 'war criminal' and who has threatened nuclear war against the West—as the controller of Iran's nuclear-weapons program. ... It's hard to believe, but through its double-dealing with both Russia and Iran, America is now working with a lethal enemy of the West to empower a lethal enemy of civilization" (March 18).

## **Bad Actor**

One obstacle to completing the new deal is the status of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). President Trump designated it, correctly, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Iran wants that reversed.

The IRGC is easily one of the largest, best-funded terrorist organizations in the world, led by a fanatical regime. It has aided in numerous anti-West terrorist attacks since its inception. It is responsible for the deaths of thousands, if not millions, of people, directly and indirectly. Its stated goals include obliteration of the State of Israel and genocide of the Jewish people.

Thus one can imagine the shock and anger felt by Israel's leaders when rumors emerged that the Biden administration was considering delisting the IRGC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. In exchange, the mullahs would promise to deescalate the region. Israel's leaders initially refused to believe it. In a joint statement on March 18, Prime Minister Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said, "We find it hard to believe that the IRGC's designation as a terrorist organization will be removed in exchange for a promise not to harm Americans. The fight against terrorism is a global one—a shared mission of the entire world. We believe that the United States will not abandon its closest allies in exchange for empty promises from terrorists."

When it became evident that the U.S. was indeed planning to delist the IRGC, Mr. Bennett said, "Unfortunately, there is still determination to sign the nuclear deal with Iran at almost any cost—including saying that the world's largest terrorist organization is not a terrorist organization. This is too high a price."

Obama and Biden are willing to pay it.

## **Spoiler Alert**

Melanie Phillips wrote this interesting statement: "Given that the Iranian regime has been at war with the West since it came to power in 1979, that its fingerprints are on almost every major terrorist atrocity against Western interests and that it unceasingly declares its genocidal aim to exterminate Israel, the administration's determination to empower it is incomprehensible" (op cit).

Indeed, most people find the U.S. government's push for this new deal to be incomprehensible. Biden and those around him seem determined to empower a direct enemy and one of the most dangerous regimes on Earth today. Worse still, he seems happy to do it at the expense of America's allies. To any rational, clear-thinking person, the actions of the Obama administration and this administration have been mystifying.

But you can understand. There is a reason why this administration has made so many

decisions that are disastrous for Americans, Israelis and others.

While other news sources praised and swooned over presidential candidate Barack Obama, the *Trumpet* sounded the alarm. We emphasized scandal after scandal during his administration as other news sources dismissed or forgot them. When Obama's administration signed the original nuclear deal, Mr. Flurry called it a "cataclysmic foreign-policy blunder."

When Joe Biden took office, Mr. Flurry forecast that we would see the same horrifying policies as we did under Obama. "Many people can clearly see that Joe Biden is not really in charge of the government," he wrote in our October 2021 cover story, "This Isn't Incompetence. This is Treason!" ([theTrumpet.com/24563](https://www.theTrumpet.com/24563)). "He has filled his administration with Obama-era officials, and Mr. Obama himself is really directing the show! Some say—correctly—that this is effectively Obama's third term."

Writing about America's shameful withdrawal from Afghanistan, Mr. Flurry wrote, "Many of the seeds for this disaster were laid years ago, when Joe Biden was *vice* president—second in command to Barack Obama. I have written extensively on how, for eight years, the Obama administration was working dangerously against America's interests—and WHY" (*ibid*).

The *Trumpet* has accurately forecast and emphasized the role of Iran and of Obama by using a key understanding: the prophecies of your Bible.

"Many people can see that these are disastrous decisions," Mr. Flurry continued. "But we must understand that this isn't simply the result of ineptitude on the part of this administration, or naivety about how the world really works. We are seeing the aftereffects of a calculated, aggressive, satanic attack aimed at weakening and ultimately destroying the nations of Israel, starting with the world's most powerful nation!"

There is a force that *wants* terror, war and nuclear detonations. There is a spirit behind it. That is why these events are all moving in the same direction.

"Many biblical scriptures explain and underscore this truth. You cannot grasp the malevolent intent behind Barack Obama's actions without recognizing this," Mr. Flurry wrote.

For decades, using Bible prophecy, the *Trumpet* has warned about America's decline and imminent fall as a superpower and the rise of Iran. We warned that it would become the nuclear-armed king of radical Islam based on a prophecy found in Daniel 11:40: "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." In *The King of the South*, Mr. Flurry identifies the pushy, aggressive, belligerent leader of Islamic terrorism, Iran, as this king of the south.

The renewed zeal for a nuclear deal by Barack Obama's men is readying the king of the south to make this prophesied push. Initially, this will make America's longtime ally Israel extremely vulnerable to future attack. But according to this prophecy, extreme worry will also be felt by the king of the north.

Who is the king of the north? Since 1945, the late Herbert W. Armstrong, editor in chief of the *Plain Truth*, the predecessor magazine to the *Trumpet*, identified this king as a German-led Europe. Now, to the cheers and adulation of the rest of the world, Germany is pushing to remilitarize, using the Russian invasion of Ukraine as a pretext (article, page 10).

Mr. Armstrong predicted Germany's remilitarization more than 75 years ago, when Germany was a bombed-out ruin following World War II. He based his forecast on the sure word of Bible prophecy. As Mr. Flurry explains, the coming clash between radical Islam and a united, Catholic Europe will spark the nuclear fires of World War III.

The terrifying forecasts of the *Plain Truth* and the *Trumpet* are coming to pass. And the worst is still to come. But from this same key source—Bible prophecy—also comes the greatest news anyone could ever hear!

