

Jesus



**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest.”**

Matthew 11:28

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Preface

As a Family Care Pastor, one of my major areas of service is pastoring shut-ins in nursing homes and retirement centers. This is a rewarding ministry so much so that, many days after visiting all day, I feel guilty because I feel like I received the greater blessing that day!

So many of those I visit have been forgotten. By friends. By Family. By churches. Like the old saying goes: “out of sight out of mind”.

It is important that we all remember that The Lord said “I will never leave you nor forsake you”. This booklet will hopefully do just that.

Introduction



Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.

Philippians 4:8

The purpose of this Jesus Booklet is to remind us just how much Jesus loves us, why He came into this world, what He was like when in this world, why He had to leave this world, and what He means in our lives every single day.

In order to help you grow closer to God, the Bible teaches in Philippians 4:8 that we are to meditate on His Word. The final section of this Booklet contains scripture and pictures about Jesus that will help you meditate and grow closer to God.

The first section of this Booklet will help you learn more about Jesus and what He was like when He lived on this earth.

The second section of this Booklet will tell you how to meditate on Jesus and provide images and scripture to assist.

The third section of this Booklet will discuss the 14 signs of the next coming of Jesus and what to look for.

Who Is Jesus Christ?

Unlike the question “Does God exist?” very few people question whether Jesus Christ existed. It is generally accepted that Jesus was truly a man who walked on the earth in Israel 2000 years ago. The debate begins when the subject of Jesus’ full identity is discussed. Almost every major religion teaches that Jesus was a prophet or a good teacher or a godly man. The problem is that the Bible tells us that Jesus was infinitely more than a prophet, a good teacher, or a godly man.

C.S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* writes the following: “I am trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him [Jesus Christ]: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with a man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that option open to us. He did not intend to.”

So, who did Jesus claim to be? Who does the Bible say He is? First, let’s look at Jesus’ words in John 10:30, “I and the Father are one.” At first glance, this might not seem to be a claim to be God. However, look at the Jews’ reaction to His statement, “‘We are not stoning you for any of these,’ replied the Jews, ‘but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God’” (John 10:33). The Jews understood Jesus’ statement as a claim to be God. In the following verses, Jesus never corrects the Jews by saying, “I did not claim to be God.” That indicates Jesus was truly saying He was God by declaring, “I and the

Father are one” (John 10:30). John 8:58 is another example: “‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I am!’” Again, in response, the Jews took up stones in an attempt to stone Jesus (John 8:59). Jesus’ announcing His identity as “I am” is a direct application of the Old Testament name for God (Exodus 3:14).

Why would the Jews again want to stone Jesus if He had not said something they believed to be blasphemous, namely, a claim to be God?

John 1:1 says “the Word was God.” John 1:14 says “the Word became flesh.” This clearly indicates that Jesus is God in the flesh. Thomas the disciple declared to Jesus, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Jesus does not correct him. The apostle Paul describes Him as, “...our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). The apostle Peter says the same, “...our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1). God the Father is witness of Jesus’ full identity as well, “But about the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.’” Old Testament prophecies of Christ announce His deity, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

So, as C.S. Lewis argued, believing Jesus to be only a good teacher is not an option. Jesus clearly and undeniably claimed to be God. If He is not God, then He is a liar, and therefore not a prophet, good teacher, or godly man. In attempts to explain away the words of Jesus, modern “scholars” claim the “true historical Jesus” did not say many of the things the Bible attributes to Him. Who are we to argue with God’s Word concerning what Jesus did or did not say? How can a “scholar” two thousand years removed from Jesus have better insight into what Jesus did or did not say than those who lived with, served with, and were taught by Jesus Himself (John 14:26)?

Why is the question over Jesus' true identity so important? Why does it matter whether or not Jesus is God? The most important reason that Jesus has to be God is that if He is not God, His death would not have been sufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Only God could pay such an infinite penalty (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus had to be God so that He could pay our debt. Jesus had to be man so He could die. Salvation is available only through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus' deity is why He is the only way of salvation. Jesus' deity is why He proclaimed, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

What Are The Different Names And Titles Of Jesus Christ?

There are some 200 names and titles of Christ found in the Bible. Following are some of the more prominent ones, organized in three sections relating to names that reflect the nature of Christ, His position in the tri-unity of God, and His work on earth on our behalf.

Names and titles of Jesus Christ — His nature

- **Chief Cornerstone: (Ephesians 2:20) – Jesus is the cornerstone of the building which is His church. He cements together Jew and Gentile, male and female—all saints from all ages and places into one structure built on faith in Him which is shared by all.**
- **Firstborn over all creation: (Colossians 1:15) – Not the first thing God created, as some incorrectly claim, because verse 16 says all things were created through and for Christ. Rather, the meaning is that Christ occupies the rank and pre-eminence of the first-born over all things, that He sustains the most exalted rank in the universe; He is pre-eminent above all others; He is at the head of all things.**
- **Head of the Church: (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23) – Jesus Christ, not a king or a pope, is the only supreme, sovereign ruler of the Church—those for whom He died and who have placed their faith in Him alone for salvation.**
- **Holy One: (Acts 3:14; Psalm 16:10) – Christ is holy, both in his divine and human nature, and the fountain of holiness to His people. By His death, we are made holy and pure before God.**

- **Judge: (Acts 10:42; 2 Timothy 4:8) – The Lord Jesus was appointed by God to judge the world and to dispense the rewards of eternity.**
- **King of kings and Lord of lords: (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16) – Jesus has dominion over all authority on the earth, over all kings and rulers, and none can prevent Him from accomplishing His purposes. He directs them as He pleases.**
- **Light of the World: (John 8:12) – Jesus came into a world darkened by sin and shed the light of life and truth through His work and His words. Those who trust in Him have their eyes opened by Him and walk in the light.**
- **Prince of peace: (Isaiah 9:6) – Jesus came not to bring peace to the world as in the absence of war, but peace between God and man who were separated by sin. He died to reconcile sinners to a holy God.**
- **Son of God: (Luke 1:35; John 1:49) – Jesus is the “only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14). Used 42 times in the New Testament, “Son of God” affirms the deity of Christ.**
- **Son of man: (John 5:27) – The phrase “Son of Man” emphasizes the humanity of Christ which exists alongside His divinity. It is also a messianic title (Daniel 7:13-14; Mark 14:63).**
- **Word: (John 1:1; 1 John 5:7-8) – The Word is the second Person of the triune God, who said it and it was done, who spoke all things out of nothing in the first creation, who was in the beginning with God the Father, and was God, and by whom all things were created.**

- **Word of God: (Revelation 19:12-13) – This is the name given to Christ that is unknown to all but Himself. It denotes the mystery of His divine person.**
- **Word of Life: (1 John 1:1) – Jesus not only spoke words that lead to eternal life, but according to this verse He is the very words of life, referring to the eternal life of joy and fulfillment which He provides.**

Names and titles of Jesus Christ — His position in the Trinity

- **Alpha and Omega: (Revelation 1:8; 22:13) – Jesus declared Himself to be the beginning and end of all things, a reference to no one but the true God. This statement of eternity could apply only to God.**
- **Emmanuel: (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:23) – Literally “God with us.” Both Isaiah and Matthew affirm that the Christ who would be born in Bethlehem would be God Himself who came to earth in the form of a man to live among His people.**
- **I Am: (John 8:58, with Exodus 3:14) – When Jesus ascribed to Himself this title, the Jews tried to stone Him for blasphemy. They understood that He was declaring Himself to be the eternal God, the unchanging Yahweh of the Old Testament.**
- **Lord of All: (Acts 10:36) – Jesus is the sovereign ruler over the whole world and all things in it, of all the nations of the world, and particularly of the people of God’s choosing, Gentiles as well as Jews.**
- **True God: (1 John 5:20) – This is a direct assertion that Jesus, being the true God, is not only divine, but is the Divine. Since**

the Bible teaches there is only one God, this can only be describing His nature as part of the triune God.

Names and titles of Jesus Christ — His work on earth

- **Author and Perfecter of our Faith: (Hebrews 12:2) – Salvation is accomplished through the faith that is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9) and Jesus is the founder of our faith and the finisher of it as well. From first to last, He is the source and sustainer of the faith that saves us.**
- **Bread of Life: (John 6:35; 6:48) – Just as bread sustains life in the physical sense, Jesus is the Bread that gives and sustains eternal life. God provided manna in the wilderness to feed His people and He provided Jesus to give us eternal life through His body, broken for us.**
- **Bridegroom: (Matthew 9:15) – The picture of Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church as His Bride reveals the special relationship we have with Him. We are bound to each other in a covenant of grace that cannot be broken.**
- **Deliverer: (Romans 11:26) – Just as the Israelites needed God to deliver them from bondage to Egypt, so Christ is our Deliverer from the bondage of sin.**
- **Good Shepherd: (John 10:11,14) – In Bible times, a good shepherd was willing to risk his own life to protect his sheep from predators. Jesus laid down His life for His sheep, and He cares for and nurtures and feeds us.**
- **High Priest: (Hebrews 2:17) – The Jewish high priest entered the Temple once a year to make atonement for the sins of the**

people. The Lord Jesus performed that function for His people once for all at the cross.

- **Lamb of God: (John 1:29) – God’s Law called for the sacrifice of a spotless, unblemished Lamb as an atonement for sin. Jesus became that Lamb led meekly to the slaughter, showing His patience in His sufferings and His readiness to die for His own.**
- **Mediator: (1 Timothy 2:5) – A mediator is one who goes between two parties to reconcile them. Christ is the one and only Mediator who reconciles men and God. Praying to Mary or the saints is idolatry because it bypasses this most important role of Christ and ascribes the role of Mediator to another.**
- **Rock: (1 Corinthians 10:4) – As life-giving water flowed from the rock Moses struck in the wilderness, Jesus is the Rock from which flow the living waters of eternal life. He is the Rock upon whom we build our spiritual houses, so that no storm can shake them.**
- **Resurrection and Life: (John 11:25) – Embodied within Jesus is the means to resurrect sinners to eternal life, just as He was resurrected from the grave. Our sin is buried with Him and we are resurrected to walk in newness of life.**
- **Savior: (Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:11) – He saves His people by dying to redeem them, by giving the Holy Spirit to renew them by His power, by enabling them to overcome their spiritual enemies, by sustaining them in trials and in death, and by raising them up at the last day.**
- **True Vine: (John 15:1) – The True Vine supplies all that the branches (believers) need to produce the fruit of the Spirit— the living water of salvation and nourishment from the Word.**

- **Way, Truth, Life: (John 14:6) – Jesus is the only path to God, the only Truth in a world of lies, and the only true source of eternal life. He embodies all three in both a temporal and an eternal sense.**

Where Is Jesus Now? Is Jesus In Heaven?

According to Mark 16:19 and 1 Peter 3:22, Jesus is in heaven right now at the right hand of God the Father. Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:9-11 describe the bodily ascension of Jesus, which occurred 40 days after His resurrection. Jesus had told His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them and for all believers (John 14:2–3).

It is plain from Scripture that Jesus' ascension was a literal and bodily return to heaven. He rose up from the ground gradually and was received into a cloud while His disciples and other astonished onlookers gazed in wonder. Then two angels appeared and promised Christ's return "in just the same way that you have watched Him go" (Acts 1:11). This marked the end of the human limitations Jesus had during His earthly ministry. Some of the attributes He possessed as God had been temporarily suspended, but now the suspension was over. His heavenly glory returned—a glimpse of which was seen at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–9).

King David said in the Spirit, "The LORD says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet'" (Psalm 110:1). This verse literally says, "Yahweh says to Adonai." This is a remarkable conversation between two Persons of the Godhead. In Matthew 22:43–45, Jesus applies this psalm to Himself, claiming that He is more than the son of David, but that He is David's Lord. Jesus' place is at the right hand of God, the place of divine honor.

Other passages that indicate Jesus' presence in heaven are Matthew 26:64; Luke 22:69; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 12:2; and Revelation 5:7. Also Stephen, just before he died, had a vision in which he "looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).

So, biblically, Jesus is in an actual place called heaven, a place of glory where God dwells with His angels and redeemed children. In another sense, Jesus is also with us here, in this world. Jesus, being God, has all of the attributes of God, including omnipresence. So, Jesus and the Father and the Holy Spirit are everywhere and not just “in heaven.” As Solomon said in 2 Chronicles 2:6, “The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him.”

What Does Jesus Look Like In Heaven?

The book of Revelation describes what Jesus looks like after ascending to heaven with a glorified body. In two main places, Revelation 1 and 19, John sees Jesus in vision and writes down the following description. Jesus looks like the “Son of Man” who is clothed with a garment going down to His feet and a golden sash around His chest (Revelation 1:13). His head and hair are white like snow (Rev 1:14) and His eyes are like flames of fire (Rev 1:14; 2:18; 19:12). John sees Jesus holding seven stars in His right hand (Rev 1:16) and His feet look like highly polished brass from a furnace (Rev 1:15, 2:18). Jesus’ face also shines like the sun in its brilliance (Rev 1:16).

Revelation 19 also paints the picture of Jesus coming back to earth crowned with many crowns and sitting upon a white horse having a name written upon Him which no man knew (Rev 19:11-12). The vision continues, adding that Jesus will rule with a rod of iron having the name “King of Kings” and “Lord of Lords” written on His robe and thigh (Rev 19:16). Revelation also says that the voice of Jesus is like a trumpet and the sound of many waters (Rev 1:10,15; 19:6).

