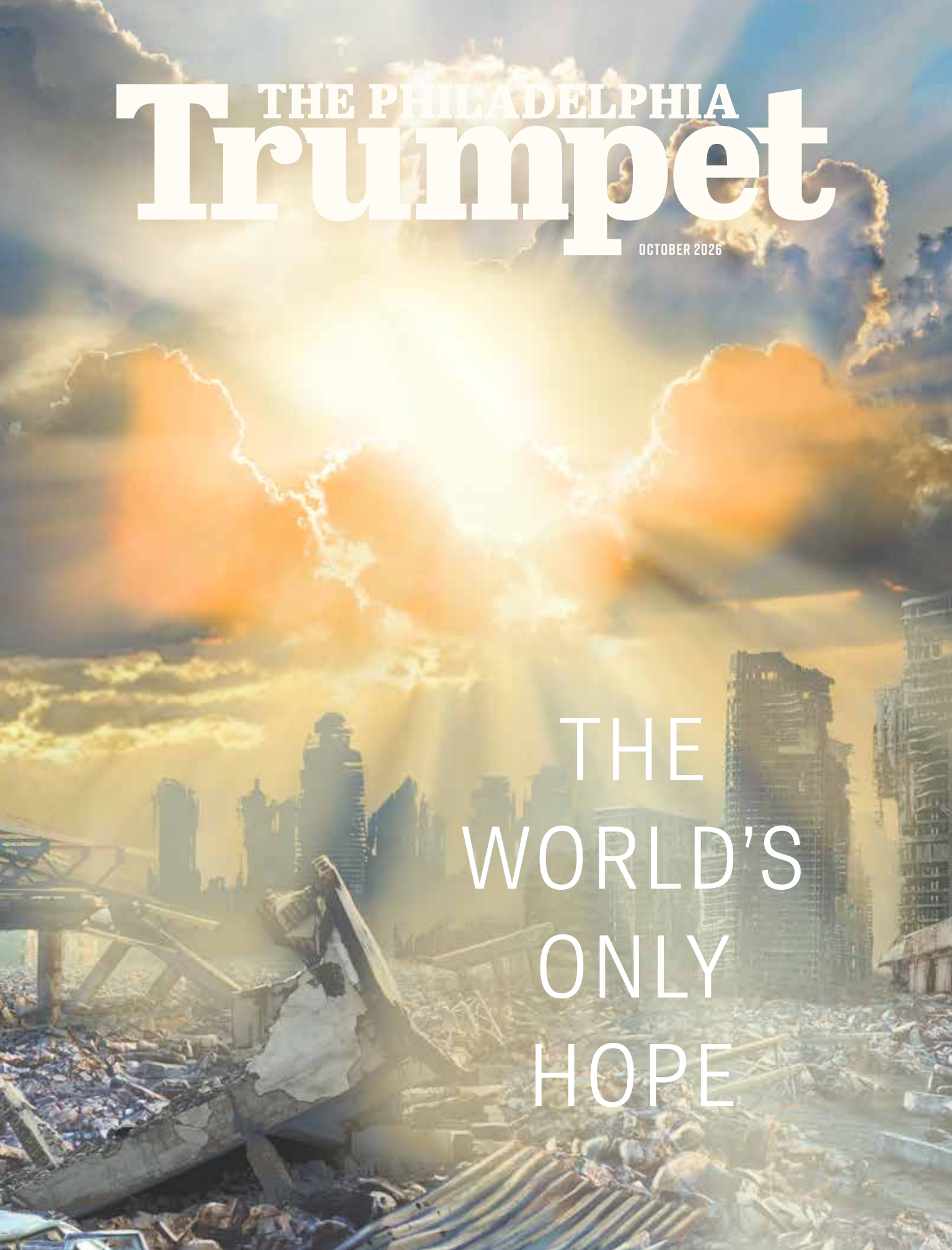


The background image is a dramatic, apocalyptic scene. In the foreground, there is a vast field of rubble and debris, including twisted metal, broken concrete, and scattered trash. In the middle ground, a city skyline is visible, with several tall skyscrapers standing amidst the destruction. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds, and a bright sun or light source is shining through the clouds, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the scene with a warm, golden light. The overall mood is one of devastation and hope.

THE PHILADELPHIA Trumpet

OCTOBER 2026

THE
WORLD'S
ONLY
HOPE

**These prophesied
events are unfolding
for a purpose: so that
you change your life.**



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Why You Must Watch World News

You need to know not only what is happening, but why, and where it is leading.

JESUS CHRIST TOLD US TO WATCH AND PRAY, LOOKING FOR the signs of the end of the world (Luke 21:36). Those signs are all around us. Yet even most people who profess to be Christians don't know or recognize those signs. They ignore Bible prophecy and remain asleep to just how rapidly and dramatically our world is accelerating toward the catastrophes—and the hope—that Jesus prophesied of!

Just look at a few of the *many* developments affecting our lives. Experts are warning that artificial intelligence could wipe out humanity within a few years. This technology is slipping out of control, and its makers don't understand it—even as it is being integrated into weapons systems! War in Ukraine continues, despite all efforts to end it, motivating Europe to rearm. Germany is a boiling pot, politically: Voters have made a far-right party with Nazi associations the nation's most popular political party. Yet United States President Donald Trump wants to dismantle NATO and is encouraging Germany to arm itself. Is that wise? America is getting more isolated as Trump strikes blows at long-standing allies Britain, Canada, Israel and other nations. Supposedly mighty America has been unable to defeat Iran. Disruption to the global economy caused by the Iran war persists.

All these events have *earthshaking* implications and major prophetic significance! It's not enough to know *what* is happening. In fact, it's not even enough to understand how these events fulfill Bible prophecy.

These prophesied events are unfolding for a purpose: so that *you change your life!*

That is why this magazine exists. The *Trumpet* is unlike any other newsmagazine. It informs you about certain world events for a certain purpose. Thousands of other news sources fill our lives with news and information, yet people are still starving for answers. Why? Because they don't know what to look for, they don't understand how it connects to Bible prophecy, and they don't grasp *why God inspired Bible prophecy in the first place*.

Did you know that *one third* of your Bible is prophecy? The same God who created mankind devotes huge portions of His Word to these forecasts of the future. Why?

He wants you to know what is going to happen—before it happens. "... I am God, and there is none like me," He says. "Declaring the end from the beginning, and *from ancient times the things that are NOT YET DONE*, saying, My counsel shall stand ..." (Isaiah 46:9-10). Almost all that prophecy is **BEING FULFILLED NOW OR IS ABOUT TO COME TO PASS!**

LIKE CREATION ITSELF, PROPHECY PROVES GOD!

But understand: Prophecy is God's warning to mankind. Prophecy foretells the consequences, nationally *and individually*, of choosing to disobey Him (e.g. Jude 15). God gives us prophecy to convince us to *turn our lives to Him* while there is still time! (Read Ezekiel 33:11 and Zephaniah 2:1-3.) So it serves a beautiful, loving purpose.

Prophecy is proof of and a warning from our Creator, the God of love!

God's Word prophesies that dark, violent events will precede Christ's return. Why, when God loves us? Because mankind's *rebellion against God* causes darkness and violence. We bring these curses on ourselves—and then often blame God! This is the problem of all mankind, and that attitude is *causing* these dark events, present and future.

Time is indeed *very short* before the Second Coming. The increase in catastrophic events shows God strengthening His correction. God simultaneously wants to **STRENGTHEN AND INTENSIFY HIS PROPHETIC WARNING** to reach those who exhibit a teachable attitude, who willingly accept His authority and correction—who not only *agree* but also *take action* to obey Him!

He is doing that through this magazine and this work.

It is my fervent hope that *you*, dear reader, are one of those individuals who will respond to God's warnings.

I have directed our writers to think more deeply about how to reach out and give you the *understanding* you need to recognize the unparalleled urgency of these times. We want to make sure we are concentrating intensely on the most significant prophecies unfolding right now. We want to prove to you how God *told* us these things would happen and *what we should do about it*.

At the same time, we want to show you the *hope*—the wonderful, sure hope that exists beyond this evil age! God gives us sure prophecies of *warning* and of *hope* to motivate us to change and to keep us stirred and uplifted, even amid accumulating tragedies.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then *look up, and lift up your heads; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH*" (Luke 21:28).

The world is descending into the global holocaust that Jesus Christ and other prophets specifically warned us of. But God promises to spare those who repent and turn to Him. He doesn't just want to save your physical life. "Your redemption draws near" refers to the fact that He wants to give you *eternal life!* ■

JESUS CHRIST WILL RETURN

God's greatest promise
and this world's only hope

BY JOEL HILLIKER

EVERY DAY, SOME 13,300 children under age 5 die. Most perish from causes we know how to prevent. Every day, more than 1½ million children and nearly 5 million adults wake up trapped in commercial sexual exploitation. Every day, another 21 million are put to forced labor, 645 million people go hungry, and more than 800 million live on less than \$3 a day. Last year, war and armed conflict killed some 670 people a day, and nearly 15,000 more were driven across a border, fleeing for safety.

Each of us tends to fixate on our own wants, concerns and troubles. We forget the pervasive poverty and famine, sickness and disease, injustice and abuse, deceit and betrayal, corruption and fraud, tyranny and oppression, rivalry and war that plague people all around the world.

When we do tear ourselves away from our own lives for a moment and wake up to one of these monumental injustices, some of our leaders attempt, or at least promise, to solve them. But time after time, these efforts prove to be bitter illusions.

But these crises *will* be solved.

The Bible is nothing less than the inspired Word of mankind's Creator (2 Timothy 3:16). It can be relied on. And it is filled with hope. In it, God acknowledges the suffering, even imposes certain suffering—yet He repeatedly *promises* to punish evil, correct injustice, relieve oppression, free captives, heal the sick, dry tears, and establish righteous rule. And God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

God **WILL** do these things. The question is *when*. And the Bible's answer is, when Jesus Christ returns to Earth to establish God's Kingdom—a literal government that overthrows and replaces the governments of man.

The world today is governed by “the god of this world,” Satan the devil, who “deceiveth the whole world” (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9), and is cut off from God (e.g. Genesis 3:22-24; Isaiah 59:2; Ephesians 2:12). That is *why* there is such rampant suffering. It will remain Satan's world until Christ returns.

This world needs God's Kingdom so desperately! Thank God He has promised to bring it—and His promises are sure.

Do you believe your Bible?

So much of the Bible concerns Jesus Christ's return. Yet even most self-professing Christians live as if His return is either a myth or destined to occur in the distant future.

It is just as the Apostle Peter prophesied about our time: "Above all, you must understand that *in the last days* scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this "coming" he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation'" (2 Peter 3:3-4; New International Version). Even most *true* Christians have grown weary of waiting and now treat Christ's Second Coming casually.

You must take Christ's promise to return seriously! God has not changed His plans. Christ's return remains on schedule—God's schedule.

How can you know? BY STUDYING YOUR BIBLE—AND BELIEVING IT. God's Word is the foundation of our faith (Romans 10:17). Studying Christ's return in God's Word builds your faith. This is an article you cannot read straight through. You must *get your Bible and read with your own eyes* the glorious promises—here we will only cover a fraction of them—that God has given about this imminent event.

Old Testament Promises

One reason we can have confidence in the Bible's promises of the Second Coming is the accuracy of its prophecies of Christ's *first* coming.

The Old Testament is full of promises about the Messiah coming to Earth. Depending on the commentator making the count, Old Testament verses prophesying of Christ's first coming or Second Coming range from several dozen on the conservative end to nearly 600!

More than 100 prophecies foretold details about Jesus's first coming, including such specific facts as that He would heal the blind, lame and deaf; that He would be rejected by His own people; that He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver that were later used to buy a potter's field; that His garments would be divided among others; that His hands and feet would be pierced; that none of His bones would be broken. All these were fulfilled precisely. God kept all those promises and prophecies—and He will keep those regarding the Second Coming.

The book of Psalms is replete with references and prophecies regarding Christ's coming. *Read Psalm 2 about a change in government from the kings of the Earth today.* Verse 7 prophesies of Christ's physical birth, and verse 8 describes Him inheriting "the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Verse 9 describes Him breaking the nations with a rod of iron, which certainly did not happen at His first coming. Christ is coming as a conqueror and a king! "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth" (verse 10). God is putting them on notice!

Read Psalm 98, a celebration of Christ's return. For 6,000 years, God

has hidden Himself from mankind. But in that day, He will openly show His righteousness! (verse 2). All nations will see God. This psalm describes Christ's coronation and the establishment of God's government on Earth.

Study the prophetic vision in Psalm 110. Verses 1-2 relate a vision David saw of God the Father speaking to the God who later became Jesus Christ and anticipating the moment when He will command His Son to return to Earth in the midst of His enemies and *rule the entire world!* Verse 3 speaks of "the day you lead your host" (Revised Standard Version), picturing Christ's descent from heaven with His armies and accompanied by "your people," meaning true Christians.

Read the sobering prophecy of verses 5-6. Other biblical prophecies show that the nations will have been killing each other by the millions in the Great Tribulation when they encounter this dramatic event. They will *resist* Jesus Christ as He comes to assume rulership over the world. And He will respond with **OVERWHELMING FORCE**. This shows the power it will take to defeat Satan and the people he deceives and inspires!

Read the result in verse 7: Christ will emerge as the conquering king, refreshing Himself after battle, lifting up His head, glorying in the victory by which He will begin establishing a far better world, the Kingdom of God, *a literal kingdom*, here on Earth.

Again, the fact that Christ did not replace Satan as ruler of Earth when He came the first time is evident by this wretched world plunging into its terminal phase of inestimable poverty, hunger, slavery, rape and murder day after day. The devil remains "the prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30). The Bible prophesies dozens of times, however, that Christ will *return* to replace Satan and will completely conquer him and his forces. Christ will then assume His rightful position as King of kings.

Promises in the Prophets

The Old Testament prophets wrote expansively about Christ's return and the world He will set up. Consider just a few examples.

Read Isaiah's prophecy about "the last days" in Isaiah 2:1-5. Now read verses 10-21 for even more detail. These events

THY KINGDOM COME

"Thy kingdom come." Jesus instructed us to ask God for this every day in our prayers (Matthew 6:10). That prayer will be fulfilled at the Second Coming, when He begins His rule as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).

Praying "thy kingdom come" shows a yearning for that event. Yearning for the period when God promises to restrain Satan from influencing mankind (Revelation 20:1-3). Yearning for a government that teaches and enforces God's law worldwide (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:9). Yearning for the peace that can only come when God's government and peace, God's judgment and justice, prevail (Isaiah 9:6-7).

God wants your daily prayers and your life to have a "thy kingdom come" focus. We must watch world events and pray (Luke 21:36) to understand how important that prayer truly is. God wants us to yearn to help Him relieve the world's suffering. He wants us to support His work as it warns mankind about what he is doing to himself—and to give people hope of how God is about to stop this madness. The return of Jesus Christ means ending this world's misery.

We *all* ought to fervently pray "thy kingdom come" each day.

definitely have not yet occurred. Verse 12 describes the “day of the Lord.” Notice that this is a day of warfare—of God correcting the nations. God also mentions this “day of the Lord” in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel (five times), Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah and Malachi. The Messiah who returns on this day is much different in power and glory from the human teacher of Christ’s first coming—and *entirely opposite* of the weak, effeminate, far-distant one that most Christians believe in.

Consider the prophecy about Jesus Christ in Isaiah 9:6-7. What does this teach us about the coming of the Kingdom of God? This is one of the most spectacular prophecies of Christ’s Second Coming and rule. This states that the government *shall be* on His shoulder. The government of all peoples and nations of the Earth is not yet on His shoulder. He is not yet recognized and worshiped around the globe. He has not yet acceded to the throne of David and established His everlasting, ever increasing worldwide governance of the entire Earth. Satan still rules. But God is zealous for and eagerly anticipating the day He will give that throne to His Son, who will implement the *solution* to all the suffering: the Kingdom of God.

Read Daniel 2, about the dream God gave Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar. Study verses 40-45 to grasp the lesson it holds. Nebuchadnezzar ruled the known world. The fearsome statue he saw in the dream God gave him represented a sequence of future world-ruling empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greco-Macedonia and Rome. Then notice: A fifth kingdom appeared, totally unlike the previous four and incomparably mightier. This shows that the Kingdom of God, ruled by Jesus Christ, is just as real and just as literal as those physical political empires—and far more powerful!

This is just a small sampling of the Old Testament prophecies of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to establish the literal Kingdom of God for the purpose of taking over all political, religious and other forms of power from the governments of this world.

The Jews of Jesus’s day had studied these scriptures. They expected a Messiah to come, to conquer and to assume rulership—and not figuratively.



Promises During the First Coming

“The Jews had understood about the Kingdom of God. They were familiar with the prophecies of Isaiah 9:6-7, of how the Messiah would come to set up the Kingdom and government of God over all the world,” Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in his autobiography. “What the Jews did not understand was that Jesus’s first coming, as a babe born of the virgin Mary, was to qualify, by resisting and conquering Satan, to replace Satan on the throne of the Earth as well as to announce that Kingdom to appear some 1,900 years later. And to pay with His own life’s blood for the penalty of human sins.”

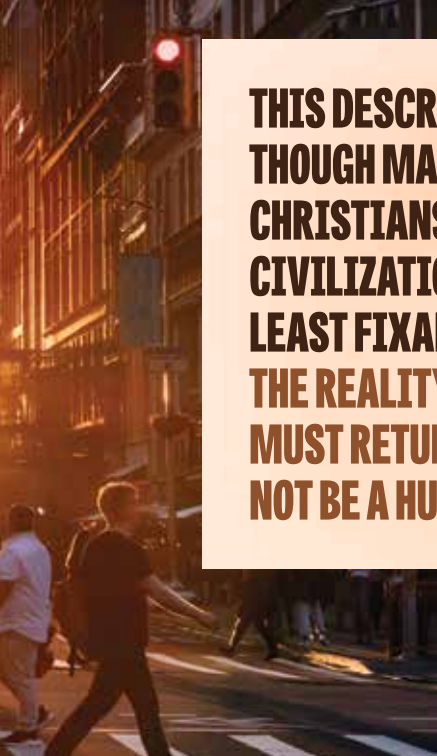
This is why the Jews opposed Jesus so bitterly: They understood that the Kingdom of God was a real kingdom, just as the Roman Empire was a real kingdom, and they thought He would actually overthrow the Romans! Yet they rejected Him as the Christ. By contrast, today’s Christians accept that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ—yet they reject or deny that He is returning to rule a real kingdom!

Read what an angel prophesied to Mary in Luke 1:30-33 when telling her she would be the mother of God’s child. The Son of God miraculously becoming the Son of man (verse 31) has occurred; this obviously applies to Jesus Christ’s first coming. He has not received the throne

of David and begun His never-ending reign—yet.

See what Jesus Himself said and showed about His Second Coming in Matthew 16:27-28. Jesus was standing right there with them, yet He said He would come *in glory* in the future. This leads right into the transfiguration in Matthew 17, where He revealed Himself in His glorified state (that is what He referred to in Matthew 16:28). His disciples clung to that vivid vision for the rest of their lives! The transfiguration ended, He returned to His normal human appearance for the rest of His human life, and He was tortured and murdered as though He were a criminal, rather than being transfigured and becoming a mighty ruler.

Read Matthew 17:10-11 to see what Jesus emphasized to His disciples immediately after this vision. The scribes and other Jews were looking for the Messiah and the establishment of His rule on Earth. They knew that scriptures regarding this event prophesied that the Messiah would come only after a messenger fulfilled a role similar to that of Elijah (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6). Jesus affirmed that when He came in power and glory to establish God’s Kingdom, He would indeed be preceded by a messenger, an *end-time* “Elijah.” (This would take place some 1,900 years later.) He also noted



**THIS DESCRIBES OUR WORLD TODAY—
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something the disciples and other Jews had overlooked: John the Baptist had fulfilled that messenger role before His first coming (Matthew 17:12). (Learn about the end-time fulfillment of this crucial prophecy in our free booklet ***A Pivotal Sign of the End Time.***)

Note Jesus's promise to His disciples in John 14:2-3 that He would go away and then return. Remember, God cannot lie. Read what Jesus told the high priest trying Him for sedition in Mark 14:62. This too is a firm statement—"you WILL SEE"—invoking the same imagery that the disciples saw.