"[J]ust as surely as those events will unfold, Jesus Christ will return to this Earth in power

and glory, as dozens of scriptures confirm!” states our booklet *History and Prophecy of the Middle East*. Prophecies involving the king of the north and the king of the south culminate in the return of Jesus Christ. Human beings will have proved through history that we are

incapable of ruling ourselves and that our nations need to be ruled not by men but by the Kingdom of God. That government will end terrorism, wars and nuclear weapons. The fulfillment of that forecast is what we at the *Trumpet* are looking forward to the most. ■

# Discovered on the Mountain of Curse

An artifact affirms writing of the earliest books of the Bible and forces a revolution in archaeological thinking. **BY CHRISTOPHER EAMES AND BRENT NAGTEGAAL**

JERUSALEM—

**I**T IS HARD TO OVERSTATE THE IMPORTANCE OF a tiny biblical archaeological discovery released to the public on March 24. Measuring 2 by 2 centimeters, the square curse tablet (*defixio*) contains the most ancient Hebrew inscription ever discovered in Israel, dating to the Late Bronze Age II period (circa 1400–1200 B.C.). In the words of epigrapher Prof. Gershon Galil of Haifa University, the discovery represents “absolutely the most important inscription ever found in Israel.” Put together, the 40 alphabetical characters that have thus far been deciphered make a stunning pronouncement:

*Cursed, cursed, cursed—cursed by the God*

*YHW*

*You will die cursed*

*Cursed you will surely die*

*Cursed by YHW—cursed, cursed, cursed.*

The inscription is by far the earliest use of the Hebrew name of the Israelite God found in Israel, YHW (more commonly spelled YHWH), predating the next-earliest inscription by centuries. But outside the discovery of the writing itself, or even the use of God’s name, the other startling element is where the tablet was found: Mount Ebal.

Just before he died, Moses instructed

Joshua on how he should lead Israel into the Promised Land. Following the battles at Jericho and Ai, the Israelites were told to assemble in the mountains surrounding Shechem, the place where Abraham first sacrificed to God when he arrived in the region roughly 500 years earlier.

Moses’s instructions were explicit and detailed. Six tribes were to gather on Mount Gerizim, the other six on Mount Ebal. Leaders of the tribes then read from the book of Deuteronomy about the blessings they would receive if they obeyed God and the curses they would receive if they disobeyed. The six tribes on each mountain then sang back and forth, their voices resonating across the valley. The tribes on Mount Gerizim sang the blessings; the tribes on Mount Ebal sang the curses (Deuteronomy 11:29; 27:1-13).

Before this grand alfresco choral performance, Joshua did something important. “Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal, As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings” (Joshua 8:30-31). Joshua

began this momentous event by building an altar on Mount Ebal and sacrificing offerings to God.

Many people have considered the account of Joshua's Mt. Ebal altar and Israel's epic outdoor concert to be fiction. However, the discovery of the Late Bronze Age curse tablet on Mount Ebal, the mountain of *curses*, at the precise location of a massive stone structure resembling an altar, vindicates the accuracy of Bible history.

## **A 40-Year Journey of Discovery**

Mount Ebal is located in Samaria, roughly 30 miles north of Jerusalem. Historians agree on Mount Ebal's identity, but have debated for decades whether Joshua actually built an altar there.

This debate began in the 1980s largely as a result of the work of the late archaeologist Prof. Adam Zertal of Haifa University.

Following Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, Zertal surveyed and explored the territory that had been acquired from Jordan, especially the northern territory known in biblical times as the hill country of Manasseh.

"A window of opportunity had opened, and for the first time, my generation would steal a glimpse at the place where the central narratives of the Bible took place," Zertal wrote in *A Nation Born*. "No one before us had been granted an opportunity so grand and a responsibility so great."

His massive "Manasseh survey" began in 1978 and ended in 1990, yielding dozens of ancient sites, 80 percent of which had never been documented.

On April 6, 1980, Zertal made his most famous and electrifying discovery. His team was exploring El-Burnat, the Arabic name of a site on the east side of Mount Ebal, about 200 meters below the mountain peak.

"As usual, the surprise of the day came at the last minute!" Zertal recounted in his field journal. "We'd spotted the rock pile earlier, but attached no significance to it. When we approached from the east, however, it looked like a fortified tell. ... It seemed likely that at the very last minute we had stumbled upon an

extraordinary site—there is no other explanation for its shape or location. But we must be careful; only excavation can reveal the truth."

He went on to conduct five excavations at El-Burnat between 1982 and 1987. During the first excavation, the team removed layers of field stones that seemed to have been placed intentionally for the purpose of covering the structure below. With the stones gone, Zertal was able to more clearly delineate the large structure, which measured 30 meters square and 3 meters in height.

Through the next four excavations, Zertal found large amounts of ash and bone in the area around the large structure. In fact, he found more than 1,000 bones, all of which came from young, choice male animals. This indicated the site had been used for animal sacrifices carried out according to biblical guidelines.

But what exactly was the large structure? The "aha" moment occurred toward the end of the day on Thursday, Oct. 13, 1983. Zvi Koenigsberg, a colleague of Zertal, wrote for the *Jerusalem Post* on January 26 this year: "Zertal and I were having coffee while the volunteers were busy washing the pottery they had dug from the ground that day. Zertal was working with a pencil and paper, and then handed me a drawing of what he thought the structure beneath the pile of stones would look like when it was completely revealed.

"I was thunderstruck, and bolted from the table without saying a word. I returned moments later with a book, opened to the page I had been seeking, and handed it to Zertal. It was now his turn to be thunderstruck. The book was one of the tractates of the Mishna, the first post-biblical code of Jewish law, compiled around A.D. 200. The page had a drawing of the altar of the Jerusalem temple, drawn to the specifications of the description in the text. The similarity between the two drawings was striking."

The structure on Mount Ebal was massive and had a distinctive design and function, as the ash and animal bones attested. Yet even Zertal struggled to accept that he had discovered archaeological evidence of this early period of biblical history. He was a secular

archaeologist, not a religious crusader striving to verify the Bible. But faced with compelling evidence of an altar site on Mount Ebal, Zertal could not ignore or reject the remarkable connection between the stones he had excavated and the biblical narrative.

“The problem now was how to present what we’d found,” he wrote in *A Nation Born*. “My academic background made it difficult for me to accept the idea of Joshua’s altar being a tangible reality. After all, Moses is not a historical figure, and the Torah lacks any substantive archaeological support. In the end, I was obliged to overcome each of my thousand-and-one doubts, for it seemed that we had made a discovery as unlikely as finding Sodom and Gomorrah.”