Why Did Jesus Come To Earth?

Before Jesus took upon Himself flesh and blood, He existed eternally in heaven with God the father and God the Holy Spirit. Yes, Jesus came to this earth for the express purpose of shedding His precious blood on the cross to provide forgiveness of sins (Romans 5:8-9; Hebrews 5:8-9)

For them the death of Jesus was part of a divine plan to save humanity. The death and resurrection of this one man is at the very heart of the Christian faith. For Christians it is through Jesus's death that people's broken relationship with God is restored. This is known as the Atonement.

He is believed to be the Jewish messiah who is prophesied in the Hebrew Bible, which is called the Old Testament in Christianity. It is believed that through his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, God offered humans salvation and eternal life, that Jesus died to atone for sin to make humanity right with God.

Many Christians answer the question “Why did Jesus come to earth?” as follows: “Jesus came to die on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins so that my soul can go to heaven when I die.” This is absolutely true! We are all sinners who deserve eternal punishment, but Jesus’ sacrifice atones for our sins so that we are declared righteous before a holy God. Hallelujah!

But there is even more to the story than this. Look at how Jesus Himself understood His mission. Luke’s gospel records that Jesus’ earthly ministry began on a Sabbath day in a synagogue in his home town of Nazareth “as was his custom” (Luke 4:16).

He stood up to read and was handed a scroll from the prophet Isaiah:

Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Luke 4:17-21

Isaiah had prophesied that a king was coming who would usher in a kingdom unlike anything the world had ever seen – Jesus’ hearers in the synagogue must have wondered if these prophecies were really about to come true. Was it really possible that justice, peace and righteousness were about to be established forever? Was Jesus really the promised king who would bring healing to the parched soil, the feeble hands, the shaky knees, the fearful hearts, the blind, the deaf, the lame, the mute, the brokenhearted, the captives and the sinful souls? Was he the king who would proclaim the year of jubilee for the poor (Isaiah 35:1-6; 53:5; 61:1-2)? Jesus’ answer to all these questions was a resounding “yes!”

Indeed, later in the same chapter, Jesus summarized his ministry as follows: “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent” (Luke 4:43, emphasis added).

The mission of Jesus was and is to say to one and all, “I am the king of kings and lord of lords, and I am using my power to fix everything that sin has ruined.” The good news that Jesus proclaimed was cosmic in scope, bringing healing to all creation, reconciling all

things by the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:20) and making all things new (Revelation 21:4).

Why Did Jesus Die?

A part of the answer to Jesus' death lies in the fact that a just and perfect God could not simply sweep sin under the carpet and go on running a perfect universe.

God must deal with the injustice of sin. Suppose a criminal should come before a judge and that judge would simply excuse a crime of murder, rape, or theft simply because the judge loved the criminal. What would society think of such a judge?

The Bible says: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right" (Genesis 18:25). Selfishness has a natural consequence that eventually results in death to the innocent (Romans 6:23). Jesus, the Judge, assumed the consequence of sin on the part of man, rather than inflict death upon the sinner. That consequence was death.

How does Jesus' death save us?

Martin Luther said that as God, He could not die, so He became man in order to die. On the cross, he accepted the sin of man against Himself. As a perfectly innocent man he accepted the injustice of man against man.

The death of Christ accomplishes reconciliation, or reconnecting us back to God. Romans 3:25 says, "...whom God set forth as a propitiation" for our sins. "Propitiation" literally means "something that appeases a deity." However, in the Biblical sense it means much more than this. It can mean to "accept hurt", to "forgive", to "show mercy." As sinners we transgress God's perfect law and have no legal right to exist. But God himself who sits as Judge accepts the hurt, pays the price, forgives, and offers mercy.

If a husband should say a harsh word against his wife, and the wife does not retaliate, but lets the word fall upon her heart and crush her spirit; if she forgives and treats her husband as though he had offered only words of praise she pays the price of his sin against her.

It is this way that God pays the price of our salvation. The Bible does not say that Jesus paid a propitiation, but that He "is" a propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:25, 1 John 2:2; 4:10). This means that He, being God, bears the hurt in order to give mercy and forgiveness.

Crossing Over

The Bible has many other ways to show how God Himself bears our sinfulness in order to bring us back into fellowship with Him. The story of the prodigal son is one example (Luke 15:11-32). In this story, the father representing our Heavenly Father, accepted the son back into his home and heart even though the son had taken things that could not be restored.

This is what God is like. The cross speaks to mankind for all time. It is graphic enough to reach the most hardened criminal, as well as the most sensitive humanist. Christianity not only acknowledges the cruelty to God in the cross, but dwells on the reconciliation that was won by the cross. The Bible says: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10).

Christianity focuses on the loving favor God bestowed upon each one who receives the salvation of the cross. The Bible says: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). This means that peace with God, eternal life, and a glorious future are ours through the sacrifice of Jesus. We may never fully understand it, but we experience the peace, love, and joy that flow from the cross.

Why did Jesus have to die in order to forgive us?

There is another reason which is often overlooked. Satan tried to use God's perfect righteousness as a reason why God should not save sinners. Satan accused God of being a self-serving Judge, saving man for God's own benefit.

Thus it was necessary for Jesus to die in order to answer this question before the entire universe (Rev. 12:10, 5:9, 12). This accusation of Satan was cast down at the cross, when Jesus demonstrated to the universe that He, a member of the Godhead, was perfectly unselfish, even unto death.

The unfallen beings of the universe could see that God did indeed become flesh and that Jesus tasted of eternal death. He died under the condemnation of our sins. The Bible says "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, "Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). This curse was recognized to be eternal loss. When Jesus accepted the consequence of our sin against Himself, He could not see beyond the portals of the tomb. He said: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38) and "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:34).

He was fully conscious that He was God, yet existing as man He was willing to accept the hostility of sin against himself and die rather than treat sinful mankind as they deserve. What greater argument could be set forth to demonstrate unselfishness? This gives a perfect God a perfect right to save sinners.

Sinners may receive this justification and become safe to save (Romans 5:17)! Repentance comes as we see how our sins treated Christ (Acts 5:31). When we confess our sins and ask Him to remove sin from our lives, He will give us power to become safe to save (1 John 1:9, John 3, 1 John 3:9). As we receive this salvation we will seek forgiveness from those we have wronged and live a life of love by His power.

What Did Jesus Look Like On Earth?

Jesus' lineage

From the accounts in the New Testament, we gather that several times Jesus slipped away into the crowd and could not be found (Luke 4:30). Matthew 1:1-17 also traces the lineage of Jesus from Adam and Abraham down to his parents, Joseph and Mary. Why is this important? He looked similar to the other Jews living in Israel at the time and thus there was little to distinguish Him from the rest of the crowd. Another fact that sheds light upon what Jesus looked like was his profession. Carpenters worked long hours without the aid of modern power tools meaning that Jesus probably had a muscular build with strong rough hands.

Browse: Where was Jesus Born?

Was Jesus Beautiful?

The Old Testament prophesied in Isaiah 53 that Jesus would not have any external features or beauty that would attract or draw people to Him. Isaiah adds that Jesus would grow up like a plant out of dry ground with no form of kingly majesty. In short, Jesus looked like an average person with no distinguishing characteristics. The crowds that followed Jesus didn't follow Him because he looked like a rock star or a model. Instead they followed Him because of His words, teachings and doctrine. Jesus' teachings were not like the leaders of the time, rather He spoke with authority (Matthew 7:28-29).

What Did Jesus Look Like on the Cross?

Additionally, the Bible says in Isaiah 52 and 53 that near the time of crucifixion Jesus endured immense torture both physically and mentally. Isaiah 53:4-5 says that Jesus carried our grief and sorrows and that He was whipped, wounded and bruised for our sins. Imagine what Jesus looked like after going through all of that torture. Imagine the look on His face when the nails were placed in His hands. Imagine the look on His face when the crown of thorns was placed on His

head. Imagine the look on His face when He forgave Peter. Imagine the love on Jesus' face when He sees you, over 2,000 years later, and forgives you for all you have done.

Did Jesus Have Any Brothers Or Sisters?

Four men—James, Joses, Simon, and Judas—are mentioned as the brothers or siblings of Jesus. (See Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3.)

There has been much discussion through the centuries as to the exact relationship of these men to Jesus. So the question remains, did Jesus have siblings? Three principal views have been advanced:

(1) that they were Jesus' actual siblings/brothers, that is, half-brothers, sons of Joseph and Mary (and therefore younger than Jesus);

(2) that they were His stepbrothers, that is, children of Joseph by a previous marriage (and thus all older than He and not His blood relatives at all);

(3) that they were the cousins of Jesus on the mother's side, according to some, or on Joseph's side, according to others.

Three views about Jesus' siblings

Those who hold the first view argue that this is the most natural way to understand the various references to these brothers; also that this is the most obvious intent of Matthew 1:25 and Luke 2:7.

Those who hold the second view argue that family ethics would not permit younger siblings to taunt or otherwise meddle with an older brother as Jesus' brothers taunted Him (see Mark 3:31; John 7:3-4). They point out further that the fact that Jesus left His mother in the care of the apostle John (John 19:26-27) rather than with one of His brothers strongly implies that Mary had no other children.

The view that these brothers were the cousins of Jesus on Joseph's side is based on pure conjecture. That they were cousins on Mary's side is based on the unproven identity of "Mary, the wife of Cleophus"

with the sister of Mary (John 19:25; Mark 15:40), and on the unproven identity of "Clopas" with Alphaeus (Mark 3:18).

Jesus' brothers, sisters & mother

Jesus' siblings are mentioned as accompanying Jesus and his mother to Capernaum after the marriage at Cana (John 2:12). Later Mary and these brothers are recorded as seeking an audience with Jesus (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21). Toward the end of Jesus' ministry, His brethren are mentioned as urging Jesus to prove His Messiahship, which they themselves doubted (John 7:3-5). That they were later converted is clear, for they are described in Acts as uniting with the disciples and others in "prayer and supplication" prior to Pentecost (Acts 1:13-14). Paul implies that they were all married (1 Corinthians 9:5).

Many commentators hold that the author of the epistle of Jude, who identifies himself as the "brother of James," was one of these brothers (Jude 1). It is also generally believed that the leader of the church at Jerusalem was James the brother of Jesus, (see Acts 12:17; 15:13). This seems to be confirmed by Paul's reference to his visit to Jerusalem, in which he states that he saw only Peter, and "James, the Lord's brother" (Galatians 1:18-19).

A Summary Of Jesus' Life Until Now

Although born in Bethlehem, according to Matthew and Luke, Jesus was a Galilean from Nazareth, a village near Sepphoris, one of the two major cities of Galilee (Tiberias was the other). He was born to Joseph and Mary sometime between 6 BC and shortly before the death of Herod the Great (Matthew 2; Luke 1:5) in 4 BC. According to Matthew and Luke, however, Joseph was only legally his father. They report that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived and that she “was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18; cf. Luke 1:35). Joseph is said to have been a carpenter (Matthew 13:55)—that is, a craftsman who worked with his hands—and, according to Mark 6:3, Jesus also became a carpenter.

Luke (2:41–52) states that Jesus as a child was precociously learned, but there is no other evidence of his childhood or early life. As a young adult, he went to be baptized by the prophet John the Baptist and shortly thereafter became an itinerant preacher and healer (Mark 1:2–28).

In his mid-30s Jesus had a short public career, lasting perhaps less than one year, during which he attracted considerable attention. Sometime between AD 29 and 33—possibly AD 30—he went to observe Passover in Jerusalem, where his entrance, according to the Gospels, was triumphant and infused with eschatological significance. While there he was arrested, tried, and executed. His disciples became convinced that he still lived and had appeared to them. They converted others to belief in him, which eventually led to a new religion, Christianity.

Christian Meditation On Jesus

Christian meditation is the process of deliberately focusing on specific thoughts (such as the scripture and images in this booklet) and reflecting on their meaning in the context of the love of God. Christian meditation aims to heighten the personal relationship based on the love of God that marks Christian communion.

Here are a few very specific reasons why Christians meditate.

1. Meditation begins, but by no means ends, with thinking on Scripture.

To meditate properly our souls must reflect upon what our minds have ingested and our hearts must rejoice in what our souls have grasped. We have truly meditated when we slowly read, prayerfully imbibe and humbly rely upon what God has revealed to us in his Word. All of this, of course, in conscious dependence on the internal, energizing work of the Spirit.

2. Meditation, then, is being attentive to God.

It is one way we “keep seeking the things above where Christ is” (Col. 3:1). It is a conscious, continuous engagement of the mind with God. This renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:1-2) is part of the process by which the word of God penetrates the soul and spirit with the light of illumination and the power of transformation.

3. Meditation on Scripture is essential to Christian living.

Just consider a handful of texts that make this clear.

“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make

your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night” (Ps. 1:1-2).

“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Ps. 119:11).

“I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways” (Ps. 119:15).

In addition, consider numerous other exhortations and examples of meditation on God’s word from Psalm 119:23, 48, 78, 97, 99, 103, 148.

