



FROM THE EDITOR **GERALD FLURRY**

A Tiny Artifact Proclaims a Powerfully Encouraging Message

“Let the stones speak.” —Dr. Eilat Mazar

FOR MORE THAN FOUR YEARS, I HAVE EXPLAINED THAT UNITED States President Donald Trump fulfills a role prophesied in the Bible of an end-time “King Jeroboam.” You can find this stunning prophecy in Amos 7, which talks extensively about this national leader.

This prophecy is connected to 2 Kings 14, which records the history of King Jeroboam II in the eighth century B.C. As Israel’s longest-serving monarch, this man presided over a remarkable national resurgence in the kingdom. Like much of Israel and Judah’s ancient history, the events in 2 Kings 14 are dual, which means there is also an *end-time* fulfillment. (Read our article explaining this on page 23 of this *Trumpet* issue.)

Amos 7 and 2 Kings 14 are crucial passages to understanding Donald Trump’s presidency, the current political situation in America, and even broader trends in the world.

Even now, with Joe Biden in the White House, I continue



SEPTEMBER 2021
VOL. 32, NO. 8
CIRC. 240,596

FROM THE EDITOR 1

A Tiny Artifact Proclaims a Powerfully Encouraging Message

The Tyranny of ‘Science’ Falsely So Called 4

- The NHS: Britain’s False Religion 10

Germany Transformed by Crises 11

The Church That Ruled the World 16

- Seven Resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire 21

Why Is July 4 Suddenly Scandalous? 22

‘At the Verge of Impossible’ 24

The Ultimate Plan of God 27

The Modern King Jeroboam II 30

WORLDWATCH 37

SOCIETYWATCH 41

PRINCIPLES OF LIVING 42

Beware Our Present-Tense Culture

COMMENTARY 44

A Humble Request

to believe Donald Trump will once again become America's president. The reason is that I understand and believe God's prophecy in Amos 7. If only more people really *believed* the Bible, they would have so much more understanding and hope!

Right now, the situation may look dire for Mr. Trump, since he no longer leads the nation and his enemies are so widespread and fierce. Events appear to undermine the prophecy in Amos 7, yet neither God nor His prophecies have changed—which means I cannot change my view either.

Late last year, as it seemed that evidence disproving this prophecy was piling up, we learned about a very special discovery in Israel. I BELIEVE GOD HAD A HAND IN THIS DISCOVERY.

In the world of archaeology, the discovery and authentication of a seal stamp (bullae) mentioning a biblical king is rare. The last time it happened was in 2015, when it was revealed that archaeologists had uncovered a bullae mentioning Judah's King Hezekiah. Last December was another one of those rare occasions. What was the name of the biblical king inscribed on this seal?

IT WAS KING JEROBOAM II!

The Lion of Israel

Amanda Borschel-Dan, one of Israel's finest archaeology journalists, wrote this about the bullae: "What is arguably the earliest inscribed clay seal impression from the land of Israel—USED AT THE COURT OF ISRAELITE KING JEROBOAM II—has been authenticated after years of strict laboratory testing under the supervision of Ben-Gurion University Prof. Yuval Goren" (*Times of Israel*, Dec. 10, 2020).

The timing of this announcement was interesting. This bullae has been around for a long time. In fact, it was purchased from a Bedouin antiquities merchant in the 1980s, more than 30 years ago. For years, the man who purchased this tiny artifact assumed it was a forgery. There was no record of where it came from or how it was discovered. He paid about 10 shekels for it—a few cents.

About five years ago, Prof. Yuval Goren from Ben-Gurion University began testing the

seal impression. The procedure was intense. Professor Goren "followed a protocol he had forged over the past decade, which includes a series of overlapping tests from varied scientific disciplines." Only after five years of scrupulous testing was it announced that the bullae was authentic. The media in Israel and worldwide published many articles about it.

This wonderful artifact brings King Jeroboam II to life. But it also brings to life Amos 7 and 2 Kings 14, TWO PROPHECIES ABOUT AN END-TIME JEROBOAM II!

I don't believe the timing of this announcement was a coincidence.

Faith is "the evidence of things *not* seen" (Hebrews 11:1). My faith is in God's Word—*not* in a tiny 2,500-year-old artifact. However, such a discovery can be an inspiring miracle that God often gives to those who believe His message. That encourages us to build even more faith. As our faith grows, so do the miracles. Then our Bible comes alive as never before!

The oval-shaped bullae is small: roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ inch tall and 1 inch wide. Though tiny, it packs a powerful message!

On the front is an image of a roaring lion standing with its tail raised. Above the lion is a paleo-Hebrew inscription that reads, "I'Shema eved Yerov'am," which means "Belonging to Shema the servant/minister of Jeroboam." This bullae didn't belong to King Jeroboam personally; it belonged to a servant, or minister, who worked with the king.

The word *Shema* is used many times in the Bible. It means *hear*, or *listen*. This is the word in Deuteronomy 6:4, where God says, "Hear, O Israel ..." The word is used 10 times in the book of Amos, including in chapter 7. "Now therefore *hear* thou the word of the Lord ..." (verse 16). Do you think God might be trying to tell us something with this bullae? I do.

Its depiction of the lion also fits nicely with the biblical record. The book of Amos, written during the time of King Jeroboam II, mentions *lion* five times—a lot for such a short book. Between this seal and the writings of Amos, it's clear the lion symbol carried great significance for Israel under Jeroboam II.

To many of his supporters—and there are *tens of millions* of them—Donald Trump possesses the qualities of a lion. Last year, one of these supporters posted a photo on Twitter of the president casting a shadow of a lion. (Remarkably, the shape of the image was similar to the one inscribed on the Jeroboam seal.) The message praised Mr. Trump as having “the courage of a lion.” It is hard to disagree with this evaluation. Over the past four years, and certainly in recent months, Mr. Trump has been fighting with the courage and spirit of a lion. It’s an admirable quality, one that we all need at this time.

A Message the World Needs

When bullae like this are uncovered, they don’t receive enough attention, especially outside of Israel. But the discovery of the seal mentioning Jeroboam II truly is special, and its discovery carries a lot of meaning for our day. That bulla bears a message of tremendous hope—a *message the world desperately needs!*

With this bulla, I believe God is encouraging those who truly believe the Bible to hold fast to His prophecy in Amos 7. The people who understand Amos 7 and recognize Donald Trump as the end-time Jeroboam were encouraged and excited by this news. God wants us to see what He is doing with Jeroboam and with His people at this time.

King Jeroboam II was not a righteous man. Still, God used him to *save Israel* for a time. 2 Kings 14 says, “For *the Lord saw the affliction of Israel*, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And *the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven*: but HE SAVED THEM BY THE HAND OF JEROBOAM the son of Joash” (verses 26-27).

Anciently, the kingdom of Israel was in bitter affliction—verging on collapse—when Jeroboam II came to power. You could say the same about America (and the rest of the modern nations descended from biblical Israel) today: IT IS IN BITTER AFFLICTION! If the radical left has its way, America, Britain and the State of Israel (biblical Judah) will be fundamentally transformed.

NOW THAT THE RADICAL LEFT HAS CONTROL, THE “AFFLICTION” IS QUICKLY GETTING MUCH WORSE!

The forces attacking America today are terribly destructive—and the worst of them are *within the nation*. They want to destroy traditional America, especially its Judeo-Christian heritage and its history with God. That’s what the “deep state” is all about; that’s what Antifa and Black Lives Matter are all about; that’s what the attacks on the Constitution are all about; that’s what the destruction of the statues and heritage sites are all about; that’s what the effort to rewrite history is all about. It’s all an attempt to “BLOT OUT THE NAME OF ISRAEL FROM UNDER HEAVEN”—ALL OVER THE EARTH!

Can anyone looking at events in Washington, D.C., and America right now deny that the nation is suffering “bitter affliction”?

Amos 7:8 says, “And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: *I will not again pass by them any more.*” This is God speaking! He has warned these nations numerous times to try to wake them up, but they have ignored those warnings.

So here in Amos 7 He says, *I am going to warn these people one last time!*

And notice: THIS FINAL WARNING OCCURS DURING THE TIME OF AN END-TIME JEROBOAM. “And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against THE HOUSE OF JEROBOAM with the sword” (verse 9). When God says, “I will not again warn them any more,” He is talking about the *time of Jeroboam*.

In spite of what virtually everyone believes, Mr. Trump’s job is not over. Since the 2020 election, he has been roaring like a lion. This is the message God wants us to take from the Jeroboam bulla: GOD IS NOT DONE USING MR. TRUMP! Despite all physical appearances, know that God is directing it all!

In Amos 3:7-8, God says, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?”

This is a prophetic message the whole world needs to hear! With the discovery of this bulla, God is bolstering that message delivered by His people. This is certainly an encouraging discovery at this time, and it shows God's hand in world events.

As difficult as recent times have been, the Bible says world conditions are about to get much worse. The Prophet Daniel warns us that the people of Israel (America and Britain) and Judah (Jews) are barreling toward a time of destruction "such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Daniel 12:1). The prophecy in Amos 7 ends with America falling into terrible calamity and horrible suffering.

These are urgent and sobering prophecies, but they are also exceedingly bright and

hopeful. Never forget the truth revealed in Amos 7: GOD IS DELIVERING A FINAL WARNING! HE IS SO LOVING AND MERCIFUL AND COMPASSIONATE. AND HE IS GIVING THE PEOPLE ONE FINAL OPPORTUNITY TO REPENT, TO CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR, TO STOP SINNING, TO RETURN TO HIM!

Donald Trump is going to return. When he does, a lot of people, especially the Jews, will be pleased. But when this happens, we must remember Amos 7 and 2 Kings 14. GOD will be the one behind Mr. Trump and what he accomplishes!

No politician can save America or Israel. The ultimate savior will be the *real* "lion of Judah" (Genesis 49:9-12; Revelation 5:5)—Jesus Christ. Do you hear that lion roaring? This is only the beginning. Who can but prophesy? ■

The Tyranny of 'Science' Falsely So Called

Society is making sacrifices to a false messiah.

BY STEPHEN FLURRY

“A LOT OF WHAT YOU'RE SEEING AS ATTACKS on me, quite frankly, are attacks on science.” That is Dr. Anthony Fauci's description of Dr. Anthony Fauci, from a June interview. “Because all of the things that I have spoken about, consistently from the very beginning, have been fundamentally based on science. ... [I]f you are trying to, you know, get at me as a public health official and a scientist, you're really attacking not only Dr. Anthony Fauci, you're attacking science.”

Anthony Fauci is an alumnus of the College of the Holy Cross and a doctor of Cornell University Medical College. He has received 50 honorary doctorates from universities in the United States and other countries. According to a government website, he is the

132nd most-cited author of 992,000 authors in general and internal medicine, the 32nd most-cited living researcher, the 20th most-cited author of 2.4 million in the field of research and experimental medicine, the ninth most-cited author out of 2.5 million immunologists, a presenter of major lectures around the globe, and a recipient of the National Medal of Science, the George M. Kober Medal, the Mary Woodard Lasker Award, the Albany Medical Center Prize, the Robert Koch Gold Medal, the Prince Mahidol Award, the Canada Gairdner Global Health Award, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor awarded by the U.S. government. He is also the highest paid of all the government's 2 million-plus employees.