Read Jesus's prophecy in Matthew 24:3-31 concerning His return and the events that precede it. Here Christ gave the overall time frame of His Second Coming. Christ wants us thinking about and watching for this. Focus on this, and you will keep your perspective as you await that return. We need to study these prophecies to become increasingly excited and convicted that Christ's return is at hand!

In this Olivet prophecy, Christ showed that just before His return, the world would enter a time of great crisis: an intensification of war, earthquakes, famines and pestilence. Our world will be just as evil as it was before the Flood, when "God saw that the wickedness of

man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). *This describes our world today*—though many people, including many Christians, think man's society and civilization are still good, or at least fixable.

The reality is that Jesus Christ must return soon or there would not be a human being left alive! As He says in Matthew 24:22, if those days are not "cut short, not a soul would be saved alive ..." (Moffatt translation). Christ's Second Coming will punctuate a time of unprecedented upheaval with an even greater shock! (verse 27).

*Read verse 14 to know when this will happen. Jesus gave a tremendous sign of the timing of His Second Coming. Yet similar to His first coming, even most religious people who read the Bible missed it: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The true gospel was lost shortly after His first coming and was not preached around the world until the end time—by an end-time Elijah. This has happened—and you need to know about it and prove it for yourself! (This prophecy, too, is explained in *A Pivotal Sign of the End Time.*)*

Read an additional sign in verses 32-36. Only the Father knows the precise time He will send His Son to Earth, but Christ said true Christians could and should know when it is "at the doors." That is why He made so many statements in the Old Testament and during His ministry

to indicate the time frame of His return. Consider all these statements about Christ's coming, then look honestly at world events. Who can deny that the parable of the fig tree applies today?

Read Christ's admonition in verses 42-51 regarding what He expects from you before His coming. End-time prophecy helps you prepare for Christ's return. Studying prophecy and world events helps you maintain a sense of urgency in your life. Watch the events Christ tells true Christians to watch, and you will become better prepared for His return. Only an "evil servant" would say or think that Christ's return is far into the future (verse 48). Christ says some of His own servants have become drunk spiritually. They have become so evil they are smiting their fellow servants. A servant who says "my lord delays his coming" has fallen back into the ways of this world.

Christ Himself repeatedly confirmed the promise of His coming. He gave details to watch for to keep us in that vigilant posture. He told us to beware a casual attitude about it. His whole ministry focused on announcing the arrival of that future Kingdom He will establish! Yet most Christians today never really discuss that vital purpose for His first coming! That is why they are so confused, casual and wrong about His Second Coming.

The Apostles' Hope

After His crucifixion, Jesus reappeared to be with His disciples over a period of several weeks. Finally, though, Jesus was taken into heaven—and two angelic messengers confirmed His promise to the disciples. *Read this in Acts 1:9-11. They said He would return to the same place that He ascended from and in the same manner, the manner previewed in the transfiguration.*

Christ gave His disciples this hope to motivate them. They were *sure* of His return. You see references throughout the epistles to the certainty of the Second Coming. These men had faith in that promise. They *lived* for that future.

The Apostle Paul, who was called well after Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, also had this glowing hope. *Read his wonderful description in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. Read the details he gave in 1 Corinthians 15. Note verses*

22-23 about a resurrection of “they that are Christ’s at his coming,” and the description of that resurrection “at the last trump” in verses 51-54.

True Christians should long for Christ’s triumphant return. We should be those who “love his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8). In Titus 2:13, the Apostle Paul wrote, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Paul was looking for that “blessed hope” even though the “glorious appearing” of Christ would not come for some two millennia! Surely we today, 2,000 years closer to that event, should have even more fervent anticipation.

HOPE IN CHRIST’S RETURN SHOULD MOTIVATE YOU TO PURIFY YOURSELF TO GET READY. REAL FAITH PRODUCES OBEDIENCE, DIRECTION, URGENCY AND ZEAL FOR GOD’S KINGDOM. IT CHANGES YOU.

Read another crucial prophetic milestone preceding Christ’s return that God reveals in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. This dramatic “falling away” within God’s true Church has happened in recent years. (This is thoroughly explained in our free book *Malachi’s Message to God’s Church Today*.) This should also strengthen our conviction that our Savior is almost here.

The other apostles shared Paul’s belief. Read 2 Peter 3:1-13, where the chief apostle directly addressed those who, more than 2,000 years after His first coming, deny that Jesus Christ will come again. Yes, scoffers abound, but God’s people cling to His promises in full assurance of faith. For them, revelation from God truly is the “more sure word of prophecy” (2 Peter 1:19).

Read where the Apostle John, in 1 John 3:1-2, affirms that “he shall appear” and describes what else will occur at that time.

Is it enough to avoid scoffing and to sincerely believe in the promise of Christ’s return and the establishment of the literal Kingdom of God on Earth? Read verse 3 for the answer. Hope in Christ’s return should motivate you to *purify yourself* to get ready! Real faith produces obedience, direction, urgency and zeal for God’s Kingdom. It *changes* you.

As deeply as John believed, surely his excitement for God’s soon-coming Kingdom swelled to bursting when he was given the prophetic visions of the book of Revelation. Read the proclamation he heard from heavenly voices in Revelation 11:15. Read John’s description of the majestic vision of the Second Coming he saw with his own eyes in Revelation 19:11-21. God gave John that vision and ensured that he recorded it so that, to this day, we can hold fast that spectacular hope!

Look to the Future

During World War II, Viktor Frankl survived four concentration camps, including Auschwitz. He said one lesson he learned was that it is crucial to be oriented toward a future goal. “The prisoner who had lost faith in the future—his future—was doomed,” he wrote. “He simply gave up.”

Frankl told the story of a man who had a vivid dream that he would be liberated on March 30, 1945. “When he told me about his dream, he was still full of hope and convinced that the voice of his dream would be right. But as the promised day drew nearer, the war news which reached our camp made it appear very unlikely that we would be free on the promised date. On March 29, he suddenly became ill and ran a high temperature. On March 30, the day his prophecy had told him that the war and suffering would be over for him, he became delirious and lost consciousness. On March 31, he was dead. To all outward appearances, he had died of typhus.

“The sudden loss of hope and courage can have a deadly effect. The ultimate cause of my friend’s death was that the expected liberation did not come and he was severely disappointed.”

Yes, your state of mind—including your amount of courage and hope—is connected to your physical health. But it is all the more closely connected to your spiritual health.

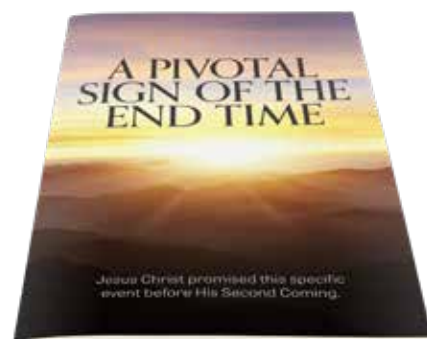
False Christians and even many true Christians have lost hope and lost focus on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. They think, *My Lord delays His coming* (Luke 12:45). Some have gotten too convinced of a personal view of a prophetic timetable that ends up failing. This has a devastating effect on our spiritual health. Disappointment is deadly. Satan can use it as a deadly weapon.

True Christians must have greater faith than that!

“It is a peculiarity of man that *he can only live by looking to the future*,” Frankl wrote. “And this is his salvation in the most difficult moments of his existence, although he sometimes has to force his mind to the task” (emphasis added).

God wants us to “live by looking to the future.” Even as the world grows ever gloomier with injustice and tyranny, we can cling to the many promises and prophecies God has preserved for us of a just and righteous kingdom. As we watch despair and hopelessness intensify, we can set our minds on this vision. And we can follow Christ’s admonition to *pray daily* for the restoration of God’s government on Earth: “Thy kingdom come” (Matthew 6:10).

This hope should saturate and govern our minds continually. Jesus Christ WILL return—and all signs point to it being very soon! ■



Are we living in the end time?

Here is one proof we are. Request your free copy of **A Pivotal Sign of the End Time**.

IMAGINE IF YOU SUDDENLY began smoking a dozen or so cigarettes per day. Within a week, you might notice lower energy levels and poorer sleep. Within months, you would likely find yourself coughing more, getting winded more easily, and losing stamina.

And if you kept it up for years, you would dramatically increase your risk of developing a range of serious diseases.

Now consider this: Loneliness can have surprisingly similar consequences.

A 2023 advisory from the United States Surgeon General warns that chronic loneliness and social isolation can devastate both body and mind. “Loneliness is far more than just a bad feeling,” the advisory states. “The mortality impact of being socially disconnected is similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, and even greater than that associated with obesity and physical inactivity.”

That warning rests on a substantial body of research. A meta-analysis of 16 studies found that poor social relationships were associated with a 29 percent higher risk of coronary heart disease and

a 32 percent higher risk of stroke. A separate meta-analysis involving more than 600,000 people found that loneliness was associated with a 31 percent higher risk of dementia. And an analysis of 70 studies involving more than 3.4 million people found that loneliness was associated with a 26 percent higher mortality rate.

Chronic loneliness is a silent destroyer, capable of hollowing a person out from the inside. And while it is an ancient affliction that has plagued mankind through every time and place, it has become alarmingly common in the United States today.

Although COVID shutdowns and social distancing deepened the problem, rates had started rising well earlier. Back in 1994, only 7 percent of American adults said they could accurately be described as lonely, according to data from the Barna research organization. By 2002, that number had climbed to 12 percent, and in early 2020 it hit a chilling 20 percent.

A year into the COVID era, the numbers had grown considerably worse. In March 2021, roughly 25 percent of U.S. adults surveyed by Gallup said they experienced significant loneliness during a typical day. For those ages 18 to 29, the rate soared to 38 percent.

The end of the pandemic brought some improvement, but not much. In September 2025, roughly 21 percent of American adults surveyed said they experienced significant loneliness in a usual day, with the rate for those ages 18 to 29 close to 30 percent.

So it is clear that the rates run alarmingly high, particularly among the young, with no indication that the trend will reverse. The loneliness crisis has grown so widespread and distressing that the U.S. Surgeon General declared it a modern epidemic.

What then drives this plague of chronic loneliness? The causes are many, and some of the most pernicious are hiding in plain sight.

When the House Was Full

Not long ago, family formed the center of far more American lives. In 1960, almost 70 percent of Americans 18 and older were married. Nearly 88 percent of households were headed by a married couple, and an average of 3.3 people lived under each roof. About 88 percent of children lived with both parents. Only 13 percent of households consisted of a single person, and only 2.4 percent of people had divorced.

DISCONNECTED

The modern world has built countless ways to connect and communicate.

So why do so many people end up
cripplingly lonely? **BY JEREMIAH JACQUES**



So the average American spent far more time surrounded by family than alone. And 1960 didn't even mark the pinnacle for American family life. Earlier generations married even younger, had more children, and tended to live in larger, extended-family households.

But that family-centered picture of American life did not last.

The decades that followed brought economic shifts, rising secularism, increased availability of reliable contraception, the legalization and greater accessibility of abortion, the liberalization of divorce laws, a growing emphasis on personal fulfillment, or "self-actualization," and ideological movements encouraging women to prioritize careers over marriage and children.

The resulting transformation of American family life has profoundly altered the nation.

Today, fewer than 48 percent of American adults are married. Among adults ages 20 to 34, the figure drops to just 28 percent, with unmarried men outnumbering married men by 2 to 1. Only 46.7 percent of households are headed by a married couple, and the average size has fallen to 2.5 people. Meanwhile, the number of single-person households has more than doubled to 28.5 percent, and almost 11 percent of people have divorced.

The shrinking American family constitutes far more than a demographic curiosity. Fewer marriages, fewer children, fewer siblings, fewer extended family connections, more divorces and more one-person households all add up to weaker social connectedness. And that contributes to more loneliness.

"At the heart of this loneliness epidemic is the breakdown of marriage and family that has occurred during the last five decades," Dr. Samuel Wilkinson, associate director of the Yale Depression Research Program, wrote in a March 2024 essay for the Institute for Family Studies. "Admitting this is somewhat taboo in many circles," but "the data are overwhelming at this point."

At the same time, non-family relationships have also eroded in recent decades. Back in 1985, about 80 percent of U.S. adults surveyed said they had at least one non-kin person with whom they discussed important matters. By 2008, that figure had fallen to just 45 percent. And

in a 2024 survey, 17 percent of adults reported having no close friends at all.

"The country is sick," Susan Mettes writes in her 2021 book *The Loneliness Epidemic*, "with respect to people's ability to have close, trusting relationships—one of the most important parts of our humanity."

This sickness—the breakdown of marriage, family and friendships—is the primary driver of the plague of loneliness.

Where Have All the Church Bells Gone?

In earlier decades, the rhythms of community provided shape and cadence to most Americans' everyday lives. Rotary clubs, service groups, bowling leagues, community sports leagues, veterans' organizations, fraternal lodges and neighborhood associations gave people places to belong and reasons to regularly meet with others and work toward common goals. Church bells, too, called them together for weekly fellowship.

In many organizations, the group's stated purpose mattered less than the connections it fostered among its members. Members saw the same people week after week and year after year, gradually getting to know them and become part of their lives. The relationships that grew from those interactions mattered as much as or more than the pastimes or causes the groups got together for.

And tens of millions of Americans joined such groups.

In 1974, roughly 75 percent of Americans belonged to at least one voluntary club, civic group or other nonreligious organization. Today, Census Bureau and AmeriCorps data show that number has tumbled to 25 percent.

The picture for churches looks even starker. In 1937, almost 75 percent of Americans surveyed belonged to a church. The figure remained near that level for decades before beginning a precipitous decline in the late 1990s. Today, only 45 percent of Americans belong to a church, and just 32 percent say they attend a religious service in a typical week.

The decline of religious participation matters not only because churches provide places to gather but because religious practice itself fosters greater social connectedness.

A 2020 Barna study of young American adults found that only 16 percent

of practicing Christians reported often feeling isolated and lonely. Among nonpracticing Christians, the figure reached 21 percent. The highest rate appeared among those with no religious affiliation, at 31 percent.

In other words, the less these young adults connected to a religious community, the more alone they felt.

Whether religious, civic or social, Americans are drawing back from all kinds of brick-and-mortar institutions where they regularly saw others face-to-face. And former U.S. Surgeon General



Vivek Murthy, who authored the 2023 loneliness advisory, links that withdrawal to the rise of loneliness. "[W]hat we've lost is a lot of those structures that naturally capture us and hold us—what I think of as a true social safety net," he said. This has "resulted in many people not having an anchor" for socialization.

Trading Presence for Pixels

The proliferation of digital technology has also made Americans lonelier, corrupting the way we interact with each other and, in many cases, displacing human interaction altogether.

Roughly 90 percent of American adults now use the Internet daily, with 4 in 10 saying they stay online *almost constantly*. Among 18-to-29-year-olds, that figure rises to nearly two thirds.

Smartphones, ever-present in our pockets and purses, are the main reason for the near-constant connection. Some 91 percent of American adults now own

one. Among those ages 18 to 29, the figure soars to 97 percent.

How do we spend all that online time? An outsized share of it goes to social media. The average American adult Internet user spends 2.4 hours per day on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and other social media sites. For those ages 16 to 24, the average soars to 5.1 hours a day. That adds up to nearly *36 hours a week*, essentially a full-time workweek spent on social media.

One in 5 Americans in a 2025 YouGov survey admitted to having a social media



addiction. Among adults ages 18 to 29, the figure rose to 30 percent.

Many thought *social* platforms would make us more connected than ever. That was the promise of their creators—and there was some basis for it. These platforms let us send messages to friends in seconds, share photographs and updates with people around the world, watch videos and live events together, see what hundreds of acquaintances and others are up to, join online communities built around virtually any interest, and follow the thoughts and daily activities of hundreds or even thousands of people—all without leaving the couch.

Yet despite all these new ways to connect, two decades of data reveal an alarming reality: The technologies that promised to bring us closer have pushed us further apart. It is striking that, during the very years when these technologies began dominating our waking hours, loneliness reached epidemic proportions.

And is it just a coincidence that the people using social media the most—the younger demographics—also suffer the highest levels of chronic loneliness?

Part of the problem is that social media platforms compete with each other for our attention. Their business models demand engagement, so the longer they can keep us watching, scrolling and clicking, the more successful they become. And what reliably captures attention? Fear, anger and outrage often win out. Keep people afraid and upset, and they will keep watching. So the algorithms push frightening or unsettling content. The more the users watch, the more dangerous the outside world appears. So we stay inside and keep watching—trapped in a cycle that reinforces our fear of the world outside and deepens our isolation.

Social media also kindles feelings of jealousy and inadequacy by prodding us to constantly compare our ordinary lives with the curated “highlight reels” of others. Instead of getting to know a person in the fullness of who they are, we see only the airbrushed version they have chosen to publish. We end up comparing our unfiltered lives with others’ carefully edited ones—and come away feeling envious or inadequate.

Foreign actors make the already-toxic online environment even more alienating. The U.S. Justice Department has uncovered numerous Russian, Chinese and Iranian operations involving armies of trolls and bots, many of them masquerading as Americans. Their purpose is to engage real Americans, promote messages highly critical of the U.S., United Kingdom, Israel, etc. and flood social media with content sowing confusion and division on everything from racial politics and immigration to the Israel-Gaza conflict and data centers. Sometimes their goal is to make Americans feel alone in commonsense views they once assumed were (and actually are) widely shared.

In many cases, real Americans on the Internet don’t understand what they are caught in. They see nothing but countless angry, unrelatable “fellow Americans.” Each encounter can reinforce the sense that the people around them are extremist, conspiratorial, hateful and impossible to understand. And with each such interaction, those Americans feel more isolated and alone.

Social media interactions also often turn openly abusive and criminal. A 2025 Thorn survey of 1,200 Americans ages 13 to 20 found that 36 percent said they had received solicitation from an online-only contact to send sexual images of themselves while they were under 18. The solicitations often come with threats that young people cannot know are real or merely bluffs. And the problem does not disappear in adulthood. Fifty-six percent of American adults reported experiencing online harassment, according to a 2024 survey by the Anti-Defamation League, including sexual harassment and extortion, physical threats, stalking, doxing and swatting.

Beyond social media, many also use technology as a replacement for human interaction. Nearly 1 in 5 American adults say they have chatted with an AI designed to simulate a romantic partner. Some take it further: Companies can now integrate AI into sex robots and sex dolls, allowing people to simulate companionship, romance and physical intimacy with machines rather than with another human being. “Aki has been my rock in many situations but also has shown vulnerability when life gets overly chaotic,” said Christopher Stokes of his AI-powered sex robot. “We are still very much in love and very much together.”

The sobering truth is, the technologies that promised to bring us closer very often have the opposite effect. They may leave us with the illusion of connection, but they often foster feelings of inadequacy, jealousy and distrust—and expose us to hostility, deception, manipulation, abuse and degradation. In some cases, they even replace human connection with artificial substitutes.

And we can’t forget that this carries an opportunity cost: When dozens of hours each week are scrolled away on social media or otherwise spent in technology’s embrace, far less time remains for face-to-face interactions. Our days—and eventually our lives—can become filled the way junk food fills the stomach: It offers quick satisfaction in the moment while leaving less room for what actually nourishes us. If we keep it up long enough, malnourishment is inevitable.

Social psychologist Sherry Turkle warns, “We slip into thinking that always being connected is going to make us feel

less alone. But we're at risk, because actually it's the opposite that's true."

A Cure for the Disease

The evidence leaves no doubt: plummeting marriage rates, shrinking families, weakening communal institutions, technology manipulating us and displacing real interactions have combined to make us lonelier. A hundred smaller changes have also contributed: Americans move more often, change jobs more frequently, commute farther, work remotely and increasingly live farther from extended family and the friends they made growing up.

All this means more people go through life with far less of the regular, repeated, face-to-face contact from which deep relationships grow.

If the trend isn't reversed, "we will continue to splinter and divide until we can no longer stand as a community or a country," the Surgeon General's advisory states. "And instead of coming together to take on the great challenges before us, we will further retreat to our corners—angry, sick and alone."