As credentialed and respected as Professor Zertal was, the announcement that he had found Joshua’s altar was met with skepticism by many in the archaeological community. Most agreed with his dating of the large structure (around 1200 B.C.) and did not deny the presence of ash and sacrificial animal bones. Still, experts considered its identification as an altar to be a step too far.

Zertal debated the merits of his Mount Ebal discovery for more than three decades, up until his death in 2015. In that time, more of Zertal’s colleagues came to agree with his identification of the Mount Ebal structure as an altar. Many others found it easier to simply ignore the discovery.

Recently, a third view of the discovery on Mount Ebal has emerged.

## **An Earlier Altar and Curse Tablet**

A few years ago, American archaeologist Dr. Scott Stripling turned his attention to Mount Ebal and Professor Zertal’s excavations. Stripling wanted to look for connections that would help him understand his excavations in Shiloh.

Given the choice, Dr. Stripling would have liked to have continued Zertal’s excavations on Mount Ebal. But this is largely impossible as the site lies in politically sensitive territory. So Dr. Stripling did the next best thing: He wet-sifted the material that had been excavated

decades earlier by Zertal and left adjacent to the large structure. It was in these massive dump piles that Stripling and his team discovered the curse tablet.

Entering the project, Stripling believed Zertal had found the altar mentioned in Joshua 8, but that it was an *earlier* altar built on the same site. To understand Stripling’s view, it’s important to understand exactly what the Bible relates about Joshua’s conquest of Canaan. The biblical text firmly supports an early date of the conquest, indicating that Joshua and Israel began conquering Canaan around 1400 B.C.

This date is different from the one suggested by Professor Zertal and others. Those who propose a later date for Joshua’s conquest believe Israel entered the Promised Land in the late 13th century, sometime close to 1200 B.C.

In Zertal’s excavations, he documented the presence of an earlier altar directly underneath the massive square altar. This altar, which he termed Installation 94 in his preliminary report, is much smaller than the large square structure. Its diameter is only 2 meters.

The shape of this smaller altar is also important. The large altar is square, but the smaller one is circular, and made from unworked, medium-size stones. In his report, Zertal noted that directly on top of this smaller altar was a 10-centimeter layer of clean ash containing animal bones, many of which were burnt. Zertal, just before he died, wrote about this smaller altar: “It would be some time before we’d realize that this was the core, the very heart of the ritual within the ancient structure. This was it—the primogenial ritual site on Mount Ebal.”

Zertal believed this smaller altar was built shortly before the larger altar and dated to the same relative period (around 1200 B.C.). While Dr. Stripling agrees that the smaller altar was built prior to the larger structure, he believes the evidence indicates that the smaller altar was built much earlier, even 200 years earlier (around 1400 B.C., the biblically supported time frame for Joshua’s conquest).

Dr. Stripling supports his view with evidence uncovered during the wet-sifting of

Professor Zertal's fill material. Upon examining the fill, Stripling's team uncovered a higher percentage of pottery styles that can be dated to an earlier period than what Zertal suggested in his preliminary report. The presence of pottery from an earlier period suggests an earlier use of the site. Stripling also notes the presence of 15th-century Egyptian scarabs, as well as the discovery of a Late Bronze Age pumice chalice, as further evidence of the dating of the earlier altar. "Everyone agrees with Zertal that the rectangular altar dates to the 13th century," wrote Stripling. "[But] the round altar likely belongs to the late 15th century and IS PLAUSIBLY THE ALTAR THAT JOSHUA BUILT."

As Dr. Stripling noted, the only way to conclusively settle this debate is to excavate the site further. Sadly, this isn't likely to happen anytime soon. But if it could, Zertal left part of Installation 94 intact, meaning modern excavation methods could help settle the age of the earlier altar.

According to Stripling, only 30 percent of the excavated material from this site on Mount Ebal has been sifted. As the rest of the dump piles are analyzed, other Joshua-era discoveries are likely.

Regardless of the debate over which of the two altars belong to Joshua, the evidence from Mount Ebal proves beyond doubt that the earliest narratives of the Israelites' entrance into the land of Israel are based on fact. And as Zertal wrote, "If we have found material evidence of a story as early as Joshua's, who knows how far back the archaeological record can take us."

No longer can anyone say that the history of Joshua is a reconstruction by later scribes. As Professor Galil noted: "The scribe that wrote this [tablet] could have written every chapter in the Bible. Now no one can claim that the Bible was written in later periods ... because they were able to write it very, very early." Combined with the fact this was found on the biblical mountain of curse and dates to Joshua's time period, it's hard to think of more conclusive proof for a biblical event.

To quote the late Harvard professor Lawrence Stager, who visited Zertal's altar excavations in 1984: "If this is really what it looks like it is, we [scholars] all have to return to kindergarten." As Dr. Stripling commented to the *Trumpet's* sister publication *Let the Stones Speak*: "School's in session!" ■

## THE GREATEST INSCRIPTION EVER DISCOVERED IN ISRAEL?

**I**N MARCH, DR. SCOTT STRIPLING AND HIS Associates for Biblical Research team announced their discovery of the Mount Ebal curse amulet. It was a joint effort between scientists from the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and two esteemed epigraphers, Prof. Gershon Galil of the University of Haifa and Prof. Pieter Gert van der Veen of Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz.

Only preserved text contained within the folded tablet has been deciphered so far; the more heavily damaged script on the outside of the tablet is still being studied. Still, the evidence is already clear that the text on this amulet is "centuries older than any known Hebrew inscription from ancient Israel."

The proto-alphabetic tablet was examined with advanced tomographic scans, revealing the text on the inside of the lead tablet without opening it. Analysis of the lead by Hebrew University's Prof. Naama Yahalom-Mack revealed that the metal had been sourced from the Greek mining area Laurion, a site notable for Late Bronze Age lead products (and thus matching with the epigraphic and archaeological dating). The lead script, most likely written with an iron "pen," parallels a statement in the book of Job, the earliest book in the biblical canon: "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven *with an iron pen and lead ...*" (Job 19:23-24).