By all these measures, Dr. Anthony Fauci is a success. This is why he has come to the forefront of the government in its response to the COVID-19 outbreak. And apparently, this is why he equates the field of scientific study to himself.

Yet well-paid, award-winning, extensively cited, doctor-times-50 Anthony Fauci is also the man who initially helped fund the lab where COVID-19 likely originated, then opposed the lab-leak theory; who initially said the outbreak would likely remain minor, then promoted “15 days to slow the spread,” and later advocated unprecedented lockdowns for more than a year. He is the man who initially advised that masks were unnecessary, then claimed that he had been misleading people so that they would leave enough masks for health-care workers, and still later said that the effectiveness of double masks was “common sense.” He is the man now telling the world that he has spoken “consistently from the very beginning,” and has, at the same time, “evolved” his advice.

Some people advance through the educational, medical, political or other systems of our societies and become what we consider elite, wise, high-minded. Yet this does not immunize them from being wrong.

The Apostle Paul wrote this about some people in his day: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22). Look at the elites in the news today. Don’t these words apply to them?

Trusting Experts

The scientific community is probably the second-most-trusted institution in America, after the U.S. military. Only 20 percent of Americans say they trust the government, but 44 percent say they have a great deal of confidence in the scientific community.

Faith in scientific experts has remained steady for the past 50 years—even *after* the drastic Fauci-recommended, government-enforced, COVID-19 lockdown measures. A survey of more than 20,000 Americans conducted by Prof. David Lazer found that both Democrats and Republicans trusted scientists and doctors to handle the COVID-19 pandemic

more than any other individual or institution, including state governments and the federal government.

This faith has remained despite repeated misjudgments by scientists and public health experts over the past two years that have demonstrated that they do not really know how to deal with this pandemic. Claiming their decisions were “backed by science,” health experts have recommended a labyrinth of contradictory rules and insisted on phenomenally oppressive measures that have shuttered businesses, devastated education, upended millions of lives, and created far more grievous problems than they have solved.

This is to say nothing of the fact that scientists, including Dr. Fauci himself, almost certainly *caused* the pandemic.

One of Dr. Fauci’s many articles was published in 2012 by the American Society for Microbiology. There he explicitly wrote that “gain of function” research on bat coronaviruses was *worth the risk of a pandemic* if it increases our knowledge of diseases. The government nevertheless banned “gain of function” research only two years later. But Dr. Fauci and his colleagues at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases found a loophole. They now admit to U.S. lawmakers that, under Fauci’s guidance, the National Institute of Health earmarked \$600,000 for the Wuhan Institute of Virology and funneled it to the Chinese lab through the nonprofit EcoHealth Alliance. This money was used to study whether bat coronaviruses could be transmitted to humans. Now even leftists who recently scoffed at the lab leak as a conspiracy theory admit it is likely a fact.

If it is true that COVID-19 originated in a lab at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, then Dr. Fauci may have directly contributed to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic by funding this research.

Yet for many, their devotion is unshaken. Mask mandates, social-distancing measures, school closures, business lockdowns: Millions have submitted to and been subjected to these acts of “faith in Fauci.” Americans have taken on \$6 trillion more in debt and sacrificed their

economy before a priesthood of scientific experts for salvation from a pandemic that those experts likely caused!

Consequences

There is no evidence that COVID-19 is substantially more contagious or deadly than a normal flu, which infects some 9 to 45 million Americans each year. There is no evidence that wearing a paper or cloth mask stops the spread of a 20-nanometer coronavirus particle. But scientists, flanked by leftist politicians and progressive media, pushed these drastic, catastrophic interventions with stunning self-assurance, quashing any dissenting concerns about the broader consequences.

Those broader consequences were colossal. In addition to the financial and economic disruptions, and the physical and mental health problems caused by compulsory social isolation, these lockdowns helped politicians push last-minute changes to mail-in ballot rules that helped throw the 2020 presidential election into chaos.

Is it a coincidence that the dire predictions pushed by scientific experts have had major *political* ramifications? Is it a coincidence that the solutions demanded by the press and the political left are massive *socialistic interventions*? Or is it more reasonable to think that the scientific community is just as fallible—even biased and politically motivated—as every other government institution?

Consider the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recent series of mixed messages about who should wear face masks. In early 2021, as more people were vaccinated, many wondered when mask mandates would be lifted. If the vaccine was as effective as the experts claimed, why wear the mask? In May, the CDC revised its guidelines, prompting Joe Biden to announce, "If you are fully vaccinated, you no longer need to wear a mask." Just two months later, however, the science again changed. In July, the CDC discovered that vaccinated individuals could still contract, carry and spread COVID-19. Back to the masks! Are you following the science?

Anthony Fauci defended the CDC, saying they

weren't flip-flopping. "They're dealing with new information that the science is providing," he said. But on the day that the CDC reversed its mask-wearing guidance, they did not publish any new research. Even the *Washington Post* asked, "Where's the data?"

After the CDC's flip-flop, a reporter called out Joe Biden: "You said if you were fully vaccinated, you no longer need to wear a mask." Biden's response: "I didn't say that."

Even when the experts are plainly wrong, they're still right! To criticize them is to attack science—and truth.

And *the same week* that the new CDC guidance came out—effectively showing that vaccines do not prevent people from contracting and spreading coronavirus—Joe Biden announced strict new measures cracking down on all unvaccinated federal workers. The contradictions are head-spinning.

This pandemic is a massive and painful case study proving that Americans' faith in the scientific community is misplaced.

In reality, science stands exposed as a false messiah.

An Exact Description

The Bible describes our situation perfectly. It prophesies of the society that would exist "in the last days." It says that among those who are "lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers" and even "traitors," there are those who are "HIGHMINDED" (2 Timothy 3:1-4). These verses apply to the "perilous times" of *our* generation. This perfectly describes many of the educated elites behind the COVID-19 pandemic.

God also inspired Paul to write this insightful admonition to his assistant: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

Science falsely so called!

The New King James Version translates verse 20, "avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge." The Greek word for "science" in

this verse is *gnosis*, which means knowledge.

True science is true knowledge. Our Creator intends us to receive *true* education, engage in *true* scientific study, and acquire *true* knowledge about the creation around us. But there is such a thing as *science, falsely so called*. In fact, science falsely so called dominates our society. And in recent months, it is increasingly turning into a tyranny!

Why is this?

In these “last days” of human civilization, scientists so called assume the nonexistence of the Creator. They are almost all taught and trained to reject revelation from God and God’s Word and to deny God’s existence. This rejection of God is the *very foundation* of human knowledge production.

Scientists scorn the idea that creation came from a Creator and are thus compelled to devise explanations for how creation came about on its own. Ignoring and suppressing all evidence to the contrary, they accept as absolute fact the alternative faith of godless evolution. Unable to support that theory with any of the proof they insist on in all other scientific inquiry, they contradict their own standards and the foundation for true science. Nevertheless, they thereby anoint themselves—along with their high-minded observations and reasonings—as the highest authority in the universe!

This is why science and academia are so prone to, as the New Living Translation renders it in verse 20, “godless, foolish discussions.” Scientists and other experts have knowledge, but much of it is *false* knowledge. It is filled with authoritative pronouncements that conflict with other statements of irrefutable fact. We are floating in a flood of information that is truth mixed with error, good mixed with evil.

The Traditions of Men

Read what the Bible says about knowledge and so-called experts, and ask yourself if it doesn’t perfectly describe the intellectual arrogance motivating the authoritarian scientific regime increasingly dominating our society.

Paul wrote that those who reject God’s truth

are conceited, ignorant and passionate for controversy and argument, which leads to envy, dissension, insults and insinuations (1 Timothy 6:3-4). He decried “[p]erverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness”—and concludes with the sage counsel: “from such withdraw thyself” (verse 5).

During Jesus Christ’s day, the governing elites were knowledgeable, highly acclaimed, wealthy and powerful. They even believed in God and devoted much of their lives to their religion. They excelled within that system. They gained status, respect and much more. Yet religious as they were, they were steeped in intellectual vanity. They and others supposed they were godly—yet when they encountered knowledge from the very Son of God, they wanted to *destroy* it and destroy Him!

In Mark 7:7-9, Christ said, “Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.”

In Matthew 11:24, Christ gave this shocking warning: “[I]t shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.” My father quoted this remarkable passage in “The Fatal Flaw in Modern Science” and wrote, “Intellectual vanity is more dangerous than the sexual sins of Sodom!” (*Trumpet*, January 2018).

In verse 25, Jesus thanked God the Father for *hiding* the truth from the elites and *revealing* it to the lowly.

These people were not Satan worshipers, as we usually think of the term, yet Jesus Christ told them to their faces, “Ye are of your father the devil He ... abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him ...” (John 8:44). What a revealing statement! The devil doesn’t just inspire “satanic” people—he influences *everyone* (see 2 Corinthians 4:4 and Revelation 12:9).

For someone who has excelled in the tradition of men, who holds 50 honorary degrees, it is easy to assume that he is like a god. That

is how he can say, *I am science! I am the truth!* while he deceives people who face a society-wide life-and-death situation.

This is deeply ingrained in human nature. Paul encountered it in Athens among the intellectuals of Greece: “[A]ll the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21). These thinkers devoted their lives to gaining new knowledge. They were amazed by the human mind, but they worshiped it rather than worshiping God and building God’s character. As Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in “The Modern Athenians in Today’s Universities,” our educational system *worships* the human mind!

Our system of education is founded on this belief. It exalts knowledge and *science falsely so called*. It worships it as if it were a messiah! This is why, despite producing amazing advancements, it has also propagated egregious evils. Being smart and being good are two different things. Many very intelligent people have done very evil things!

How deep does this fatal flaw go?

The Origin of the Scientific Method

Genesis 3 records Satan the devil subtly reasoning with the first woman ever created. The ultimate choice Adam and Eve had to make was this: *Whom would they believe?* God gave them the choice to believe Him and obey Him. Satan gave them the choice to reject God, promising, “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (verse 5).

That is an appeal to the human *mind and intellect*. It is an appeal to disbelieve and disobey the God who *created* that mind and intellect. It is an appeal to decide good and evil for yourself, to experiment as you see fit, to set your own boundaries.

Verse 6 says, “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

“They pioneered in deciding for themselves

what is *right* and what is *wrong*—what is righteousness and what is sin!” Mr. Armstrong wrote in *The Missing Dimension in Sex*. “And humanity has been doing what seems right in its own eyes ever since. And how did they do it? They 1) rejected revelation, 2) used observation, 3) used experimentation and 4) used human reason. And *that* is precisely the ‘scientific’ method used by modern science today!”

The false “scientific method” started with the first human beings! They rejected revelation from God and relied instead on their own five senses and human minds. This marked the foundation of the world as we know it! Human beings have continued to build civilization by rejecting God’s revealed truth and relying on observation, experimentation and human reasoning. And what we have constructed is increasingly unstable—and ready to collapse!