To cure the disease, the surgeon general proposes a new national strategy based on six pillars: Enact more pro-connection government policies, invest in parks and other social infrastructure, mobilize the health sector to treat the lonely, reform digital environments, increase research into loneliness, and cultivate a culture of connection.

Some of these measures could help foster more interpersonal relationships and strengthen some of the social bonds that protect against loneliness. Yet for all its breadth, the strategy conspicuously skirts the most fundamental social bonds of all. Why does it omit direct focus on the breakdown of marriage and family—the primary driver of the loneliness epidemic?

In fact, the entire 82-page advisory mentions "marriage" only twice, and never in the context of remedying this plague. "Husband," "wife," "man" and "woman" do not appear in the document.

The exclusions point to a serious problem: We are trying to cure loneliness without addressing the purpose for which humans were created in the first place.

The Bible provides that missing foundation. It begins with the creation

of man and makes clear that the Creator never intended for him to live a solitary life. In Genesis 2:18, God says, "It is not good that the man should be alone" He solved this by creating a companion: "I will make him an help meet for him."

From the start, the Creator made man to require human companionship and support. To fill the need, He created a *help* complementary to and fitting for the man: a woman. No other being could fulfill her unique role (verse 20).

And then, long before the establishment of any social programs, national governments or even political states, God instituted marriage—to join the man and woman and keep them in a state of togetherness. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (verse 24).

The marriage institution also keeps children together with their parents until they mature, marry and begin families of their own—the cycle is self-perpetuating, generation after generation. Men, women and children were created for marriage and family, and these institutions safeguard against many of society's gravest ills—including chronic loneliness.

A complete understanding of God's plan for mankind reveals that He wants each of us to ultimately become a part of His divine Family. The physical institutions of marriage and family are designed not just to give us safety and meaningful relationships now, but also to prepare us for that transcendent future (2 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 5:22-33).

Marriage and family provide the foundation for everything. Yet today they are crumbling, just as 2 Timothy 3:1-13 foretold. Until we confront this head-on and apply the Bible's instruction on family life, the loneliness epidemic will grow.

The Bible also offers guidance for cultivating and maintaining friendships and social ties outside the family (Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:9, 17; John 15:13-15;

Romans 12:10; Galatians 6:2;

1 Peter 4:8-10). And it

warns about the dangers of squandering our time or allowing addictions to master us—warnings that take on new relevance in this age of endless, often compulsive, scrolling (Proverbs 25:28; Ephesians 5:15-16; 1 Corinthians 6:12).

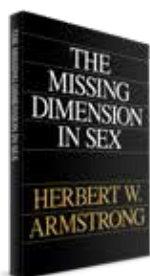
A remedy exists for loneliness. But treating symptoms while ignoring the underlying cause will not cure it. Government social programs and technology cannot replace what we have lost: strong marriages, families and communities built according to God's design.

God used the late Herbert W. Armstrong to restore vital understanding of that design. His book *The Missing Dimension in Sex* explains God's purpose for marriage and family—and why getting that purpose right will mean getting human relationships and connection right. The family teaches us the skills of human connection: how to love, serve, sacrifice, forgive, care for others and give of ourselves. When the family falls ill, the disease spreads throughout society. Loneliness ranks among the symptoms.

The cure requires more than teaching people how to cope with loneliness. It requires restoring the institutions that God designed to teach us how to live in loving relationships with one another.

That cure will ultimately be applied on a global scale when Jesus Christ returns. Scripture describes a world in which families and communities will flourish again: "There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof" (Zechariah 8:4-5).

That will be the world Jesus Christ will establish at His return: a world of strong marriages, stable families, thriving communities and a sense of belonging—no marriage ends in divorce, no child grows up without the care and guidance of a family, and no elderly person goes forgotten. That future is coming. By understanding God's purpose for marriage and family, you can begin preparing for it now. ■



We all need connection.

Drop the screen and read *The Missing Dimension in Sex*. It will give you the Bible's explanation of why we all need human connection, why marriage and family are important, and how to live your best life.



What Is Draining Your Bank Account?

There is a financial force so powerful it can ‘suck the bone marrow out of your money.’ Do you know what it is? **BY ROBERT MORLEY**

ALBERT EINSTEIN, NAPOLEON Bonaparte, Baron Rothschild and John D. Rockefeller supposedly all marveled at this one incredible force. They marveled at its power to destroy—at the personal level, corporate level and national level.

That force is compounding interest.

It might not sound very interesting, but it has been called the eighth wonder of the world. It can ruin lives or be a tool for immense wealth building—if it is understood and used properly.

But most people don’t understand it. The proof?

Everyone’s soaring debt.

Consider America’s record student loan debt (\$1.8 trillion), record vehicle debt (\$1.7 trillion) and record credit card debt (\$1.3 trillion), the trillion-dollar trifecta of terrible financial transactions.

Then there is America’s record mortgage debt (\$18.8 trillion).

A 2024 study by Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker found that Americans also owed a record \$220 billion in medical bills. (Some of that might be included in the record credit card borrowing.)

State governments owe a record \$2.7 trillion. Cities and towns owe an additional \$1.4 trillion. Public school districts, another \$1.2 trillion. Counties, \$757 billion.

That’s a lot of terrible records. And we haven’t even mentioned the biggest one of all: U.S. federal government debt.

If people truly understood how interest worked, they would avoid it like the plague, not load up on trillions of it.

Here is what you need to know: Interest is the money you pay to the lender for the privilege of borrowing. When the payment comes due, you owe the amount you borrowed plus the interest. If you don’t pay it in full, it compounds. In other words, for the next payment, you will owe interest on both the original amount you borrowed and the interest.

Paying interest on interest will cause your debt to soar.

That’s the eighth wonder of the world working for the lender—and *against* you.

Consider your credit card. If you make the minimum monthly payment on a \$5,000 debt, it will take you 19 years to pay it off, and you will spend \$13,000 to do it. If you miss payments along the way, you will get hit with penalties and higher interest rates on top of the unpaid interest. So it will take you even longer and cost you more to get out of debt. That is why Mastercard and Visa are some of the most profitable companies in the world. They understand how interest works.

Consider what happens when you purchase a home. If you borrow

\$400,000 to buy a house with a 30-year mortgage at a 6.5 percent interest rate, you will pay more than \$910,000 for the home by the time you are done. The interest alone is more than the total value of the house. You better believe that JPMorgan Chase and Citibank understand this principle.

Vehicle loans are another great way to needlessly drain your bank account.

“If you want to be middle class, stay in car debt. You will never build wealth because it will suck the bone marrow out of your money,” said financial adviser Dave Ramsey. “You don’t go into car debt, *ever*, if you want to build wealth.”

Ever is a strong word. But if you understand how interest works, you understand why.

According to NerdWallet, the average used car payment in America is \$531 per month for 68 months. The average vehicle loan is \$27,070. With a typical 6.4 percent interest rate, over the life of that loan, you would pay more than \$5,000 in interest. But here is the worst part. By the time you pay off that vehicle, it won’t be worth anywhere near the \$36,100 you paid.

The math on financing a new car is even worse. A new car loses about 50 percent of its value after five years. Paying interest on a rapidly depreciating asset is always a bad financial decision.

“I guarantee you’ll be broke your whole life as long as you stay in car payments, because it’s the most expensive thing you buy that goes down in value,” Ramsey said.

A whopping 86 million people in America make vehicle payments. And the percentage of borrowers who have locked themselves into longer seven-year loans has doubled since 2018.

If people just got rid of the car payment, it would change their life, says Ramsey. If you instead saved up and bought a less expensive vehicle for cash, then put \$531 into a conservative investment of some kind rather than into a monthly car payment, you would easily become a millionaire within about three decades.

Do the math yourself. Plug that \$531 into an online compounding interest calculator and see what sum it multiplies into after 30 years. Assume a 10 percent return on investment (the approximate stock market average) and you end up with more than \$1 million.

Do the math on the average \$770 new car payment. That comes out to \$1.7 million.

That too is the power of compounding. It makes the eighth wonder of the world work for you instead of against you.

That \$8 Frappuccino at Starbucks every day? Invest it instead, and after 30 years, it becomes \$470,000.

Sadly, the concept of compounding interest isn't taught to very many students these days.

Student loan debt rivals auto loans for the irresponsible debt title. The average student borrower owes almost \$40,000, oftentimes for a degree that is worthless to his actual career—or just worthless.

It has gotten so bad that the Trump administration recently limited what types of degrees students can borrow money for. According to the administration, too many students are taking on unsustainable levels of debt for degrees that offer no observable advantage over high school diplomas. In some fields of study, college grads are actually earning less after four years than their non-debt-burdened high school counterparts. Now, before students are allowed to take on government loans, undergraduate programs have to show that graduates will actually earn more than those with high school diplomas. Masters and doctorate programs have to show that graduates will earn more than graduates with bachelor's degrees.

That is a good thing because, on August 1, a lot more students came face-to-face with their debt choices.

The Biden administration allowed students to put off making debt payments due to COVID-19. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which was passed last year, ended that forbearance.

Compounding interest is about to be made compulsory in the curriculum. And it will be a uniquely painful lesson because student loan debt is the only kind of debt that you can't get rid of even if you declare bankruptcy. By law, once you borrow it, the debt and all its compounding interest remains with you until you pay it off or you die.

Forty-two million Americans have student loans. For the past several years, instead of repaying them, they spent that money at Walmart, on rent, starting businesses, and living life. Now payments are once again required, all

that debt is accruing interest again, and standards of living are about to drop.

It is ironic that the federal government is giving lessons on debt and interest. Congress hasn't paid America's national debt down since the Clinton administration.

On August 18, America's national debt surpassed \$40 trillion.

At the national level, interest payments are increasingly impacting America's finances, says money manager Bryden Teich. "You are getting to this overall level of debt burden," he told the *In the Money* podcast, "where even at these interest rates, the U.S. is going to spend more on interest this year than they are spending on defense or Medicare."

Building wealth the right way can be a great tool for helping others and doing good.

Debt payments are now America's number one budget expense (outside of Social Security, which has its own source of funding). And they are growing fast.

If America's debt problem isn't confronted, eventually there won't be any money left for anything else.

People need to learn math—and the true compounding cost of that new kitchen upgrade, biweekly lunch meeting at Panera, or additional squadron of F-35 fighter jets.

This isn't a new problem. The ancient Babylonians understood compounding interest and marveled at how quickly debt could double. That was 3,600 years ago.

King Solomon warned about the danger of debt too. He might have been the richest man to ever live. Proverbs 22:7 is probably his most famous proverb about wealth and debt: "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

The word *servant* means slave, or "a servant of servants" (*Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*).

That is God's perspective on debt. And that is what paying interest on interest does. It turns you into a servant of a servant, or a debt slave of a debt slave.

Compounding interest is an incredible curse in nearly all cases.

God told the ancient Israelites that if they disobeyed His laws, "He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him:

he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail" (Deuteronomy 28:44).

But the power of compounding interest can also be a powerful tool for building wealth.

Psalms 37:21 says, "The wicked borrows, and cannot pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives" (Revised Standard Version).

Building wealth the right way is a blessing and can be a great tool for helping others and doing good.

In the parable of the pounds, the nobleman commended the servants who multiplied the money they were given. The first servant took one pound and earned 10 pounds. The second servant compounded his one pound into five pounds. Christ called them good servants and rewarded them with rulership over cities.

Yet what happened to the servant who did nothing with what he was given? Christ asked him: "Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?" (Luke 19:23).

Christ called him a wicked servant for not even trying to grow what he was given by charging interest.

Although this parable is speaking primarily about growing spiritually, it also offers physical principles to build your life on.

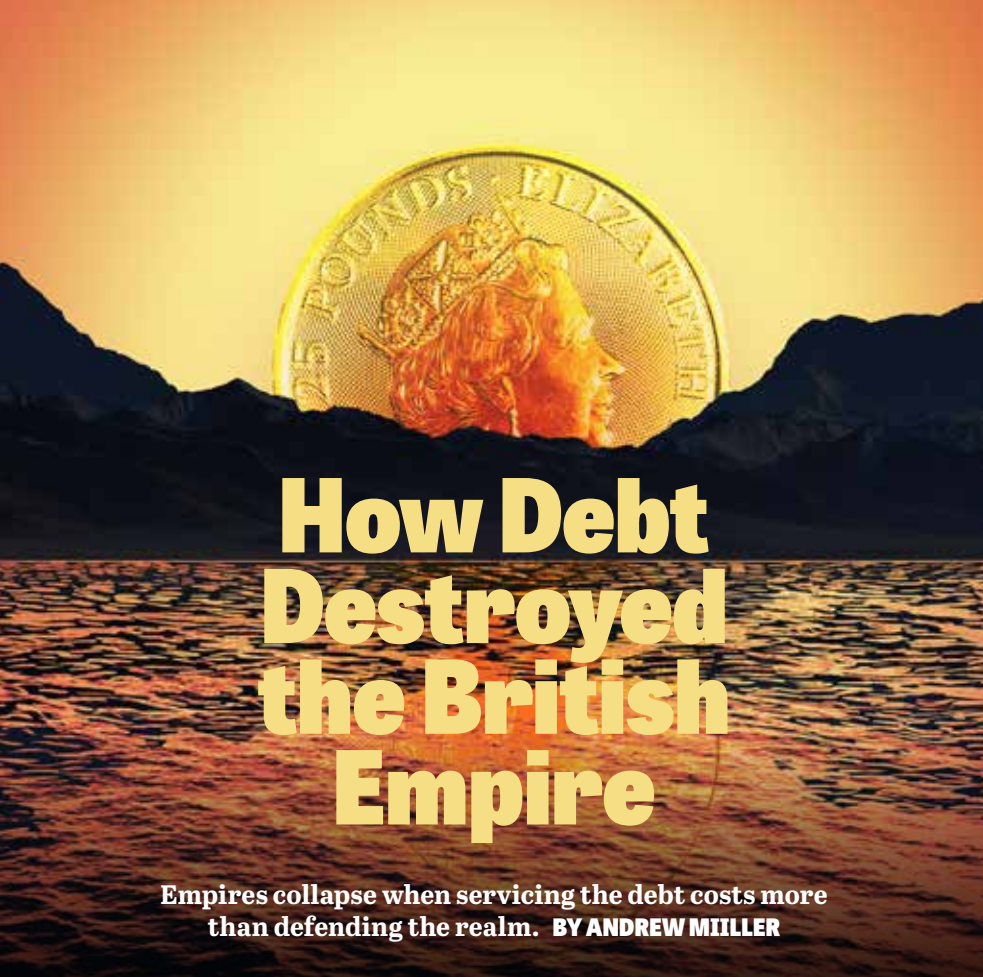
Albert Einstein, Napoleon Bonaparte, Baron Rothschild and John D. Rockefeller may have understood the physical application of the parable of the pounds in Luke 19. They probably knew all too well the dangers of debt, interest and the power of compounding.

Learn those lessons in your life today. Make the compounding power of the eighth wonder of the world work for you, not against you. As Dave Ramsey said, don't let it "suck the bone marrow out of your money." Instead, follow the advice of King Solomon to avoid debt slavery and become a good, faithful and profitable servant. ■

Drowning in debt?

Request your free copy of *Solve Your Money Troubles!* to get the help you need.





How Debt Destroyed the British Empire

Empires collapse when servicing the debt costs more than defending the realm. **BY ANDREW MILLER**

WHY DO SUPERPOWERS FALL? Over the past 500 years, six powers have successively dominated the global economy: Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France, Britain and the United States. None managed to hold onto that dominance for much more than a century. In every case, the high cost of maintaining global dominance eventually outgrew the economic foundation underpinning it.

Britain's fall is the clearest version of this story and the most useful one for understanding where America stands today.

A century ago, the British Empire governed 23 percent of the world's population, controlled 25 percent of the world's land surface, held 40 percent of the world's overseas investments, and financed 50 percent of the world's trade. It was the world's largest creditor nation, and sterling was the undisputed reserve currency (the currency foreign governments and central banks use to back their own money). The Royal Navy protected the world's trade routes.

Sterling sustained the fleet and the empire behind it.

What happened to this globe-girdling power? Today, Britain accounts for just 4 percent of official foreign-exchange reserves, handles roughly 3.5 percent of world exports, contributes only 3 percent of global gross domestic product, governs less than 1 percent of the world's land, and is a net debtor to the rest of the world.

How did the world's greatest empire fall from unchallenged hegemon to a country whose output per person now roughly equates to that of Mississippi, the poorest state in America?

This question is crucial because the United States is at risk of repeating Britain's mistakes.

Rising Debts

Before World War I, Great Britain was not merely powerful. It was solvent.

In 1913, the British economy generated roughly £2.2 billion. The national debt stood at about £625 million, a debt-to-GDP ratio of roughly 29 percent. The budget was close to balanced. Tax receipts amounted to roughly 13 percent

of national output. Britain could still afford its navy because interest payments consumed only about 12 percent of the central budget.

William Gladstone's fiscal rules, combined with a century without a major war, gave Britain a firm financial foundation. Any holder of a Bank of England note could demand gold at a fixed price of £3.89 per troy ounce. Sterling was literally as good as gold, and half of the world's trade was transacted in it.

Then German Kaiser Wilhelm II invaded Belgium, and "the war to end all wars" was on.

Fighting the First World War cost the British Treasury about £7 billion, more than three times the entire 1913 economy. To pay for it, the government raised the standard income tax rate from 6 percent to 30 percent, sold off overseas assets accumulated over generations, and borrowed on a scale the Victorian state had never attempted. It also suspended the gold standard, cutting the monetary anchor that had made sterling as good as gold. The national debt rose from about £625 million to roughly £7.4 billion.

By 1919, wartime inflation had lifted Britain's nominal GDP to about £5.3 billion, and the debt-to-GDP ratio stood near 140 percent. Taxes took about a fifth of national output. Debt interest, which had consumed about 12 percent of the central budget in 1913, now absorbed roughly a quarter of government tax receipts.

Prime Minister Lloyd George argued in a 1919 parliamentary debate that because Britain was obligated to pay war pensions and interest on its massive debt, it had no choice but to enact the most aggressive military cuts in British history. He slashed the defense budget from £770 million to £110 million, putting the country in a position where it spent twice as much servicing debt as defending its borders.

The strategy backfired: The economy shrank faster than the budget did. Between 1919 and 1923, Britain's debt-to-GDP ratio climbed further still, from 140 percent to nearly 180 percent. As pressure mounted on the pound, international investors increasingly favored U.S. dollars over sterling.

Recognizing that sterling was in real danger of losing its place as the world's reserve currency, Winston Churchill

restored the gold standard after he became chancellor of the Exchequer in 1924, believing it necessary to keep the dollar from overtaking the pound. But he mismanaged the transition badly. By ignoring the inflation of the previous decade and restoring parity at the prewar rate of £3.89 per troy ounce, he severely overvalued the pound. British exports became prohibitively expensive on international markets, crushing key industries, driving up unemployment, and ultimately triggering the General Strike of 1926.

Britain had entered a trap: Servicing yesterday's debts left no resources for tomorrow's defense.

Power Transfer

In 1931, when the Great Depression forced a run on London's gold reserves, Britain went off the gold standard for good. Unable to compete with the dollar at a fixed gold price, Britain turned inward, introducing protectionist tariffs, establishing Imperial Preference (a system of lower tariffs for trade within the empire), and forming the "sterling area," a monetary bloc in which member countries anchored their currencies to the pound and held their reserves in London.

Under this system, if Australia sold wool to America for U.S. dollars, London confiscated those dollars and issued paper pounds in return, then used the seized dollars to buy American food and munitions. As the British economy struggled, it ran up debts to its own colonies, debts denominated in pounds that could be converted into neither gold nor dollars.

Perhaps this system could have survived if Britain had been given time to pay down its debts. Adolf Hitler's 1939 invasion of Poland ended that possibility. Britain ran up astronomical debts to fight a second world war, and by the time it ended, its debt-to-GDP ratio had spiked to 260 percent. In 1944, most of the world agreed at Bretton Woods to conduct international trade in U.S. dollars.

The empire survived, but Britain had forfeited its role as the world's reserve currency and was nearing bankruptcy.