4. We should also train our souls to meditate on the glory and majesty of God as revealed in natural creation.

Jonathan Edwards describes the impact of one particular encounter with the power and wonder of creation:

"And as I walking there [in his father's pasture], and looked up on the sky and clouds; there came into my mind, a sweet sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, that I know not how to express. . . . The appearance of everything was altered: there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon, for a long time; and so in the day time, spent much time in viewing

the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things: in the mean time, singing forth with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce any thing, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning. Formerly, nothing had been so terrible to me. I used to be a person uncommonly terrified with thunder: and it used to strike me with terror, when I saw a thunder-storm rising. But now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God at the first appearance of a thunder-storm. And used to take the opportunity at such times to fix myself to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder: which often times was exceeding entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. And while I viewed, used to spend my time, as it always seemed natural to me, to sing or chant forth my meditations; to speak my thoughts in soliloquies, and speak with a singing voice” (Extractions from his Private Diary, 27-28).

5. We should also regularly reflect and meditate on God himself and his many works.

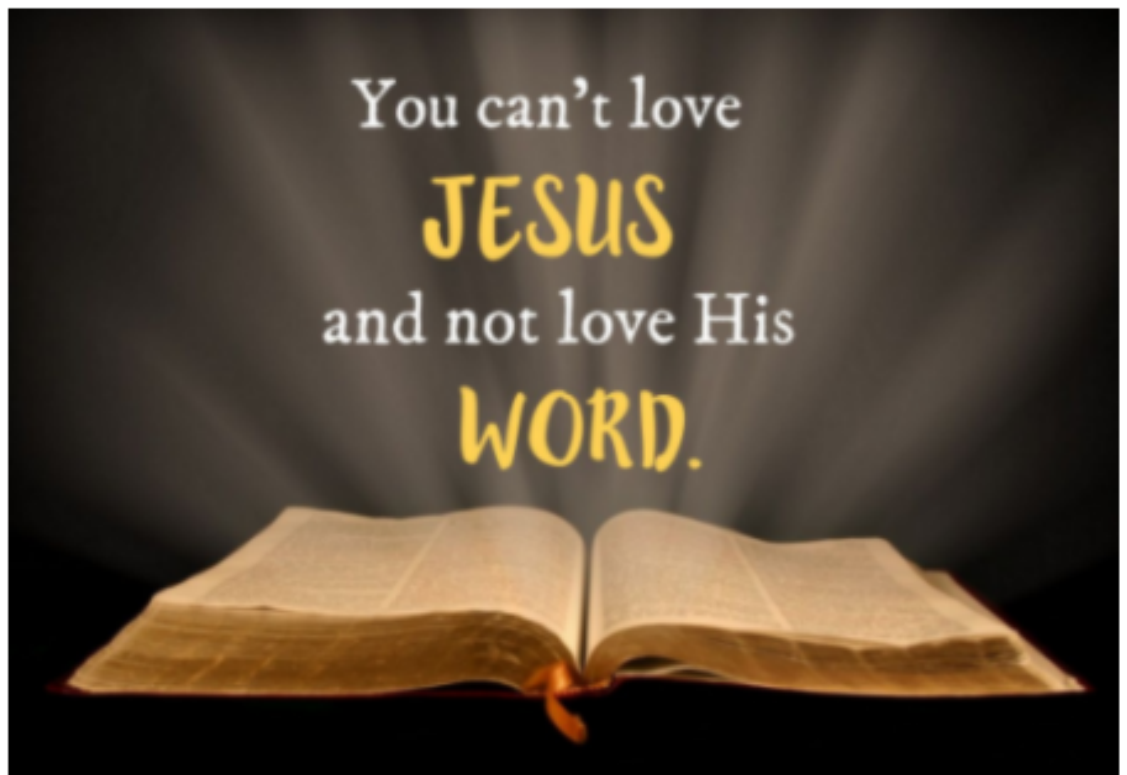
“One thing I have asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire [meditate, NASB] in his temple” (Ps. 27:4).

“when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night” (Ps. 63:6).

“I consider the days of old, the years long ago. I said, ‘Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart. Then my spirit made a diligent search. . . . I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder [meditate] all your work, and meditate on your

mighty deeds” (Ps. 77:5-6, 11-12; see also Psalm 111:2; 119:27; 143:5; 145:5).

**Scripture & Images
Of Jesus
For
Meditation & Fellowship
With God**



Jesus Loved Us So Much That He Died For Us



**Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his friends.
John 15:13**

Jesus Protects Us



He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: This truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noontday.

Psalms 91:4-6

Jesus Forgives Us



**As far as the east is from the west,
so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
Psalm 103:12**

Jesus Cares For Us



For I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11.

Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9

Jesus Takes Care Of Us



**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.**

**He restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his
name's sake.**

**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil:
for thou art with me; thy rod
and thy staff they comfort me.**

Psalm 23:1-4

Jesus Prays For Us



O Father, I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

John 17:5-9

Jesus Has A Home For Us



Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: 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 14:1-3

Jesus Will Not Let Us Go



**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them,
and they follow me:
And I give unto them eternal life;
and they shall never perish,
neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.
John 10:27-28**

Jesus Loves Us



**I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.**

Jeremiah 31:3

Jesus Helps Us Resist The Devil



Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

James 4:7-8

Jesus Drives The Devil From Us



A Prayer To Resist The Devil So He Will Flee From You

“Satan, you may have a place in me, but I take it back in the name and the authority of Jesus. Satan, I don’t shout at you, I don’t plead with you, I don’t argue with you, I don’t beg you. I bring Jesus Christ against you. You have no right here, no authority here. This body of mine is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God. You are trespassing on my Father’s property, and in the name of Jesus, Whose I am and Whom I serve, be gone!”

Jesus Rewards Us More The More We Are Tested



Difficulties are Valuable:

trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor at Christ's return.

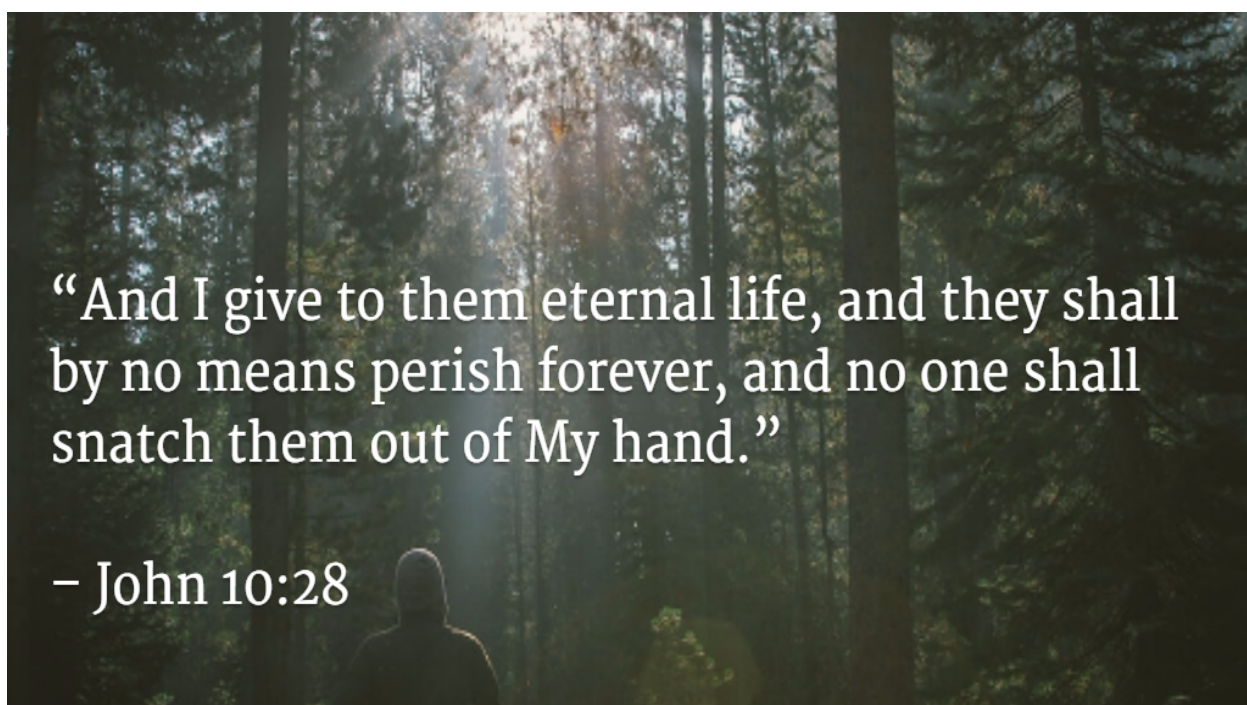
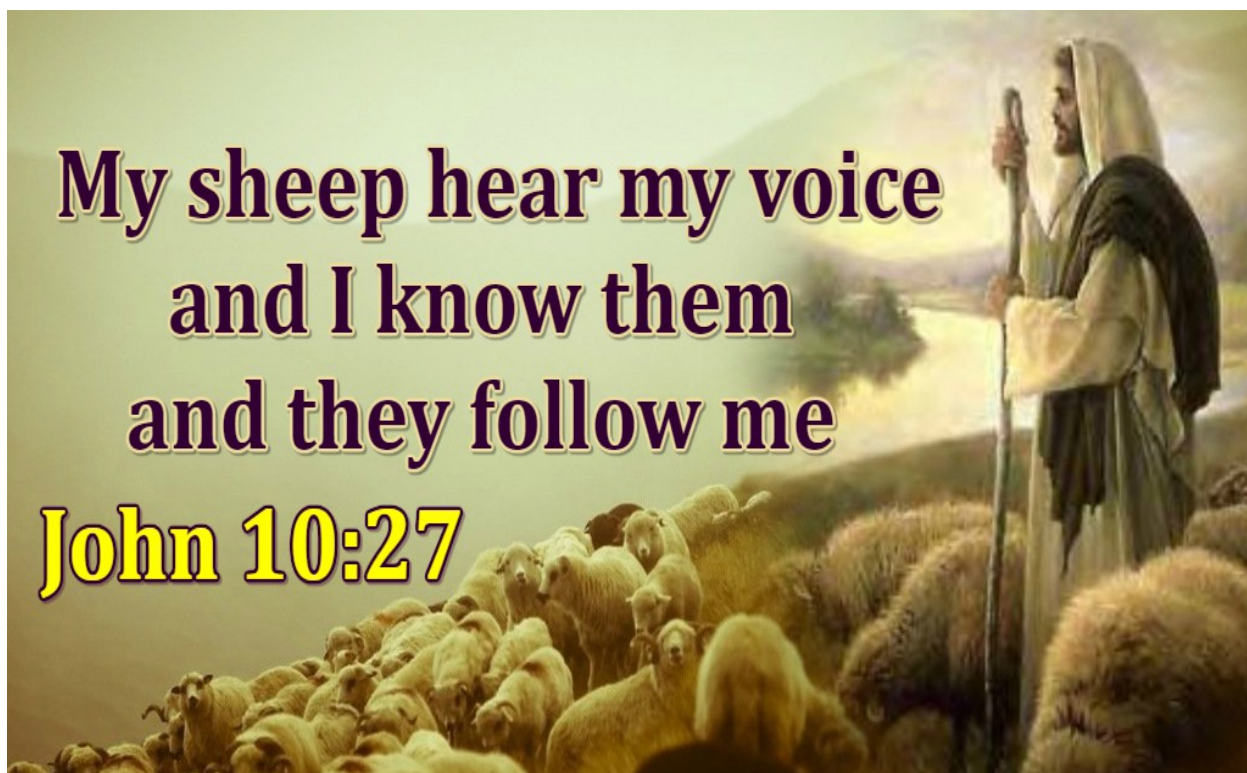
1 Peter 1:7

Jesus Gives Us Peace



**Do not be anxious about anything, but
in every situation, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
And the peace of God,
which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:6-7**

Jesus Is Our Shepherd



Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ's Return

Do you know what events will signal the biggest event of all time—the return of Jesus Christ to this earth? Learn what to watch for on the chaotic world scene so you will not be confused or caught unprepared.

Do you know what lies ahead in your future? What about the future of your nation and the world? We are not living in ordinary times. We are nearing the end of an age—the end of a civilization.

Our time truly fulfills the words that Franklin Delano Roosevelt spoke at the beginning of the Great Depression: “This generation has a rendezvous with destiny.” Far more than the 1930s generation, which was then fast approaching the most destructive war in the world’s history, we, today, truly have a rendezvous with destiny! A world-shaking crisis is inexorably building and will, in the near future, explode the appearance of normalcy that still pervades Western civilization at this time.

Presently, the news media is randomly reporting tragic events, explaining their significance in a way that the average man or woman can understand. You need to know that the progression of disturbing news stories is not random and inconsequential. In fact, they foreshadow remarkable key trends and specific events that will change everything you are familiar with in the next few decades!

How can anyone know the future for sure? Who really understands the big picture?

There is one Source who really knows what will happen. Did you realize that about one-fourth of the entire Bible is prophecy, and that about 90 percent of all prophecy is for “the end time”—the time just ahead of us?

These predicted events are sure. Of course, some people are not interested in Bible prophecy. But they should be, since it will affect their own lives, their families, their jobs and their futures. There is a real God, and the Bible speaks for Him. God inspired the words of these prophecies, and they are sure. We had better wake up and believe they will happen! By the time you finish reading this booklet your eyes will be opened to understand the significance of today's news and where it is all leading.