What a powerful insight from the Bible. God is not the only spirit being out there. The same spirit being that gave Adam and Eve false education is still educating people today. That is why our society is the way it is!

Philosophy and Pride

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8). *Philosophy* means “love of wisdom,” but this field is just as fallible, flawed and self-contradictory as science and education.

“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For *the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men...” (1 Corinthians 3:18-21). This is wisdom so called, that is, “the wisdom of this world” (e.g. 1 Corinthians 2:6).

Our carnal human minds *naturally* resist believing, honoring and obeying God. “For although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their

senseless minds were darkened” (Romans 1:21; Revised Standard Version). Human beings can think deeply, but if we don’t repent humbly toward God, we worship the self and consider the self the final authority. All our thinking, wisdom and expert opinions based on that is ultimately futile.

Scholars in science and other fields pride themselves on pursuing knowledge. What always bubbles to the surface is *pride*. Intellectual vanity breeds pride in our trifling accomplishments, contempt for God, and other evils.

Verse 22 states: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” The Bible repeatedly warns against trusting our own reasoning. Proverbs 28:26 says, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.” The Prophet Isaiah wrote, “Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:21).

“God is emphatically not opposed to knowledge and understanding,” Mr. Armstrong wrote in 1978. “But modern ‘scholarship’ speaks a language all its own. ... It is not only a manner of speaking and writing. It is a way of thinking—an attitude. And I will say bluntly it is injected by Satan. It is a form of *intellectual vanity!* ... [O]nce a ‘scholar’ he will seldom change his mind. He is right—he knows he is right—others are wrong—his intellectual vanity will not let him admit error.”

An honest mind that is free from Satan’s self-glorifying influence recognizes the obvious, inescapable truth that we were made by a Creator, that we are fallible, and that we need education from Him.

“Today the truth appears as mere foolishness to the highly educated in this world!” Mr. Armstrong wrote in a Nov. 29, 1946, co-worker letter. “None but the fool says ‘there is no God.’ Yet surveys show most college graduates say it—educated fools!”

God Chooses the ‘Foolish’

In this same letter, Mr. Armstrong announced that he was establishing a college to support the work of the Church, later writing, “God showed me the time has come to establish an educational institution based on truth, on

God’s revelation of truth, supplemented with those facts of natural and exact sciences which man has been able, himself, to discover—and all based on, and explained by, and in harmony with, the Bible.”

God’s truth is a “mystery” and “hidden wisdom” to the natural human mind that has chosen to reject revelation from God (1 Corinthians 2:7), which, sadly, almost every human mind has done since the very first humans. But actual understanding, true education, the wisdom of God is open to those who believe and obey their Creator!

“[T]he foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Corinthians 1:25). Intellectuals find God’s revelation—of what human beings are, the laws of cause and effect, our purpose—to be foolishness. Then they dedicate their lives to intellectually dishonest pursuits like pridefully pressuring others into believing there is no God!

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (verse 26). God has not called into His Church many professors, lawyers, judges, politicians or elites. That is because most of the “wise” turn away from God rather than repenting of their own vanity.

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are” (verses 27-28). God calls the lowly of the lowly. Then it is up to each person to yield his mind and his life to God and His truth.

“The Almighty God is not impressed by the mighty of this world,” my father writes. “Until they bring God into their lives, they amount to nothing. Their talents and riches are chaff. Should God’s servants be impressed with and awed by very talented people? If we don’t evaluate with God’s mind and with the depth of His thinking, it is easy to become too impressed with things that truly do not matter.

God wants people who are rich in faith” (*The Epistle of James*).

An honest, humble, open, firm pursuit of the truth leads you straight to the Creator! It leads you straight into His Word. And it leads you straight into a time for choosing. Will you

too cling to your own so-called right to choose what is good and what is evil for yourself? That is what human beings, including the experts, have been doing from the beginning. Only a few surrender to God and let Him give them a *true* education. Will you? ■

The NHS: Britain’s False Religion

BRITAIN’S NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE IS apparently the best thing ever. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer called it “our country’s greatest institution.” Former Health Secretary Matt Hancock went one better, saying, “The nhs is the best gift a nation has ever given itself.”

On July 5, the nation celebrated the “birthday” of the NHS. A thanksgiving ceremony was held at St. Paul’s Cathedral. Buckingham Palace hosted a garden party. Most remarkable was the awarding of the George Cross, Britain’s highest civilian award for “acts of the greatest heroism or of the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger,” to the NHS.

In the venerated name of the NHS and its COVID-19 directives, the British have surrendered freedoms that their ancestors fought and died for for hundreds of years.

Yet the NHS is measurably worse than health services in other developed countries. Dr. Kristian Niemietz, head of policy at the Institute of Economic Affairs, compared NHS performance in four common cancers and found that Germany’s health system yields 12,000 fewer deaths every year. James Bartholomew crunches even more numbers in his 2013 book, *The Welfare State We’re In*, and concludes that if the NHS functioned as well as an “averagely good health-care system,” it would yield about 48,000 fewer deaths each year.

Britain has been shut down for the last year “due to COVID.” In fact, the infectious virus we really ought to be concerned about is the NHS. It has been weakening Britain from within for decades.

The National Health Service began after World War II, when the British voted out

Winston Churchill and elected the Labour Party. Labour celebrated by singing “The Red Flag,” the Communist anthem, in Parliament. Aneurin Bevan was one of the most extreme of these socialists, having been briefly kicked out of the Labour Party six years earlier due to vocal support for communism. Then he became minister of health and helped establish the NHS. His biographer, Labour Party leader Michael Foot, said his thinking was “rooted in Marxism.”

The NHS was part of a reformation of the welfare state that deeply rooted socialist thinking into the British psyche. These reforms minimized personal freedom and responsibility, replacing them with a collectivist approach. Any man’s personal failings became society’s problems. If he failed to care for his health, ran out of cash, or fathered children out of wedlock, the nation would bear the expense.

Of course, any just society needs a safety net. No one wants to see a child die because his or her parents can’t afford to pay the bills. But the new welfare state went much further. And the result was not just an economic decline but a decline in character.

Bartholomew writes, “It is not going too far to say that there seems to have been a revolution in the culture and character of the British people in the last 60 years. The evidence is overwhelming that they are less polite and more violent. ... A picture emerges of a country that has become brutish and even degenerate compared to how it was.”

The whole world has suffered in this collapse. Defense spending suffered cut after cut to pay for the NHS. For many, January 1968 marks the official end of the British Empire.

Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced that Britain would withdraw all its forces east of the Suez Canal. United States Secretary of State Dean Rusk was incredulous and “could not believe that free aspirin and false teeth were more important than Britain’s role in the world.” But Britain had no interest in empire or even in a responsible drawdown of the empire. It just dropped everything, heedless of the lives it shattered.

In India, the result of Britain’s hurried handover to native elites was a disaster. As British authorities pulled out of India, the ethnic tensions they had kept under control exploded. Estimates vary wildly, but somewhere in the region of 1 million people died in the violence. As Britain pulled out of Uganda, Zimbabwe, Egypt and elsewhere, men like Idi Amin, Robert Mugabe and Gamal Abdel Nasser took over.

The NHS has been part of an agenda that has diminished personal responsibility, destroyed families, and extinguished Britain’s sense of duty toward the world. America is rapidly hurrying down the same path, expanding the welfare state and government power, and smothering individual liberty and responsibility. It too is rejecting any ambition to help or even set an example for the wider world.

This is perhaps the most pernicious effect

of the welfare state. It took Britain’s focus off a wider vision and turned it inward. No longer would we dare great things. And when a disease came along which 99.97 percent of healthy people survive, we cowered in fear and prayed to the NHS for salvation.

The desire to place faith in a big government to take care of us is alluring but deadly. We were created to thrive in personal responsibility, striving to look after ourselves and each other, rather than sitting back and waiting for a bureaucracy to do it for us.

A society that encourages individuals to strive is one that allows them to thrive—and enables them to then give to others. No society has ever been perfect, but some have been far better than others. Those are the nations, like Britain, that have acknowledged that men are created to exercise freedom, bear responsibility, help others and build society.

God allowed the decline of Britain and now America to pave the way for a new society—one that takes care of its poorest and ensures the sick don’t die for lack of funds, but not by stripping individual and family responsibility. You can read more about it in our free booklet *The Wonderful World Tomorrow—What It Will Be Like*, by Herbert W. Armstrong.

RICHARD PALMER

Germany Transformed by Crises

In editorials, online posts and beer halls, the sentiment is the same: Our leaders are pitifully powerless. Something must change. **BY JOSUÉ MICHELS**

UNFÄHIG, MACHTLOS, SELBSTSÜCHTIG: incompetent, powerless, selfish. That is how many Germans would describe their government right now. *Katastrophe* is how they would summarize the government’s coronavirus response and its preparedness

for recent record flooding. Some are saying this in private, others in public. And some are growing impatient. A survey published on May 17 showed more Germans than ever (61.5 percent) desiring a big shift within the federal government.

Germany has stumbled from the euro crisis to the refugee crisis to the coronavirus crisis to the recent flood crisis. Each has transformed Germans.

Germans love stability and strong leaders, especially in unstable times. The prolonged lack of such leadership has grievously agitated them. It is an alarming repeat of history.

In September, Germans will vote in national elections, hoping for a leader to steer the nation through choppy waters. Angela Merkel, chancellor for the past 16 years, is not running again, so whatever stability she provided will disappear. In recent months, she has been almost invisible in her party's campaigning. Her departure from politics comes as the German mood is ready for drastic changes.

Record Floods

On July 16, as Central Europe was hit by devastating floods, German Defense Minister Annetegret Kramp-Karrenbauer declared a military disaster alert. Rivers of water rushed through major cities, people were evacuated, houses were destroyed, and emergency workers were brought to their limits, with some losing their lives. About 200 people were confirmed dead and 1,300 were reported missing during the height of the flooding. The damage was estimated in the billions.

The disaster could not have come at a worse time. Following months of lockdowns, Germany's economic reserves are meager and trust in the government is at a low.

The flooding also hit Germany's North-Rhine Westphalia, the home state of chancellor candidate Armin Laschet. The German Army used tanks to clear debris from the streets.

Past floods have changed election outcomes. When the Elbe and Oder rivers flooded in 2002, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder appeared as crisis manager and used his power to help his people. His rival, Bavarian State Premier Edmund Stoiber, was in no position to make a difference and narrowly lost the election.

In the early days of the recent flooding, Laschet failed to make such an impression. But he was able to provide economic relief to his own state, while others could only make

promises. The rivals to Merkel and Laschet's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) are the Greens, and they hoped to use the flood to score political points, but polls indicate they failed; some even saw their attempts to do so as inappropriate.

In a July 21 Forsa/RTL/n-TV survey regarding which of the candidates should replace Merkel, the most popular answer, at 44 percent, was "none of the above." In the crisis, Germans looked for leadership and found none. While the effect on the election remains to be seen, the effect on the public mood is already clear.