Stripling also noted that the inscription actually features *two* names for the deity described.

The first line of text is translated: “Cursed, cursed, cursed—cursed by the God YHW.” As Dr. Stripling commented, this line contains a “juxtaposition of names—El [God] and YHW are side by side.”

The name YHW on the tablet (which typically appears in the Bible as the longer form YHWH), is the name for God used most often in the Bible (nearly 7,000 times). As Dr. Stripling noted, the shorter YHW represents an early, “non-standardized” form. Variations can be seen within the Bible itself, such as the name YH.

Different forms of this name also constitute a “theophoric element” in personal names, such as *Jeremiah* and *Jehoshaphat*. Archaeological discoveries across Israel have revealed that while individuals from the southern kingdom of Judah tended to use the YH or YHW element in their personal names, the form YW was more prevalent in the northern kingdom of Israel.

The other common name for “God,” El, is used hundreds of times in the Bible. There are other forms of this name as well, such as the longer *Eloah* and *Elohim*. This too is a commonly incorporated name element (i.e. *Bethel*, *Daniel*). The use of this Hebrew name is also found in a well-known New Testament passage (“*ELi, ELi, lama sabachthani?*”; Matthew 27:46).

The use of El on the curse tablet is notable for its relevance to the debate about the early authorship of the Torah, the Bible’s first five books. For the past several centuries, a predominant theory among scholars has been some form of the Documentary Hypothesis or “JEDP Theory.” It asserts that the Torah was a creation from the imaginations of writers living during the first millennium B.C. who,

depending on when they lived and the deity they worshiped, used various names for God. According to the theory, there was first a *Jehovist* (or *Yahwist*) author, denoted as “J,” who lived during the early first millennium B.C. and wrote this name for his deity, followed a century or two later by an *Elohist* author, denoted as “E,” who used a different name for a different deity. (The other two letters, D and P, designate later writers or redactors: *Deuteronomist* and *Priestly*.)

Bible believers, however, recognize that these two deity names are used concurrently in the Torah and elsewhere. Rather than being a sign of different writers or of different pagan gods worshiped in different locations, the two names instead have different implicit meanings for different aspects of the *same* God. (Exodus 3 and 4, for example, explain the special meaning of the name YHWH.)

The names Elohim and YHWH are used together in numerous biblical passages, as are the simplified El and YHWH (e.g. Exodus 34:6; Psalm 10:12 and 94:1 as YHWH El; Psalm 118:27 and Isaiah 42:5 as El YHWH).

It is especially notable, then, to find the names El and YHW appearing together on a late-second-millennium B.C. inscription. This confirms the early concurrent use of various titles for God, undermining the argument that the use of multiple names of God was the product of “blending” by various late authors using different deity names.

Dr. Stripling noted that this discovery has “enormous implications.” As it stands, the curse amulet discovery looks set to revolutionize academic discussion about many details, not least the antiquity of the Hebrew alphabet and literacy, the name(s) of God, as well as the wider historicity of the Israelite conquest and early accounts contained in the Torah. ■

# Where Western Sanctions Against Russia Are Leading

Are sanctions actually helping build the prophesied ‘mart of nations’? **BY ABRAHAM BLONDEAU**

**R**USSIA’S ATTACK ON UKRAINE IS THE FIRST war of a first-rate power against a Western nation since the end of World War II. And what has been the United States’ and other Western nations’ response? Economic sanctions. This has been the go-to foreign-policy tool to try to coerce and punish regimes that oppose the status quo of the balance of power. Russia has more or less faced sanctions constantly for the past 30 years, but the latest round of sanctions is intended to isolate and cut off Russia’s economy from the West.

The sanctions include freezing assets of Russian oligarchs, banning its imports and exports, targeting luxury goods, restricting travel for Russian officials, and halting all flights from Russia. The U.S. banned transactions with the Central Bank of Russia, meaning Russia cannot access foreign assets it has in U.S. dollars or do international business with U.S. dollars. The “nuclear option” of the sanctions is excluding some Russian banks from SWIFT, the main payment method used by businesses around the world.

Will these sanctions stop Russia?

In truth, no. They will hurt the U.S. and the English-speaking peoples more than they will hurt Russia.

In fact, these sanctions are actually hastening a revolution in the global economic framework—a revolution that is prophesied in the Bible.

## Face-saving Sanctions

The sanctions had an immediate impact on the Russian economy: After some banks were banned from SWIFT and Russia could not access \$600 billion in foreign assets, the ruble

plunged 30 percent. These are devastating short-term effects.

However, the very same nations imposing these sanctions are paying Putin’s Russia *\$1 billion a day for oil and natural gas*. This is the underlying flaw in any measures meant to punish Putin: The global energy supply is so interconnected to Russia that it is impossible to cripple Russia’s economy without harming one’s own nation. This is due largely to deliberate economic policies by Western nations to stop producing their own oil and gas in favor of green-energy initiatives.

“Russian gas made up 42 percent of Europe’s gas imports via pipeline alone. Shutting that off would create painful economic fallout for European countries that are already grappling with the specter of high inflation,” reported Politico (February 24). Europe imports \$31.9 billion of petroleum oils and crude, \$14.9 billion of other petroleum products, and \$8 billion of natural gas. Europe also consumes 45.2 percent of Russian mineral exports (including energy). The total amount Europe paid Russia in 2020 for mineral imports (\$64.1 billion) exceeded the Russian military budget for that year (\$61.7 billion).

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. imported 245 million barrels of crude oil and petroleum products from Russia in 2021, a 79 percent increase over four years ago. Canada was the only nation to ban the import of crude oil from Russia, but Canada has not imported any since 2019. Canada will still import \$550 million of refined petroleum from Russia each year.

Even banning certain Russian banks from SWIFT appears worse than it actually is. The

banks not banned are most likely those needed for importing Russian energy. Even the banks banned from SWIFT can still do business with Western nations; it simply requires an alternative method of payment.