Even with total economic mobilization, tax collections reached a record 35 percent of GDP, yet roughly 22 percent of that revenue had to go straight to creditors just to service interest on the debt. To keep the interest bill from

overwhelming the state, London suppressed interest rates. But financial controls could not change the fundamental reality. Britain, so recently an economic superpower, was now unable to survive financially without aid from abroad.

The only path to solvency was a low-interest loan from America. The United States extended Britain a \$3.75 billion line of credit at an ultra-low 2 percent interest rate, amortized over 50 annual installments. But the U.S. demanded concessions calculated to build a U.S.-led global trade order: Britain had to make sterling fully convertible into U.S. dollars, dismantle its protective Imperial Preference network, and formally accede to the newly created International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The 1946 Anglo-American Loan Agreement saved Britain from bankruptcy, but at a steep cost. The greatest empire in world history now depended on the largesse of its former colony. Any military deployment could spark a run on sterling, trapping London and handing the U.S. a kill switch on British foreign policy. Britain still technically governed 20 percent of the world, but it could no longer act without Washington's consent. The borrower served the lender.

Fallen Empire

This financial trap showed nowhere more clearly than in British India. By the end of World War II, London owed India over £1.3 billion in war debt. Indian nationalists demanded immediate repayment to fund postwar development and famine relief. London did not have the money. Repaying those balances in hard currency would have triggered a run on the pound and collapsed what was left of the British banking system. Refusing to repay them risked riots that would have required deploying hundreds of thousands of British troops—troops the depleted Treasury could not afford to pay.

Faced with massive debt to India and no funds to suppress an uprising, the British government reached a sobering conclusion: The empire could no longer afford to keep its most prized possession. The British Empire left India in 1947, not because it wanted to go but because it could no longer afford to stay.

Without the Indian subcontinent, the Suez Canal alone held together

what remained of the British Empire. When Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Co. in July 1956, Prime Minister Anthony Eden viewed it as a direct threat to the empire's survival. That November, Britain, France and Israel launched a secret, coordinated military strike to seize the canal zone. Britain had the ships to do this—but it lacked the funds.

The invasion triggered a global panic, and international investors began aggressively dumping the pound. Britain needed emergency loans from the IMF to stabilize its currency. But U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, furious that Britain had launched an invasion without Washington's knowledge during a delicate moment in the Cold War, blocked Britain's access to IMF loans and threatened to crash the pound by selling off America's holdings of British government bonds.

The Suez debacle ended the illusion that Britain could act as an independent power. Remaining colonies did not all depart at once, but the episode signaled that London could no longer impose its will on them. From Ghana's independence in 1957 through the mid-1960s, most of Britain's African and other territories became independent. What remained were scattered islands and small outposts by the time the Colonial Office closed in August 1966.

Britain's debt-to-GDP ratio fell from 260 percent to around 80 percent over the course of decolonization, but the country remained dependent on loans from the IMF and the U.S. America overtook Britain as the world's dominant power not through braver soldiers or a stronger military but through its role as the world's creditor, backed by deeper gold reserves and manageable debts.

America's Turn

In 1966, U.S. economic power rivaled that of the British Empire in its heyday. The American economy generated roughly \$800 billion in GDP. The national debt stood at about \$330 billion, a debt-to-GDP ratio of roughly 40 percent. The



federal budget was close to balanced, and America could easily afford its military because net interest payments on the national debt consumed only about 7 percent of the central budget.

Yet six decades of war, welfare and waste have taken their toll. The U.S. abandoned what was left of the gold standard in 1971, and its debt-to-GDP ratio

At that point, default appears inevitable. Either the Treasury stops paying bondholders or the government prints money to inflate the debt away. Both options carry serious costs.

Refusing to repay creditors would shut Washington out of bond markets entirely. Right now, the government spends \$1.9 trillion more each year than it collects in taxes, and it borrows that difference. If it couldn't borrow, it would have to make up that gap immediately through some mix of spending cuts and tax hikes. No country has ever cut spending or raised taxes that fast, that much, without triggering a recession.

Many experts think this recession could be worse than the Great Depression, which is why America probably won't take the first option. Instead, the U.S. government will almost certainly print money to inflate the debt away over time, the same choice Britain made,

again and again, for 50 years.

Britain's strategy worked in the narrow sense that it never missed a bond payment. But the cost showed up elsewhere: The pound lost value every year, becoming a currency the world stopped trusting, and the government could no longer act without asking Washington's permission first. Britain didn't lose its empire in a single default. It lost it one devaluation at a time, as the world quietly moved its trust and its reserves to the dollar.

If America makes this same choice, its dominance will also gradually drain away.

Next Reserve

One key difference between Britain in 1926 and America in 2026 is that America isn't facing competition from another currency the way Britain faced competition from the dollar. But that could soon change.

Today, the world's second-most widely held reserve currency is the euro. The eurozone economy is only about half the size of the U.S. economy, but its debt-to-GDP ratio is much lower, and its gold reserves are meaningfully greater. The

primary reason the euro isn't a major competitor to the dollar is that it isn't backed by a single central government, and investors are unsure how long the union will last.

The founders of the European Union always intended for the euro to be backed by a central government, but division between eurozone member states has prevented this from happening.

Dr. Otto von Habsburg discussed this with the late Herbert W. Armstrong in 1983. Both men agreed that it would likely take a massive crisis to force European integration. Dr. Habsburg suggested to Mr. Armstrong that it might take an aggressive foreign leader to frighten Europe into uniting. Mr. Armstrong forecast that a banking crisis could be just as geopolitically impactful.

Specifically, he warned that a massive banking crisis in America "could suddenly result in triggering European nations to unite as a new world power larger than either the Soviet Union or the U.S."

Mr. Armstrong based this forecast on Bible prophecies in Daniel 2 and Revelation 17 about 10 nations in Europe giving their economic, military and political power over to "the beast."

Economic trends are now proving Mr. Armstrong correct. Over the last four decades, European nations have created a unified currency that ranks second only to the dollar in global transactions, while U.S. fiscal liabilities continue to climb. If a U.S. bond crisis eventually prompts Europe to unite into a fiscal union, America will find itself in a very similar situation to interwar Britain. Any attempt to stabilize its currency will leave it unable to pay its astronomical debts, and any attempt to inflate these debts away will destroy its currency.

Either way, the result will be a new economic superpower to rule the world. ■

Here's how you can prepare for the dollar's collapse.

And it's not what you expect.

Request your free copy of

The Financial Law You Can't Afford to Ignore.



The Suez debacle ended the illusion that Britain could act as an independent power.



Smoke rises from oil tanks beside the Suez Canal hit during the initial Anglo-French assault on Port Said, Nov. 5, 1956.

began rising soon after. Its debt has since climbed to a record \$40 trillion, driving the U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio to a staggering 126 percent, nearly the same ratio the British Empire reached in the years right after World War I. Interest payments on the national debt now consume nearly 19 percent of federal revenue.

These statistics mean that President Donald Trump is now facing many of the same choices Lloyd George and Winston Churchill faced a century ago. The Penn Wharton Budget Model estimates that debt held by the public cannot rationally exceed about 210 percent of GDP, the point beyond which no tax on labor income, at any rate, could conceivably keep pace with the interest.

That figure excludes the trillions the government owes its own trust funds: Social Security, Medicare and others. Add them in, and the effective ceiling works out to roughly 260 percent of GDP, almost exactly the level Britain reached at the end of World War II. On current trends, America could reach that 260 percent threshold sometime between 2045 and 2051, depending on how fast health-care costs continue to rise.

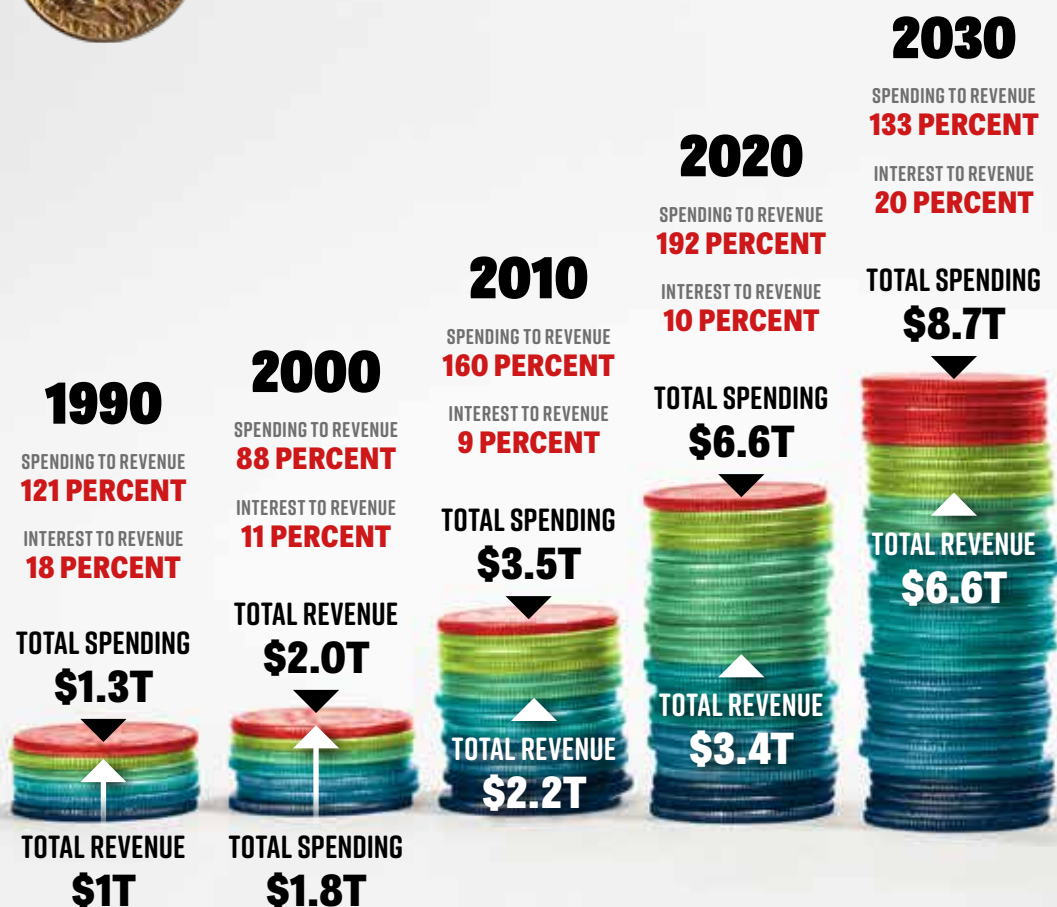
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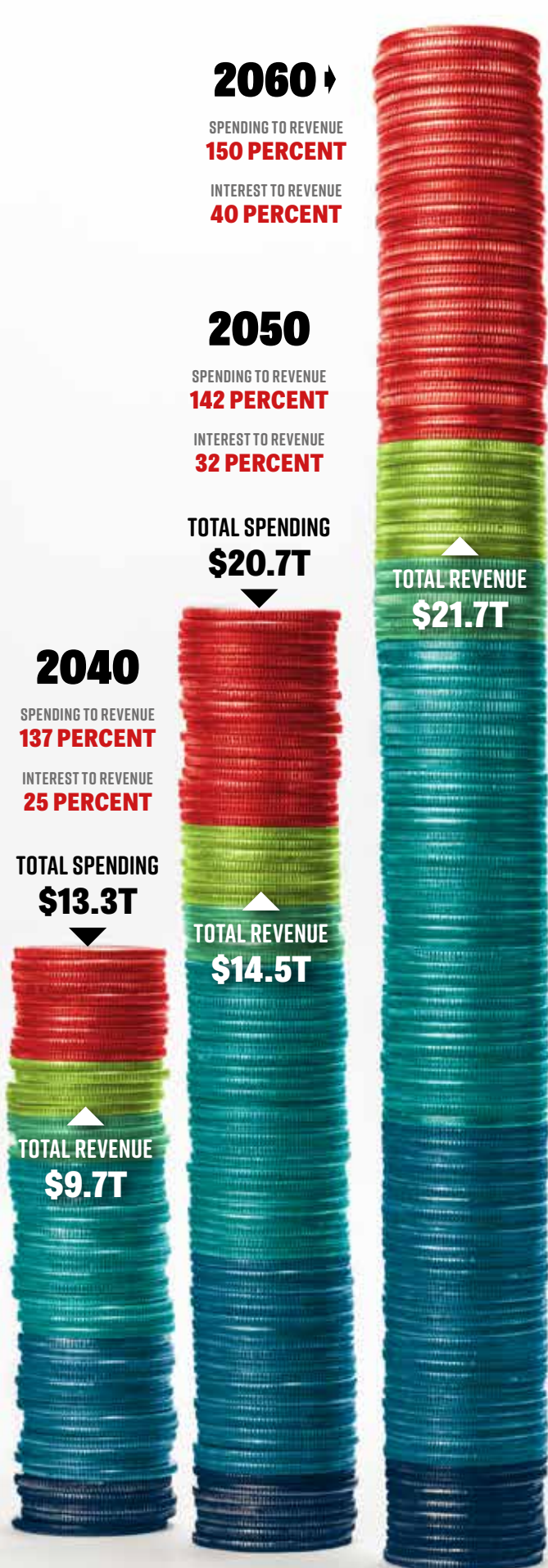
The danger in America's rising debt

For more than 50 years, the U.S. government has spent more than it collects. But the real danger isn't the spending itself—it's the growing share of tax money needed just to pay interest on old debt. Interest payments are on pace to eat up 20 percent of revenue by 2028, 30 percent by 2046, and a staggering 40 percent by 2060. Each predictable milestone marks a deeper national crisis. At 20 percent, interest crowds out critical federal spending on schools, roads, and defense. At 30 percent, annual interest costs grow faster than the economy itself. At 40 percent, confidence completely cracks: global investors lose faith, interest rates spike, and the economy freezes up. Worse, a sudden shock—like a credit downgrade or foreign investors pulling back—could push these crises years closer, forcing brutal choices long before the bill officially comes due.



= \$250,000,000,000





◀ TOTAL SPENDING **\$32.5T**



INTEREST

Payments owed to lenders who purchased U.S. Treasury bonds, growing automatically each year as accumulated national debt continues climbing higher.



DISCRETIONARY

Annual funding Congress approves yearly for education, infrastructure, scientific research and federal agencies not already locked into mandatory spending programs.



DEFENSE

Military spending covering troops, weapons, equipment, research and operations that maintain U.S. national security and fund America's armed forces worldwide.



WELFARE

Income support and safety-net programs like food assistance, housing aid and unemployment benefits, designed to help low-income and vulnerable American households survive.



HEALTH CARE

Federal health programs including Medicare and Medicaid, covering medical costs for seniors, low-income families and people with disabilities across the country.



SOCIAL SECURITY

Monthly payments to retired workers, disabled Americans and survivors of deceased workers, funded by payroll taxes collected from current employees and employers nationwide.



The far-right Alternative für Deutschland celebrates as election results come in on September 6.

WHY THE TRUMPET WATCHES

Germany Will Betray America

Prophecy warns that the United States trusts Europe's leading nation at its peril. **BY RICHARD PALMER**

"M GGA" DOESN'T ROLL OFF THE tongue as easily as President Donald Trump's catchphrase "MAGA." But as he celebrated the landslide victory of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in the German state of Saxony-Anhalt on September 6, he rejoiced in the fact that they would "Make Germany Great Again."

Whether or not he realizes it, MGGA will be Donald Trump's most important foreign-policy legacy. "Germany must demonstrate leadership," he said in 2018. He pushed Germany to spend 2 percent of its economy on its military. Then 4 percent. Then 5. Under his watch, Germany has become Europe's top military spender, upending Europe's decades-long balance between French military power and German economic power. Germany is even on track to outspend Russia on defense by the end of the decade.

At the same time, Trump's administration has encouraged the rise of the AfD. Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio have both defended the party. Sen. Tom Cotton said it should

not be treated as a "right-wing extremist organization." Elon Musk went further, actively campaigning for the party.

Trump trusts Germany, and he trusts the AfD. And this is only the latest development in a relationship that goes back to the time just after World War II, when America rebuilt Germany from its defeat. From intelligence sharing to stationing nuclear weapons on German soil to selling Germany F-35s to encouraging Germany to lead Europe—for decades America has placed considerable trust in a nation that has repeatedly proven itself dangerous.

Yet as Herbert W. Armstrong warned in the 1980s, a tremendous shock is coming from Germany to America—one "which the public now least suspects ... doesn't dream is coming." Bible prophecy warns that Germany is going to betray America. "[O]ur Western peoples will stand aghast" when it happens, but "the stage is being set," Mr. Armstrong said.

How could this happen? And why? Can we be sure? As Mr. Armstrong said in that same broadcast, "It's time

we ... blow the dust off our Bibles" and prove what Scripture says about modern Germany.

The Master Key

The terms *Germany*, *Britain* and *United States of America* are not in your Bible. Understanding what the Bible says about them depends on what Mr. Armstrong called "the all-important master key."

This master key unlocks an entire third of your Bible: the third devoted to Bible prophecy.

Most so-called Christian denominations view prophecy as essentially irrelevant. Yet why would an all-wise Creator include so much of it in His instruction book for mankind, if that were true?

The Bible's prophecies focus on the nation of Israel. The key to understanding Bible prophecy, then, is *understanding who the descendants of Israel are today*.

Most people think the answer is simple: Israel is a country in the Middle East. The people of Israel are the Jews. Yet the Jews are the descendants of just one of the 12 tribes of ancient Israel: Judah. The first time the term *Jew* is used in the Bible, in 2 Kings 16:6, these "Jews" are *at war with Israel*.

All Jews descended from Israel, but clearly not all descendants of Israel are Jews.

Bible history records that Israel's descendants became tribes, then a nation, then the kingdom of Israel. Under Solomon's son Rehoboam, Judah split away to remain loyal to David's line; the other tribes formed their own monarchy. Assyria conquered the northern kingdom beginning in 721 B.C.; Babylon conquered Judah more than a century later. They *never reunited*.

A few northern Israelites escaped captivity, and their descendants appear occasionally in Scripture. But Ezra 2 and 8 and Nehemiah 7 list those who returned from exile as overwhelmingly from Judah, Benjamin and Levi—the tribes that formed the kingdom of Judah. The northern tribes vanished from the record. That is why they are called the "lost 10 tribes of Israel."

This used to be common knowledge, and explorers often searched for the lost 10 tribes. Wherever they went, the descendants of these tribes must be alive.

Jews Didn't Receive These Promises

Many people acknowledge that God made promises to Abraham that are fulfilled both in the Jews and in Jesus Christ. But several of His promises are fulfilled in neither. God told Abraham he would be “a father of many nations”—*plural* (Genesis 17:5). Jacob was promised “a nation [and] a group of nations” (Genesis 35:11; Moffatt). Where are those nations? The Jews form one; God's Church is “an holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9)—also singular. So where is the *group* of nations?

Abraham's descendants would “be as the dust of the earth,” “multiply as the stars of heaven,” and number in the “thousands of millions” (Genesis 28:14; 26:4; 24:60). It will take ages before today's roughly 16 million Jews number in the billions. These millions would “possess the gate of those which hate them” (verse 60)—the world's choke points. The Jews have never controlled these. In Genesis 27:26-29, Isaac's blessing says Jacob's descendants would be among Earth's richest and most powerful nations. The state of Israel is strong for its size, but no superpower.

In Genesis 49, Jacob prophesied of “the last days” of each tribe. If 10 tribes are gone, those promises have failed and the Bible is not the infallible Word of God. The 10 tribes must exist; they must include some of the wealthiest nations on Earth—specifically those that dominate others by controlling the world's transit choke points.

Those nations must include Britain and the U.S. In *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* (free upon request), Mr. Armstrong sets out this history and logic in more detail and proves that the lost tribes include *these two nations*.

Israel Betrayed

God gave these nations unprecedented greatness and wealth because of *Abraham's* obedience, not their own.

The spotlight on these nations gave them an opportunity to point the world to God. They did some good, but they also used that God-given wealth and power to spread materialism, lawlessness, perversion and godlessness. They could have been model nations, showing that God's ways bring blessings. Instead they now show that even history's richest, strongest nations fall if they defy His laws.