Many Germans and media outlets blamed the government for not doing enough to warn citizens and provide help. The European Flood Awareness System did issue warnings, but many residents were still caught by surprise. Some called it a monumental failure of the system. One hydrologist told *Science* that researchers "were stupidly congratulating ourselves that we were forecasting something so early. ... The assumption was that would be really helpful," she told *Science*. "We should not be seeing this number of people dying in 2021 from floods. It just should not be happening" (July 20).

Floods are common in Germany. So why isn't it better prepared for such a crisis? Some are blaming privacy concerns. While other countries routinely warn citizens through mass text messages, German lawmakers have resisted such measures. But within days of the floods, priorities changed and the nation green-lighted mobile providers to text emergency warnings to specific areas.

This is just a small example of how a crisis can change Germany. Once people feel powerless, they quickly give up freedoms in favor of stronger government.

The coronavirus crisis revealed a similar trend.

Dysfunction and Pandemic

Despite Germany's world-class economy, medical infrastructure and pharmaceutical industry, its management of the COVID-19 outbreak has been a crisis of its own. Politicians, commentators and everyday citizens agree that this crisis is self-inflicted. They don't

blame individual politicians or parties, but their form of government.

Mr. Laschet was elected party leader of the CDU on January 16 and is now in a prime position to become the next chancellor. As such, the eyes of millions of people were on him in the crisis months of early 2021. But when leadership was needed, Laschet was nowhere to be found. Germans in a crisis heard him say he was “contemplating” what to do. This downgraded him from being merely unpopular among the average German to being a laughingstock: The social media hashtag #laschetdenktnach (“Laschet contemplations”) trended in Germany.

But something more serious is taking place: Demand for decisive leadership is building. Many Germans believe the coronavirus is killing thousands as a direct consequence of government failure. Some say the government is implementing lockdowns in an inconsequential, haphazard, irresponsible manner. Also, some politicians have profited from the crisis through dubious business deals and rank corruption. It is as if the coronavirus exposed weaknesses in the German system itself.

In “Germany Is Facing an Epic Identity Crisis,” Thomas Kielinger wrote, “After 16 years in the saddle, Angela Merkel’s legacy is a disoriented and divided country. [O]ur woefully inadequate response to the COVID pandemic is chipping away further at the time-hallowed perception of German excellence in organizational matters” (*Telegraph*, April 4).

On March 20, *Der Spiegel*’s cover story was “Descent of a State: The New German Incompetence.” It asked: “Why can’t we get a handle on the coronavirus mess? It’s about more than scandals and mishaps: The republic’s systemic weakness is being revealed, and the citizens’ patience is at an end. ... A rude awakening is taking place, coupled with resentment against politicians” (*Trumpet* translation throughout).

With many, though, it is resentment against their entire *system of government*.

In “Weakness of Federalism: Make Germany Finally Ready for Crises” (April 2), *Spiegel*’s Martin Knobbe wrote: “Germany’s small-scale federalism is failing in the coronavirus

pandemic.” He praised the nation’s small-state model as “a success story that goes back centuries,” and he described the Hitler era as “a warning for today of what a monopoly of power at the head of the state can do.” However, the nation’s Basic Law, drafted with the help of the Allies in 1948 to prevent the rise of dictators, is proving “dysfunctional” in the age of the pandemic.

Knobbe reasons that Germany’s entire way of governing itself must change “to equip Germany for special challenges, for extraordinary crises—of which there will probably be more rather than fewer in the future.”

Case in point: During the pandemic, Chancellor Merkel was leading one way while the state premiers chose their own paths. In most cases, this is a sign of a functioning democracy, but it visibly bothered Ms. Merkel. In a March 28 interview, she threatened Germany’s 16 state premiers: If they failed to support the national government’s coronavirus measures, she would “have to consider whether we will find [other] ways” to push the decisions through, perhaps giving the national legislature “a greater role.” This was a demand for nothing less than a major transfer of power from German states to the national government.

In April, Germany ended up passing the amendment that Merkel and others demanded. The power to enforce lockdowns was centralized in Berlin. When it was signed into law, Germany’s most popular newspaper, *Bild*, called it “A Black Hour for Freedom!”

The power shift from the people and the states to the central government is said to be only temporary and only for lockdowns during pandemics. But the threshold has been crossed. In peacetime, Germans are content with democracy, but in crisis, they seek something more akin to autocracy.

Expect the central government to help itself to that power whenever it pleases.

In Crises, Freedoms Vanish

It used to be that protests were an incentive for the government to change its policies. Today, protests seem to be an excuse to increase governmental power. Citizens fed up with

restrictions have marched in the streets. Authorities have responded by trying to lock them up.

On April 28, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution warned that since the government began enforcing measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, the nation's "democratic order, as well as state institutions ... faced multiple attacks." For this reason, the domestic secret service put certain citizens under nationwide surveillance. This surveillance includes monitoring meetings, intercepting e-mails, even screening bank accounts and financial flows.

Still, this is an alarming development. If Querdenker supporters can be surveilled for "delegitimizing the state," what German is immune from surveillance? Government critics of all sorts can expect to be targeted.

In the July 2020 *Trumpet*, editor in chief Gerald Flurry warned of the early stages of this dictatorial approach: "EUROPEAN LEADERS ARE INCREASINGLY BEHAVING LIKE DICTATORS AND ASSUMING DICTATORIAL POWER. THE PEOPLE OF EUROPE ARE BEING CONDITIONED TO ACCEPT MORE TYRANNICAL LEADERSHIP."

Now we see European states trying to force citizens to take the vaccine. These and other measures would have been unthinkable if not for the media overhyping the COVID threat. Once again, a crisis has transformed nations.

Refugee Crisis

Overshadowed by the recent flooding and the coronavirus crisis is another grinding crisis that has already transformed Germany and Europe, yet is far from over: immigration.

In the first half of 2021, the number of migrants arriving in Italy was three times higher than during the same period last year. Between the start of the year and June 10, authorities counted 15,252 boat migrants arriving at Italy's shore—a sevenfold increase over 2019 (yet still a fraction of what Italy experienced at the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015).

The next refugee crisis looms. Following the withdrawal of NATO forces, violence is escalating in Afghanistan. Clashes between

the Taliban and the Afghan government are causing more and more to flee the country. While many seek to escape to Turkey, Europe will be their next destination. On July 27, Germany's *Welt* asked: "Is Europe in Danger of the Next 2015?"

With every wave of migration, Europeans are increasingly concerned that they are losing a part of their identity. More and more people are willing to resort to extremes: attacks on refugees; refugee centers set ablaze; far-right parties voted into national parliaments.

Governments across Europe are passing more anti-terrorist laws and tightening their screening methods for migrants. They are introducing new surveillance measures and granting security authorities more power. Behind the scenes, military strategists are preparing to deal with the problem head on.

Without the crisis, such trends would have been unthinkable in multicultural, tolerant Europe.

Euro Crisis

All these crises have created serious financial concerns for Germany and kept its government and people off-balance. Germany is surrounded by failing economies, all bound together in one common currency, the euro. Germany was repeatedly forced to bail out European countries after the economic crisis of 2008.

COVID-19 has also caused an epidemic of debt across Europe. With the exception of Ireland, every single country that needed a bailout in the last economic crisis now has even worse debt problems. Even large economies like Italy and France are in deep danger. Across the eurozone, government debt has increased by \$1.3 trillion. Much of southern Europe only stayed afloat due to the European Central Bank printing €1.3 trillion (US\$1.5 trillion). This has made Germans very worried that runaway inflation could soon destroy their savings.

"Many experts will tell you that Europe is about to break apart," Mr. Flurry wrote last year. "If these nations' response to the coronavirus does not cause an immediate economic meltdown, the debt they are accumulating will still

come due at some point. Some kind of financial crisis is inevitable. When it comes, watch what happens! A crisis like the current one is exactly what European leaders have longed for to forge a European superstate!” (ibid).

It is precisely such a financial crisis that is needed to transform Europe into the single federal power its founders dreamed of. “The founders of the European project knew that creating the euro—a unified European currency—without all the other aspects of a unified government would provoke economic crisis,” Mr. Flurry wrote. “Yet they still deliberately proceeded with their plan, knowing that crisis would provide the pretext for transforming Europe into a superpower!”

Jean Monnet, an EU founding father, said, “Europe will be forged in crises and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises.” Former German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble said, “Crisis represents an opportunity. Europe always moves forward in times of crisis. Sometimes you need a little pressure for certain decisions to be taken.”

The euro crisis has paved the way for a worse crisis to hit Germany. Germany’s economy hinges, like so many others, on the United States dollar. When the ticking debt bomb of the U.S. Federal Reserve explodes, it will also leave Europe’s system in ruins. When this occurs and Europeans fall into despair, one nation will emerge as the natural leader to resolve the emergency: Germany.

The upper echelons in Germany know this is coming. They know that all of Europe will look to their nation for solutions. They also know the German people are fed up with weak leadership and with bailing out other countries; they don’t want to risk their savings to save Greeks. All of Germany’s recent troubles are about to culminate into one decisive crisis. This is prophesied to unite Europe into a sleeker, pared-down version of the European Union. European leaders often talk about a “two-speed Europe” or “core Europe”—but it will take a crisis to turn these dreams into reality. It will also take strong leadership.

This is exactly what Bible prophecy says Europe is about to get.

Bible Prophecy

All the above-mentioned crises make Europeans realize that their leaders cannot solve their problems. They are growing more in favor of authoritarian rule. Already we are seeing the rise of strongmen and a push toward authoritarianism in Europe.

“Yet these rising strongmen are not yet united as the Bible says they will be,” Mr. Flurry wrote last year. “The Holy Roman Empire yet lacks its overarching leader.”

For centuries, Europeans lived under the dictatorial rule of the Holy Roman Empire. The *Trumpet* often warns that Europe is returning to this form of government. When COVID-19 emerged, Mr. Flurry warned that Europe’s reaction would hasten that outcome.

The Bible prophesies of a European empire rising in the end time. The book of Daniel repeatedly emphasizes that it is an end-time book (e.g. Daniel 12:4, 9). Although Daniel 11 contains history, Jesus Christ Himself referenced that chapter and said it contains prophecy for the end time (Matthew 24:15). Daniel 11:21 describes a strong German leader who comes to power through “flatteries.” A parallel passage in Daniel 8:23 says this man is “a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences.” Other scriptures show this is referring to the leader of a European beast power (request our free booklet *Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?*). Based on this prophecy, Mr. Flurry has boldly proclaimed that Germany will, once again, unite under a strongman who walks in the tradition of Charlemagne, Hitler and other dictators.

The Bible reveals that a strongman will take advantage of people’s craving for strong leadership in crisis and offer solutions and stability to a desperate Germany and a divided Europe. Mainstream Christianity has ignored these end-time prophecies. Current events in Germany, however, perfectly match what the Bible prophesied thousands of years ago.