These sanctions are merely face-saving measures by world leaders whose energy policies have empowered Putin financially and politically to invade Ukraine. Western leaders act like Putin's military ambition can be thwarted through emotional speeches, strongly worded social media posts, or even financial sanctions. All evidence shows that the only thing that will stop Putin is force.

What is worse, these sanctions are actually hastening the decline not of Russia's economy and international power, but of America's.

## **The Real Consequences**

In the short term, these sanctions will actually hammer Americans with stagflation. "Today's crisis represents a geopolitical quantum leap. Its long-term implications and significance can hardly be overstated," wrote Project Syndicate. "The war in Ukraine will trigger a massive negative supply shock in a global economy that is still reeling from COVID-19 and a yearlong buildup of inflationary pressures. The shock will reduce growth and further increase inflation at a time when inflation expectations are already becoming unanchored" (February 25).

The United States has the ability to use economic sanctions around the world because the U.S. dollar is the world's reserve currency, as JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimone explained on March 1: "The widespread use of the dollar in international markets, for instance, allows the United States to affect foreign-policy goals through financial market channels ... and may also confer certain reputational benefits ...." That is how the U.S. is undermining Russia's economy and influencing SWIFT.

But what happens if Russia fights back economically? Dimone continued: "However, overuse of these powers could compel other actors to try to replace dollar transactions, as Russia already did to some extent following earlier sanctions." Is it possible that by extending economic sanctions, the U.S. has opened

the door for other world powers to replace the dollar as the global reserve currency?

"Aside from the immediate collateral damage, excluding Russian banks from SWIFT risks longer-term consequences for international finance," wrote the editors at Bloomberg. "As with any network ..., the value of SWIFT depends on the number of banks that use it. ... The example of Russia could prompt others—such as China—to turn to alternatives, fragmenting the payments system and potentially even undermining the U.S. dollar's dominance as the global reserve currency. One could even imagine a future in which rival nations turned similar financial weapons against the U.S." The Asian power bloc is uniquely positioned to make this threat a reality.

The current situation in Ukraine reveals that Europe is so integrated with Russian energy and minerals that the Continent cannot cut off Russia economically without facing ruin itself. Data from the World Integrated Trade Solution shows that China is far and away Russia's most important trade partner already. Western financial and economic punishments against Russia will motivate it to work with China even more closely. Shortly after Russian banks were removed from the SWIFT system for international payments, shares for China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System surged.

Some have noted that when China is ready to invade Taiwan, it will be sure to shed U.S. dollars first. China holds \$1.1 trillion in U.S. debt, giving it a potent financial weapon against America.

We are facing a turning point in monetary history. And all these developments are leading to the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

## **The Mart of Nations**

Jesus Christ called the period just before His return "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). After centuries of domination by the modern-day Israelites, principally Britain and America, the balance of power will shift dramatically to non-Israelite power blocs, especially a European resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire led by Germany, and an Asian alliance of Russia, China and other large Asian

nations. These powers possess considerable economic strength. *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry writes in *China's Dangerous Move Against America*: "Some 2,700 years ago, God inspired the Prophet Isaiah to sound the alarm about a massive trade bloc that would form in the end time. Isaiah 23:3 describes it as a 'mart of nations.'"

Verse 1 shows that a lead nation in this trade bloc will be "Chittim." Mr. Flurry proves in *Isaiah's End-Time Vision* (free upon request) that Chittim is an ancient name for China. This chapter shows that this trade bloc also includes "Tyre," a name representing the *commercial center* of modern Europe. A related passage in Ezekiel 27 shows that Russia and Japan will also join this "mart."

This mart of nations is a trade bloc combining a European empire and Asian nations, and it will exclude Britain and America. The sole purpose of this economic alliance is to destroy the English-speaking peoples, especially the American superpower. Prophecies

in Deuteronomy 28:52 and Ezekiel 4:4-5 reveal that the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21) begins with this economic siege by this mart of nations, as Mr. Flurry explains in *Ezekiel—The End-Time Prophet*. This time of terrible suffering caused by national sins and satanic attacks begins with a trade war. "Should Europe, the resurrected Holy Roman Empire, find a way to take advantage—even for a moment—of key resources and strategic holdings of China, Russia and Japan, it would have more than enough power to besiege the Anglo-Saxon nations and enslave them," Mr. Flurry writes in *Isaiah's End-Time Vision*.

Is this the moment Germany, Russia and China need to seize economic control away from America? Is Russia's pivot away from SWIFT the spark that will help form this mart of nations?

The suffering in Ukraine is only the beginning of the suffering the times of the Gentiles will inflict on the world. Watch closely for the fulfillment of this crucial end-time prophecy.■

# THE DOLLAR IS DYING

**W**E ARE NEARING THE END OF THE DOLLAR'S reign as the world's reserve currency. The greenback has lost 11 percent of its value since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis. It may lose another 10 percent of its value this year.

The Federal Reserve lifted its key interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point on March 16 to combat inflation—into a range of 0.25 percent to 0.5 percent. At the same time, policymakers projected six more rate hikes this year. These moves should slow the inflation rate and economic growth by driving up interest rates on auto loans, credit card rates, mortgages, home equity loans and other borrowing.

Yet America has a much bigger problem than runaway inflation and rising mortgage rates. The federal debt load recently passed \$30 trillion. Hence, interest rate hikes add billions of dollars to the sum America owes its creditors. Last year, the government paid \$562 billion in interest—more than \$1,500 for every man, woman and child in the nation. And it stands to pay much more than that this year if the Fed raises interest rates.

Today, nearly 60 percent of the \$12.8 trillion in worldwide currency reserves is in dollars. This allows the U.S. to borrow cheap money since dollars are always in demand. But were the dollar to lose its reserve currency status, the federal government would no longer be able to borrow money cheaply. The interest payments on the national debt would consume a burgeoning portion of the gross domestic product.

This is one reason why financial historian Niall Ferguson warns that nations and empires often fall when the costs of servicing their debts exceed the cost of defending their borders. The U.S. is close to this tipping point and its rivals—like China, Russia and Saudi Arabia—realize this fact. So they are targeting the dollar.