Micah 5 describes what would happen to modern Israel. The “remnant of Jacob”—the modern descendants of the ancient tribes—would be like a lion among the nations (verse 8); military victories, economic blessings that help feed the world (verse 7). Yet God says, “[I]n that day ... I will cut off thy horses ...” (verse 10).

“How plain can you get?” Mr. Armstrong asked in *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. “Here God identifies the great peoples of the Earth who are the most wealthy and beneficent, the most powerful—yet *at the very time* their power reaches its zenith, He suddenly ‘breaks’ the pride of their power (see Leviticus 26:19), cuts off their implements of war, and destroys their cities!”

If America cannot trust Europe as an ally, is making it powerful really a good idea?

How does God cut down a modern superpower at the height of its dominance? Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 list the curses God promises to send: weather, agriculture, disease, famine and disaster, culminating in foreign invasion. Other passages say this invasion comes suddenly and catches the dominant nation by surprise. It is not led by Britain's and America's enemies, but by their closest allies.

“All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not,” God warns in Jeremiah 30:14.

God pictures Israel not merely courting these allies, but paying for their affection: “They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom” (Ezekiel 16:33).

Britain and America could have celebrated their history with God and taught the world that the Eternal is the source of all blessings and prosperity. They could have continued to demonstrate that lesson by depending on God for their safety and survival in a dangerous world.

Instead, they depend upon themselves, their wealth, their technologies, their armies and their alliances.

During World War II, Britain and America prayed to God and held

national days of fasting. Still, they lacked the faith to rely fully on Him, and they relied instead on their own arms and on the Soviet Union for victory.

After the war, even what trust they had in God faded. They trusted in themselves, and America built a global system of alliances—most notably including NATO—to defend against the Soviets. America hired these allies, giving them many gifts, including the atomic bomb, the most destructive weapon man had ever produced.

God is not pleased with this. He explains in Ezekiel 23:35 that Israel “hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back”

When a nation does this, it breaks the first and great commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37).

“We violate that as a nation,” Mr. Armstrong said in a *World Tomorrow* broadcast in the 1980s. “[W]e've been deceived into believing that we are really relying on God. [W]e think that God is sort of a myth, and He's far off. Maybe He is not real, and maybe He couldn't really help us. ... We must depend on something that we can see. And so now we are so afraid of Russia that the United States government feels that it must take what we call a ‘calculated risk’ ... and try to build up Germany and Central Europe against Russia.”

So God says He will inspire these lovers to turn on America. “... I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy,” God reveals in Jeremiah 30:14. In Ezekiel 16:37, God says, “I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure ... I will even gather them round about against thee”

Impending Disaster

The northern tribes of the kingdom of Israel were conquered by the Assyrian Empire starting in 721 B.C. But over a hundred years later, God inspired the Prophet Jeremiah to record something seemingly odd. Jeremiah 5 discusses the house of Judah and the house of Israel, two separate nations (e.g. verse 11). In verse 15, he writes: “Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what

they say.” Didn’t that warning come more than a lifetime too late?

The same puzzle appears in Ezekiel 3-4. There God commissions His prophet to go to the house of Israel. Once again, Israel and Judah are described separately in the same passage. Not only does this come about 150 years too late to warn Israel of its doom, but it is given to Ezekiel, a captive of the Babylonian Empire who is never recorded as traveling anywhere, let alone bringing this message to the tribes of Israel, which have already been conquered.

Consider another mystery in Jeremiah 3:18: “In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.” This has never occurred in history; only some from the kingdom of Judah returned to the Holy Land—but not those of Israel.

Some have assumed that the Samaritans, who lived in the land once inhabited by the northern tribes of Israel, are the descendants of these tribes returned from exile. But 2 Kings 17 explains that Assyria moved other peoples into the region (verse 24) who lived there “unto this day” (verse 41). Jesus Christ Himself confirmed that these Samaritans were not from the tribes of Israel when He told His disciples, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:5-6). The Samaritans cannot be these lost sheep.

So where are they? This is quite a puzzle. Zechariah points to the answer.

A Second Captivity

After some of the Jews began to return to Judea from captivity in Babylon, God said, “And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong” (Zechariah 8:13).

The return from captivity described by Zechariah and Jeremiah—when Israel and Judah will return together—is a *future* event.

Jeremiah confirms this: “For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will

bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it” (Jeremiah 30:3).

The only logical conclusion is that a *second captivity* is coming on the people of Israel. The first, as sore and bloody and tragic as it was, was only a forerunner.

Who Are Our Lovers?

Anciently the Assyrians took the northern tribes of Israel into captivity, while Babylon captured the kingdom of Judah. God sent many prophets to warn them *before* these captivities happened. Yet the warnings recorded in the Bible are primarily for the *future captivity*.

Isaiah 10, for example, describes God using the king of Assyria to correct and conquer nations. It goes on to describe the survivors from Israel and Judah returning home. The first part of Isaiah 10 happened: God raised up Assyria and then struck it down. But Israel didn’t return from captivity, and Judah never went into captivity to that empire.

In this end-time, second captivity, Israel and Judah will fall together. Hosea 5:5 says, “[T]herefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.” This is very different from what happened anciently.

In this second captivity, God says the captors are “Assyria” and “Babylon.” Ezekiel 23:23 foretells that Israel and Judah’s lovers are the “Babylonians ... and all the Assyrians.” Note that: The principal *lovers* are also the principal *CAPTORS*!

Who are these treacherous lovers, whom God calls “Babylonians” and “Assyrians,” today?

The New Testament supplies some answers. Revelation 17 describes a great end-time power using the symbol of a beast, ridden by a whore, with the name “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth” written on her forehead (verse 5). To know what this symbolizes, we must look to other scriptures that use the same symbolism. The true Church of God is often described as a woman—the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:32; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-8). The immoral woman of Revelation 17 is a great *false church* that consorts with the kings of the world.

This woman rides a “beast.” In Daniel 7, four beasts represent four great empires and the rulers who lead them. So this woman—a false church—rides and controls a great superpower. This “beast” is unusual: It has seven heads, which are seven kings, who rule one after the other (Revelation 17:10). Between one king and the next, the beast disappears into the bottomless pit (verse 8), seemingly destroyed.

The final time this beast rises, it has “ten horns which ... are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast” (verse 12).

So we have an empire, repeatedly led by a church, repeatedly rising and falling, and in this end time, led by a union of kings.

This is a prophetic description of the Holy Roman Empire, a series of European empires, all strongly influenced by the Catholic Church.



This helps us pinpoint Assyria. It is described almost interchangeably with Babylon in Bible prophecy because, in modern times, it is part of this same empire. The beast of Revelation 17 is described doing all the same things that the Old Testament prophesied Assyria would do: conquer Jerusalem, make war against Jesus Christ, and ultimately be defeated by Christ when He returns.

Assyria describes modern Germany, the military and political heart of Europe. Babylon refers specifically to the religious power.

This mirrors the relationship these two had anciently. Babylon was the great religious power. Assyria was renowned as the political and military power. The Assyrians adopted most of Babylon's religion as their own and viewed Babylon as a holy city.

Today, the modern religious Babylon and the Assyrian Germany will dominate the final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

America encouraged the creation of the European Union, out of which this 10-nation union will emerge. Because of these prophecies, Herbert W. Armstrong warned that "we're actually helping to create the Frankenstein that is coming against us."

Turning Against America

President Trump sees some of the problems with America's relationship with its "lovers." America has given much to Europe and has received little gratitude, appreciation or "love" in return.

Even during President Trump's first term, French President Emmanuel Macron said NATO was "brain dead." He called Trump's second term an "electroshock" for the Continent.

After his election in 2025, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said, "My absolute priority will be to strengthen Europe as quickly as possible so that, step by step, we can really achieve independence from the U.S.A."

Both sides turned Greenland into a major issue. Trump said he wanted it.

Greenland's population is so small that he could have simply made an offer: Vote to become American in a referendum, and every Greenlander receives \$100,000. It would still have been cheap. Instead, he spoke of invasion, and Europe responded by sending in troops. Suddenly, having NATO members on opposite sides of a war was no longer unthinkable.

President Trump threatened to pull out of NATO, telling the *Telegraph*, "I was never swayed by NATO. I always knew they were a paper tiger, and Putin knows that too, by the way."

The Iran war created another divide. Europe not only refused to support the campaign, but several European nations barred the U.S. military from bases that, in many cases, America had built and used to protect Europe for decades.

George Saravelos, Deutsche Bank's head of global currency research, publicly called for EU nations to fight back against Donald Trump economically by dumping U.S. debt. Danish pension fund AkademikerPension did exactly that. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that many others are discussing such all-out financial warfare in private.

Yet none of this has prompted the Trump administration, or anyone in America, to pause and question whether encouraging Europe to arm is a good idea. If America cannot trust Europe as an ally, is making it powerful really a good idea?

Fed up with this lack of love, the Trump administration has thrown its support behind the fringe parties rising in Europe: the AfD in Germany and the National Rally in France. Trump has embraced them as European versions of the MAGA movement. Yet in many cases, they are even more anti-American than the mainstream leaders they are replacing.

AfD co-leader Alice Weidel has told senior party figures to reduce their trips to Washington and to instead cultivate ties with Russia and China. The party's other co-leader, Tino Chrupalla, accused Israel of dragging America into war with Iran, praised Spain for its refusal to cooperate, and called for Germany to evict American troops from German bases.

Marine Le Pen, a leader of France's National Rally, called President Trump's war aims "erratic." Party president Jordan Bardella accused Trump of attempting the "vassalization" of Europe.

Look at the roots of these movements, and this hostility is no surprise. *Compact* is a magazine by and for AfD supporters. It presents a view of World War II in which Germany is the victim. Its special editions have included:

- "Lost Homeland," describing the "unspeakable suffering" of the 14 million Germans expelled from Eastern Europe after the war and the "martyrdom they had to endure";
- "Crimes Against Germans," describing how Germany was victimized by

war crimes during World War II;

- "Dresden 1945: The Dead, the Perpetrators and the Trivializers," describing the "Anglo-American bombing terror" and the "mass murderer" Winston Churchill;

- "The Death Camps of the Americans," which accuses Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower of carrying out the mass execution of German prisoners of war in 1945.

The party briefly jumped on the MAGA train after Trump's second presidential victory, but it clearly hates America. These new European lovers are just as false as the first set.

The Stage Is Set

Jeremiah 1:13 describes this northern European power as a "seething pot," a cauldron boiling over with resentment. Yet America doesn't recognize it.

Everything matches, in detail, the precise situation the Bible describes. Even as some in America realize these "lovers" don't really love them, they are still encouraging them to rearm. Meanwhile, both the mainstream and new upstarts in Europe are seething under the U.S.-led global order, ready to turn against her as soon as the opportunity arises.

Far from being a confusing mess, the prophecies throughout the Bible, written hundreds of years apart, when unlocked with the master key, fit together to form a perfect and detailed picture of the betrayal that is about to stun the world.

Why use so many pages of the Bible to spell this out? So that when it happens, we know it is from God: It is of His design, and He is in total control.

The purpose of prophecy is to help us see God. God raised up Israel. God is now punishing Israel. He controls your destiny too. The key to prosperity, happiness and success lies in putting Him and His law first.

The coming captivity will teach Israel this lesson. God will then deal with Germany and the Holy Roman Empire and teach them that same lesson. Eventually the whole world will learn it. People will dig into the other two thirds of their Bibles and learn how to build under Jesus Christ a world of peace and prosperity that all can share in.



Why Europe Is Being Cursed

All the talk about reducing carbon emissions distracts from what God is trying to teach us.

BY JOSUÉ MICHELS AND ADAM JONES

EUROPE HAS ENDURED A SUMMER heat wave with few rivals in history. Temperatures repeatedly reached the triple digits and broke record after record. Wildfires scorched 1.5 million acres from January to August. Rivers dried up, exposing World War II relics, while satellite imagery revealed the dramatic loss and browning of vegetation. The Associated Press reported on August 13 that economic consequences like crop failure could reduce the entire European Union gross domestic product by 1 percent (about \$210 billion).

Europeans are also suffering drastically higher numbers of hospitalizations and heat-related deaths as the high temperatures affect an aging population in ill-equipped homes. The *New York Times* reported on August 15: “In One Week During Europe’s Record Heat Wave, Deaths Increased by 16,000.”

The headlines and numbers are hyped up to scare people into believing these serious situations are due to climate change caused by carbon emissions. In reality, the causes are more spiritual in nature than physical.

In earlier centuries, people facing such a crisis would have asked: *Why are we being cursed?* But the world’s religions had no answers. Today’s climate-change believers pin all the blame

on carbon emissions and other similar causes. But God’s Word reveals the *true* reason for the suffering in Europe this past summer.

Why Weather Disasters?

Throughout the Bible, God uses environmental disasters to punish disobedient peoples and nations. Examples include the Flood (Genesis 7), the 10 plagues against Egypt (Exodus 7-12) and the three-year famine in Israel (2 Samuel 21). God also inspired prophets to warn that if nations disobeyed in the future, He would use weather curses to punish them (Zechariah 14:17-18).

God has used weather plagues to punish a variety of sins in the past and He continues to do so today. That’s why natural disasters are a global problem today. The United States, Canada and the United Kingdom are experiencing wildfires, storms and earthquakes because they have rejected God’s law and their history with God (for more information, request a free copy of *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*).

There are also specific Bible prophecies that reveal that God will use weather disasters to punish modern Germany and, by extension, the European nations that follow its lead—and these prophecies explain why.

Europe Cursed?

At the end of August, the *Guardian* reported an estimated 35,000 excess deaths in Europe for the month.

Not all these deaths are directly attributable to the heat. This estimate only states that 35,000 more people died than expected based on historic averages.

Use of these figures is controversial because they generally give wildly higher figures than tallying up individual causes of death. A range of factors can contribute to the totals. For example, hotter weather means more people traveling to enjoy it. A higher number of cars on the road pushes up the number of fatal accidents. These extra fatalities are then counted as “heat-related” deaths, though the weather isn’t a primary cause. In many cases, the heat aggravates existing underlying health conditions, contributing to death.

In this case, though, the figures are widely reported because they serve the approved narrative. The media and government use climate change as an excuse for massive socialist policies. Hot summers suit this narrative, so they are highly dramatized. Meanwhile, excess death figures due to the cold in winter are rarely discussed.

Yet looking at this story even while staying alert to the propaganda, this summer

has seen record-breaking extremes.

Major European cities such as Paris have experienced once-in-a-generation temperatures of 104 degrees Fahrenheit.

This has been France's driest summer on record. Roughly 250,000 acres burned in France, making 2026 its worst wildfire season in decades. More than 200,000 people were forced to evacuate in July, and 25,000 insurance claims were made. The damage was declared "exceptional" by France Assureurs and was estimated to cost approximately \$570 million.

One wildfire in France was so large it generated a thunderstorm, which produced additional wildfires—the first such instance to occur in France and one of only a few such instances in recorded European history. In fact, this summer, France experienced its largest wildfire since 1949.

As France experiences excess fire, its rivers are also drying. As of September 1, 1,424 of France's 3,000 small waterways had interrupted flows, according to the French Office of Biodiversity.

To the southwest of France, Spain had 650,000 acres burn from January through August. That's less than last year, but the year isn't over yet. At the time of writing, wildfires continue to rage.

The Loire in France and the Po in Italy, down in places to about a 10th—or even a 20th—of normal flow, dried so much that people could walk across some sections of the rivers. The Po is Italy's longest and most important river. Roughly one third of Italy's entire agricultural production comes from the valley through which it flows, making such a recession particularly concerning.

Droughts like these affect crop yields. The EU forecasts a 14 percent decrease in European summer crop yields from the five-year average. That's a serious decline, especially considering that Ukraine, Europe's main agricultural exporter, is not producing as much as it used to.

Germany Cursed?

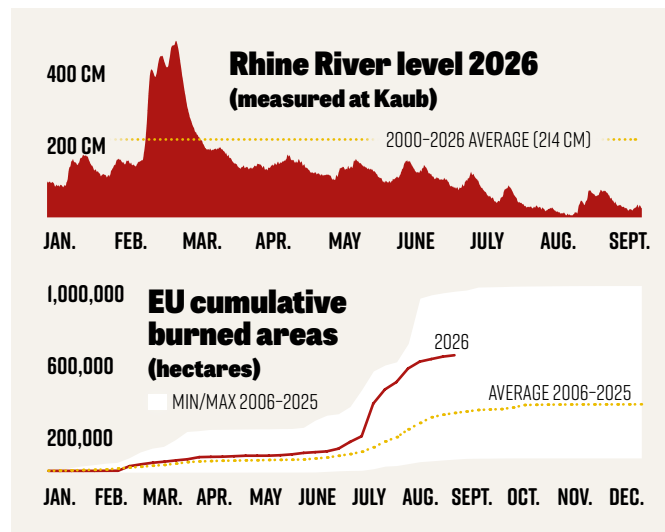
It is not unusual for France or Spain to experience wildfires—but it is unusual for Germany, which had to evacuate

more than 2,000 people because of a wildfire this summer.

But the more serious curse for Germany is its falling river levels.

The Rhine, the main circulatory system for German factories, fell in August to its lowest level since 1880, when record-keeping began.

In some areas, the river fell from an average depth of 10 to 20 feet to just 4 feet. Cargo vessels were forced to carry lighter loads: Some with 2,000-ton capacities could carry only 500 tons. This necessitated more trips, more fuel and reduced productivity. In some sections, like Kaub, shipping was completely halted for up to two weeks in August.



This comes as Germany's economy is already under pressure from the fuel crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, compounded by the Iran war.

Nearly 300 million tons each year transit the Rhine to Cologne, Dortmund, Düsseldorf and Germany's other industrial cities. Roughly 80 percent of Germany's domestic water traffic travels on it.

The government suspended its ban on Sunday truck driving to compensate for reduced Rhine traffic.

Can the receding of the Rhine give a clue as to why Germany is being cursed?

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry writes in *Nahum—An End-Time Prophecy for Germany*, "God wants this world to learn that He controls nature. Many natural disasters are anything but *natural*."

The Rhine functions as a freeway for the factories of the Ruhr region. This is where Germany has forged its steel for

its tanks and aircraft: This is where it has begun building its war machines.

The drought has forced ThyssenKrupp's Duisburg steel factory to reduce production. ThyssenKrupp was a major supplier of Third Reich military hardware. To a smaller degree, it continues today to rebuild Germany's rapidly forming war machine.

The drought has also affected Salzgitter, another major steel producer, along with chemical company BASF—a corporate descendant of IG Farben. IG Farben is infamous for producing the Third Reich's chemical weapons.

Millions of troops and civilians died from bombs, bullets and gases that originated in some form in the Ruhr Valley.

The last time the Rhine dried to critical levels was in the summer of 2022, the year that the current push for large-scale German remilitarization began. It was also the year Russia invaded Ukraine while Germany blocked sanctions on Russia and delayed military aid to Ukraine. Ever since, Germany has used the slow grinding Ukraine war to develop its weapons industry.

The low riverbeds have exposed the relics of past wars that Germany started:

sunken warships, bomb casings and other military hardware. This should remind the nation of its bloody past and serve as a warning against repeating it.

However, Germany is once again rebuilding its military power.

The biblical book of Nahum, as Mr. Flurry explains, is a specific warning to Germany to repent of its militaristic mindset. While other biblical prophecies show that God will use the nation's military power to fulfill His will (Revelation 17:17). God can, in His great power, use Germany's evil ambitions, and will do so for His purpose. But He would rather the German people repent of their militaristic nature.

The curses that Germany and Europe face need to be seen in that context.

"Woe to the bloody city," God warns in Nahum 3:1, referring to Nineveh, the ancient capital of the Assyrians, who

were the ancestors of the Germans. Nahum reveals that God controls the storms and clouds, and He is the one who “drieth up all the rivers” (Nahum 1:3-4).

Through the book of Nahum, God is reaching out to Germans today, saying: *I am the one drying up your rivers. I can humble you, and I can prosper you. Remember your bloody history and repent before you repeat it!*

These scriptures should get the Germans’ attention. They show that God is in charge of the weather and that He can solve *all our problems* if we turn to Him. But instead of seeing God behind these weather curses, Germany blames climate change, ignores the biblical warning, and continues to revive its capacity for forging weapons and spilling blood.