Revelation 17 also describes this European power. It likens it to a *beast*—biblical symbolism for an *empire*—that continually rises and falls. This empire is led by a woman—the biblical symbol for a church. Only Europe has a history

of a series of empires led by a church. Verses 12-13 prophesy that in its last phase, 10 European nations or groups of nations will submit to the rule of one strong leader. This is certain to result from a series of shocks and crises.

Are we about to see this astonishing prophecy fulfilled?

Dark clouds are hovering over Germany. Few speculate what the nation will look like when the storm breaks. It is about to change from a democracy to an autocracy, and all Europe will change with it. When you see a transformed Germany emerge, remember the *Trumpet's* forecast.

This change may follow soon after the September German elections. Armin Laschet may

win—he may even be one of the 10 kings—but he is unlikely to satisfy Europe's longing for strong leadership. The *Trumpet* is watching for another man to become the prophesied strong leader. Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg has long prepared to lead Europe out of a financial crisis. As Europe's crises intensify, watch for this man to rise to power. Keep your eyes on Germany.

As you see these events unfold, remember that the same passages that prophesy of this radical, dangerous change in Germany also say it will happen just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, "the Prince of princes" (e.g. Daniel 8:23-25). At His return, God's Kingdom will be established (Daniel 2:44). Dark days are ahead, but after the storm comes hope! ■

The Church That Ruled the World

What happens when the Vatican gets involved in politics? History tells. **BY RICHARD PALMER**

ON MARCH 5, THE ELDERLY POPE FRANCIS arrived in what was recently a war zone. Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI both tried to visit Iraq, and Francis had been trying for years. Despite the risk to his life, he traveled into what was once the core of the Islamic State.

Around the world, the pope is active in politics and international relations. A secret letter from him in 2014 to then United States President Barack Obama helped open U.S. relations with Communist Cuba. His officials were instrumental in a Nobel-prize winning peace agreement in Colombia. Many people applaud such efforts; after all, in a world full of war, injustice and persecution, surely we need a great moral force in international relations.

But when put in its historical context, the pope fulfilling this role gives pause for thought.

This is hardly the first time the Catholic Church has had a major role in international relations. For nearly a thousand years it was a genuine superpower and dominated the European international system. What was the result? That history teaches us where today's renaissance of Vatican diplomacy is leading.

Holy Roman Empire: Force of Nature

"[N]ull, void, invalid, iniquitous, unjust, damnable, reprobate, inane, empty of meaning and effect for all time." That was Pope Innocent X's official and infallible verdict on the Peace of Westphalia.

What made the pope so wrathful against this series of peace agreements? Those agreements, though they put an end to some of the bloodiest warring in Europe's history, also acknowledged the legitimacy of separate

sovereign nation states. The system of international law created by the Peace of Westphalia forms the very foundation of modern international relations. The pope's hostility reveals a lot about how Roman Catholics view their church's role in the world.

Prior to the rise of Christianity, the idea of a unified world religion was alien. Different races and peoples had not only their own histories and characteristics but also their own local gods. But as the idea of a universal religion and church spread, it became natural for people to believe in a *universal government*.

"Because divinity was divided, humanity had been divided likewise; the doctrine of the unity of God now enforced the unity of man, who had been created in His image," James Bryce wrote in *The Holy Roman Empire*. "The first lesson of Christianity was love, a love that was to join in one body those whom suspicion and prejudice and pride of race had hitherto kept apart. There was thus formed by the new religion a community of the faithful, a holy empire, designed to gather all men into its bosom, and standing opposed to the manifold polytheisms of the older world"

Bryce described a common theme that developed in Western theories of world government: that is, "a world-monarchy and a world-religion." People came to believe that what the world needed was a single empire led by a world ruler who could referee disputes between rival kings, avoid war, and bring justice.

To the people of the Middle Ages, a world of competing states with no overarching authority is "null, void, invalid," an aberration, a sign of something going horribly wrong.

Bryce wrote that throughout the Middle Ages, the Holy Roman Empire was seen as "an institution divine and necessary, having its foundations in the very nature and order of things." People "went on for centuries believing in the necessary existence of the Roman Empire, because they believed in its necessary union with the Catholic Church."

He described the way that the Catholic Church of this period interpreted Bible history and prophecy to claim that a Holy Roman

Empire, ruling over all other states, was God's divine order for the world.

Pasadena City College philosophy professor Edward Feser wrote that under this worldview, it is not aberrant for the Mongol Empire or the nation of Yugoslavia, for example, to expire, but in this view, "there is something abnormal, and contrary to natural law and the supernatural order, that there is no longer a Holy Roman Empire. Indeed, on this view of things, given that the natural and supernatural orders require that there be such an empire, it is not quite correct to say that the Holy Roman Empire no longer exists. It is more accurate to say that it is dormant."

The Reality

Catholicism teaches that human beings have a soul and a body. Their theory of world politics taught that the Catholic Church was the soul, and the Holy Roman Empire was the body. Each had its own role, but the two could not separate any more than body and soul could separate.

This vision of universal church and empire never governed the entire globe. But in Europe, it was reality.

The Catholic Church's role in regulating religious life is well known. When King Henry VIII wanted a divorce, he first asked permission from the pope, for example. But the authority of the church extended even further.

In a very real sense, Catholic canon law was international law across Europe. It did not concern itself merely with religious disputes.

The one-empire-one-religion theory meant that it wasn't up to states to negotiate disputes through diplomacy. Instead, they were to take them to the higher power: the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and the pope.

That was the theory. In practice, this neat hierarchy wasn't always followed—or even recognized. But often it was. "Popes served as arbiters, and papal legates served as peacemakers," the *Encyclopedia Britannica* notes. "Papal ambassadors held status above those from mere states."

How far did the pope's power extend? When Spain and Portugal discovered *the entire rest of the world* and disputed who owned what,

it was *Pope Alexander VI* who drew a line on a map that divided the territory between them.

No form of international relations was beyond the reach of the Catholic Church.

In business, the church also reigned supreme. For example, alum, a vital material for textile dyes, was heavily regulated by the church. The pope awarded himself a monopoly on it: No one was allowed to sell it but the papal states.

Granted, the church's involvement in the alum trade was the exception, not the rule. But in that age, it was big business. It showed that any industry could find itself brought under papal regulation.

When Sir Thomas More fought King Henry VIII's attempts to break England away from the Catholic Church, he argued that this wasn't simply a religious system. England, he said, was "but one member and small part of ... the church. It could not make a particular law disagreeable with the general law of Christ's Universal Catholic Church." It was like London "being but one poor member in respect of the whole realm, might make a law against Parliament to bind the whole realm." England was not a sovereign state, More asserted: It was part of a much larger hierarchy.

Thomas More was articulating orthodox Catholic doctrine, and the Vatican later made him a saint. As England continued to reject the church's authority, Pius V declared that God had made the pope "ruler over all peoples and kingdoms, to pull up, destroy, scatter, disperse, plant and build," and that Henry's daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, must be overthrown.

But before the Catholic Spanish Armada was dashed on the rocks in 1588, the pope's vision of world government was already crumbling. England was not the only country to embrace a new religion and a new system.

This brings us back to the Peace of Westphalia. More than a century after the Protestant Reformation, Europe was hopelessly fractured. Persecutions and wars designed to put it back together had claimed 50 million lives. When more than 100 delegations arrived in Westphalia in 1648, they ended the Thirty Years' War and established a new international system

on a core principle familiar to anyone who has had an argument that nobody can win: *Let's agree to disagree.*

But this idea completely contradicted Catholic doctrine. It rejected the principle of the Holy Roman Empire holding authority over lesser states and replaced it with a principle of legal equality between states. The Holy Roman Empire continued to exist, but as one of several major European powers, not as a body with any theoretical claim to overarching power.

The Catholic Church's period of dominating international relations had been deemed a complete failure and comprehensively rejected. In time, the Peace of Westphalia became the standard for international relations around the world.

The 20th Century

Ideologically, it was the Protestant Reformation that sent the Catholic theory of world empire into remission. Yet the Catholic Church did not change its teachings on this until the Second Vatican Council in 1962, when it softened—but did not eliminate—the doctrine. Pope John Paul II's Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "the church shows forth the kingship of Christ over all creation and in particular over human societies." It states that societies that reject the church's vision "arrogate to themselves an explicit or implicit totalitarian power over man and his destiny."

Professor Feser noted that "the Catholic doctrinal principles still reflected in the Catechism are those that informed the theory of the empire." In other words, the Middle Ages theory of Catholic supremacy in international relations is still alive and well within Catholicism.

But the rest of the world continues to reject that authority. So the pope has had to find for himself a new role. No foreign ministries or state departments will be waiting at his ornate Vatican doors to submit their international disputes to his supreme verdict any time soon.

Or will they?

One way the Catholic Church has been rebuilding its international role has been through mediation.

One early example was the 1978 conflict between Chile and Argentina over the Beagle Channel, a conflict that seemed headed for war. Pope John Paul II stepped in and reconciled the two sides.

In a world split between capitalism and communism, the pope represented an ancient institution that was aligned with neither side. The two sides quickly accepted the pope's mediation.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the think tank for German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, produced a paper in 2015 called "Microstate and Superpower—The Vatican in International Politics." It described the Vatican's role as being "involved in central decision-making and events of world politics for a long time, acting patiently behind the scenes, particularly since the middle of the 20th century."

This effort has accelerated under Pope Francis. He deployed "forceful, confidential" letters and secret visits from high-ranking archbishops to pressure the United States to open up its relations with antagonistic, Communist Cuba. Negotiations took place in the Vatican, and the pope offered to act as guarantor to the agreement.

In 2014, Catholic bishops met with high-ranking ayatollahs in Iran to try to help then-President Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Iran. In 2016, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos received the Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating a peace deal with Marxist militant rebels from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. Vatican Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, probably the most powerful figure in the church besides the pope, personally attended the deal's signing ceremony prior to the referendum. The Catholic Church attended the peace negotiations in Cuba, pushing both sides to reach a deal.

The current pope has also been active in the Middle East, traveling to Israel and hosting the Palestinian Authority in Rome. He stopped for a photo op at an Israel security barrier. The photo quickly became an iconic implication that the Israelis are the oppressors. In March he visited Iraq, attempting to solve a conflict

America has spent trillions trying to bring to an end.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation wrote that "there are clear indications of efforts being made under Pope Francis's leadership to reach out beyond the faith by putting forward ethical-universal arguments rather than Catholic-moral ones. ... Consequently, the Holy See is developing into an informal authority on moral standards reaching far beyond the boundaries of Catholicism." The pope is now reaching out to the world, "not just as head of the church and head of state, but as a moral authority."

The foundation noted that the Vatican "has the oldest diplomatic service in the world. Only few other actors of international politics take a similarly clear and consistent stance with respect to global challenges. Also, no other religious community or secular worldview has produced an institution that comes close to the Catholic Church in terms of durability, centralization, global presence and membership."

Their conclusion: "At first glance, the Vatican is a microstate without massive resources," the authors wrote. "Be that as it may, it does have a great deal of symbolic power, not least thanks to it partially sharing its identity with a world religion, which makes it a superpower after all, religiously, culturally and socially."