Both China and Russia have been reducing their dependence on the dollar for bilateral trade since 2014. Some analysts predict that these powers will start dumping more dollars in retaliation against U.S. sanctions on Russia over the war in Ukraine. China, India and Russia are already exploring an alternative to the U.S.-dominated SWIFT payment mechanism so they can continue trading with countries facing American sanctions. Such an alternative payment mechanism would be a significant blow to the dollar's status as the world's reserve currency.

Saudi Arabia is also talking with China about pricing some of its oil sales in yuan instead of dollars. Suppose China, India, Russia and Saudi Arabia stopped using the dollar. The greenback would become an isolated North American currency barely needed in the rest of the world. Banks would stop accumulating dollar reserves. The U.S. government would have to offer high interest rates if it wanted to sell treasury bonds to borrow money. It would have to enact high tax rates to pay the interest on those treasury bonds.

Currency war is on the horizon.

**ANDREW MILLER**

# How to Walk With God

There is only one way to walk as a Christian, and that is to follow Christ's example.

**O**NE SUN-DRENCHED AFTERNOON LAST autumn, my family and I stopped at a large farmers market. Workers sold fresh fruits and vegetables inside the main building. Families listened to a live band. Young children chased each other over a hay-bale obstacle course. At the rear of the property, some tried out an extensive corn maze. If you have ever done such a maze, you know it can be a real challenge! There are many paths you can take through those tall stalks of corn. They all look similar. They all seem to be leading somewhere. But only one actually does.

Modern Christianity is like a vast maze. Many different options look good, but the people inside are confused and heading into dead ends.

This is exactly the way Jesus Christ said it would be.

In Matthew 24, Christ's disciples asked Him for the sign of His coming and of the end of this age of civilization. He gave them several things to watch for: wars, rumors of wars, natural disasters, famine and disease. But first He drew their attention to the danger of being deceived.

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (verses 4-5).

Christ warned about religious deception, specifically false Christianity. And so it is that modern Christianity offers many different paths that all seem to lead to Jesus Christ. But only one actually does.

So which path does a true Christian take? How should you live? How can you know? You do not have to guess. God reveals in His Word the way a Christian must walk. If you will use the Bible as your guidebook, it will lead you on the right path.

God instructs us to follow the same path Jesus Christ followed. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk,

even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). The only way for a true Christian to walk is to follow Christ's example. 1 Peter 2:21 shows that we should follow Jesus's steps. He always did those things which pleased His Father, putting His Father's will above His own (Luke 22:42).

Christ lived a perfect, sinless life (1 Peter 2:22). And there are others who also walked with God. The Bible records that Enoch walked with God (Genesis 5:22). Hebrews 11:5 shows that Enoch pleased God. Hebrews 11 lists many others who faithfully followed God.

How did these people walk with God?

In Leviticus 26, God showed the ancient Israelites two ways to walk. One would lead to curses and unhappiness. The other would please God and lead to blessings. And what was that way? "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them" (Leviticus 26:3). This chapter details all the blessings that would result from walking in His statutes and keeping His commandments. In verse 12, God said that if the Israelites would obey Him, He would walk among them.

"But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments," God states in verse 14, curses would result.

In verse 21, God says that disobeying His laws would mean Israel was walking contrary to Him. Notice the results in verse 24: "Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins."

Clearly, walking with God means *keeping His commandments*.

In Revelation 18:4, amid a prophecy of the calamities that will befall human civilization before the Second Coming, is this: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." God instructs true Christians to live differently than people in the world—even those of other religions, including those who

believe they are Christians but are walking a path different from the one Christ walked.

This is the same type of warning God gave in Leviticus 26:14-41. There are curses for walking contrary to God in disobedience. But there are great blessings for walking with God in obedience!

A true Christian walks with God by keeping His laws. Living this way sets a marvelous example for this world (Matthew 5:14-16). It is a challenging path, and walking it requires the power of the Spirit of God (see Matthew 7:13-14; Romans 8:9-10).

Here is how walking with God is summed

up in our correspondence course: “A Christian has sincerely repented of his sins and is striving, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit, to live by his Savior’s teachings. He is seeking to do God’s will in every aspect of his life as it is revealed in the Bible. And he is becoming a recipient of the happiness and blessings that come from being obedient to God!”

It is possible to find the right path and to walk with God, and He will bless you for it! Start by learning how to use His guidebook. Use the information on the back cover of this magazine to enroll in our free *Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course*. ■

# WORLDWATCH

## EUROPE

On March 2, while Russia continued bombing Ukrainian cities, **German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited Jerusalem and met with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.** The two leaders “agreed on the creation of a new strategic cooperation.” Bennett called it “a significant upgrade in our relations.”

After discussing Ukraine, Bennett said, “Mr. Chancellor, we are also charged with the responsibility of making sure that Iran will have neither nuclear weapons nor the possibility of attaining them—not on our watch, not ever.” Scholz stated that it was “unacceptable” for Iran “to install centrifuges on a broad scale within a few years.” But he also countered Bennett’s concerns by saying that a new nuclear agreement with Iran “cannot be postponed any longer,” meaning that **no matter how much the deal empowers Israel’s terrorist-sponsoring, nuclear-ambitious enemy, Germany must sign it.** Yet he promised, “Germany will always stand fast by Israel’s side.”

The United States is pushing forward with the Iran deal with similar urgency. Western powers promised to protect Israel, but they made a similar promise to Ukraine—a promise they broke.

Daniel 11:40 reveals that Iran will push at a German-led empire. After defeating Iran, this European power will “enter also into the glorious land,” or Jerusalem (verse 41). *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry explains in ***Jerusalem in Prophecy***\*: “The word ‘enter’ in no way indicates the use of force. The Germans will undoubtedly be invited in as a peacekeeping force.”

Jerusalem is far more important to the Vatican and Europe than Kyiv is to Russia. “The Vatican and Germany are the heart of the Holy Roman Empire,” Mr. Flurry writes. “They have conquered Jerusalem several times before. And they are destined to do so one last time!” (Read about this in our free booklet ***The Holy Roman Empire in Prophecy***.) Could it be that a deal has already been made to allow the

German-led European empire to peacefully seize Jerusalem?