Notice what the Apostle Peter wrote about the Bible's prophecies: "So we have seen and proved that what the prophets said came true. You will do well to pay close attention to everything they have written, for, like lights shining into dark corners, their words help us to understand many things that otherwise would be dark and difficult.... For no prophecy recorded in Scripture was ever thought up by the prophet himself. It was the Holy Spirit within these godly men who gave them true messages from God" (2 Peter 1:19–21, The Living Bible). Why did God preserve these prophecies for us? Because the great God is working out a marvelous purpose here below, nationally and individually. We need to study God's inspired prophecies if we wish to understand His purpose!

CAN THE ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE HAPPEN?

Do you know what the most important news story of our generation will be? What is the biggest event that will shake the entire earth within the lifetime of most of you? The Second Coming of Christ will be the most important event of this generation. Christ is coming back!

Make no mistake about it. Jesus' return will not happen secretly off in some cave with no one knowing about it. Jesus Christ will literally come back to the city of Jerusalem, to the top of the Mount of Olives, to begin governing the entire earth! There will be a divine, one-world government. What a shock that will be to all humanity!

This event is specifically predicted throughout the Old and New Testaments of your Bible. Hundreds of millions of people at least superficially believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. The Second Coming is predicted in each of the four Gospels, in the book of Acts and in the epistles of Paul, James, Peter and John. Jesus' return is the focal point of the entire book of Revelation. If you believe the Bible is the inspired word of God, then you must believe in the Second Coming of Christ.

If the King of kings is soon returning to establish the Kingdom of God upon this earth, you should be getting ready for it. You should know how it will affect your business, your economic future, your personal safety and everything around you.

You can know what the signs are that will precede Christ's coming and watch for them. Why stay in ignorance about the meaning of the events taking place around you? Jesus commands His genuine disciples to watch and to be ready. "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Your entire life is about to change. Events will unfold soon to destroy the Western world's way of life as we have known it.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke each contain an account of Christ teaching His disciples what to watch for before He returns. Luke wrote: "So you, likewise, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:31–33).

Jesus Christ gave a series of signs that must occur before He returns. Evidently, the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy would happen within the lifetime of one generation—once the signs relative to that specific

prophecy begin. So Christ is coming back to this earth, but not right away. Not until these signs have occurred! People who go running around mouthing their own ideas and predictions about Christ's return "tonight" are false prophets. They are not heeding the words of Jesus Christ. The signs listed in Jesus' words must occur first.

Soon, mankind will suffer through the most devastating, bloody war in human history—called, in biblical terminology, the "Great Tribulation." "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved [alive]; but for the elect's sake [for the sake of God's repentant, obedient people] those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:21–22).

We are now approaching that time, and these things are now being revealed. "Many shall be purified, cleansed, and refined [God is examining you and me, testing us to see who is willing to obey His word], but the wicked shall continue to act wickedly. None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:10, NRSV).

Do you understand that our degenerate, corrupt nations are headed for a big fall? Do you fully realize that America's national debts are almost out of control and that, proportionately, Canada's indebtedness is even greater? Can you grasp the full meaning—in God's eyes—of the spiritual and moral toboggan slide of our entire Western civilization?

If you consider yourself a follower of Jesus, then you should pay close attention to His instruction to you: "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). Read on, dear reader, to see what things to "watch" for!

1. WARS, VIOLENCE AND LAWLESSNESS

Watch for wars—big wars, little wars, ethnic wars, wars of all sorts and escalating violence and increasing lawlessness—which will increasingly affect all of the world, especially the English-speaking nations.

A common perspective is that the world will somehow get better. Former U.S. President George H. W. Bush, talked often about a “new world order” as though there was going to be peace. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor to former U.S. President George W. Bush, described her vision of U.S. foreign policy as to “help developing countries move from war to peace, poverty to prosperity, poor governance to democracy and the rule of law” (Foreign Affairs, July/August 2008). Yet increasing numbers of people around the world consider the U.S. a threat to world peace. An April 2007 poll by the Forsa Institute found that German citizens consider the U.S. the greatest threat to world peace, with 48 percent naming the U.S. as the main instigator of war and lawlessness around the globe.

This post–Cold War time is unstable and extremely volatile. Will peace emerge from the chaos? Brian Urquhart, former United Nations Undersecretary-General, reminds us that “in the age of humanitarian intervention, the human catastrophes of failed states and civil wars will continue to come before the Security Council” (“A Force Behind the U.N.,” The New York Times, August 7, 2003). Indeed, the “new world order” is only producing a faltering, fading peace. Events will grow worse, not better.

Why is our civilization bankrupt of workable solutions to global, peaceful cooperation among nations and ethnic groups? Norman Lear, long-time television producer and political activist, clearly delineated the problem in a speech addressed to the National Press Club. “At no time in my life,” said Lear, “has our culture been so

estranged from spiritual values.... Our problems lie beyond the reach of politics alone.”

The Gospel of Matthew contains Jesus’ prophecy to His disciples about the state of the world just prior to His Second Coming. “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Matthew 24:6–7). While humanity has lived with warfare over the millennia, our time in history is unprecedented because of the massive annihilative potential of modern weapons and the massive global scale of potential conflict.

Verse 22 is a prophetic qualifier that only points to our time of high technology and its awful, brilliantly evil weapons of mass destruction. “And unless those days were shortened [the time of world war using these new weapons], no flesh would be saved [human extinction]; but for the elect’s [God’s repentant, obedient saints] sake those days will be shortened.” Today’s world is full of widespread wars and rumors of wars. There are many ethnic wars taking place—not only in the former Yugoslavia, but also in the former Soviet Union and in many places throughout Africa and Asia. Dozens of regional wars are now being fought around the world!

America will not escape this increasing intra-national and international strife. The day will come when the Los Angeles riots of 1992 and the destruction of the World Trade Center towers in 2001 will seem like minor skirmishes as America’s old allies become unstable, and its old alliances fall apart. Civil wars and wars between nation-states will increase. There will be little wars and big wars, resulting finally in a great war that will culminate at the battle of Armageddon in the Jezreel Valley in Israel—at which point Christ will return.

Some think this is alarmist, pessimistic thinking, unwarranted because of mankind's innate goodness. Such naïve people exude a quirky kind of optimism, proclaiming in the best "Pollyanna" tradition, "Oh, things are going to get better." Well, as a minister of God, I am commissioned to tell you they are not going to get better until after Christ returns. Yes, there is a wonderful Tomorrow's World, but realistically you should realize that life will grow very dark and desperate before a new world dawns.

Have you noticed the completely inexplicable outbreaks of violence—random shootings, murders and mass killings? Jesus Christ predicted this societal breakdown just before his return. "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12). In the United States, we used to think we were a Christian society; perhaps some still do. But today, our leisure time entertainment—television, movies and the Internet—rivals ancient Rome's lust for sex, drugs (including alcohol), violence and brutality.

Paradoxically, the United States and Canada have remarkably high percentages of their population who say they believe in God and go to church regularly. This hypocritical national behavior was foreseen as characteristic of the human society existing just before the Messiah's return.

The Apostle Paul was inspired to write: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:1–5).

Men deny the authority of God, despite a show of religiosity. Paul commands, under inspiration of God, "From such people turn away" (v. 5)! Get away from people who talk about religion, but deny the

authority of God, because they will mislead you. They will confuse you. This sassy, sarcastic, lust-filled generation is headed for big, big trouble. You need to recognize that and not be a part of it.

The sign of wars, increasing violence and lawlessness is the first thing to watch for.

2. DROUGHT AND FAMINE

Drought and famine—lack of rain and lack of food—will stalk the earth on a massive scale never seen before. Yes, these things will become much, much worse.

When there is drought you also have wildfires—range fires and forest fires. After the fires have burned off the brush, there is always the danger of floods when it resumes raining because there is no vegetation in the burned area’s watershed to retain the precipitation. These catastrophes of drought, famine, fire and flood naturally tend to go together. In Matthew 24:7, Jesus predicted: “And there will be famines.” Worldwide famines will engender vicious competition and strife among nations over food. This will mean increased political and military danger, especially for the United States, Britain and the British-descended peoples, whose lands have typically been seen as the breadbasket of the world.

Those of us living in the advanced, developed world have thought these things would only occur in places like India, Bangladesh or Africa. How could famine happen to us? It is practically unthinkable to suggest that one dark day the supermarkets and restaurants would have to close due to lack of food! But famine, the pain of empty stomachs, will occur in the United States of America, Canada, Britain, New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere among the English-speaking peoples of the world. Let us understand what God says and why.

Most people just do not understand that it is God Almighty who controls the weather and that He sometimes uses this power to punish nations that displease Him! King Solomon knew this. During the dedication of God's temple in Jerusalem he acknowledged God's power, "When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they [the people] have sinned against You..." (1 Kings 8:35). Does God collectively punish a nation for mocking or ignoring His moral, ethical standards? You bet He does! "For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:30–31).

The book of Revelation confirms this coming famine. "When he had broken the third seal [shortly before the coming of Christ], I heard the third Living Being [an angelic personage] say, 'Come!' And I saw a black horse, with its rider holding a pair of balances in his hand. And a voice from among the four Living Beings said, 'A loaf of bread for \$20, or three pounds of barley flour, but there is no olive oil or wine'" (Revelation 6:5–6, The Living Bible).

Yet God is merciful and patient with individuals and nations that have a change of heart. Solomon also understood this point when he prayed, "...when they [the people] pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and give rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance" (1 Kings 8:35–36).

We need to recognize that God controls the weather! He punishes His own people when needed. If our nations would return to God with heartfelt repentance, and begin to keep His laws and live His way, then these plagues need not come. But how many of you believe this will really happen? How many of you believe that our nations will have a heartfelt repentance and get back to the God of Abraham,

Isaac and Israel? I think most of us know better. I wish they would, but I doubt that they will. Regrettably, our nations have some very hard lessons to learn about thumbing their noses at God.

3. EARTHQUAKES AND OTHER NATURAL CATASTROPHES

God prophesies that earthquakes and other natural catastrophes will increase as we approach the end of this age.

Los Angeles is regarded as the media capital of the world. More rotten, vile movies and television shows featuring murder, mayhem and illicit and perverted sex are produced in Los Angeles than in any place else in the world. California has long been regarded as the “leading edge” of almost any form of perversion known to man. So the great God who guides the affairs of men and nations has every right to punish such degeneracy and rebellion against His laws and His ways by a people He has blessed so much. And the people in California—as in most parts of the English-speaking world—have had many chances to learn the Truth in the past if they had any genuine interest.

“Why pick on Los Angeles?” some local journalists have asked. The better question would be, “Why not?” Maybe a good shaking up will get people’s attention!

Yet earthquakes affect people all around the world—not just in southern California. And Scripture tells us that, before Jesus Christ returns, there will be increasing “earthquakes in various places” (Mark 13:8; Matthew 24:7). In the last few years, most of you realize that there have been frequent earthquakes, sometimes in unusual places. This trend will continue because the Bible indicates that it will. Jesus Christ prophesied of them. And you, too, should be expecting them. Watch, as the number and magnitude of earthquakes grow, because they will become extremely devastating.

There had been earthquakes even in ancient times, as mentioned in the writings of Josephus (Antiquities, bk. 15, chap. 5, sec. 2). The Bible records specific instances of earthquakes in the past and predicts them in the future (Zechariah 14:4–5).

These earth-jarring occurrences arise from natural shifts and changes in the earth’s mantle, especially along worldwide earthquake belts or fault lines. As journalist William Broad pointed out, a million people died in earthquakes during the 20th century, and scientists acknowledge that the 21st “might see 10 times as many deaths, with a million lost in a single blow” (“Earthquakes: A Matter of Luck, Most of It Bad,” New York Times, September 28, 1999).

U.S. Geological Survey scientists reported in May 2008 that a 7.8 magnitude quake along the San Andreas Fault would likely result in more than 50,000 injuries, thousands of deaths, and \$200 billion in quake-related damage (“The ShakeOut Scenario,” U.S. Geological Survey Open File Report 2008-1150). That is in a region where for decades there has been extensive warning about, and extensive preparation for, earthquakes. Yet human nature often leads people to ignore warnings. In the wake of China’s devastating May 2008 earthquake in Sichuan Province, Chinese scientists have been quick to point out that they have for decades known the risk of a potentially catastrophic quake along the very fault that gave way. “But they say preparations for a quake there were cursory at best, and building codes remained well short of the codes that have become standard in other well-known earthquake zones” (“Experts Warned of Quake Risk in China,” New York Times, June 5, 2008).

In the near future, there will be more earthquakes even in places where they are not normally expected. A report by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in September 2000 warned that while California is at greatest risk of severe economic harm from earthquakes, cities across the U.S. are also at risk of heavy

damage—yet are not doing enough to prevent or prepare for such harm. Earthquake expert John Nance put the matter into perspective: “The Eastern Seaboard is in more danger than the West because they are abysmally unprepared, with building standards far less stringent than California which is ‘earthquake country’ in the thinking of many people. An earthquake in the American Midwest or somewhere in New England, for instance, could be devastating because there is so little readiness and the shock from the unexpected so overwhelming” (“Superquake May Lie Ahead Almost Anywhere in U.S.,” March 25, 1989).