A Prophesied Role

In a world full of war, injustice and persecution, a church wielding more moral authority seems like a good thing. No wonder many are welcoming the Catholic Church's increased influence.

But if we consider the *actions* of a church, we should judge it by what the Bible says.

Christians are those who follow Jesus Christ. Christ described His Church as a "little flock" (Luke 12:32) with "few" followers (Matthew 7:14). God says that His followers would be "hated" and rejected by rulers of this world (John 15:17-20). He also said there would be many deceptive "Christian" churches and organizations (Matthew 7:22-23; 24:5).

In Revelation 17 and other places, the Bible specifically describes *another* church,

symbolized by a woman. This church is not a little, persecuted flock, but a superpower. This church deals with “the kings of the earth” and wields great wealth and power, religiously, culturally and socially.

But God *condemns* this church’s behavior. A church should choose pure faith and obedience toward Him rather than intermeshing with world governments. He said this church has “committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (verse 2).

Revelation 17 describes this church riding and steering a beast, symbolizing an empire. This beast has seven heads, representing seven successive resurrections of the same. At times, it appears dormant, but then it rises up again.

Revelation 13 describes the same prophecy using different symbols. Here, this church appears like a lamb, which is a symbol of Christ (verse 11). Many people believe that it is God’s true Church. But it teaches the world to worship the Holy Roman Empire (see verses 11-12). Its form of government is actually patterned after the government of the Roman Empire. It teaches in its places of worship that this empire is part of God’s plan for man.

But this organization is not God’s Church!

That is why the period during which it dominated international relations in the Middle Ages was such a disaster.

But the Bible prophesies that the Catholic Church will return to power once more, in our time.

The Power to Unite Europe

The Holy Roman Empire will rise in Europe one more time, exactly the way Catholic doctrine says it must. The European Union has spent the last 60 years trying to form itself into this kind of Holy Roman Empire. But it has lacked a strong Catholic element. And it has struggled.

In the November 1965 *Plain Truth*, Herbert W. Armstrong wrote about one “hard, stern fact” that the nations of Europe must face. “That crucial fact is this: The nations of Europe are **UTTERLY UNABLE TO UNITE THEMSELVES** by their own political maneuvering. ...

“HOW, THEN, CAN THEY AGREE TOGETHER AND UNITE? For years the *Plain Truth* has said these nations are going to have to realize their inability to unite themselves **POLITICALLY**—to choose a common political-military leader that **ALL** can trust. They are going to finally face the fact they must look to a supreme authority they can all trust! That supreme authority cannot be a politician, or a general The only possible answer is a religious leader! ...

“Watch for developments suddenly to speed toward European **POLITICAL** and **MILITARY** union, through religious union!”

Only through the Vatican’s role as a mediator and peacemaker can bickering nations come back together, as they were centuries ago when Europeans were believers.

The Bible also tells us the Catholic Church will be involved in the peace process in Jerusalem. Hosea 5:13 describes Judah being afflicted by a “wound.” *Strong’s Concordance* defines that word, “in the sense of binding up: a bandage, i.e. *remedy*.” *Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* says that it is “used figuratively of a *remedy* applied to the wounds of the state.” The cure *is the wound*. Obadiah 7 uses the same word, directly referring to it being received by a peace pact.

Israel’s peace process with the Palestinians is a wound, an open sore, sapping the nation’s strength. Yet like some medieval medical procedure, the Jewish nation continues to try to heal itself with that same wound. Hosea 5:13 says that once Israel recognizes this, it will turn to “the Assyrian”—Germany in Bible prophecy. Germany is the key military power in the Vatican-dominated Holy Roman Empire. When Israel sees the peace process has failed, it will turn to this Vatican-led power for help.

The result? Daniel 11:41 states that this European power will “enter also into the glorious land.” The Hebrew word “enter” doesn’t mean invasion. There’s no sign of this being violent at all. Why? Because the Jews believe this Vatican-led power is a peacemaker.

The Vatican-led world order in the Middle Ages ended in one of Europe’s most destructive conflicts in generations. The Bible

tells us the new era will be much shorter but much more destructive.

But it also tells us this will be its last resurrection. There will be no more going dormant only to rise again. This time the Holy Roman Empire will be finished for good!

The Holy Roman Empire is a counterfeit of

God's rule on Earth. That is one reason it has been so enduring. But God tells us this time He will replace it with the real thing. Those theologians who taught that the world needed one ruling empire to be at peace were right. But it matters which empire. Soon the God Family Empire will truly bring peace to the world. ■

Seven Resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire

“The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.” REVELATION 17:9

The Apostle John compares the Holy Roman Empire to a mountain range comprised of seven mountains. Just as yawning valleys separate mountains, there are valleys distinguishing these seven peaks, or resurrections, of the Holy Roman Empire. These troughs mark a lull in the power and activity of the Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire.

A.D. 554 | IMPERIAL RESTORATION

774 | FRANKISH KINGDOM

962 | HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

1530 | HABSBURG DYNASTY

1804 | NAPOLEON'S KINGDOM

1870–1945 | ITALIAN & FASCIST REGIMES

Today | UNITED EUROPE

Why Is July 4 Suddenly Scandalous?

Topple your history, destroy your liberty. **BY ABRAHAM BLONDEAU AND MIHAILO S. ZEKIC**

JULY IS A MONTH OF ANNIVERSARIES IN North America. On July 1, Canada celebrates its founding as a self-ruling country within the British Empire. On July 4, America celebrates its independence from Great Britain. For most countries, national holidays are times of celebration. But this year, Independence Day and Canada Day have never been more controversial.

The Fourth of July

Here are some headlines published by major media outlets ahead of this year's Independence Day: "The Willful Self-Delusion of American Independence Day" (*Nation*), "A Fourth of July Symbol of Unity That May No Longer Unite" (*New York Times*), "The Culture War Has a New Target: Independence Day" (19FortyFive), "Squad Member Says Fourth of July Is About Freedom 'for White People'" (*Washington Examiner*). *National Geographic* posted on social media that air pollution from Fourth of July fireworks displays "disproportionately" affects the health of "vulnerable people and communities of color."

Radical leftists are changing July 4 from a celebration that brings Americans together to an opportunity to say America was racist from its birth and should not be celebrated.

One of the main organizations responsible for preserving American history, the United States National Archives and Records Administration, declared in an April 10 report that it is, itself, racist. The report suggested that the administration "reimagine the Rotunda," the main public room in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., visited by many tourists each year. It displays some of the most precious treasures of American heritage,

including the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The walls are decorated with the Faulkner Murals, painted between 1935 and 1936, portraying allegorical scenes of the Founding Fathers. All of this, according to the report, is offensive. America's founding history needs "reimagining."

The report calls for adding "labels to one of the Rotunda cases addressing the lack of representation and predominant focus on the men who framed the founding documents." It also calls for "planning for a new Rotunda exhibit that explores the roles of women, enslaved Africans and Indigenous Americans in the founding of the United States along with contemporary views on the men who framed the founding documents and their participation in and positions on slavery."

Documents like the Constitution and the Bill of Rights enabled the U.S. to become an astonishingly free society for all races. Men like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were the architects of those documents. Yet a movement is gathering strength that twists the best parts of American history into some of the world's greatest evils.

Canada Day

Canada is in the midst of the same reevaluation. In June, the city of Victoria, British Columbia, announced it would not commemorate Canada Day this year. The decision came after the discovery of the unmarked graves of 215 children in northern British Columbia on the premises of a former residential school. Victoria's government claims celebrating Canada's founding would insult First Nations (or Indians).

“The history of our country’s genocidal relationship with First Nations has been once again revealed in a way that is painful for the Lekwungen people as well as First Nations across the country,” wrote Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps. Helps also refused to give the traditional oath of loyalty to Queen Elizabeth II on her inauguration. She said doing so would disrespect First Nations’ land rights.

On Canada Day, a more violent episode took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba. A group of protesters pulled down the statue of Queen Victoria in front of the Manitoba Legislature. The group of about 200 individuals was protesting the effect residential schools had on indigenous people and chanted, “No pride in genocide.” They covered Victoria in red paint and wrote in red graffiti “we were children once” on the pedestal. They removed the statue’s head and threw it into the river behind the legislature. Meanwhile, protesters near the Governor’s House tore down a statue of Queen Elizabeth II.

Also on Canada Day, in Kitchener, Ontario, one man splashed red paint on the statue of Queen Victoria located in Kitchener’s Victoria Park. The man climbed the statue and protested for five hours.

Canada’s residential school system was created to help indigenous tribes assimilate into the nation’s European-style society and give children a basic academic education. The government joined the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church and other groups to administrate the schools, much like the missionary model of schooling. Government and social service workers often forcibly removed children from their families and compelled them to attend the schools. About 150,000 indigenous children were placed into the schools, and an estimated 6,000 died while attending them.

What happened to these many children and their families is indeed tragic. But why attack the memory of Queen Victoria? She had no direct responsibility in these policies or in the deaths of the children, and some of her policies heavily benefited Canada’s indigenous populations. Yet liberals attack her as a symbol

of “white colonialism.”

Queen Victoria approved the creation of what is now the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which prevented lawlessness as the Canadian West developed and, in fact, protected indigenous tribes. It supplied a way to deal lawfully and fairly with them, protect them from more aggressive European settlers, and even provide for them. Many mounted police forts handed out rations that saved indigenous people from starvation. The rule of law in the West also helped create an overall ordered society in which improvements like the Canadian railway could be built and the land could be developed.

Yet many activists have used what little they have learned about some of the worst aspects of history—or history that is completely false—as an excuse to attack Queen Victoria as a symbol of genocide.

Where does this irrational hatred come from that despises the history and existence of America and Canada and the best aspects of these societies?

The Real Target

In *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, Herbert W. Armstrong proved that America and the British Commonwealth (including Canada) descended from the ancient Israelites. The birth of the United States on July 4, 1776, directly fulfilled God’s promise to the patriarch Abraham that He would make his descendants into “a great nation.” The U.S. is the mightiest, wealthiest and (aside from its predecessor, ancient Israel) the freest nation in world history.

“And so now, as God had started the whole world with one man, He started His own peculiar nation in the world from one single man—Abraham,” Mr. Armstrong wrote. “As the world, which has strayed far from God and the blessings of God’s worship and rule, was started with one man who rebelled against God and rejected His rule, *so God’s own flesh-born nation, from which is to be reborn the Kingdom of God*, was started with one man who obeyed God without question, and accepted His divine rule” (*The United States and Britain in Prophecy*; emphasis added).

All human beings and nations are rife with problems. The *only* solution is the administration of *God's* principles, law and government. Through the modern descendants of Abraham in Britain and America, God established some of those principles, which led to unparalleled blessings and fulfillment of His promises and prophecies. But a radical movement is underway to blot out those principles and history.