In related news, while many countries loosen vaccine requirements, Germany maintains strict mandates, and its legislators are debating two more. Despite the mandates not proving to save lives, the German government has spent huge sums to implement and enforce them. Yet it has cited *economic cost* as one reason why it continues to import large amounts of gas, financing Russia’s war on Ukraine. And it is spending a truly historic €100 billion to update its military, citing the Russian threat.

Judge by actions rather than rhetoric, and you see what is most important to Germany: **empowering the government at the expense of the people, empowering Russia at the expense of Ukraine and Europe, and upgrading its firepower.** Germany has begun building a European superpower. ■

## ASIA

Russia’s invasion has caused major repercussions all over the world. **Japan is responding by preparing to fully remilitarize.**

After losing World War II in 1945, Japan demilitarized and has since relied on the United States for national security against potential threats. Over the past several decades, the nation has gradually built the technology, doctrine and hardware necessary to make its military fearsome again.

Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida** said in early March that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine shows that “Japan needs to implement a fundamental upgrade of its defense capabilities.”

On March 9, **former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe** even discussed **arming Japan with nuclear weapons.** “In NATO, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy are hosting U.S. nuclear weapons,” he said. “It’s essential that we understand how global security is maintained. We must not put taboos in the discussion about the reality we are facing.”

Bible prophecy shows that one of the main



powers in World War III will be a bloc of Asian nations that Revelation 16:12 labels “the kings of the east.” Ezekiel 38:6 lists ancient names that refer to the modern Japanese, showing that Japan’s significant population, world-class economy, technological brilliance and military capacity will be part of this end-time Asian military force.

Abe’s comments advocating a Japanese nuclear deterrent came on the same day that **North Korea conducted its ninth missile test of the year.** Analysts fear that this isolated, nuclear-armed dictatorship will become increasingly provocative.

“The Bible’s prophecies show that, in a sense, the North Korea crisis is a massive distraction from the real threat posed by China and Russia,” *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote in a Sept. 13, 2017, letter. “These powerful Asian nations are the only reason North Korea is able to operate so freely. And Bible prophecy shows that they pose a threat many times greater than the one from North Korea! Nevertheless, nuclear technology from North Korea could still play a major role in events during the time ahead.”

Economic threats are also mounting: **China and Saudi Arabia are planning to replace the United States dollar with the Chinese yuan for oil sales** between the two nations, the *Wall Street Journal* wrote on March 15. China is the world’s largest oil importer, so this move could further degrade the global influence of the U.S. dollar and the U.S. government.

Leaders of oil-exporting nations such as **Russia, Iran and Venezuela** have been mostly unable to bypass the dollar due to the size of America’s economy, the dominance of U.S. markets, and the momentum of long-standing global financial practices, including pricing global oil sales in dollars. So far, other major currencies, like the yuan, have not garnered enough international confidence to be viewed as trustworthy alternatives. But Saudi Arabia making the switch could mark a major turning point.

**This could be catastrophic for the dollar and the American economy.** The dollar has dominated international markets since the end of

World War II in 1945, helping to finance its out-of-control spending. When China and other nations get their wish and demand for the dollar drops, the U.S. economy will implode.

For five decades, the *Trumpet* and our fore-runner, the *Plain Truth*, have warned, based on biblical prophecy, that a catastrophic financial crisis centered in the U.S. will send shock waves across the planet, changing the entire geopolitical landscape. ■

## MIDDLE EAST

The U.S. has reversed course with **Saudi Arabia.** **After withdrawing its antimissile batteries from the nation last year, the U.S. government is now giving them back** in a bid to improve relations. A State Department spokesman said this came in response to the increased drone and missile attacks coming from Houthi rebels in **Yemen.** But this isn’t the real reason why Joe Biden has changed his mind.

Biden is under increasing pressure to alleviate high oil prices. Because he refuses to allow increased oil production in the United States, and oil imports from Russia are in jeopardy, he has left America at the mercy of other oil-exporting nations like Saudi Arabia, **Venezuela** and, should a nuclear deal be struck, **Iran.**

Of all these options, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states allied with it represent the least bad of Biden’s bad options. The problem is that the Biden administration came into office speaking out against and promising to isolate Saudi Arabia. Relations have hit such a low that both Saudi Arabia and the **United Arab Emirates** declined to take calls from Biden.

This is part of a trend the *Trumpet* has watched for a long time: **the collapse of American influence in the Middle East.** Saudi Arabia was aligned with the United States for years, when U.S. power commanded respect. But now, America’s pride in its power is broken, just as God stated in Leviticus 26:19.

Along with trying to woo back disillusioned allies, Biden has **granted the designation of “major non-NATO ally” to a nation that has supported virtually every anti-American Islamic terrorist organization: Qatar.**

This designation is not merely political

theater. It grants Qatar important political and military privileges. America is cozying up to one of the greatest sponsors of terrorism. Why? Because the world is experiencing an energy crunch and Qatar is one of the world's leading producers of liquefied natural gas.

There is a deeper and far more sinister reason for Joe Biden's overtures of friendship to enemies of the U.S. In *America Under Attack*, Gerald Flurry explains that there is a spiritual reality behind this administration's actions: Satan the devil is attacking America through its own top leaders. That is a provocative claim, but as Mr. Flurry writes, "in looking at the decisions this administration is making, I'm hard-pressed to think of *any* that don't have the effect of weakening America and strengthening the forces of evil in this world." America's influence and power will continue to plummet in the Middle East. ■

## ANGLO-AMERICA

Russia's invasion of Ukraine could seriously hurt the **United States** economy. America's benchmark crude surged 8 percent to \$103.41 per barrel on February 24, the day Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine. That was the highest price since Russia annexed Crimea eight years ago, and prices have remained high since then.