In recent years, scientists have come to a better understanding of the immensity and magnitude of the tremendous fault systems that trace themselves underneath the whole earth. However, not all the earthquakes of the near future will be natural disasters—the usual groans and strains of planet earth’s crust. Some will be directly induced by God as a sign of His power, and will be designed to help people wake up. God will take a direct hand in the affairs of men. The earthquakes specifically mentioned by Jesus Christ as a foreshadowing sign of His return will be unusual by their location or unparalleled magnitude.

Why? Most of us understand. But remember that Jesus Christ directly predicted, “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places” (Matthew 24:7). Have there not always been earthquakes? Of course. So Jesus must have been speaking of more earthquakes than usual—and more powerful earthquakes. And certainly that is exactly what has been happening over the past several years!

In Isaiah 29:6, God says of Jerusalem: “You will be punished by the Lord of hosts with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with storm and tempest and the flame of devouring fire.” God says, “I do not change” (Malachi 3:6). He did punish ancient Jerusalem with

earthquakes and storms. Now, He is beginning to punish modern Israel in the same way.

Dear readers, please watch for increasing earthquakes as a sign that Christ is coming soon. And if you would like to know more about God's intervention in natural phenomena, write for your free copy of our booklet *Who Controls the Weather?*

4. DISEASE EPIDEMICS

A plague of disease epidemics is beginning to worry public health officials all around the world. AIDS is only the most discussed of these “new” diseases—the ebola virus, “mad cow disease” and many others scarcely heard of just ten years ago are now worrying public health experts worldwide. And many old scourges of humanity (malaria and tuberculosis to name just two) are reemerging as super, drug-resistant diseases that ignore penicillin and other drugs that were formerly used to combat them! Of course, degenerative diseases such as cancer and heart disease continue to affect greater numbers of people, as our food and water supplies become increasingly tainted with the pollutants of our technological age.

The Bible indicates clearly that future disease epidemics will be, in part, spread by wild animals (Revelation 6:8). Some of the worst plagues of humanity have been animal borne, like bubonic plague. Bubonic plague is a naturally endemic problem among wild animals in certain regions. It is only due to society's diligence in maintaining sanitary standards that such problems stay at the fringes of civilization.

People are aware that whenever society is disrupted due to war or natural calamities, there is always the threat of disease. But these disease problems are just a small foretaste of the deadly contagious pandemics that are prophesied to sweep the earth. “I heard the fourth Living Being say, ‘Come!’ And now I saw a pale horse, and its rider's

name was Death. And there followed after him another horse whose rider's name was Hell. They were given control of one-fourth of the earth, to kill with war and famine and disease and wild animals" (Revelation 6:7–8, The Living Bible).

The Greek word translated "pale" is chloros, which signifies the pale green or sickly yellow-greenish color of severe disease. Jesus Christ predicted that great "pestilences" would be one of the signs to mankind to warn of His imminent return (Matthew 24:7).

Would God afflict the earth with lethal disease plagues? Moses was inspired of God to write this: "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you on high above all the nations of the earth" (Deuteronomy 28:1). God, speaking directly through Moses, is saying that if His people today would obey Him, and diligently observe to do His commandments, He would set us on high above all the nations of the earth. That is exactly what God did for the ancient Kingdom of Israel at the time of King David. When King David turned to God with all his heart, He began to bless and prosper Israel magnificently.

But what happened when "the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel" because they were disobeying? (2 Samuel 24:1). "So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died. And when the angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, 'It is enough; now restrain your hand'" (vv. 15–16). We, whatever our descent or ethnicity, are no better than those ancient Israelites.

The Old Testament Israelites, who accepted a relationship with Almighty God, promised to live by His word. They praised His name with their mouths and thought of themselves as God's people. The

great God of the universe, however, is not impressed with hypocrisy—mere words of loyalty and love—but requires us to back up our words with action, genuineness and honesty.

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:14–17, 26).

We must show ourselves as being fully faithful and engaged in our commitments to God. We must do, or at least make serious efforts to do, all that God requires of us in our family, sexual relations, business dealings and every other area of life. Why? Notice what God inspired to be written for our benefit: “But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.... The Lord will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.... The Lord will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. The Lord will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart” (Deuteronomy 28:15, 22, 27–28). Disease epidemics are clearly a tool used by God to punish disobedient people.

Yes, God will do all these things to this world, including the modern descendants of Israel, unless we turn back to God in profound, heartfelt repentance in a way that few people have ever done.

Awesome times are bearing down on us. We are not talking about some little thing to be done off in a corner. We are talking about the most massive, event-by-event intervention by the Creator in the history of this earth. Nothing in the past can even remotely compare to this. Can you grasp the massive effect these events will have on your life, and on everything you have ever known?

Listen! God is trying to get your attention! These soon-coming events are real. They will happen. Do not just believe me. Believe what is written in your Bible. Check up and prove it. That is how you come to know God. You must know God to receive His protection in this coming time.

Remember, these coming events will not occur primarily somewhere off in Africa, Asia or remote from the Western nations. Disease epidemics will begin to strike America, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia in a worse way than they have ever done in our entire history.

5. THE RISE OF AN AGGRESSIVE, FUNDAMENTALIST ISLAMIC POWER

In the time of the end, the Bible predicts that there will arise, in North Africa or the Middle East, a charismatic personality who will be able to unify, harness and lead a powerful block of nations in which Egypt will have a key role.

“At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him [a power located north from the king of the South]; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.... He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious

things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels [will be at his feet or footsteps]” (Daniel 11:40, 42–43).

This is a good example of why you need to watch the daily newspapers. Your newspaper reading will be very interesting if you understand Bible prophecy. You will begin to realize, from now on, what is the significance of the massive arms purchases by Middle Eastern countries from weapon-producing countries like North Korea, China, Russia and the U.S.

Presently, the whole Islamic world in the Middle East and North Africa is being enveloped by a wave of resurgent Islamic fundamentalism. Islamic fundamentalist insurgencies, funded by rogue states and terrorist organizations, are trying to destabilize the moderate, Western-leaning, secular regimes currently in power, and are seeking to replace them with a unified, resuscitated Islamic caliphate (empire)—the prophesied “king of the South.” The final leader over these reinvigorated Muslim nations will be a tremendously powerful religio-political false Messiah or “Mahdi” who will draw his power from a confederation of those nations. He will provoke the key events written in Daniel 11, which must occur before the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

Mideast analyst Michael Slackman observed: “From Cairo, to Rabat, Morocco, to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the order that emerged after World War II—long accustomed to encouraging domestic anger against Israel—has seen its influence and grip on power challenged in the wave of instability washing across the Middle East. That has roughly coincided with the rise of the insurgency in Iraq. This region has long been defined by conflict, and leaders are unafraid to use force to crush opposition. But the current level of instability has unnerved them. They are not about to be toppled, not as long as they retain firm control over their security operations. But they find themselves fighting to maintain stability and credibility, political analysts said. ‘The ruling regimes cannot disregard or dismiss the influence of

Islamist movements in their countries,’ said Gamal Abdel-Gawwad, who runs the International Relations unit at the Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo. The empowerment of the Islamists has been propelled by events large and small—the occupation of Iraq, Israel’s war with Hezbollah, the United States’ support for Israel in that war, Danish cartoons lampooning the Prophet Muhammad, and most recently comments about Islam made by Pope Benedict XVI” (“Islamists’ Rise Imperils Mideast’s Order,” New York Times, September 18, 2006).

Do you think that fanatical Muslims will not use nuclear or biological weapons if they have the opportunity? You had better believe they will. And Bible prophecy shows how it will all turn out. This great charismatic “Mahdi” (Messiah) will gather together the forces of Islam in a final jihad (holy war) against the morally corrupt nations of the West, whose religion, lifestyle and values represent a deadly challenge to the Islamic dream.

He will feel emboldened to provoke or attack the European Union (Daniel 11:40). This will anger the fierce “king of the North” and the forces of the king of the South will be completely crushed by this European power. The king of the North will then come down “like a whirlwind” (v. 40) and take over the Middle East, including the Holy Land (vv. 41–42). The king of the North’s armies will seize control of the region’s vast oil reserves (v. 43).

These soon-to-happen events will be awesome to witness. The “king of the North,” a future European Napoleon or Hitler type of powerful, dynamic leader, will react mightily with a blitzkrieg retaliation. This dramatic military response against the king of the South will set off a chain of other events.

“And they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation” (Daniel 11:31). As this dual prophecy shows, there will, at

the end of this age, either be a temple or a special altar in Jerusalem. The priests of the family of Aaron will again offer the daily animal sacrifices prescribed in the Old Testament until a great military power comes in and places there what is called the abomination of desolation.

The description continues: “At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time” (Daniel 12:1). This is talking about the American, British Commonwealth and Jewish peoples. The great Muslim “king of the South” will cause a war, and the European “king of the North” will conquer much of the Middle East. This king of the North also comes west against God’s people at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This is the same time Jesus described in Matthew 24:21: “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

We need to realize where all these things are leading, and how they will affect our lives—your life, your family, your children, your job and your future.

6. AN ASCENDANT EUROPEAN UNION SEEKS GLOBAL PRIMACY

Watch Europe! Revelation 13 describes the revival of a great military power. The symbolic language that the Apostle John used—about a fantastic beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns—depicts a recurring, evil political system which has greatly oppressed and heavily influenced the peoples in Western civilization, and through them, the entire world.

The seven heads represent seven distinct revivals of this evil empire over a long period of time. The ten horns represent the ten leaders (kings) of the constituent nations that will make up this ungodly

federation that will, first of all, fight against God's saints. "And it was granted to him [the leader of the ungodly empire] to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation" (Revelation 13:7). These ten leaders will also fight against Christ Himself at His return! "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:12–14).

This final seventh revival will be similar in form to today's European Union—ten different nations or groups of nations will be represented by ten different kings or presidents. These ten heads of state "receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast" (v. 12). In other words, they will rule for a very short time along with the final "Hitler."

That is shocking! The Bible is discussing a wholly evil empire that is yet to arise—not some political power way back in history somewhere. Life in the future will not be "kinder and gentler." This final system is just ahead of us, and the men and women in this oppressive government will literally fight Jesus Christ at His coming!

Right now we are living in an unstable transition time in world history. Momentous changes are afoot in Europe. More than 40 years ago, U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson remarked, "Europe has been at peace since 1945. But it is a restless peace that's shadowed by the threat of violence." Now, with the Cold War behind us, and the Berlin Wall a fading memory, Europe is proceeding toward a unification that would have seemed improbable to most on that day in March 1957 when France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux nations signed the Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community.

Condoleezza Rice, former National Security Advisor in the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush, stated in the July/August 2008 issue of Foreign Affairs: “The goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace is very close to completion. The United States welcomes a strong, united, and coherent Europe. There is no doubt that the European Union has been a superb anchor for the democratic evolution of eastern Europe after the Cold War.”

Yet a “strong, united and coherent” Europe represents an economic threat to the U.S. economy. As writer Carter Dougherty pointed out on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the European Central Bank, “Paris, Lisbon, Madrid, Rome and Berlin were each, at some point, the political and economic capital of an empire, containing the power of New York and Washington combined. And they all surrendered a piece of their sovereignty to a common currency.... the euro is the currency of 15 countries and 320 million people, and as gilt-edged an investment as can be found in the current tumultuous global economy” (“An Impossible Dream, the Euro Finds Its Way,” New York Times, June 3, 2008).

One of the major characteristics of this European federated union, described in the Bible as “Babylon the Great,” is its enormously attractive economic prosperity and wealth. Material goods will abound for those who cooperate and submit to “Babylon.” The Bible says this about the coming, wicked federated union, “For all the nations have drunk the fatal wine of her intense immorality. The rulers of earth have enjoyed themselves with her, and businessmen throughout the world have grown rich from all her luxurious living” (Revelation 18:3, The Living Bible).

Humanity will become seduced by one of the oldest of false gods—the golden calf of materialism and pleasure. Revelation 18:12–13 gives a partial listing of the commodities being traded in “Babylon.” At the end of verse 13 it lists, “...and bodies and souls of

men.” The original Greek text is talking about not only living human beings being sold as slaves but also the dead corpses of men.

In Hitler’s Third Reich, human bodies were sold. Dental gold was picked out of the mouths of gas chamber victims for remelting into ingots. Skin was used for lampshades. Hair was used to stuff pillows and make fabric. Could this happen again? Perhaps you did not grow up during World War II as I did. This is exactly what happened in what was supposed to be the most educated, cultured nation on earth—Germany! That was the nation with the greatest number of people with master’s and doctor’s degrees, proportionately, of any peoples on the earth.

Do not think these things cannot happen again! God says these things will happen. There will be a revival of an evil empire in the same spirit as the pagan Roman Empire. It will hate God’s people and His word.

As of mid-2008, there were 27 nations associated with the European Union. Yet Scripture describes “ten” nations or groups of nations as comprising the final “Beast” power. So we can expect old national boundaries to shift, or some current EU members to quit. Since EU law requires all 27 nations to ratify certain important policy documents that would shift greater control away from individual nations and toward EU headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, the resistance of several key states has so far posed a problem for the most vigorous advocates of European unity. France, Great Britain, Ireland and the Netherlands have all at one time or another failed to ratify key EU unification proposals. This has led some EU advocates to call for a “two speed” Europe, with Germany and other key nations forming an “inner core” of EU members, with closer economic, military and political cooperation than other EU nations that retain misgivings.