Yet God's plan continues beyond Britain and America. The Bible prophesies that God will literally, supernaturally replace the governments of this world with the government of God (Daniel 2:44; Revelation 11:15). He will intervene to stop human beings and human governments from destroying the human race (Matthew 24:21-22). Through right government, the literal government of God on Earth, God will establish and enforce His principles and laws. The result will be peace and happiness for all peoples and races. That is the message revealed in the history of the descendants of Abraham, that is what the Kingdom of God truly is, and that is the gospel Jesus Christ proclaimed when He was on Earth (Mark 1:14-15).

The Kingdom of God will be born from Israel not because Israelites are superior to other peoples—common sense and abundant Bible history make that clear. It will be born from Israel because that is the means by which God plans to bring all human beings who are willing, of all nations and races, into His eternal family—including those thousands of indigenous children and the myriad others who have died throughout history!

Whether they realize it or not, people who attack the very existence and fundamental principles of America and Canada are attacking the plan of God.

“There is an *unseen reason* why troubles are intensifying as never before,” writes *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry in his free booklet *America Under Attack*. “You cannot understand events without recognizing this truth. ... It has affected the United States [and Canada] in a MASSIVE way. ... It is an assault by an invisible force—a force that is very real and deadly dangerous.”

Attacks on the good aspects of American, British and Canadian history seem bizarre indeed, until you understand the “unseen reason.” ■

‘At the Verge of Impossible’

The Webb Telescope prepares to launch. **BY HARLEY BRETH**

THE HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE HAS BEEN capturing incredible images of the cosmos for years. In 1995, it concentrated its lens for a 10-day exposure on a 24-millionth section of the sky, the diameter of a tennis ball about three football fields away, a spot that appears completely empty. Yet it yielded perhaps the most influential image ever taken for space exploration: the Hubble Deep Field.

This Hubble exposure captured light from approximately 3,000 galaxies. A typical galaxy can harbor 100 million to 100 billion stars. The

image set the imaginations of astronomers and ordinary people around the world on fire.

One year later, work began on a new, even more advanced telescope that would ultimately become known as the James Webb Space Telescope. Scientists—and all of us—wanted to discover more.

Expanding Universe and Wavelengths

Hubble's view of the universe has far transcended Earth-based telescopes. But it has its limits. Its instruments mainly detect the

ultraviolet wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum, the same wavelengths visible to the human eye. There are many other wavelengths that Hubble can't detect.

Add to this the fact that the universe is not static. In the 1920s, astronomer Edwin Hubble measured wavelengths of light from other galaxies and found that distant objects were drifting away from our galaxy. His work and that of other astronomers, including those using the Hubble telescope, have established the universe is expanding in all directions.

As the universe expands, the *light* traveling through it also expands. What starts out as ultraviolet light has its wavelength stretched until it becomes infrared light. (This process is sometimes referred to as "red-shift.") Our eyes cannot see it, and neither can Hubble.

Astronomers want to see that light and learn what it teaches us. So they knew the James Webb Space Telescope would need to be a dedicated infrared instrument.

They also knew it would need to be big. The bigger a telescope is, the more light photons it can collect and the better the resolution of the images it produces. So the team building the Webb telescope gave it a primary mirror more than 21 feet wide. It will be the largest telescope ever launched into space. It is too large for the cargo bay of the rocket that will launch it. The solution to this dilemma came from origami. The telescope will launch with its 18 mirror segments configured into a folded position.

The launch itself presents many challenges of its own. It has been reported that about 300 to 400 operations must occur perfectly, without fail, the first time.

If those operations work successfully, the James Webb will fly far beyond the 340-mile orbit of the Hubble. It will outdistance the moon, which is about 240,000 miles from Earth. Its orbital resting place will be 1 million miles from Earth at what is known as the Earth-Sun Lagrange 2 (L2) point.

NASA.gov describes these points as "positions in space where objects sent there tend to stay put. At Lagrange points, the gravitational

pull of two large masses precisely equals the centripetal force required for a small object to move with them."

The L2 is not only a position where the telescope would tend to "stay put," but also a dark, cold area optimal for infrared sensory instruments. Orbiting at L2 will also prevent the telescope from going in and out of the shadows of both the Earth and the moon.

When a problem was discovered with Hubble's primary mirror, astronauts were able to install equipment that fixed it. But Webb will be far beyond reach. The moment it leaves the launchpad, human beings will never be able to reach it again! Everything must be perfect the first time.

"There's nothing I can say that can come close to describing how technically difficult this telescope is," Tom Vice, president of Northrop Grumman, said. "We are at the verge of impossible."

Sunshield

If the hundreds and thousands of highly technical factors involved all lead to the Webb telescope reaching the L2 point, it will then be required to operate in the vacuum of space at an ambient temperature of nearly 400 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. Traveling into those cryogenic temperatures puts an even greater stress on the telescope than launch does, but it has been designed to operate in harsh cold. The greater threat is posed by the sun's heat. To ward off that threat is a critical element: the telescope's sunshield.

To view the infrared light stretching across the universe from faint, faraway objects, the Webb telescope must remain cold and stable. "To protect the telescope from external sources of light and heat (like the sun, Earth and moon) as well as from heat emitted by the observatory itself, Webb has a five-layer, tennis court-sized sunshield that acts like a parasol providing shade" (*JWST.NASA.gov*). The telescope will always be on the dark side of the Earth from the sun; and the sunshield will always stay between the Earth, sun or moon and the telescope's iconic golden hexagonal mirrors.

What Will We See?

If all the complex calculations, manufacturing, spaceflight, deployment and operation of the James Webb Space Telescope succeed, what will it see?

It will fill a crucial void in mankind's armory of observatories and spacecraft, viewing the universe in the near-infrared and mid-infrared with a robust set of optical and other scientific instruments.

This infrared telescope will peer through the dust of the ultraviolet images for which Hubble has become famous. It will see light from much farther away and, consequently, from further back in time. Astrophysicist Matt Mountain said: "The real excitement of the James Webb will be the things that we didn't anticipate. Whenever you go into the unknown, you discover things you didn't expect, and those are going to be the most interesting of all."

Our Universe Dream

The Hubble Space Telescope launched about four months after the Philadelphia Church of God, publisher of the *Trumpet*, began in December 1989. PCG Pastor General Gerald Flurry has repeatedly drawn attention to the images it has captured as an inspiring view into the universe and the future of mankind. He said in a 2013 *Key of David* program titled "Our Awesome Universe Potential," "I strongly believe that God had a hand in the success of the Hubble Space Telescope."

Webb is NASA's successor to Hubble. What then are the implications for this project?

King David wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Psalm 19:1). Does God want us to see more of what He created? Does He want to give us an even more vivid understanding of His mind and power?

The James Webb Space Telescope has been delayed extensively and repeatedly, and it remains one tiny mishap away from complete failure. But *if* it succeeds, it might be an indicator that God has a hand in this mission too.

Whatever new vistas may be unveiled in space—whatever unexpected

discoveries—whatever is seen *in the depths of the vast unknown*—it is actually linked with the destiny of the human beings who are straining so hard to peer through the heavens.

Mr. Flurry wrote in the May-June 2021 *Trumpet*, "Here is a most exciting truth, revealed in your Bible: The condition of these planets is closely linked with your incredible human potential!" He wrote that, as inspiring as the February landing of the Perseverance rover on Mars was, "this biblical truth makes it a million times more so."

"In this convulsing world, we need our universe dream," Mr. Flurry wrote. "We need to see the stupendous possibility and the eternal majesty God is offering human beings. ... Nothing can stimulate our imagination like comprehending our universe potential!" (ibid).

God plainly declares to any who will believe not only that He *created* the universe but that He created it to be *populated* (Isaiah 45:18). It's His zealous desire to plant it with life and to build His God Family forever throughout the cosmos (Isaiah 51:16). That is what we are seeing when we look at the stars.

The James Webb Space Telescope should light our imaginations on fire and motivate us to search God's Word for the *reason* for the heavens! Looking into your own Bible, you can see beyond Hubble and beyond the James Webb to a vast, ever-expanding universe—a truly immense inheritance awaiting mankind. ■

The Ultimate Plan of God

Clues in Scripture illuminate a spectacular future of endless family growth! **BY GERALD FLURRY**

THE GOSPEL IS THE GOOD NEWS OF THE coming Family, or Kingdom, of God. God is a Family. The Bible teaches that every human being who has ever lived will have the opportunity to receive salvation and be born into the Family of God—most of them, after a resurrection that is yet to come.

But there is a mind-shattering truth we need to understand, and have not understood. Three scriptures strongly indicate that after God completes His Work on Earth—and everybody who obeys God and will become a Spirit being HAS become one—He will REPEAT what He has done here, at least to some degree, throughout ALL the universe!

The universe is overwhelmingly vast. Light travels at 186,000 miles per second, and the light from the other side of the universe hasn't even reached us yet. By their best estimates, astronomers say there are some 2 to 3 trillion galaxies. That means there are likely more stars than grains of sand on Earth! Yet God calls all the stars BY NAME (Psalm 147:4). This alone shows that He has a wonderful PLAN for the future of those stars and the planets that orbit them. What an omnipotent Creator God we have!

During the Millennium, God is going to rule for 1,000 years and create a godly utopia, a paradise this world has never seen. Isaiah 35:1 says Earth is going to “blossom as the rose.” “For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD ...” (Isaiah 51:3). Satan will not be around to interfere.

Many scriptures reveal this is also what the WHOLE UNIVERSE will be like eventually! It will become like “Eden the garden of God.” And the three scriptures I want to show you strongly indicate that, at that phase in His plan,

God will *still* be working with carnal-minded people and bringing them along to baptism and repentance and conversion. Just as in the Millennium, Satan will not be around. But we will have to help convert those people and teach them the truth. If what I'm telling you is true, those planets are going to be inhabited!

These scriptures strongly indicate this royal majesty of the future. Look at them and see what YOU think about them.

The House of Jacob

Look first at Luke 1:31-33: “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” This is describing a Father-Son relationship between God and Christ. God is a Family—and He is going to bring us into that Family if we are willing to obey Him.

For years I have wondered why God inspired the word “Jacob” in this verse. *Jacob* was the name of the great biblical patriarch before he was converted, at which point God changed his name to *Israel* (Genesis 32:27-28). Those whom God calls into His Church and begets with His Spirit are spiritual *Israel* (e.g. Galatians 6:16). Eventually, *all mankind* will be converted and become spiritual *Israel*! Many prophecies talk about that. But Luke 1:33 says Christ will “reign over the house of *Jacob* FOR EVER.” You can check both Old and New Testaments and see that this means exactly what it says: the house of Jacob.

How do you explain this? I think there are astounding implications here! The name *Jacob* refers to people who are unconverted.

Surely this means that God will be dealing with *unconverted people* FOREVER—just as He will in the Millennium. That must include the period AFTER God’s plan has finished on Earth, and every person who is going to become a Spirit being is born into the Family of God. Even after that, there will still be people who grow up and then become converted and join spiritual Israel! I don’t know how else you can understand this scripture.

It seems carnal human beings like Jacob are going to be out there in the future—not on Earth but on vast, distant planets in the universe—and God will be teaching them to become members of the God Family forever and ever! Jesus Christ’s death is going to continue to pay for men’s transgressions throughout eternity.