The average price for a gallon of gasoline in the U.S. has topped \$4 for the first time in over a decade, and analysts are predicting gasoline prices will remain above \$4 per gallon into the summer. The Biden administration has also sanctioned Russia's energy industry, pushing energy prices even higher. **Americans are already struggling with inflation rates at a 40-year high, so high fuel prices could push the nation into recession.**

Biden is considering easing sanctions against **Venezuela** and **Iran** so that these two dictatorships can sell more oil. And he is

considering a trip to **Saudi Arabia** to beg the sheiks to pump more oil into international markets. But he is doing nothing to boost U.S. oil production. He would rather help Persian mullahs, Arab sheiks, and Venezuelan Communists than American oil workers. This is because Biden and his cabinet want America to transition away from fossil fuels and making it easier for U.S. companies to drill might derail his green agenda.

In Deuteronomy 33:13-17, God promised to give the end-time descendants of ancient Israel the "chief things of the ancient mountains" and "the precious things of the lasting hills." Today, the United States is still the world's top oil- and natural gas-producing nation, but it is increasingly looking to tyrannical regimes like Iran, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela for its energy needs because it wants to scale back its own oil production.

Meanwhile, **the United States and Canada are digitizing identification and currency.** On March 9, Joe Biden signed an executive order instructing federal agencies to develop the framework for a Federal Reserve Digital Dollar. And several Canadian provinces are planning on launching digital IDs sometime in 2022. These digital IDs would create a "digital wallet" for Canadian citizens, capable of holding their driver's license, bank information, social insurance numbers, citizenship information, health information, COVID-19 vaccine status, and eventually digital money.

Forbes said, "The real reason for this war on cash—start with the big bills and then work your way down—is **an ugly power grab by big government.**"

In Revelation 13:17, God prophesies about an end-time power that will regulate who is able to buy or sell, and the technology currently being developed for digital currencies may well play a role in this prophecy. ■

# Are We Too Good for War?

Russia's attack on Ukraine starkly reminds us of a crucial truth.

**W**ERE YOU SHOCKED BY RUSSIA'S INVASION of Ukraine? Many people were. Analysts called it “a raw, 18th-century-style land grab” and “a throwback to earlier centuries.”

Why this reaction? Because they assumed that human nature is improving. They assumed that, *in the 18th century, we were more primitive, less evolved*. Even those of us who do not believe in evolution are susceptible to this.

My own reaction to the Ukrainian invasion proved this to me. At first, I thought there was a good chance Putin would invade. Russia is dramatically more powerful than Ukraine. But as time wore on and his troops remained on the border, I became more skeptical. Russia had forfeited the element of surprise, Ukraine has the second-largest army in Europe, and now that it was ready and defiant, waging a full-scale war would be messy not just for Ukrainian troops but for Russia and for Ukrainian civilians. Putin has proved very good at taking over countries gradually. Surely he'd choose this route. Why generate mass casualties when there are less painful ways of getting what he wants?

But he chose mass casualties. And I realized that I too was a victim, in part, to the same kind of thinking displayed by those liberals.

The fact is, people have thought war was a thing of the past *for centuries*. At the end of the 18th century, experts thought large-scale war was over. Generals had grown so scientific and sophisticated that they would no longer engage in bloody struggles. Instead, before a battle was fought, it would be clear who was in the better strategic position and, therefore, who would win. The soon-to-be-loser would retire. Wars could be fought with strategy and little loss of blood.

Then the French Revolution and Napoleon

Bonaparte launched two of the bloodiest decades in European history.

In 1913, Norman Angell produced his famous book *The Great Illusion*, arguing that international commerce and modern sophistication made war obsolete. The very next year came the most destructive war the world had known to that point. It became known as the war to end all wars—until World War II.

Why do we make this same mistake over and over again?

“There is a tendency to look upon peace as normal and war as abnormal,” wrote international relations expert Nicholas J. Spykman, “but this is because of an intellectual confusion resulting from emotional reactions to war. War is unpleasant, but it is an inherent part of state ... To forget that reality because wars are unwelcome is to court disaster.”

That is part of the answer. But a deeper truth is that we consistently underestimate the evil of human nature.

*Mankind is basically good; we're figuring out how to avoid wars and improving our society.* If you think that, you are also telling yourself, *I am good; I have a good heart!* If you think, *Man has a fundamentally flawed nature and is completely incapable of living in peace*, you are also acknowledging that you are flawed and evil, and incapable of living a good life on your own effort.

Jeremiah 17:9 puts this truth even more plainly: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” “Desperately wicked” means “dangerously sick,” “incurably sick” or “sick unto death.”

“Trusting sick human minds is why we live in such a sick, sick, sick world!” writes *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry in his booklet *Jeremiah and the Greatest Vision in the Bible*. “The frightening evidence is all around us. Avoiding human annihilation is our number

one problem! (Matthew 24:21-22). That one problem should reveal how sick the human mind is.”

Yet whether we are statesmen, analysts or just everyday people, we are willing to deny centuries and millenniums of tragic, bloody evidence to cling to the belief that, deep down, we human beings are fundamentally good.

Daniel 7 describes the major world-ruling empires that have dominated history. It typifies these empires as “beasts.” “These are dreadful beasts that conquer and enslave entire nations,” Mr. Flurry writes in *Daniel Unlocks Revelation*. “It’s what these beasts do. But biblical Israel likes to think of them as harmless wild animals. Our nations do that because of their broken wills. They fear to face the extremely unpleasant truth.”

The war in Ukraine has brought this vividly to life. We live in a world of beasts. Vladimir

Putin is indeed willing to flatten cities full of people. So are other men. And even they consider themselves fundamentally right, fundamentally good.

More conflicts are coming. God is allowing it. Why? Because we still won’t admit how weak human beings are, how susceptible to sin and evil. And until we admit the truth, we will never truly turn to our Creator so that He can save us, not just from war, but from *being* evil.

As Mr. Flurry writes, understanding our own evil “is where mankind must begin if we are ever to have hope. There is no hope in man. There is endless hope in God” (op cit).

There is a solution to war. But it’s not in trade, treaties or organizations like the United Nations. It’s in following Jeremiah’s example, recorded in Jeremiah 17:14: “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved ...” ■