We do need to understand the momentous times in which we live. A new world order is in the process of emerging. Will the present European Union transform itself into “Babylon the Great”? Watch! The Bible’s prophecies will be fulfilled before Christ returns—that is the whole point.

A crucial element that will be essential to the creation of “Babylon the Great” is yet missing from the picture. All of the awesome empires of the past were led by charismatic, dynamic leaders, such as Adolf Hitler, Napoleon Bonaparte, Charlemagne, Justinian, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great and Nebuchadnezzar.

The Bible does give us some information about this coming “great” leader who will assume political and military control of “Babylon the Great.” Notice the time setting of this prophecy: “And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purge them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time” (Daniel 11:35). The context of this prophecy is the end-time. Also, it is important to point out that the nature of many prophecies is dual. That is to say, there was one preliminary fulfillment of a prophecy in antiquity, and there is to be a yet future fulfillment of that scripture.

We learn in Daniel 11 that a powerful leader is yet to come on the world scene. This “king,” who will rise up in Europe, “shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god; shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods...” (Daniel 11:36).

Some Bible students assume this is talking about the great, end-time false prophet, who will be contemporaneous with the rising political-military leader. But there are to be two different individuals involved. Verse 36 is about the secular-power leader—the coming dictator—who will be a charming flatterer, cunning, egotistical and ruthless. This leader is destined to exalt himself above any other

religious entity. He will be “full of himself.” “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done” (Daniel 11:36).

God uses vicious leaders like the coming “king of the North” to punish His hypocritical people, who say they worship Him and print His name on their money (the Americans), but do not do the things He commands. This future “Hitler” will execute God’s wrath, especially upon the peoples of America and the British countries, because as nations they have rejected God’s values and chosen sinful pleasures and conveniences.

“And you, son of man, thus says the Lord God to the land of Israel [whose descendants are now living in the U.S.A. and the British countries and other places]: ‘An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. Now the end has come upon you, and I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways, and I will repay you for all your abominations. My eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity; but I will repay your ways, and your abominations shall be in your midst; then you shall know that I am the Lord!’

“Thus says the Lord God: ‘A disaster, a singular disaster; behold, it has come! An end has come, the end has come; it has dawned for you; behold, it has come! Doom has come to you, you who dwell in the land; the time has come, a day of trouble is near, and not of rejoicing in the mountains. Now upon you I will soon pour out My fury, and spend My anger upon you; I will judge you according to your ways, and I will repay you for all your abominations. My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; I will repay you according to your ways, and your abominations will be in your midst. Then you will know that I am the Lord who strikes’” (Ezekiel 7:2–9).

This coming king of the North “shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above them all” (Daniel 11:37). This despicable political leader will cooperate with a false church system for a time, but he is not attracted to its religious teachings personally, and only wishes to use it to achieve power. He sees himself above it. In his enormous ego he tries to make a god out of himself.

“But in their place,” this coming Hitler type will “honor a god of fortresses,” or a god of munitions, as some translations have it; “and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things” (v. 38). This powerful individual will dedicate tremendous amounts of international resources to building up his military machine. And he will worship his power and that military machine. “He shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall make more wealthy, and shall appoint them as rulers over many, and shall distribute the land for a price” (Daniel 11:39, NRSV).

Here is this awesome power of a coming “Hitler,” and, as we explained, there will be exactly ten nations or groups of nations eventually in Europe having ten kings or rulers over them. They will give their power and strength to this coming dictator, this “Hitler,” for a short time just before Christ’s return. And as verse 40 shows, this European power-bloc will also fight against the Islamic power block to the south.

7. A POWERFUL RELIGIOUS FIGURE LEADS A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

One of the definite “signs of the end-times,” which will herald the close of this present evil age, is the arrival on the scene of a great false religious leader, called in the Bible the “false prophet” (Revelation 19:19–21). This religious leader will possess great charisma, and will exercise a very powerful influence over a political

power—the soon-coming “Beast” (Revelation 13, 17, 19). He will be the long-prophesied, influential head of a great, militant church in Europe. Together, this combination of personal charisma and awesome power to influence others, will have an enormous effect on the future of the nations of the Western world.

This coming false religious leader—a leader who is prophesied to sit astride the end-time “Beast” (the revival of a governmental system having characteristics similar to the old Holy Roman Empire, which was a combination of church and state) is described in Isaiah 47. “Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon” (v. 1). Notice this is a daughter of ancient Babylon. A modern sort of Babylon is to rise up! “Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate” (ibid.)

Who, then, is this “lady” mentioned in Isaiah 47? Scripture gives us a clear answer. “Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no more be called the Lady of Kingdoms” (v. 5). This woman is called the “Lady of Kingdoms” because she has a fornicating political relationship with, and actually rules over, quite a number of different kingdoms or governments of this world.

Now, read on in this important end-time prophecy. God says, “I was angry with My people” (v. 6). Who are God’s people? There are two ways this can be properly understood: one is the Church of God, the other is God’s physical people, Israel—“You [Israel] only have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2). This prophecy is definitely speaking nationally, so this is not talking about God’s true Church. Clearly, this is speaking about the end-time nations that comprise modern Israel.

So God says, “I have profaned My inheritance, and given them into your [the Babylonish system’s] hand. You showed them no mercy; on

the elderly [‘ancient’ people, Israel—KJV] you laid your yoke very heavily” (Isaiah 47:6).

Notice the word “yoke.” This is a yoke of slavery laid upon us by the daughter of the ancient Babylon. “And you said, ‘I shall be a lady forever,’ so that you did not take these things to heart, nor remember the latter end of them” (v. 7). And so this modern “lady,” this false religious system, will put a yoke on God’s birthright people—those who have received their tremendous national inheritances from God Almighty.

God speaks of this woman as being a “Lady of Kingdoms,” putting a “yoke” on the neck of God’s chosen people, Israel, and says this Babylonish “lady” will not think she is doing any terrible thing when she afflicts God’s people. Then He says: “Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children’” (v. 8). “But,” God says, “these two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood” (v. 9).

That is what God says! But where is this explained in the Bible? How can we know that this is an end-time prophecy?

Turn back again to the book of Revelation, where He is talking about this same system. God says, “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury” (Revelation 18:3). A great religio-political trading system!

Well, what is that trading system? Verse 2 says, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit.” Yes, this modern Babylon, which is now in the process of forming in Europe, will be a very sophisticated, wealthy

system that will soon dominate most of Europe. Yet it will be heavily influenced by Satan!

Notice God’s warning to His people: “Come out of her, my people” (Revelation 18:4). Dwelling in this Babylonish system will be some of God’s people (this applies both physically and spiritually)—and they are commanded: “Come out... lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (vv. 4–5). And so this Babylonish system and the people in it will be warned!

Now notice verse 7: “In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she [this modern Babylon] says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’” Do you remember those words? That is quoting directly from Isaiah 47. Yet modern Babylon will say those words!

“Therefore,” God says, “her plagues will come in one day [just like God said back in Isaiah 47:9]—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her” (Revelation 18:8).

But first, the modern descendants of ancient Israel will be brought down and punished by God through this system. These people will be punished as no peoples have ever been punished in modern history, because of their flagrant disobedience, and their going after every ungodly abomination.

A GREAT FALSE RELIGIOUS LEADER

The great false religious leader will rise up very soon now—in our very day! He will deceive not a few hundred people—like David Koresh and his Branch Davidians—but hundreds of millions! Yes,

prophecy indicates that hundreds of millions of people will be deceived! That is exactly what will occur before Christ's coming.

The Apostle Paul, in a letter concerning the Second Coming of Christ, wrote: "Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him..." (2 Thessalonians 2:1). He then cautioned God's people "not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come" (v. 2). Some were even writing letters purporting to be from Paul. "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition [or son of destruction]" (v. 3).

Clearly, a great false religious leader will rise up before Christ returns to this earth. What will be the attitude and modus operandi of this great false prophet? "Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (v. 4).

This man will have supernatural power to deceive! He will have the ability to perform great miracles such as causing fire to come down out of the sky (Revelation 13:13–14). Will you follow such a man? Or, will you now begin to study and understand your Bible so you will know what is ahead? "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs [miracles] which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image of the beast who was wounded by the sword" (v. 14).

This great false religious leader will have tremendous impact on the Western world—make no mistake about it! You need to watch for these things so that you will not be misled or deceived by him (the soon-coming great "false prophet") or by any man! "Take heed that no one deceives you" (Matthew 24:4)! Keep alert! Keep your eyes open! Be on the lookout for a great, charismatic false religious

leader—a “false prophet”! He, like the early New Testament false prophet, Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–11), will deceive hundreds of millions into thinking he is a great servant of God.

If you know God’s word—and obey it—you will not be one of those many millions who will be deceived by the soon-coming, great “false prophet”!

8. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD PREACHED TO ALL NATIONS

The great “Olivet prophecy” of Jesus Christ is pivotal in understanding future events. In Matthew 24:3, Jesus was asked by the disciples, “Tell us, when shall these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” As we have seen, Jesus first warned them about false prophets, wars and rumors of wars leading to world war, famines, disease epidemics and earthquakes, and said, “All these are the beginning of sorrows” (v. 8).

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation” (v. 9). The coming Great Tribulation will affect the Church as well as national Israel. “And [they will] kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.” This verse is quite significant because it says, in effect, that God’s true Church and Work will be known by all nations. People will not hate it unless they know about it, will they? They will hate the true Work of God because they will hate its message.

“But he who endures to the end, shall be saved” (v. 13). The end of what? Well, certainly the end of our physical lives individually, but this also applies to those alive at the end of this age. By this statement, Jesus intended to signify the end of 6,000 years of human experience and sin under the influence of Satan the Devil, which is heralded by the Second Coming of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

In verse 14, Jesus mentions another sign that must happen before His Second Coming—and is happening right now. “And this gospel of the kingdom”—the Good News of the coming Kingdom or world-ruling government of God, based on God’s laws—“will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations.” This Gospel is good news, but it contains a warning. Every nation on earth, not just a few, will hear about this as a “witness,” not to convert them, but as a testimony of God’s future intentions.

This is not the time when God is trying to convert everyone, as many ministers, who are trying to “save” the world now, would have you believe! God is not going around like a lonely hound dog, wagging his tail and hoping someone will pay attention to him. Through his sins, man has cut himself off from God (Isaiah 59:1–2). Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44). This is the only way one can come to God. God’s Church is proclaiming the Gospel, witnessing to humanity so that those who are willing can seek Him. Whoever has their mind opened by God can understand. You are reading part of God’s “witness” right now!

9. FAITH AGAIN BECOMES A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH

Watch for persecution of Christians and the Church of God that keeps the Commandments of God (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). Jesus said, “Then they will deliver you up to... kill you” (Matthew 24:9). Here He is speaking to His people, His genuine disciples. The Apostle John gave the Church (and anyone who reads the Bible) a test that can be used to determine who is a bona fide Christian and who only masquerades as one. “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3–4).

It is these commandment-keeping Christians who will be persecuted. “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake” (Matthew 24:9). Jesus clearly foresaw that the world would be full of religious confusion during the end-time. “Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many” (Matthew 24:11). Only the few seem to understand; only those called by God. What is the result of this spiritual blindness and confusion? “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (v. 12). So, at the end, there will be widespread chaos and lawlessness—and God says much of it can be traced back to false teachings and religious confusion from a “Babylon” of religions and denominations.

God’s people will be persecuted at the time of the end, just as the early Christians faced vicious attacks. “If the world hates you,” Jesus told the disciples—and this certainly applies to us, His disciples today—“you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15:18–19).

This present society around us will become increasingly hostile to God’s people and the moral standards they live by! The political, business, media, cultural and religious elites will feel condemned by the true Church of God, which will not compromise regarding God’s word. God’s Church will be politically incorrect. This world will feel guilty.

How about you? If Scripture reveals to you some Truth that may be inconvenient, embarrassing, or personally or financially costly—what would your reaction be? Will you become angry at God because He is meddling? God says He has a right to tell you what is right or wrong in the most sensitive areas of your life. Some people will even start spitting in hatred at the mere thought that Someone else seeks to impose His values on them! And they will not like it. All animals and

human beings blink when suddenly exposed to light when they have been in darkness. They do not like that bright light. So it is with the light of the Truth.

“Remember,” Jesus said, “the word that I said to you. ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20). Did the religious and political authorities of Jesus’ time keep His word? No, they did not. They crucified Him instead. But Jesus continued, “But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me” (v. 21).

10. A CRISIS STRIKES JERUSALEM

Watch! The modern nation of “Israel,” populated by the descendants of the biblical tribe of Judah (plus significant remnants of Levi and Benjamin) will suffer serious military losses with part of its territory occupied by enemies just before the Second Coming of Christ. This is of utmost significance! Many students of Bible prophecy declare that 1948 saw the great regathering of Israel in the Holy Land and the final establishment of the nation of Israel. That is absolutely wrong! This was just a precursor, a small forerunner of the gigantic regathering of the remnants of all twelve tribes of Israel that is yet to occur. Meanwhile, the hard-pressed Jewish people in Israel will be attacked and defeated once again. This is difficult to say, but the Bible makes that very, very clear.

“Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city” (Zechariah 14:1–2).

“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and

bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land. They have cast lots for My people, have given a boy in exchange [as payment] for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink” (Joel 3:1–3).

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near” (Luke 21:20). Jerusalem has been partially surrounded by armies in recent years, but we will see Jerusalem completely surrounded by armies. Notice this prophecy: “Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains” (v. 21). Those who trust in God, those who believe in Christ, those who are true Christians will understand what to do when these things occur because they will have been studying these various signs as Jesus said. They will have been watching and praying. They will flee to the mountains. “Let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance” (vv. 21–22).

So in the future, Jerusalem, the political and emotional capital of Israel, will be overrun by her enemies, until Christ returns and fights the aggressor nations (Zechariah 14:3). Once again the city of prophets, kings and the Messiah will be brought down and punished horribly. This major event in the prophetic end-time scenario will witness further outrage.

11. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

When the city of Jerusalem is attacked and conquered, the foreign occupying power will begin what the Bible calls the “abomination of desolation.” What is that? Jesus Christ describes this abomination of desolation in Matthew 24:15–20. Start with verse 15: “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation’ [a loathsome contamination], spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... then let

those who are in Judea [today known as the modern state of Israel] flee to the mountains.” The people in Judea are instructed, when they see this terrible abomination of desolation, to flee to the mountains.

Prophecy foretells that Jerusalem is again to be surrounded by armies (Zechariah 12:2), and an idol will be set up in a holy place. Jesus warns those who are faithful to escape quickly when this desecration takes place. “Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes” (Matthew 24:17–18). In other words, you are to get out immediately when you see this happening, because if you wait, it will be too late to escape safely. “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those with nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath [God’s people will be keeping the Sabbath]” (vv. 19–20).

There is a historical parallel to this end-time overthrow of Jerusalem and the erection of an idolatrous object on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. In the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, some 160 years before the First Coming of Christ, the pagan Seleucid Greeks sacrificed pigs as offerings upon the altar of God. A statue of Zeus, the chief Greek god, was set up. Something similar will occur once again. We are living during a time that is like the calm before a menacing, destructive storm. If you had been a Jew in Germany in 1935, would you have been alert to your people’s future destiny? Would you have taken appropriate action to save the lives of your family members? You need to be paying attention to what is happening in world events! The cost of ignorance, laxness or a dilatory attitude will be extremely high.

Remarkably, an important implication of Matthew 24:15 is that there will once again be animal sacrifices on an altar at Jerusalem’s Temple Mount dedicated to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel! Another scripture confirming this states: “And from the time that the daily

sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up...” (Daniel 12:11).

Since there is prophesied to be a place of sacrifice, many wonder if there will be a great temple raised up in Jerusalem. An alternative idea would be that there will be merely an altar set up, as happened when the Jews returned from their captivity in Babylon (Ezra 3:2). Watch for this in your world news. Prophecy clearly shows that the Jews will once again be sacrificing at Jerusalem. Whether in a temple or at a simple altar is not yet clear. The Jewish people—remember the Six Day War—move swiftly and courageously when they are urgent about something.

From the time that the daily sacrifices to God are stopped by a foreign aggressor (possibly by the coming “king of the North”) and the abomination of desolation is set up—“there shall be 1290 days” (Daniel 12:11). This scripture discusses a certain period of time after the abomination of desolation until the end of this present civilization when Christ returns to this earth as King of kings to usher in a genuinely new world order, the Kingdom of God.

“Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the 1335 days. But you,” God told Daniel to “go your way, till the end; for you shall rest” (Daniel 12:12–13). In other words, Daniel would not himself see the fulfillment of the prophecies God inspired through him. Daniel was to live out his days and die, never having understood the prophecy he was inspired to write down. But today, we can read Daniel’s words and understand, if we begin to walk with God and study these things thoroughly. We need to realize that we are living in momentous times when all these things are about to occur. Let that motivate us to really study the Bible. And most importantly of all, let us obey our God in all things!

12. THE COLLAPSE OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING NATIONS—THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Before the glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom, watch for the decline and eventual conquest of the English-speaking nations by their enemies! The biblical terminology for this event is “The Great Tribulation.”

Your Bible reveals that the worst, most indescribably terrifying time in the entire history of this planet is soon to occur. This terrifying time (the Great Tribulation) is also spoken of as the time of “Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7). It will be such an awful time that the destruction and genocide of World War II will seem like a picnic in comparison!

Let us, therefore, examine the scriptures dealing with this dramatic alteration in the world’s power structure—which, like a powerful steel trap, will suddenly spring upon an unsuspecting world! Most of us will live to see these cataclysmic times, whether we realize it or not. “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people” (Luke 21:23). When you really understand this prophecy, you can see that Jesus was speaking nationally of not only the Jews, but also of the other modern-day descendants of the ancient nation of Israel—among whom are the American and British-descended peoples.

Notice this same prophecy in a parallel account in Matthew: “For then will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved [alive]; but for the elect’s sake [for the sake of God’s people] those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:21–22).

In the past, it was not possible to exterminate all human life from this earth. You might have had a devastating war in Europe, or in the Middle East, but you would still have millions of people untouched elsewhere in the world in Africa, Asia or Australia, or in North and

South America. But Jesus prophesied of a unique time in the history of humanity. No nation can feel secure from the utter annihilation that is now possible by thermonuclear warfare!

In the 1950s, it finally became possible to blast all human life off this planet. During the last half-century, we have now multiplied our ability to assure our destruction many times over. Scientists tell us today that we now can erase all human life from this earth at least 20 times over! Christ is describing our time today! No Roman army of Jesus' day could ever boast of such murderous power.

Here is what the prophet Jeremiah said about this same time: “Now these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel [whose modern descendants include the United States, Great Britain and other nations of northwestern Europe] and Judah.... ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great [Jeremiah prophesied under inspiration] so that none is like it’” (Jeremiah 30:4–7). There has never been a time of trouble in human history like this one. Whose time of trouble does this terrible tribulation pertain to? It is the time of “Jacob’s trouble” (v. 7).

It will be a time of trouble so great that none is like it. There cannot be two times of trouble like this. This is the same time of trouble described in Matthew 24:21, the same time described in Mark 13 and Luke 21, the same time of trouble described back in Ezekiel 36 and Daniel 12 and elsewhere as the “Great Tribulation.” It is the time of God’s intervention to chastise His chosen people. Nevertheless, speaking of that woeful time of trouble, God says: “I will not make a complete end of you” (Jeremiah 30:11). So he will not utterly destroy us, but He will punish us severely—to shake us to the roots of our very being in order to wake us up. He will correct and humble His people in order to wake them up before it is too late!

This unprecedented time of trouble will be directed primarily against the American and British-descended Commonwealth peoples, though the other modern-day descendants of Israel will also have troubles. But why against these nations? Because the American and British-descended peoples have been recipients of God’s tremendous birthright promises as the descendants of the patriarch Joseph (Genesis 49:22–26). For more information, please request our booklet on this subject, The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy. In God’s eyes, blessings also impart responsibilities. We are not a favorite or pet people, but we have been chosen by God for a very special purpose. Regrettably, we have failed to fulfill that purpose. Let us understand why and what will happen.

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30)! May God Almighty speed that great day!

The Americans and British-descended Commonwealth peoples have been materially blessed above all nations on the earth for the last 200 years. Beginning a little more than 200 years ago, the English-speaking peoples wielded power that thwarted the belligerent, aggressive nations—the Central Powers in World War I and the Axis Powers in World War II. Twice in the 20th century, the English-speaking peoples have restored a warring world to a measure of peace and security. Yet in spite of that, most Americans and Britons, individually, have turned away from the true God. At most, they continue to praise the Lord hypocritically. “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines’” (Mark 7:6–7, NRSV).

There are numerous end-time prophecies that reveal to the American and British-descended peoples exactly what God Almighty says will happen to them—if they do not turn from their present wayward course of disobedience to Him and His commandments.

THE PIVOTAL OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

The pivotal scripture for understanding end-time prophecy is found in the Old Testament, in chapter 26 of the book of Leviticus. When we rightly understand our national identity, this prophetic chapter takes on new, urgent meaning. Here is basic, foundational information for modern Israel—among whom are to be counted the American people, and British-descended peoples of the Commonwealth nations. Those peoples are among the descendants of the so-called “Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.” This prophecy is talking about ancient Israel, and it is also speaking of their children and grandchildren at the end of this age!

We should watch for the fulfillment of those prophecies that foretell the downfall of the United States and Great Britain, insofar as their national prestige and power are concerned, even before their cities are totally demolished in a future round of world war—World War III—which will be the most deadly time humanity will ever experience.

Speaking of the coming end-time Great Tribulation, God says: “If you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you. I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you” (Leviticus 26:14–17). God Almighty says He will bring us down very low. If we continue transgressing His commandments, He will discipline us in more ways than we can begin

to imagine. He goes on to say: “And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more [or “sevenfold more” as many versions render it] for your sins. I will break the pride of your power” (vv. 18–19).

Our competitors for global power and influence are looking down on us with increasing glee as we stumble in resolving domestic and international problems. These things are happening to us because we have turned aside from God. We have not obeyed the God of our fathers.

In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are powerful prophetic warnings for us today, because God does not change (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). God promised that if we would obey Him, He would set us “high above all nations of the earth” (Deuteronomy 28:1). However, if we do not obey God and keep His commandments: “Cursed shall you be in the city” (v. 16). Are we cursed in our cities? Think about it. Millions of Americans are afraid to go out of their own homes at night. Elderly people and women and others all over this land are afraid to venture out in the evening—in this “land of the free, and the home of the brave.” We are locked in our homes like prisoners! No, we are not blessed in our towns and cities.

Further, our disobedience would bring upon us curses in our food supply, curses in sexual relations and curses in whatever policies or programs that we nationally attempt because we have turned aside from the Great God.

The growing effect of our national sins includes escalating crime, violence, marital infidelities, sexual perversions of all sorts, lying, cheating, stealing and every foul thing imaginable that is disgusting in the sight of a just and holy God. The selfishness and decadence of our “modern lifestyle”—which is based on egotistical pride and vanity—are gnawing like voracious termites at the structural frame

that holds in place the edifice of our national greatness. How long before our house collapses? Look around you and consider.

In spite of our great material blessings, the American and British-descended peoples have turned away from God. These once-great nations have plummeted in their moral standards and become nations of perverts, liars, thieves and murderers. And God will chastise these nations for their own good, as He rebukes and chastens every son He loves (Hebrews 12:6).

God says: “Therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness” (Deuteronomy 28:48). In other words, these English-speaking nations (including the Jews and others residing in them) will be taken into a terrible captivity. God says we will be “in need of all things; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you” (same verse). Is that plain enough? God will take us into national slavery. The Holocaust of World War II will seem mild in comparison. The English-speaking peoples will not all die, but they will no longer exist as nations, not as the United States of America and the British-descended nations of the Commonwealth, after an awful punishment from God Himself: “The Lord will bring a nation from far away, from the end of the earth, to swoop down on you like an eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand, a grim-faced nation showing no respect to the old or favor to the young” (Deuteronomy 28:49–50, NRSV). This aggressor will not be Mexico or some other nation nearby, but one from “afar”—from the end of the earth—from way over in Europe. This enemy will be “as swift as the eagle flies.” It is interesting that three major nations on earth use an eagle as their symbol. One is the United States, another is Russia and the third is Germany. This aggressor will be “a nation whose language you will not understand” (v. 49), “a nation of fierce countenance” (v. 50)—meaning a very warlike nation.

God reveals that the American and British-descended peoples will be besieged in their own gates (v. 52), and will be so desperately hungry that they will resort to horrific measures in the times to come—even turning to hideous cannibalism (v. 53).

Finally, these peoples will be taken into slavery by a coming great power that is now beginning to rise up in Europe!

GOD PROMISES TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE!

God says He will humble us and correct us, but He also promises to deliver us from all our troubles—when we truly learn our lesson and turn from our many abominations!

“And at that time your people [all the descendants of the patriarch Israel] shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:1–2).

The time setting is unmistakable. Daniel is talking about the resurrection to immortality of the saints of God, which shall occur at the seventh or “last trump” when Jesus returns to this earth with all His mighty angels, to establish the Kingdom of God to rule for 1,000 years (1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4; Revelation 20:4). Daniel is not writing of something that happened way back in the Middle Ages. This prophecy concerning the Great Tribulation period leads right up to the glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ at the very end of this present evil world (Matthew 24:21–30).

As the foregoing prophecy reveals, God Almighty Himself will order one of His mighty angels, Michael, to stand “watch over” the people of Israel, who at that time will have had their power broken, and will have been scattered into many nations as captive slaves.

God's miraculous deliverance of His people is clearly revealed: "Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the Lord, 'nor be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, and no one shall make him afraid. For I am with you... to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished'" (Jeremiah 30:10–11).

God goes on to explain how He will greatly bless His people, once they have truly learned their lesson: "Then out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who make merry; I will multiply them, and they shall not diminish; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small" (v. 19).