God is angry about this! In Nahum 2:13, He prophesies that He will punish Germany specifically: “Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions; and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.”

These weather curses are a warning to Europe not to continue on the warmaking path Germany is leading it down.

Worse to Come

The Bible reveals that if Europeans reject God’s calls for repentance, they will end up trusting a man who will lead them to commit terrible atrocities. God will not prevent this from happening. In fact, He will use this militaristic Europe under German leadership to punish the modern descendants of Israel (mainly America and the British Commonwealth) for their disobedience.

This European power, called Tyre or Tyrus in Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 27, will economically besiege those nations of Israel, cutting them out of global trade before launching a military invasion (Ezekiel 4-5).

God will use Germany to execute this punishment.

In Isaiah 10:5, God calls the Assyrians, the ancestors of the Germans, the rod of His anger. He is raising up a German-led European superpower to fulfill His prophesied punishment of the nations of Israel. But if God is raising Europe up, why would He punish it? The same chapter gives the answer.

God inspired Isaiah to write in verse 15: “Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.”

The March 1962 *Plain Truth* states: “God explains here that despite the fact that He has used Assyria to punish Israel, Assyria is also rebellious against His law and government, His way, and since it will magnify itself against the very God of creation, as Daniel 11:36 and 37 explain, GOD WILL HAVE TO PUNISH IT FOR THIS!”

How will Europe be punished? The Bible provides tremendous detail on this.

In Jeremiah 50:9, God says He will raise “an assembly of great nations from the north country.” As other passages, such as Ezekiel 38, Joel 2 and Revelation 9 elucidate, this refers to a great Asian superpower led by Russia and comprising China, India, Japan, Korea and much of Southeast Asia.

That Asian superpower will launch nuclear strikes against Europe. Jeremiah 50:13 states that because of God’s wrath against Europe, “it shall be wholly desolate,” and that everyone who sees it “shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.” Only nuclear weapons could accomplish such total devastation. Verse 38 has another reference to God sending a drought to punish Germany.

The current heat wave, drought and wildfires are no comparison to what is coming on an unrepentant Europe. But God would never bring such devastation without sending a warning first.

Revelation 18 gives more details. Verse 2 states that “Babylon the great,” a prophetic term for that European empire, “is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”

In Nahum 2:1, God says He will dash the modern Assyrians in pieces. This means “A MASSIVE CRUSHING OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE!” Mr. Flurry writes. “The Germans got a taste of that kind of punishment in World War II when the Russians conquered East Germany. Many German women asked to be killed after they were brutalized and raped by Russian soldiers. But that onslaught was mild compared to what it will be like in

World War III” (*Nahum—An End-Time Prophecy for Germany*).

In Revelation 16:12, the Bible prophesies that another river will be dried up: the Euphrates. A 200 million-man army from Asia will march down the riverbed, gathering against European forces in the valley of Megiddo (verse 16). The final showdown will be so violent that no person would be left alive if Christ didn’t intervene (Matthew 24:22; Moffatt translation).

That is where Germany’s militarization is leading: If Germany puts its trust in its military might, it will indeed conquer and destroy—before it too is conquered and destroyed by superior military might. The same fate awaits the European nations that marvel at it, saying, “Who is able to make war with the beast?” (Revelation 13:4).

God wants Germany to change its course and turn to Him. Today’s weather curses are a warning to Germany, and the European nations it is dominating and leading, of the carnage to come.

They could be spared this punishment if they would heed God’s correction today. “This mayhem and slaughter could be prevented if they listened to the PCG’s warning message,” Mr. Flurry wrote. The Germans’ ancient forebears, the Assyrians, are the only nation recorded in the Bible to have repented and escaped sure destruction. God recorded this inspiring history in the book of Jonah. “If Germany were to repent, as its ancient city Nineveh did, God would prevent this massive catastrophe,” Mr. Flurry continued.

But even if they don’t repent now, there is hope—because other prophecies show that the surviving Germans will forsake their militaristic nature thereafter.

Isaiah 19 prophesies that Assyria will use its engineering prowess to build highways rather than war machines. In the long term, Germany’s future is sure to be bright. In the short term, however, its brightness depends on its receptiveness to this warning. If it turns from its current path, it can avoid this prophesied destruction. ■

Request your free copy of Gerald Flurry’s *Nahum—An End-Time Prophecy for Germany* to study what Bible prophecy proclaims about Germany.





The Middle East Is Going NUCLEAR

And America is foolishly giving its blessing.
BY MIHAILO S. ZEKIC

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY HAS passed since the morning planes crashed into the iconic Twin Towers in Manhattan, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field. Soon American troops were deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and beyond. The United States has been at war ever since. The legacies of America's presidents continue to die and revive based on what happens in the faraway Middle East.

And yet, the world has changed. 2026 is not 2001. America's days of zero compromise with radical Islam are over. In fact, United States President Donald Trump is helping two Arab states to begin developing nuclear weapons. One of these nations helped the September 11 terrorists launch their attacks. The other is governed by a group derived from al Qaeda.

The first is Saudi Arabia. Though it is ruled by a stable monarchy with strong ties to the West, U.S. investigations have confirmed some levels of the Saudi bureaucracy assisted al Qaeda 9/11 terrorists in killing 2,997 people. How high up this complicity went remains an open question. Meanwhile, the country remains a strict Islamic society that has

inspired jihad worldwide.

The second is Syria, which is literally ruled by a leader from an al Qaeda affiliate. Ahmed al-Sharaa led the group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham until 2024, then integrated his terrorist fighters into Syria's new official government and military. During his two years as president, his government has persecuted religious minorities and sheltered Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other Sunni terrorist groups.

Saudi Arabia and Syria are among the last countries the West should grant a path to nuclear weapons. Yet President Trump is not only allowing these developments, he is sponsoring them.

Catalyst

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia announced a nuclear cooperation deal on July 25, with the U.S. agreeing to help the Saudis establish a civilian nuclear program. The deal is currently under review by the U.S. Congress.

Saudi Arabia claims it wants nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only, despite already being an energy superpower. The deal excludes the nation from snap inspections by the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (something other nuclear-threshold states like Iran had to agree to). Saudi Arabia wants U.S. help on civilian nuclear reactors so it will be able to convert to a nuclear weapons program if it desires. In fact, its leader has admitted as much.

The text of the agreement has not yet been made public, but reports say it could allow Saudi Arabia to enrich uranium to 20 percent. This is a major step toward weaponization. Nuclear analyst Scott Roecker told the *Wall Street Journal*, "[A]t that level of enrichment, you are most of your way toward producing weapons-grade material in terms of the work that needs to be done." By comparison, the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action limited Iran to 3.67 percent enrichment.

Syria reached a similar agreement with the United States. The previous regime under President Bashar Assad operated a covert nuclear weapons program that Israel bombed in 2007. Assad salvaged large quantities of unenriched uranium and stored it in several locations, including a secretive facility called "Site 99." After Assad fell in 2024, there were concerns that bad actors,

including incoming leader Ahmed al-Sharaa, could obtain the material. Israel bombed Site 99's entrance to prevent this. In recent months, Israel has found it necessary to threaten further bombing of the site if it detects Sharaa's government attempting to access the uranium. To defuse tensions between Israel and Syria, President Trump negotiated a "diplomatic agreement" stipulating that Site 99 nuclear material would be removed by the IAEA. A U.S. official told Axios, "We think everybody is happy with the result."

On August 18, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi said that the agency found "a few tons of nuclear material that could be put to bad use." Standing next to Grossi was Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani, who said the nuclear stockpiles "do not pose a risk" to international security and "will remain in Syrian national custody and subject to the agency's safeguards system." Shaibani said Syria has a "sovereign and legal right" to enrich uranium "for civilian and peaceful purposes."

Israel is witnessing the exact scenario it was trying to avoid: Syria's government consolidating its control over the nuclear material and gaining diplomatic legitimacy for it.

In a September 2 report, the IAEA clarified what it meant by "a few tons of nuclear material": about 80 U.S. tons. If Syria enriched this material, most of it would end up as waste. But Iran has just over a quarter of a ton of highly enriched uranium, and that is enough to make 10 nuclear warheads. If Syria acquired the knowhow, it could hypothetically replicate similar levels.

Like Saudi Arabia, Syria lacks the technology and industrial capacity to rapidly develop a uranium stockpile into functional nuclear weapons. Both countries are estimated to be several years away from potentially becoming nuclear powers. But they are taking big steps in that direction. And in Syria's case, this nuclear material came from a weapons program.

Fallout

Nuclear weapons are the deadliest weapons ever developed. As North Korea demonstrates, a country that defies other nations to build these warheads risks

becoming an international pariah. Why would countries like Saudi Arabia and Syria give even the appearance of desiring them and run the associated risks?

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto leader of Saudi Arabia, gave his answer in 2023. In a Fox News interview, Bret Baier asked what Saudi Arabia would do if Iran acquired a nuclear weapon. His response: "If they get one, we have to get one."

The U.S. started the Iran war to destroy Iran's nuclear weapons capacity. Yet while much of Iran's enrichment *infrastructure* is heavily damaged, most of its enriched uranium remains intact and, apparently, salvageable.

The IAEA estimates that Iran has enough enriched uranium to make as many as 10 nuclear weapons. About half that material was stored in a tunnel complex at a site in Isfahan. The U.S. and Israel bombed Natanz, Fordow and other Iranian nuclear sites in June 2025. These strikes destroyed entrances, but the tunnels and the uranium stockpiles are believed to have survived. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly provided evidence to the U.S. in July indicating that Iran could be accelerating development of a nuclear weapon.

These circumstances, plus Iran's bombing of Saudi Arabia in retaliation for U.S. strikes, boost Saudi Arabia's impetus for developing its own deterrent.

Syria, meanwhile, remains in a stand-off with Israel, which has had nuclear weapons for decades. Israel distrusts Sharaa's Islamist regime; it has been occupying parts of Syria near Damascus since 2024 and carrying out periodic strikes. Sharaa may see a nuclear program, or even the mere threat of starting one, as leverage against Israel.

Two other states in the region already possess nuclear weapons and are tacitly threatening to use them.

Proliferation

Saudi Arabia signed a mutual defense agreement with Pakistan and Turkey on August 7, augmenting a similar deal it made in 2025 with Pakistan. This effectively joins these three nations in a NATO-like alliance.

Both Pakistan and Turkey possess nuclear weapons. Pakistan has about



170 nuclear warheads and is believed to be expanding its stockpile. Turkey hosts about 20 U.S.-made nuclear bombs that a NATO agreement grants Turkey joint control over.

Per the previous agreement, Pakistan reportedly sent 8,000 troops, jet and drone squadrons and an air defense system to Saudi Arabia when it was bombed by Iran. Nuclear-armed Pakistan was seriously contemplating going to war with Iran.

Pakistan lies to Iran's east, and Turkey to its west. Saudi Arabia lies directly across the Persian Gulf. Any war between Iran and these countries is unlikely to remain a limited conflict. Whether through its own domestic capabilities or its nuclear alliances, Saudi Arabia is essentially telling Iran: *When we said we'll get one if you get one, we meant it.*

Mutually Assured Destruction

On Sept. 11, 2001, America realized that Middle Eastern volatility was no longer contained in a faraway region. America launched the "war on terror" to stop radical Islam from threatening the peace of the world.

Twenty-five years later, it is clear this mission has failed. In fact, the threat from the Middle East has grown dramatically worse. Now, five Muslim states are either trying to gain nuclear weapons or threatening to use the ones they have. In Syria, this is happening under the authority of an outgrowth of the very terrorist group that launched the 9/11 attacks.

The Pakistani military launches a Shaheen-II nuclear-capable ballistic missile from an undisclosed location.



The discussion of nuclear proliferation in the most unstable part of the world increases the probability of mushroom clouds appearing—in the Middle East and far beyond.

How can we solve this problem? America has been trying to snuff it out since 2001 and has failed. Last year, it resorted to launching B-2s from Missouri and directly striking Iran for the first time, attacking its nuclear program outright. Beginning February 28, it tried to put Iran in its place by striking it day after day and week after week and sending in the largest buildup of American forces in the Middle East since the Iraq War. Yet Iran remains undefeated, and the region remains explosive.

If the world's largest, most advanced military cannot solve this serious problem, what hope does any other nation have?

Daniel 11 prophesies this dilemma. Verses 40-45 describe end-time unrest in the Middle East instigated by Iran. As *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry's free booklet *The King of the South* explains, despite the best efforts of diplomats and other policymakers, this relatively local crisis will mushroom into a worldwide cataclysm as described in Daniel 12:1: "And at that time ... there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time"

Jesus Christ gave a related prophecy in Matthew 24:21-22: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since

the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" The Moffatt translation renders verse 22 as "... not a soul would be saved alive"

Mankind has never been in a position to destroy itself until the invention of weapons of mass destruction. These prophecies are about *nuclear war*—starting in the Middle East!

In 2017, Mr. Flurry published a booklet focusing on Jesus Christ's prophecy in Matthew 24: *Nuclear Armageddon Is 'At the Door.'* At the time, he focused on two nuclear threats gripping the world's attention: Iran's enrichment of uranium and North Korea's testing of nuclear-capable missiles. Those countries' leaders "changed the nuclear equation in this world," he writes. "They relish the idea of a nuclear war! This is not a fantasy! This is the real world! Will that problem cause mankind to finally realize that the nuclear madness is out of control? No"

As he explains, the real nuclear chaos that will break out soon is caused by none of these countries but rather by a united European superpower. Yet Mr. Flurry still associates the nuclear work of these smaller countries as part of *the lead-up to the prophesied worldwide cataclysm*. North Korea's nuclear program alone "is just one example of what the fifth seal [of Revelation 5-6], or the Great Tribulation, is all about," he writes. "... Many nations have weapons of mass destruction—including nuclear bombs. The Prophet Daniel called this 'the time of the end'—or as Moffatt translates it, 'the CRISIS AT THE CLOSE'—the *crisis of all crises!* This is all tied to the Great Tribulation"

Mr. Flurry was inspired to write his booklet based on events in North Korea and Iran. Today, it's not just these countries threatening to "change the nuclear equation in this world." Saudi Arabia, Syria, Pakistan, Turkey and others are all capable of sparking this "crisis of all crises."

Nuclear proliferation has now become so commonplace that it barely makes headlines anymore.

This is the world we live in. Even if you don't believe Bible prophecy, current circumstances should drive you to serious reflection.

How to Be Protected

Though man's governments are failing to solve the nuclear problem, Bible prophecy provides a sure solution.

Daniel 12:1 concludes, "[A]nd at that time thy people shall be delivered" Matthew 24:22 concludes, "[B]ut for the elect's sake *those days shall be shortened.*" Throughout the rest of Matthew 24, Jesus elaborated on what this means: Man's plunge into cosmocide will be stopped by nothing less than Christ's Second Coming (verses 29-31).

Nuclear Armageddon Is 'At the Door' continues: "IT IS CHILDISH FOLLY TO THINK ANYBODY BUT CHRIST COULD STOP THIS NUCLEAR MADNESS. ... So all this nuclear insanity is also a part of the *sign* of the Second Coming and the sign of the end of the age when Christ will save humanity from totally exterminating itself!"

Christ promises to return and save mankind, but before that, *the cataclysmic prophecies of the Great Tribulation will be fulfilled*. God doesn't promise to protect mankind or even Christians in general. Christ prophesied that only His "elect" will be protected. Most people are confused about who the "elect" are. Request your free copy of *Can You Prove Which Church Is God's?* for more information.

If you are not part of God's work today, *you will not be protected from the Great Tribulation!*

"How many traditional Christians heed His warning?" Mr. Flurry writes. "How many Christian leaders do you hear even discuss Matthew 24? It is the most important prophetic message Christ gave when He was on this Earth! They talk about the person of Christ continually—but not His message. One third of your Bible is prophecy. Yet traditional Christians virtually ignore it all!" (ibid).

You cannot afford to ignore the message of Matthew 24. The Bible warns that the final world war is coming soon. By the time it starts, *it will be too late* to make a choice. You need to act now, while there is still time. ■

Will someone drop the bomb?

Bible prophecy has the answer!

Request your free copy of

Nuclear Armageddon Is 'At the Door.'





Your Spectacular Baptismal Covenant

Are you honoring your commitment?
BY GERALD FLURRY

WE DO NOT GRASP GOD THE FATHER'S LOVE DEEPLY enough!

If we truly saw the passion He has for His Spirit-begotten sons—and for the people in this world—it would drive us to our knees in humble gratitude. It would inspire more love and devotion in us to serve Him.

You see that love in the baptismal covenant.

Baptism is the most important, meaningful ceremony in life. It is a glorious, inspiring covenant between a human being and the Almighty God!

When we are baptized, we receive a whole range of promises and blessings from God. It is difficult to fully comprehend the investment God makes in us at that moment.

God does not take this lightly. From that moment, He is committed to our eternal spiritual success in an intense, personal way! And He is deeply grieved when one of His begotten children breaks that covenant with Him.

Sanctified by the Father

GOD THE FATHER is the one who calls us. John 6:44 tells us, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” The Father must draw us to Him before we can truly come to know Him and Jesus Christ.

Do you realize how *selective* God is in calling someone? How much effort He puts into deciding whom to draw?

The first verse in the epistle of Jude gives insight into this process. This letter is addressed “to them that are *sanctified* by God the Father, and *preserved* in Jesus Christ, and *called*.” That word *called* is better read as *invited*. This word is quite different from how it is used

in Matthew 22:14, where Christ says that “many are *called*, but few are *chosen*.” This is God personally *inviting* someone to be part of His Family. And this verse shows that *before* God calls an individual, God the Father *SANCTIFIES* him or her.

The Father is carefully selective, setting that person apart. He then gives Jesus Christ the job of *preserving* that person. The individual must be protected from the devil and his demons who seek to destroy him.

During that period, God is evaluating to gauge that person's likelihood of successfully entering His Family. Surely He is watching to see how he or she reacts to His truth, or to His correction, or to a challenge or trial He allows or sends.

Only after that person has passed such scrutiny does God extend that invitation—the greatest invitation God will ever give for all eternity! This undoubtedly means many who are sanctified are *not* invited.

When you understand just how special and exalted that calling is—and as you recognize the eternal stakes—the fact that the Father is so careful and selective makes perfect sense.

Every person God works with is *SUPER SPECIAL* to Him! He knows and loves that individual profoundly.

And when that individual is baptized into His Family, entering a covenant with God, *THAT INCREASES HIS OR HER SPIRITUAL STATURE TREMENDOUSLY!*

Begotten by the Father

After baptism, a minister of God lays hands on the person and prays over him. With that prayer, the person receives *THE GREATEST GIFT IN THE UNIVERSE*. God imparts a small portion of His spiritual power, the Holy Spirit.

That is what makes a person a Christian: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9).

At that moment, *THE FATHER BEGETS THAT PERSON AS HIS OWN SON!* That Spirit is like a sperm cell fertilizing an ovum: It is the start of a new spiritual life!

ONLY THE FATHER begets us—not even Christ does that. How amazing to be *BEGOTTEN BY GOD THE FATHER!*

Can you understand how important this is to God? *WHEN THE FATHER BEGETS A SON, THAT MEANS EVERYTHING TO HIM!* That is at the heart of His master plan. *THAT WAS WHY HE CREATED MAN!* The Father is *reproducing Himself in human beings*, creating more God beings in His own spiritual character image.

There are no accidental sons—like an accidental pregnancy—in God's Family. God calculates it to the smallest detail!

The Father has *YEARNING LOVE* for every individual in whom He has planted His Holy Spirit. We are His Family, and He makes sure we are taken care of if we are loyal to Him. He is not about to let His sons be neglected or mistreated.

God does allow trials in our lives, but even those are blessings: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, *HE SHALL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE*, which the Lord hath *PROMISED* to them that love Him” (James 1:12). The Father wants to give *YOU A CROWN OF LIFE!* This is in stark contrast to the fading flower of this life (verses 10-11). If you *love Him*—which means you love His law and the government that teaches it—then *NOBODY* can break God's promise of eternal God-life to you!