What will be the final state of the peoples of Israel, after God delivers them from their captivity at the hands of a cruel oppressor? "Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off [includes the British peoples], and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.' For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, streaming to the goodness of the Lord—for wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd; their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all.

"Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow. I will satiate the soul of the priests [God's servants] with abundance, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:10–14).

However, the bad news prophesied in Scripture—of a terrifying time of trouble that will soon spring upon an unsuspecting, heedless

world—must come first! What a tragedy that we will not hear and return to our God! That time will be the worst time of trouble this earth will ever experience (Matthew 24:21; Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1)!

But the ultimate in good news is that Scripture also predicts the imminent return of Jesus Christ to this earth. He will deliver the modern-day descendants of Israel (of whom the nations of northwestern Europe, and also the Jewish people, are part) from a horrible time of captivity and trouble. God says He will sweep aside all human governments (Revelation 11:15–18; 19:11–21). Christ will then banish Satan, so that he will no longer be able to mislead the nations (Revelation 20:1–3), and after removing Satan from power over the nations, the Great God will establish the Kingdom of God upon this sin-cursed, war-torn earth (Isaiah 11:1–9; Revelation 20:4).

The prophet Daniel also wrote the good news of the establishment of the glorious Kingdom of God: “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Daniel 2:44).

Furthermore, Daniel says: “Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Daniel 7:27).

Finally, the nations shall have passed through the Great Tribulation, and will have arrived at the time the prophets foretold—the establishment of the Kingdom of God to rule all nations—bringing peace, prosperity, health and happiness to all nations!

13. HEAVENLY SIGNS AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

Next—after the Great Tribulation—there are to be dramatic astronomical signs in the heavens visible to everyone on earth. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Matthew 24:29).

God really will intervene in human affairs! And He will even intervene with nature and show this generation that there is a real God. Even after the modern nations of Israel go into captivity, God will not be through yet. Though our nations have professed to being “Christian,” they are in fact filled with deceit, vanity, avarice and violence.

Notice: “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind” (Revelation 6:12–13).

Here are incredible parts of a crescendo leading up to Christ’s return. Almost like a vast fireworks display in the evening sky, we will literally see the transition from the Great Tribulation to intensified punishments directly from God on any who are still unrepentant in defiant rebellion against their Creator. Notice verse 17: “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

The six seals outlined here describe the same events that Jesus had told His disciples would occur at the end. As the seals are opened we first find false prophets; second, wars; third, famines; fourth, disease epidemics; fifth, a Great Tribulation (including the martyrdom of the saints). The sixth seal is the heavenly signs. In Joel 2, we also see that the heavenly signs occur before the great and terrible Day of the Lord. “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord” (v. 31). We already saw in Matthew 24 that the heavenly signs come after

the Great Tribulation. What yet remains before the Kingdom of God can be fully established?

14. THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

What will happen after the first six seals of Revelation 6 are opened? “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Revelation 6:17).

Revelation 7 then describes the protection of the 144,000 and the great multitude, Revelation 8 describes the opening of the seventh seal—God’s direct punishment on a rebellious world. This consists of the seven trumpet plagues described in chapters 8 and 9 of Revelation.

Finally, in Revelation 11:15, the Seventh Trumpet—the famous “Last Trumpet”—is sounded. Christ returns in power and glory. But even as He returns, the deceived nations of mankind will fight and curse Him who is their very Creator! (Revelation 16:21; 17:14).

So, as He comes, Christ pours out the awesome seven last plagues described in Revelation 15:1 and 16:1–21. Study these passages. These plagues will be indescribably horrible!

But even here, God—who rebukes and chastens every son He loves (Hebrews 12:5–6)—is doing this to bring men and nations to their senses! As you read the passages in Revelation, you see that every mountain and every island on earth will be shaken. There will be virtually nothing left of their former world for hard-headed, vile, rebellious men to hang on to. Everything around them will be removed or destroyed. Proud men will come to realize that they are nothing compared with the Creator God of the universe.

Hundreds of millions of men and women will finally acknowledge, as did Job: “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5–6). In a way they have never done before, human beings will

truly repent and be willing to listen to the Truth—to listen to God’s true ministers and teachers and obey their Maker.

Then they will truly understand these statements of God in Isaiah: “For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made” (Isaiah 57:15–16).

Finally, then, humanity as a whole will have been made humble and teachable. It will yield to the Living Christ and the resurrected saints who will join Him in ruling this entire earth in Tomorrow’s World. This world government established by Christ will be known as the Kingdom of God and it will be the active, hands-on, governing leadership of God on this earth!

WHAT LIES JUST AHEAD?

So, what will happen? Unless we, as nations, fully repent of transgressing God’s laws, the future of America and the British-descended Commonwealth countries looks grim indeed. For every great nation and empire in history that has descended into the depths of immorality, like we are now experiencing, has come to an end.

Will America’s or Britain’s preachers wake up and begin to preach obedience to the laws of God? Will our political leaders turn to their Creator in true godly fear, making God and His ways a vital part of our national life? Will the educators, the psychologists and sociologists begin to build their concepts on the foundations of Scripture? What do you think?

The answer seems obvious. We, along with most of our fellow English-speaking nations around the world, are in for a time of national calamity—actually, national punishment—unprecedented in the annals of modern human history. Month by month, year by year, more and more things will somehow go wrong for us. Our national debt will increase. Our immorality and crime rate will increase. Our cities will become even less safe, increasingly being racked by lawless hoodlums, gang warfare and race riots—and finally food riots, because of the impending drought and famine prophesied to strike our nations.

Describing this very situation that will occur in the “latter days,” God states: “And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them” (Deuteronomy 4:27–31).

Yes, if we do not heed—nationally or individually—the warning going out now and over the months and years just ahead, we will have to absorb the full brunt of God’s corrective punishment.

At the same time, you can be certain there will be other voices of lying deception saying not to worry, everything will be fine. “‘For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously with Me,’ says the Lord.... and said, ‘It is not He’” (Jeremiah 5:11–12).

In other words, people will say “these prophecies are not real, God is not speaking; this is just some doom and gloom preacher talking

nonsense.” The skeptics will say, “Neither will evil come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine” (v. 12). Yes, even false ministers will speak evil of God’s true ministry. “And the prophets become wind, for the word is not in them.” In modern jargon, they are saying that God’s servants are a bunch of “windbags” to whom they should not pay attention, “for the word [of God] is not in them” (v. 13).

God clearly forewarned us that there will be cynics and doubters who will contradict and ridicule God’s warning through His true servants: “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle... that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets... knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation’” (2 Peter 3:1–4).

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Now, you should realize that our nations are in mortal peril. Everything you have ever known will be changed over the next decade or two. Your future, and the future of your children and grandchildren, is really at stake.

There is a real God in charge. He rules over men, and over the nations of men, perhaps more directly and more profoundly than many of you have realized. Turn to Daniel 4:25 where Daniel, talking to King Nebuchadnezzar, said: “They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.” God speaking through Daniel said, “The Most High rules in the kingdom of men.” God gives office and authority to those whom He chooses. “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings” (Daniel 2:20–21). God is in charge of governments and He often determines the outcome of elections

and the rise of literal kings, monarchs and dictators in the nations throughout this earth.

We need to have faith in God's power. The Eternal God is the true God who rules over all, and He does intervene in this world's rotten, misguided society in order to accomplish His purpose.

So, notice what God says about these societies and about your near future: "But take heed to yourselves," Jesus said, "lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing" (Luke 21:34). Perhaps you might say, "Well, there are a few years yet to go." Yes, there are a few—maybe very few. But do not let your heart be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the cares of this life and that day come upon you unexpectedly. For it will come "as a snare"—like a deadly trap that catches an animal before it realizes what hit it. Do not let that happen to you. Christ is coming and His coming will be "as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth" (v. 35) who are unprepared or deceived.

Even if our nations as a whole will not repent, you can certainly change—and you can be forgiven and protected during the coming Great Tribulation. Jesus Himself gave this assurance. Write to the regional office nearest you to request our free booklet, Restoring Original Christianity. You can also read it online or order a copy at our Web site, <https://www.tomorrowworld.org>. This informative booklet will tell you in much greater detail what you should do.

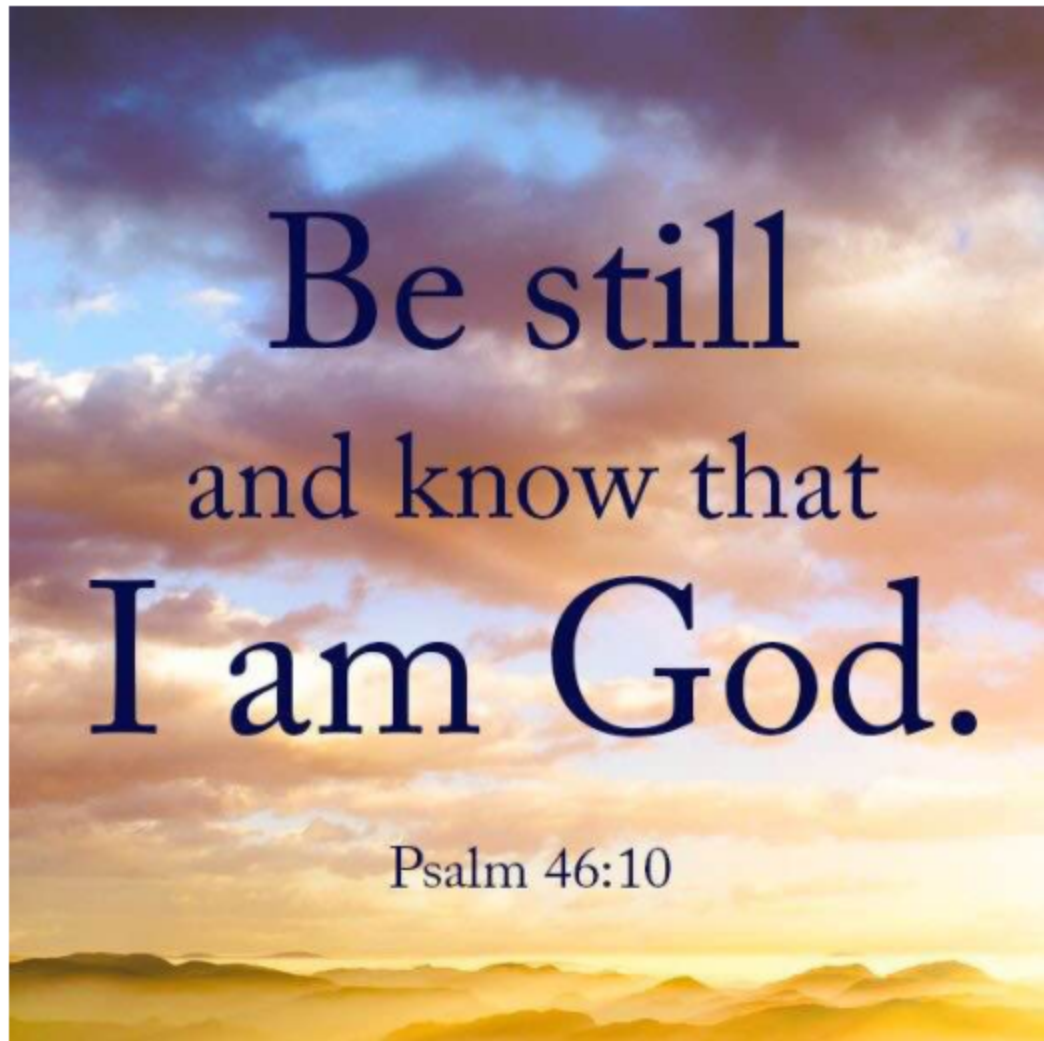
Jesus commands us to "watch." Prove the things in this booklet from the very word of God. Look these things up so you will understand. Let the Bible talk to you. Those who trust in God—those who believe in Christ, those who are bona fide Christians—will understand when these things occur, because they will have been studying these many signs as Jesus said.

So, we are to watch these events, praying that God would help us surrender our lives to Him and His Son Jesus Christ, and that we will accept Him as our Savior and our Boss, our Lord, our Master, our High Priest and our coming King. Then, through His Spirit within us, we must keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight (1 John 3:22). Thus, we can begin to walk with the God who gives us life and breath and truly prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Personally, you can awaken yourself to an intense awareness of what is happening. You can begin to diligently study the Bible and see what it really says. Cry out to God in earnest prayer! Ask Him for guidance and strength to do what is right! Seek Him for deliverance for you and your family in the turbulent years ahead! Then you can turn to Him with all your heart and start obeying His laws. You can accept the true Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and surrender to let Him live His life in you.

As you sincerely seek God and believe in the true Gospel—which Jesus Christ Himself taught—you will learn what the Lord requires of you. Do it and He will enrich your life with understanding and purpose. He will grant you the gift of eternal life in His soon-coming Kingdom (John 3:16; Romans 6:23). And He will deliver you from the coming worldwide catastrophe Jesus so vividly predicted.

As Jesus Christ Himself instructed: “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36)!



***“Be always on the watch,
and pray that you may be able
to escape all that is about to happen,
and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”***

Luke 31:26

***“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your
Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had
known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept
watch and would not have let his house be broken into.
So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man
will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”***

Matthew 24:42-44