DO YOU LOVE GOD LIKE HE LOVES YOU? Are you proving that love each day?

Text taken from Chapter 1 of Gerald Flurry's new book, **The Father's Love**



Our Burial at Baptism

The Apostle Paul knew that we are all sinners (Romans 3:23). He knew there was nothing we could do, by ourselves, to erase that penalty of death. We all need a Savior. By God's grace, after we repent, He removes the penalty for our sins against God's law.

Paul was also clear that, after we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we need to live by God's law. This too requires a miracle.

After explaining in Romans 5 about grace and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Paul says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? GOD FORBID. How shall we, THAT ARE DEAD TO SIN, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2). Is the law done away because of grace? Paul answers with an emphatic NO!

He then explains the inspiring symbolism of the baptismal ceremony. We must understand this symbolism to comprehend why we need the Holy Spirit and why Christ must live in us.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (verse 3). Paul says we were baptized into the death of Christ. He pointed out in the preceding chapter that we are *justified* by Christ's death and *saved* by His life (Romans 5:9-10).

At baptism, we are fully plunged under water, which is a symbolic burial (e.g. Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:36-38). The old, carnal man dies with Jesus Christ. Paul explains further: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE" (Romans 6:4).

Now we begin to see the importance of the Holy Spirit and why it is CHRIST'S LIFE that saves us! Just as Christ was resurrected, or raised from the dead, we arise from that watery grave and proceed to walk in NEWNESS OF LIFE BY THE POWER OF GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT.

We agree to bury the old self, and when we are baptized, that old self dies. Paul makes this plain: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the *likeness of his resurrection*" (verse 5). Baptism symbolizes both a death and a resurrection. At baptism we *die* as Jesus Christ did, and when we come up out of that watery grave, we *live* as He does—not by our own power but by the power of God's Spirit!

Our sins have been forgiven. But does our baptism excuse sin? Does it cover *future* sins? Paul continues, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the *body of sin might be destroyed*, that henceforth WE SHOULD NOT SERVE SIN" (verse 6). Baptism symbolizes a complete break. It is a line between death and life, between sin and righteousness!

To "walk in newness of life" so that we might "not serve sin," God gives us His Spirit by the laying on of hands immediately after repentance and baptism. Walking in "newness of life" means we now live a life led by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14).

The Holy Spirit by which God begets us as His sons after baptism is the very power by which we begin to OVERCOME SIN and actually take on THE DIVINE NATURE OF GOD HIMSELF. It is by that power that the resurrected Jesus Christ LIVES IN US!

Led by the Spirit

Many of you reading this likely made this baptismal covenant because of the teachings of the late Herbert W. Armstrong. Remember what he taught about this.

The down payment of God's Spirit imparts *the mind of God*. Mr. Armstrong said in a July 1983 sermon that this means God injects "His life [and] also His mind, also His character, also His attitude of love, of cooperation, of giving, of concern for others just as much as concern for yourself. Selflessness instead of selfishness."

When we are led by the Holy Spirit, it produces spiritual fruit in our lives that comes straight from God—His love, joy, faith and other qualities (Galatians 5:22-23). That Spirit also gives us spiritual understanding (1 Corinthians 2:9-14). What an unparalleled gift!

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). The very mind of God comes through the Spirit. We must *let* His mind be in us. He will not force it.

"For as many as are LED by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). If we are to be born as God's sons, simply *having* God's Spirit is not enough: We must be LED by it!

This is a big reason why there are so few in God's "little flock" (Luke 12:32), His true Church. God leaves it up to you.

If we do not follow the direction of God's Spirit, we are *quenching* the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19)—and we risk LOSING it!

THE FATHER WANTS TO LEAD HIS SONS. He wants us to follow Him the way His Son Jesus Christ does. Christ said, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I DO ALWAYS THOSE THINGS THAT PLEASE HIM" (John 8:29). This is one of my favorite scriptures, if not *the* favorite. What a beautiful attitude Christ had! No wonder the Father called Jesus "my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"! (Matthew 3:17; 17:5).

If we love our Father, we will use His Spirit to keep His commandments willingly and cheerfully (1 John 5:3). That is how we *show* Him that we love Him.

If we are led by the indwelling Spirit of God, always striving to please our Father, then He will do EVERYTHING FOR US! "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and DO THOSE THINGS THAT ARE PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT" (1 John 3:22). The Apostle John is discussing an attitude of wanting to do ANYTHING POSSIBLE TO PLEASE YOUR FATHER! That attitude gets your prayers answered! Of course, you will be asking for the things that please God.

Obviously, God will only give us what is good for us. But this verse shows that we should not put limits on what God could give us—as long as we are obedient and ask Him in a right attitude. That is the formula for success that Christ followed.

Would a father leave a child alone who had such an attitude? No—he would smash a battalion of soldiers to save that son! Take on that attitude, and your heavenly Father will intervene in your life and make splendid things happen for you.

This is the loving family relationship God opens up to us when we enter that baptismal covenant with Him!

Repent and Believe

The Father wants to give these glorious gifts generously, but there are conditions we must first meet.

When the New Testament Church began on Pentecost A.D. 31, the Apostle Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy [Spirit]" (Acts 2:38). REPENTANCE is prerequisite to being baptized and receiving God's Spirit. And, it must be noted, *continued* repentance is key for us to *keep* God's Spirit (e.g. Psalm 51, especially verse 11).

Before baptism, God leads us to repent of the way we have been living—a life contrary to His law (Romans 2:4). We repent not only for what we have done but for *what we are*.

Mr. Armstrong wrote that repentance “is a total *change* of mind and heart and direction of life. It is a *change* to a new WAY OF LIFE. It is a turning from the *self*-centered way of vanity, selfishness, greed, hostility to authority, envy, jealousy and unconcern for the good and welfare of others to the God-centered WAY of obedience, submission to authority, love toward God *more* than love of self and of love and concern for other humans equal to self-concern” (*Just What Do You Mean ... Conversion?*).

Many misinterpret repentance to mean *sorrow*. Repentance actually means *change*. Merriam-Webster defines *repent* as “to turn from sin” Turning from sin—changing your former way of life—means turning to obeying God’s law.

In addition to repentance, we must “believe”—know and accept that Jesus Christ died for us (e.g. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:12, 36-38; 16:30-31). This means He paid the death penalty for our past sins (Romans 6:23). This belief, or faith in Jesus Christ’s shed blood as payment for our sins, is outwardly manifested by baptism.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). We must have faith in that blood and the fact that He paid the penalty for “sins that are past” (Romans 3:25).

During the baptismal ceremony, God’s minister will ask the potential member of God’s Family the following question: “Have you repented of your sins and accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?” After the individual says yes, he is baptized.

Wholehearted Commitment

Baptism is only the starting point of a lifetime of conversion, striving to become more and more like God. It is a commitment to obey God and to replace our carnal thoughts, emotions and desires with the very thoughts of God Himself! WE MUST THINK LIKE GOD! That is very difficult to accomplish. We must constantly grow in our conversion. And we must endure to the end. That is all part of our baptismal commitment.

Jesus Christ said, “If any man come to me, and hate not [or love less by comparison] his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26).

Do you understand the seriousness of the commitment you make when you enter this covenant with God? You promise that whatever burden He gives you, you will bear it and follow God no matter the cost. You must be willing to *give up anything* for this cause, including the closest members of your own family. You may even have to DIE for it!

God must know that we will never allow *anyone or anything* to take priority over Him. “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (verse 33). At baptism we tell God that we will give up *anything*, do anything and go anywhere to obey Him and keep Him first in our life!

You cannot enter that covenant lightly. Before you are baptized, you must count the cost.

God’s part of the covenant is sure. Ephesians 4:30 says you are “SEALED unto the day of redemption.” At baptism, God “seals” you. He will not withdraw His calling. If you are led by the Spirit, you are as good as saved—that is how God views it. God “callet

those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17).

At baptism, we are “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). It is a “promise” because GOD’S PART IS SURE! However, WE can break that seal by our actions. Nothing is guaranteed until we are *born* sons—not just begotten.

Covenants can be broken by men. But God’s Word cannot be broken. This is the character we must build to become members of God’s Family. We MUST uphold our part of that covenant!

Our Father is dedicated to our success. He would not have chosen us if He didn’t believe we could make it. He yearns to CONSUMMATE this covenant with us—and He can only do that if we faithfully carry out our part of the agreement.

Kings and Priests

Again, Ephesians 1:13 calls what we receive at baptism “that holy Spirit *of promise*.” It is a promise from God of something greater.

Verse 14 calls it “the *earnest* [meaning *pledge* or *down payment*] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” That small measure of Spirit God implants in us at baptism is a *down payment* of our future inheritance—God giving us the *full measure* of His Holy Spirit when we become spirit beings—BORN SONS OF GOD!

God gives His Spirit to His sons to empower us to overcome and grow. But that gift represents even more. Our Father has magnificent plans for His sons! When He makes that covenant with us at baptism, He is committing Himself to placing us into supremely exalted offices in His eternal Kingdom!

1 John 2:20 says, “But ye have an *unction* from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” The New King James translates *unction* as “anointing.” Receiving the Holy Spirit means you have AN ANOINTING from the Holy One, from God Himself!

In the Old Testament, *priests and kings* were anointed with oil when God put them into that office (e.g. Exodus 30:30; 1 Samuel 16:13). When you are baptized and receive the Spirit—pictured by that oil in those ordination ceremonies—GOD ANOINTS YOU AS A KING AND A PRIEST IN EMBRYO!

John says “YOU HAVE an anointing,” *present tense*—not “you will receive an anointing.” God sees it as though it is COMPLETE.

That is why Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 use the *present perfect tense* when saying that God “HATH MADE us kings and priests unto God and his Father” Once we are baptized, we are *there and then* consecrated into the highest offices in the World Tomorrow! In His mind we are already kings and priests, though we are yet to assume those offices. Following baptism, we are being trained and prepared to rule this world.

God has such a positive, hope-filled approach to His sons. If we remain faithful, our eternal king-priesthood is assured!

This too shows you how deeply invested God is in every Spirit-begotten saint. Think of the Father’s emotions in individually choosing each one of us as a member of the royal, priestly Family that will rule the world with Him in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ told His disciples, “In my Father’s house are many mansions [or *offices*]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3). God has MANY OFFICES to fill in His future temple, and He is preparing

those offices right now for His firstfruits! These same king-priests will later have offices in new Jerusalem! Revelation 3:12 promises that those who remain faithful will “go no more out” of God’s temple. We will work from the Father’s house forever!

This destiny ought to stir us more than anything in our lives! The reward for these pillar-priests is magnificent beyond words! And it starts with the spiritual *anointing* we receive at baptism.

If you can believe it, there is an even MORE awesome, inspiring aspect of the baptismal covenant.

A Marriage Covenant

Few understand this truth, but the Old Covenant was a marriage covenant. The covenant God made with ancient Israel on Mount Sinai in Exodus 19 and 24 was a *marriage agreement*. Read Ezekiel 16, which describes God’s marriage to Israel. Verse 8 reads: “... I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”

Sadly, Israel broke its “wedding vow,” so to speak. As verse 32 says, it became “as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!” In Jeremiah 3:14, God pleads, “Turn, O backsliding children ... for *I am married unto you*” That history shows how human beings can fail God, even when He offers them such a special and glorious opportunity.

Ezekiel 16 does describe the Old Covenant marriage with ancient Israel, but it is *mostly* a prophecy about a New Covenant marriage with God’s Church today. That is the focus.

In verse 8, the expression “spread my skirt over thee” is a sign of marriage. God says *you became mine*—YOU BECAME MY WIFE. When does that happen? On the individual level, it happens *the moment we are baptized*.

This is perhaps the most electrifying aspect of the baptismal covenant. At baptism, the firstfruits make a MARRIAGE COVENANT to obey God and be born again as Christ’s wife.

Only the firstfruits—those called BEFORE Christ returns—are offered that noble reward! This is the most exalted reward ever offered to any human being at any time! It will not be offered to people baptized in the Millennium and beyond.

Verse 9 says, “Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.” Water and oil are symbols of God’s Holy Spirit, which was never offered as part of the Old Covenant marriage made with ancient Israel. This is describing God’s firstfruits today.

In verse 10, God says, “... I girded thee about with fine linen” Revelation 19:8 says Christ’s Bride is “arrayed in fine linen,” which represents “the righteousness of saints.” God is clothing His Bride with the fine linen of righteousness.

Even though we are not officially married to Jesus Christ until He returns, God already views the Church today as His wife. Unlike the Old Covenant, we who are under the New Covenant must prove ourselves BEFORE the marriage. Nevertheless, Revelation 19:7 says Christ’s “WIFE hath made herself ready.” The time frame here is during the preparation stage, *before* our marriage—but it doesn’t use the term *bride-to-be* or *fiancée*. CHRIST SEES THAT FABULOUS MARRIAGE AS ALREADY BEING CONSUMMATED! This lady was His WIFE *while* she was getting ready for the marriage. This is what God’s Word says.

To expand His Family, the Father will first give His Son a helpmeet who can assist Him in raising the rest of the Family,

those who will be invited during the Millennium and beyond. This invitation is given to only a tiny few!

This is the best and finest the Father could ever give us. We have been invited to be Christ’s Bride forever! Eternal majesty awaits us! We are the lowly of the world, but we are the elite of God—we will have unequaled stature for all eternity!

The more deeply you ponder all these thrilling truths, plainly spelled out in the Bible, THE MORE CLEARLY YOU SEE WHAT A SPECTACULAR COVENANT GOD MAKES WITH AN INDIVIDUAL AT BAPTISM!

Think of it! In that moment, He begets you as His own son. He gives you a down payment of His spiritual power, His nature, His mind, His life. He anoints you as a king-priest in embryo. And He draws you into a marriage agreement with His Son Jesus Christ!

God looks upon us as Christ’s wife, and if we do what He says, THAT IS OUR DESTINY. His part of the covenant is absolutely assured, because He is God (e.g. Numbers 23:19; Psalm 119:89-90).

The lesson God is trying to teach us is that *a covenant is a promise to keep your word*. Our word should never be broken. And if we manifest God’s character, then our word will be fulfilled!

Considering the magnitude of the reward God is offering, isn’t He justified in expecting total, unqualified commitment from us? You would have to say that God is offering us the greatest bargain we could possibly have!

Eternal Life or Eternal Death

God’s part of the covenant is sure—but *we* must be tested first. It is very possible for us to fail and never be a part of that wedding!

Once God gives us His Spirit, then OUR ETERNAL LIFE IS AT STAKE. He holds us to our promise. He holds us accountable for what we do with His Spirit and whether we fulfill our calling.

Most people do not realize this, but the Bible clearly shows that this world is not being judged today. God is preparing to offer them salvation after Jesus Christ returns, and His people are going to teach them. That is when all people will be judged.

But God is judging His Spirit-begotten people now! (1 Peter 4:17). Once we are baptized, we are under God’s scrutiny in everything we do! Eternal life hangs in the balance.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy [Spirit], And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

What incomparably majestic blessings God’s people receive! We have been *enlightened*. We have *tasted of the heavenly gift*, and *tasted the good Word of God* and the powers of the world to come! We have partaken of the very SPIRIT AND POWER OF GOD! Once you have experienced these things, God holds you accountable.

Isn’t He justified in doing so? You cannot simply walk away from those glorious gifts without terrifying consequences!

Your baptismal covenant is a life-and-death, eternal decision!

God is trying to reproduce Himself in you—and He keeps every word of every promise. That is what He needs from us. How could He give us eternal life if He couldn’t count on us to honor our word?

When you meditate on all that God the Father has invested in this relationship, and all that He has given to each of His sons, and all that He is offering us—surely you can understand why

He has such high expectations of His firstfruits! Surely you can understand why He wants to see **WHOLEHEARTED DEVOTION—TOTAL COMMITMENT**—just like a father wants from his own children, or a husband wants from his one and only wife.

And surely you can see why the Father is so emotionally upset when one of His Spirit-begotten sons treats his calling lightly or neglects his relationship with his Father or turns away from Him!

Yet we live in an age when the great majority of God's people have done just that.

The Father Cries Out

Revelation 2 and 3 are a prophecy of **SEVEN ERAS** of God's true Church starting from its founding by Jesus Christ in the first century until His Second Coming. We live in the seventh and final era, right before Christ's return, called the Laodicean era.

Read Christ's heartfelt message to His precious people in this era in Revelation 3:14-22. It is heartbreaking. This is a time of horrifying spiritual tragedy—when most of God's own people, His Spirit-begotten sons, have become spiritually lukewarm.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (verses 15-16). Christ would only say such harsh words to those who *should know better* and be honoring their promise to Him.

Is Christ speaking to you?

In verse 17 He describes how these people have become carnal in their thinking, fixing their minds on physical things, becoming worldly and self-satisfied—and have unwittingly become "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" spiritually! What a disaster!

Sadly, this describes *nearly all* of God's people in this lukewarm age. Spiritually, this is the greatest crisis on Earth!

Have you neglected God? Have you allowed the disease of spiritual negligence into your life?

You can turn back to God—even at the very end of your life—and finish your race strong. Read the rest of the passage, and again **YOU SEE THE DEPTH OF GOD'S LOVE**, even when His people go astray! These are the earnest words of our Husband reaching out to His Bride! He isn't just criticizing and condemning. He is crying out to remind us of our commitment—to show us how to get back on track—to express His devotion to us—and to make beautiful promises to any individual who will hear and heed!

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (verse 18). God wants us to be spiritually rich! He wants us to be clothed with righteousness, to be getting ready for that spectacular marriage. He wants us to see where we need to repent and change, to open our eyes to the magnitude of our calling.

Every one of us must heed our Father's cry to His errant sons.

The Father Corrects in Love

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19).

Yes, God *rebukes* those He loves. Our Father chastens us because He loves us. Even the Great Tribulation—the worst suffering in history that is about to befall the whole world—is

loving correction from God. This and other passages make clear that *most* of God's people will not be protected during the Tribulation.

But God's "**REBUKE**" is coming **NOW**, *before* the Tribulation! God loves His people and is pleading for repentance now. Anyone who is zealous and repents today will not need the chastening of the Tribulation—God will protect him from it!

Think deeply on your baptismal covenant. Consider it through God the Father's eyes. Realize just how important every Spirit-begotten son is to Him, and how determined He is to help every last one of us make it into His Family.

Promises Fulfilled

Christ's loving message to the Laodiceans continues: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). He is on the outside, beseeching them to **LET HIM INTO** their lives! They are throwing away the most beautiful relationship a person can ever have!

Christ doesn't want to see anyone go through the Tribulation. But the Laodiceans must "hear His voice." He is reaching out to them through His human messenger. What more can Christ do? What can you do if, for example, your older teenager goes astray?

God will never let you get into a spiritually fatal situation as long as you are listening to His Spirit.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (verse 21). What an incredible promise!

God makes so many promises to His precious Family.

Our baptismal covenant is a series of promises. God gives us the Holy Spirit of promise, the down payment of a spectacular inheritance. We can be "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). God finishes what He starts. Even when we fail Him, He does not give up on us. He rebukes and chastens us when we need it—in an intense effort to turn us around. Thank God for that chastening! He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

God fulfills His promises. The question is, **WILL YOU?**

Each one of us must remember the promise we made to God when we covenanted with Him at baptism. We each must use the Spirit of God to examine ourselves and to see ourselves honestly.

Think deeply on the profound, passionate love of God our Father and Jesus Christ our Husband—and on all they have done to prove that love for you. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). The more you understand God's love, the more moved you will be to fulfill your promise to Him—to love Him and serve Him with greater devotion.

If you remain faithful to God and Christ, they are going to consummate that covenant, glorify you, fill you with the Holy Spirit, crown you as a king and priest, and let you share Christ's throne as His eternal wife! **WHAT SPECTACULAR REWARDS AWAIT IF WE FULFILL OUR BAPTISMAL COVENANT!** ■

If you have neglected your baptism covenant with God, the time to turn that around is now, before it is too late. Request Gerald Flurry's free book *The Father's Love* to see how earnestly God desires this.

Test Your Church

Jesus warned that many churches are not what they appear.

DID YOU KNOW THAT JESUS CHRIST WARNED ABOUT *FALSE Christianity*? He said there would be people who claim to follow Him and speak for Him but would deceive and be deceived.

Jesus Christ was a prophet. In Matthew 24, His disciples asked Him about the end of the world and the sign of His coming. He gave dramatic warnings of earthshaking wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes. But what was the *first thing* He warned about?

Mass religious deception and counterfeit Christianity!

“... 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 said *many* would be *deceived* by people who said they were Christian.

Does something feel off with those who are supposedly championing Christianity in politics and society? Are you wondering why there are so many different and conflicting churches in the first place? Are you quietly wondering about the pastor on television, your own minister, your own church?

Listen to those thoughts. God might be trying to get your attention.

Through the Bible, God invites you to test Him. He tells you to test your minister—and to test the teachings of your church.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Have you put your minister or church to the test? A true minister of God will welcome your questions and answer them from the Bible!

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). How is it possible for you to do that? By proving teachings that are labeled as Christian against the Word of God: your own Bible!

As Acts 17:11 exhorts, by “search[ing] the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

Start by asking two basic questions.

1) Does my minister really teach what Christ and the apostles taught?

Almost all Christian ministers use certain Bible passages in their preaching. But they promote doctrines and practices that come not from Scripture but from human philosophy, popular traditions and even ancient pagan practices, many of which directly contradict the plain teaching of the Bible.

For example, did you know that two of the annual days most Christians keep are not taught in the Bible? Christmas and Easter both originated in paganism. So why do “Christian” churches celebrate them? The Bible clearly teaches true Christians to keep certain weekly and annual days holy, yet few Christians observe those, choosing instead to celebrate man-made holidays.

The Bible teaches the seventh-day Sabbath. You will not find a biblical command to worship on Sunday. Jesus clearly kept the Sabbath, and so did His followers after He died. So why doesn’t your church keep the Sabbath?

Most Christian churches teach that you have an immortal soul. But the Bible explicitly says the “soul” can die (Ezekiel 18:20). The Bible says the

wages of sin is death, and eternal life is a gift God must give us (Romans 6:23). Why would that be, if we already have an immortal soul?

The Bible teaches that evil people *die*; they don’t live forever in everlasting hellfire. The Bible doesn’t say the righteous are in heaven with God—it actually says “no man hath ascended up to heaven” (John 3:13). So why do so many preachers teach about an afterlife in heaven and hell?

Most Christian churches teach that God’s law was done away by Jesus Christ being nailed to the cross. But Christ specifically said in Matthew 5:17-18, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” After Christ died, His disciples kept and taught God’s spiritual law. God’s law is “holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12). Does *your church* teach God’s law that way?

2) Does my minister preach repentance toward God?

The first command Jesus gave when He began His ministry on Earth was *repent*. The Bible clearly shows that repentance is the first step toward becoming a true Christian. You might hear this word, but are you being taught what the Bible teaches about truly repenting?

Jesus taught and the whole Bible teaches that repentance is not merely confessing sins, partaking of sacraments, or “accepting Jesus.” Repentance means turning to the *way of God*, and the way of God is defined by His law! It is a radical change of mind and heart that produces real change in attitude and behavior.

Does your minister help you confront and overcome your wicked heart?

Have *you* really repented? Are you a true Christian?

You must *prove* what you believe. Prove that God exists. Prove that the Bible is His Word. Then ask God to teach you from the Bible, to avoid the many who come in Christ’s name but don’t teach what He taught. Ask Him to show you the one true Church that Jesus promised would never die. Ask Him to lead you to true repentance and obedience to Him.

Prayerfully ask Him to help you *live by the Bible*.

Watch a video of the author by scanning the QR code, or visit ByTheBible.com/false-religion.



EUROPE

Germany continues to rapidly upgrade its military: **The German military now fields its largest force since the aftermath of the abolition of conscription in 2011.** Its Defense Ministry reported 186,700 troops as of July 31, plus 81,000 civilian employees. German authorities had expected recruitment to be the hard part, yet they have no shortage of volunteers. Deutsche Welle called it “a comparatively rare success story” in a country beset by bad economic and political news.

Britain and America are helping Germany to expand its military. **Germany's first F-35A Lightning II flew** near its Texas manufacturing site on September 8. The F-35, a stealth multirole platform capable of carrying nuclear bombs, is America's most advanced mainline fighter. It's also essentially a computer with wings, and German access will yield insight into its capabilities and vulnerabilities.

Germany may bankroll Britain's Trident program, the *Telegraph* reported August 26, stating that a “well-placed source” said Berlin wants “to better integrate itself into the existing British and French nuclear deterrents.” Bible prophecy warns that Germany will repay Britain's and America's trust with betrayal.

Germany's intelligence agencies will free themselves of postwar restrictions under a set of laws that has been approved by the German cabinet and is currently before the legislature. These laws will enable the agencies to conduct sabotage and hacking attacks abroad and substantially increase surveillance of German

citizens. The Allies imposed these restrictions because intelligence agents had silenced dissent under Adolf Hitler. Germany has never fully broken with that past: Its postwar spy network was built by **Reinhard Gehlen, a Nazi general.**

Russia continues to give the German and European public motivation to build weapons factories, increase troop numbers, pursue nuclear capabilities, and enhance its spying. Overnight on August 4-5, a drone carrying an explosive device was found at Leipzig/Halle Airport. Investigators believe its target was a Ukrainian Antonov cargo aircraft. On August 14, NATO fighters shot down a Russia-controlled drone over **Latvia.** On August 20, an F-16 from **Romania** destroyed an explosives-laden naval drone, also thought to be Russian, near a gas field in the Black Sea. On September 1, coal plants near Brandenburg and Cologne were sabotaged.

Each incident strikes fear in Europeans and pushes them toward unification and rearmament. **Poland** is a case in point. Since June, **German soldiers have been back on Polish soil,** this time to help build barricades against Russia. This follows Warsaw's decision to allow German fighter jets to operate from Polish territory in August 2025 and March 2026, marking a dramatic reversal. In 2014, **Jarosław Kaczyński** said it would take “at least seven generations” before Poland would accept the presence of German troops. As recently as March, President **Karol Nawrocki** kept Poland from accessing roughly \$55 billion in EU defense loans because German arms companies stood to benefit. But the security situation in Europe is changing dramatically. ■

[THE TRUMPET.COM/MORE/EUROPE](https://theTrumpet.com/more/europe)



MIDDLE EAST

In August, the United Nations released the results of a comprehensive report about famine conditions in **Gaza.** It had said in August 2025 that more than half a million Palestinians faced catastrophic starvation and death, but **its new report discredits the entire famine narrative.**

The new findings estimate that the rate of acute malnutrition in children under age 5 is 0.2 to 0.8 percent, about the same rate as in Germany. Chronic malnutrition (leading to stunted growth) affects about 1 in 8 children, far below the Middle East average according to the World Health Organization's latest data. A researcher who has tracked malnutrition in famine zones in Africa said she had never before seen obesity emerging in a population that had been declared famine-stricken just a year earlier.

The *New York Times*, CNN, BBC and other major media outlets have almost entirely ignored the subject of food availability in Gaza this year—a marked contrast from their intense interest in it at this time last year. Their silence demonstrates that media executives determine newsworthiness according to their own biases and agenda, and that this bias prioritizes slandering Israel above reporting the facts.

Israel and Greece signed a \$3.5 billion deal on August 31 to build “Achilles Shield,” an air defense system based on advanced Israeli systems including David's Sling and Spyder. Under the agreement, Israeli defense company Rafael will build a command-and-control system for Greece. This is the largest defense deal between the two countries and Israel's second-largest after the over \$6.5 billion Arrow 3 deal with Germany early this year.

Bible prophecies in Ezekiel 23 and elsewhere characterize the Jewish state's reliance on



other nations rather than God as adultery. Ezekiel 23 specifically names the “Assyrians” and “Babylonians”—references to the modern peoples of Germany and Italy—as its main “lovers.” God prophesies that these “lovers” will eventually double-cross Israel. Read Chapter 10 of ***Ezekiel—The End-Time Prophet.****

Yemen's Houthi terrorist group conquered more territory on September 10, taking the cities of Mokha and Dhubab on the Red Sea coast and the island of Perim in the Bab el-Mandeb strait. This gives the Houthis control of almost the entire Red Sea coastline in Yemen. The Houthis, a proxy of **Iran**, used positions on the Red Sea to attack merchant shipping from 2023 to 2025 to



reduce international support for Israel. This year, it has launched a similar campaign to attack shipping heading to another Red Sea nation: **Saudi Arabia**.

The same day, a drone most likely launched by another Iranian proxy in **Iraq** struck Saudi Arabia's only pipeline that moves oil from its fields near the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea port of Yanbu. Saudi Arabia, as described in ***The King of the South***, belongs to a developing faction prophesied in Psalm 83. *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote in January 2021 that this alliance is “motivated basically by fear of Iran!” Iran is making concerted efforts to stop nations from supporting Israel and the United States and to harm Saudi Arabia's crucial oil export capabilities. Expect actions like these to produce the very alliance that Psalm 83 prophesied of 3,000 years ago. ■

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ASIA

Military intelligence agents from **Russia** are recruiting local gang members across Europe to attack weapons factories that contribute to **Ukraine's** defenses, the *Telegraph* reported on August 23. Using messaging apps like Telegram, Russian intelligence officers have recruited members of right-wing extremist groups in various European nations, many of which espouse pro-Russia, pro-Putin views. The latest attack that authorities have attributed to these recruits took place in **Estonia** on August 15, when arsonists set ablaze a facility operated by Milrem Robotics, a major supplier of unmanned ground vehicles to Ukraine. Earlier attacks targeted



facilities in **Italy**, **Bulgaria**, the **Czech Republic** and **Lithuania**, all of which produce weaponry or militarily useful items for Ukraine.

As Europeans' fear of Russian aggression intensifies, they are rapidly building up their own firepower. Germany has dramatically increased its military spending. Poland is building one of Europe's largest armies. **Finland** and **Sweden** abandoned decades of military neutrality to join NATO. With these acts of sabotage, Russia is giving the nations of Europe yet another motivation to prepare their militaries and their societies for war. Biblical prophecy reveals that the military power the Europeans are assembling will one day be unleashed on the world with breathtaking, devastating force.

Hackers linked to China's government targeted dozens of major United States organizations, including the Federal Reserve, the Department of Justice, the Department of Energy, NASA and the Senate, as well as power companies, defense contractors and election agencies, the FBI said in an affidavit unsealed on August 26. The sophisticated hacking outfit used a platform called QScan to scour the Internet for vulnerable devices. The platform was equipped with more than 200 methods for exploiting weaknesses in software, and it successfully infected thousands of routers, cameras and other

Internet-connected equipment, accessing untold quantities of sensitive information. *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry has often sounded the alarm about the dangers of the U.S.—particularly its military—relying on computer systems susceptible to enemy sabotage, writing

in the **June 1999 issue** that the nation “could lose the next war before we even begin.”

Russia has been secretly assisting Iran's development of hypersonic missiles that could threaten United States warships in the Middle East, the *Telegraph* reported on September 2. The collaborative missile project started in 2023 and has persisted through the current U.S.-Iran war, with the goal of arming Iran with a new generation of difficult-to-intercept missiles that could strike American warships. “This is the transfer of a highly strategically sensitive military technology from Russia that the Iranians have wanted to acquire for decades,” weapons analyst Fabian Hinz said, adding that such a program “would require political clearance from the very top in Russia.”

U.S. President **Donald Trump** has threatened “tremendous” consequences for nations that maintain trade ties with Iran. But Russia is going much further, helping Iran build cutting-edge weapons to target top U.S. assets and kill American servicemen. Will this revelation make it harder for Trump to give **Vladimir Putin**, whom he continues to treat with deference, a pass? Whatever the U.S. response, this is further evidence of the danger posed by the prophesied “**prince of Russia**.” ■

[THETRUMPET.COM/MORE/ASIA](https://thetrumpet.com/more/asia)

ANGLO-AMERICA

The United States government has finally conceded that its fraud problem is enormous—and that insiders, not only outside criminals, are the culprits. After the Justice Department charged 455 people across 45 states in health-care schemes worth \$6.5 billion, officials concluded that no single agency could contain the theft. On August 24, Assistant Attorney General **Colin McDonald** announced a **National Fraud Detection Center**.

Cronyism, deceit and theft have infected Medicare, Medicaid and many other programs. They are symptoms of a spiritual disease at the heart of the nation. Isaiah 1:5 describes the condition: “the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.” One new government office, laudable as its efforts are, will not heal a disease this far gone.

That same sickness now shows itself in relations with **Canada**. The U.S. imposed 50 percent tariffs on \$20 billion worth of Canadian goods on August 22 after trade talks collapsed on August 21. Canada answered with matching “dollar

for dollar” tariffs that took effect on September 8. Regardless of who is to blame, America and Canada are no longer allies. This fulfills the prophecy in Isaiah 9:21: “Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim devours Manasseh; together they are against Judah” (English Standard Version).

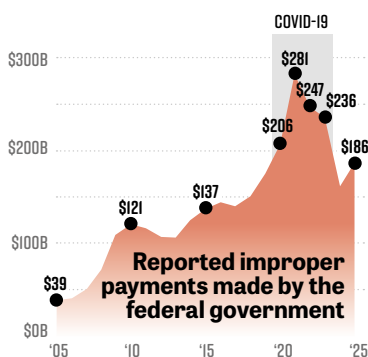
America’s turn against Judah is visible in rising Republican antagonism toward **Israel**, especially among younger conservatives. An April Pew Research survey found that 41 percent of Republican respondents now view Israel unfavorably. Commentator Tucker Carlson has tried to ride that wave by courting anti-Israel leftists like **Cenk Uygur** and **Ana Kasparian**. On August 10 he interviewed **Hunter Biden**, apologized for criticizing Hunter’s drug use, then claimed Israel pushed reports that child-sexual-abuse material was found on the laptop. He stayed silent as Hunter denied dropping the computer at a repair

shop and alleged a “Netanyahu operation center” spread his files to sway U.S. political opinion.

As U.S. relations with Canada and Israel worsen, relations with **Venezuela** improve. On August 28, President Trump announced a major oil deal that more than doubles U.S. reserves. On Truth Social he said U.S. officials and companies gained majority control of over 65 billion barrels of proven Venezuelan reserves in 17 fields. The deal follows the U.S. military’s January capture of **Nicolás Maduro**.

President Trump has pursued closer ties with socialist Venezuela’s interim government and used oil leverage to pressure Communist **Cuba** by cutting shipments. These steps weaken Chinese and Russian influence while empowering America. Yet Maduro’s fall has also boosted Vatican influence in Cuba and Venezuela, since the Catholic Church is the only organized opposition in both nations.

In Revelation 17 and 18, God labels the German-led, Vatican-influenced empire emerging in Europe as “Babylon the great.” This power bloc is prophesied to besiege America, the British Commonwealth and Israel, which are currently fighting each other as they struggle with cronyism, deceit and theft.



I can't find anything on the newsstand to compare with these articles. It's amazing!

Sebastian Dignoti CONNECTICUT

I can't live without the *Trumpet*. It's unbelievable the information that is in there, and I'm able to share it with my friends. I also appreciate the program with Stephen Flurry, and I can't wait to see it on Sunday mornings.

Claire McMinn INDIANA

My wife and I enjoy the magazines so much. They're such a blessing, and we're like little kids when we get it. We'll have dinner and then sit down and go through it.

Joe Pearce OKLAHOMA

The **August 2026** *Trumpet* was out of sight, as usual. This information is second to none.

Shirley Davis NORTH CAROLINA

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Cheering a Child Killer

American ‘mental illness’ is actually something else.

ON JANUARY 24, 2023, LINDSAY CLANCY BUILT A SNOWMAN and did art projects with her three young children. Her husband left the house to get takeout for the family’s dinner. When he returned, Lindsay was unconscious in the backyard after jumping out of a second-floor window. Five-year-old Cora, 3-year-old Dawson and 8-month-old Callan were in the basement, unresponsive.

Their mother had tied elastic exercise bands around their necks and choked them to death.

This was only the beginning of the parade of evil that follows Lindsay Clancy.

She was charged with three counts of murder, three counts of strangulation and three counts of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. Two weeks after looking her babies in the eyes and murdering them, Lindsay admitted to it, saying that she “heard a voice and had a moment of psychosis.” She described the voice as a man’s, telling her to *kill the children and herself* while she had a chance. Her lawyers argued that yes, she choked the life out of her own babies, but she was not criminally responsible.

Why? Because she had “mental illnesses.”

A murderer arguing that she should go free added another layer of evil to this story. But a still thicker, much broader layer was about to be added.

The news of the mother murderer spread across the nation and beyond, horrifying many—but causing a different reaction in many others.

Online and in person, hundreds or thousands of women have spoken out in emotional and vocal support—not for the memory of those children or for the now-divorced husband but *for the murderer*. #PeaceforLindsay. #Believe. #Sheneededhelp. #MetooLindsay. *You wanted to choke your 5-year-old little girl to death, and your little 3-year-old boy, and your 8-month-old baby.* #SameLindsay.

More than 200 women dressed in pink and held a “Stand in Peace for Lindsay” vigil outside the courthouse.

Now add another layer of evil: After seven days of deliberation, 11 of the 12 jurors wanted to find Lindsay Clancy *not criminally responsible* for murdering her children. One lone juror refused—unwilling to let a child killer go free—resulting in a mistrial.

What is wrong with us? Almost every discussion on the murders of the Clancy children almost immediately turns into

a “mental health” discussion about the vagaries and notions of depressions and psychoses.

Are the behaviors real that psychiatrists try to define with syndromes, disorders and other mental health classifications? Yes. But does a *mother* strangle *her own children* because of “chemicals in the brain”? No! Psychiatrists and others who try to define, classify, treat and *excuse* destructive and even murderous actions *don’t even know what the mind is*. Many of them will admit they don’t understand even the physical activity of the brain, and many will deny that there is a nonphysical aspect, in addition to the brain, that constitutes the human *mind*.

Evil exists! And people who deny that it comes from the *spiritual* dimension of human life intentionally or inadvertently tolerate and proliferate that evil.

The instruction book for the human mind reveals exactly where “mental illness” comes from, with no vagaries, experimental treatments, baseless conjectures or other confusion. “Mental illness” is linked with spiritual illness.

One biblical example illustrates how people used to understand this fact of human existence. Matthew 17, Mark 9 and Luke 9 record a parent-child relationship involving a different but still heartbreaking circumstance. A boy was suffering seizures, foaming at the mouth, trying to drown himself, even throwing himself into fire. The anguished, desperate father brought the boy to Jesus and explained what was evident to all: His mind was afflicted by an unclean spirit, a demon.

The Bible reveals that evil exists, that it has a source, that this source is a real individual being who commands many lesser demons (like the one that afflicted this boy), and that even though the average person doesn’t act like this boy or like Lindsay Clancy, we are influenced by these evil beings.

Your Bible says Satan is real, that he is the “god of this world,” “deceives the whole world,” broadcasts his attitudes through “the power of the air,” and tempts and influences *all* of us to commit evil (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9; Ephesians 2:2).

All these demons recorded in the Bible did not disappear. They remain here among human beings causing people to try to kill themselves, to strangle their own children, to support those who strangle their own children—and to follow Satan’s attitudes in far more subtle, pervasive ways.

The Bible shows that evil spirits can gain control over a person’s mind or body if the person willingly surrenders control. Taking recreational drugs or psychiatric medications is one way this can happen.

Surveys indicate that 72 percent of Gen Z Americans believe they have a mental illness, and 60 percent of them are taking mind-altering drugs as treatment. It’s not just Lindsay Clancy who has opened her mind up to evil influence.

Lindsay Clancy is responsible for what spiritual influences she let into her mind and should be convicted of the triple homicide she perpetrated. But the real issue behind her horrifying actions is not postpartum depression. It is our whole “mental illness” culture, where we treat inner voices as a psychiatric diagnosis, and crimes as symptoms.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,” God tells us in Ephesians 6:12, “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”



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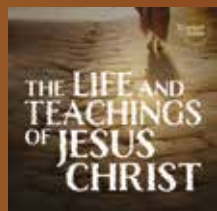
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