This is a mind-staggering truth that we need to think about, because I believe this is GOD’S ULTIMATE GOAL! *Forever* Christ will reign over “the house of Jacob”! That MUST mean God is going to continue expanding His Family forever!

I’ll show you two more scriptures that are even stronger in stating this.

The Increase of His Government

Next, let’s examine Isaiah 9:6-7. This is an Old Testament prophecy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, being born of a physical woman, Mary: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder Of the increase of his government and peace THERE SHALL BE NO END, upon the throne of David The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

This says there will be NO END to the increase of Christ’s government and peace. Now, you don’t necessarily need a government in an uninhabited wilderness. But this government will keep increasing and bringing peace—with no end! You don’t have a government and bring peace unless you have inhabitants there—*human beings*! People must LEARN how to have peace, and to have peace in ALL the planets of the universe. This verse seems to say clearly that God’s Work will continue, and His government will bring peace into men’s lives

that only the Spirit of God can bring—which they must receive at baptism and go on from there. That verse says there will be NO END to this process. ENDLESS GROWTH! Surely that means God is going to keep re-creating Himself through men throughout eternity!

Of this, you can be sure: God is going to use every inch of ALL that universe He has created!

The June 1974 issue of the *Good News*, published by the Worldwide Church of God under Herbert W. Armstrong, said this: “God the Father and Jesus Christ are reproducing themselves. They are enlarging their God Family. They are begetting sons. *Real* sons. Literal members of the God Family. That’s the purpose of human life. That’s the purpose for this Earth. And that very well could be the purpose for the *entire universe*.” The entire universe!

“Now we recognize that there is no single, specific place in the Bible which explicitly states that God created the entire universe for the purpose of populating it with His growing Family,” this article continued. “So we *cannot* be dogmatic. We are journeying, at least in part, into the realm of possibility.”

I submit to you that maybe we CAN begin to be more dogmatic about this. We have speculated on this in the past, yet God has revealed MORE to us since the time of Herbert W. Armstrong, specifically with two other scriptures.

Isaiah 9:6-7 describe ENDLESS GROWTH “on the throne of David.” That is something to ponder! Is this the ultimate goal of God? We cannot limit God. This is about creating families of God throughout the universe and for eternity! How inspiring! And I believe you can prove it from your Bible.

The Mystery of God

Look now at Revelation 10. This does not directly prove God’s ultimate plan, but it provides important background to another verse that does. This chapter is about the “little book,” a special message from God. And here is what God tells the people who have the little book to DO: “But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel: when he *shall* BEGIN to *sound* [more accurately, *is ABOUT to sound*],

the mystery of God should be finished [more accurately, *shall have been finished*], as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (verse 7).

This is an inspiring prophecy for “the days of the voice of the seventh angel”—meaning the angel who will sound the LAST TRUMPET. Revelation 11:15 says that when that trumpet sounds, the kingdoms of this world will become THE KINGDOMS OF GOD! So this really *dates* the Revelation 10 prophecy. Verse 7 says that when that angel is about to sound, *the mystery of God shall have been finished*. What is that?

Mr. Armstrong wrote a book titled *Mystery of the Ages*, and there is no other book like it! It is a synopsis of the entire Bible, and it explains what this “mystery” in Revelation 10:7 is. We need to understand what this mystery is and remove the mystery! This world does not know, but it can and it *should!* Though it is a mystery to this world, it’s not a mystery to God’s very elect.

This mystery means EVERYTHING to people who truly believe the Bible. Revelation 10 shows a *connection* between *Mystery of the Ages* and the “little book.” God tells those who have the little book, “Thou must PROPHECY AGAIN before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings” (verse 11). *You must go out and prophesy again about that mystery*. Why this strange command?

Mr. Armstrong wrote *Mystery of the Ages* just months before he died in 1986. The men who took over the Church after he died very quickly abandoned Mr. Armstrong’s teachings and discontinued that book! We remained loyal to God and to His truth, and began printing and distributing *Mystery of the Ages* again. The WCG actually *sued us* in an effort to KEEP THAT BOOK OUT OF PRINT! We fought a six-year court battle to WIN *Mystery of the Ages* because it means that much to us! In a miraculous victory, we obtained the copyright of that book and 18 of Mr. Armstrong’s other works.

This is why God says, *You must prophesy AGAIN about this mystery—just like it was done before*. And Revelation 10:7 says the work of publicizing this mystery must be finished when the seventh trumpet is “about to sound.”

This helps you understand a *third* scripture that reveals God’s ultimate plan.

Dispensing the Mystery

In Ephesians 3:9, the Apostle Paul writes that he wants “to make all men see what is THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

The word “fellowship” is incorrectly translated. The *Companion Bible* says the translators actually rendered the wrong Greek word! *Lange’s Commentary* and some Bible translations render it “dispensation.” *Dispensation* means to disperse or distribute something. This is talking about dispensing or distributing THE MYSTERY.

So what is God talking about here? This verse doesn’t just say we should deliver this mystery—which we certainly must do. It says we should make all people understand that this mystery needs to be DISPENSED, or declared, to all mankind!

That only makes sense if you are taking it out into the universe and for all eternity!

“EPHESIANS 3:9 SAYS ALL MEN MUST SEE THAT THE MYSTERY OF GOD NEEDS TO BE DECLARED,” I wrote in my booklet *Prophecy Again*. “Think about that statement. God will give all the people of this world a vision like they have never, ever seen before! *Perhaps* He wants to show them that they are going to have to get that mystery to the universe—and *perhaps* to other men and women that God will create on other planets.” I think these scriptures teach us exactly that! “Ephesians 3:9 certainly does allow for that. Is God’s mystery going to be dispensed on and on and on—where men elsewhere in the universe will have this mystery revealed to them after they go through some experience like we have on Earth?” In other words, unconverted people will get baptized, receive God’s Holy Spirit and be converted—and then, once they have the Spirit, truly understand this mystery!

“[T]he word *dispensation* has MIND-STAGGERING IMPLICATIONS!” I wrote. “The mystery must be dispensed, or declared, to every son who enters God’s Family.”

God is going to keep teaching and raising up and creating Sons of God FOREVER, as I understand these verses. How can you understand them any differently?

This is ASTOUNDING when you think deeply about it. It is, indeed, the ultimate plan of God!

Ephesians 3:9 says God has been hiding this mystery in His mind for ages, or *eons and eons of time*. The angels knew nothing about it. When God created them, the angels did not understand that He would re-create Himself in humans if His plan with angels failed. When they proved unable to do the job God gave them, He proceeded to create man! Even today, most men have never known this mystery. In that sense, it's still hidden in God's mind and

in His very elect today.

But as this verse says, a tiny group of saints do understand this. We *must* understand Ephesians 3:9!

God wants us to set our affection on things above, not on things on Earth (Colossians 3:1-2). Get your mind up there and see your incredible human potential! Set your thoughts on God's ultimate plan! What He is doing today leads into a fabulous eternity of making the universe blossom like a rose. And as these verses indicate—certainly to me—there will be NO END to God expanding His Family, rearing up more families and more human beings that He can work with and spiritually convert! What a future God has in store for His Family! ■

The Modern King Jeroboam II

The story of an ancient king of Israel carries an urgent lesson for Americans and Israelis in 2021. **BY BRENT NAGTEGAAL AND BRAD MACDONALD**

HERE IS SOME ANCIENT HISTORY THAT IS astonishingly relevant to America today.

It regards the extraordinary success of the longest-serving monarch in the history of the kingdom of Israel. It was entirely unexpected. For decades prior, the kingdom was trapped in a downward spiral of ignominy and subjugation. In the ninth century B.C., the Assyrian Empire dominated the kingdom of Israel and forced its kings to pay tribute. By the end of the century, the Assyrian overlords had been replaced by Aramean overlords. Israel was crawling from failure to failure.

Around the start of the eighth century B.C., Jeroboam II arrived. Neither the Bible nor secular history reveal anything unique about his coming to power. The author of Kings records that Jeroboam II was just as evil as his

forefathers (2 Kings 14:24). Jeroboam II was just like his namesake, Jeroboam I, who had led Israel to break away from the dynasty of David two centuries earlier.

Yet in spite of Jeroboam's wicked behavior, the kingdom's borders expanded and it grew spectacularly prosperous. Why? God answers in verse 27: "And the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash." Under King Jeroboam II, God mercifully gave a kingdom fated for certain death one final opportunity to return to greatness.

Since January 2017, *Philadelphia Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry has repeatedly explained the dramatic prophecy in Amos 7, which specifically discusses an end-time

Jeroboam and “house of Jeroboam.” Mr. Flurry has shown that United States President Donald Trump is the end-time type of King Jeroboam II, and that Mr. Trump’s presidency can be compared to the summary of Jeroboam’s reign recorded in 2 Kings 14.

The book of Amos was written during the reign of Jeroboam II. This *entire book* describes social, political and geopolitical trends in ancient Israel that are remarkably similar to those in America today. (In Bible prophecy, “Israel” refers to America and Britain, while “Judah” refers to the Jews. For proof, request your free copy of *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, by Herbert W. Armstrong.)

Under Jeroboam, Israel experienced an economic boom. Its enemies retreated. Its borders expanded. A religious revival swept across the land. **THE SAME HAPPENED IN AMERICA UNDER DONALD TRUMP.** King Jeroboam’s government forged a strong relationship with the Jews, much like the Trump administration formed a strong relationship with the State of Israel.

These parallels are not just interesting history. The reign of King Jeroboam II is *prophetic!* **AND IT IS A POWERFUL, LAST-CHANCE WARNING TO THE MODERN DESCENDANTS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.**

King Jeroboam I

Israel became a united kingdom under its first king, Saul. Its golden age came under Saul’s successor, King David, and David’s son King Solomon. Following Solomon’s death in the late 10th century B.C., the kingdom split into two rival kingdoms. The southern kingdom, Judah, was led by kings from the dynasty of King David for more than 300 years. It retained Jerusalem as its capital and Solomon’s temple as its national center of worship.

The northern kingdom, Israel, was led from the beginning by rebellious, disobedient kings. The first of them, Jeroboam I, rejected David, rejected worship at the temple in Jerusalem, and rejected the Levites as God’s priests and educators. Israel went on to have 19 kings in nine dynasties over 200 years—and not one was righteous. Sin was entrenched nationally. God sent prophets, including Elijah, Elisha

and Amos, to warn the nation, but none of the kings of Israel, and very few of its citizens, ever repented wholeheartedly.

Beginning around 900 B.C., Israel suffered a century blighted by famine and war. The Assyrians, then the Arameans, conquered parts of its territory. From the start of his reign around 843 B.C., the Aramean King Hazael repeatedly invaded Israelite territory. He eventually conquered Israel’s land on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Twenty years later, Hazael ventured farther west, gaining territory all the way to the Mediterranean coast (2 Kings 12:17). By 815 B.C., the Syrians had subjugated both the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel. 2 Kings 13:3 reveals the ultimate reason Israel and Judah suffered repeated defeat: It was punishment from God.

Consider the state of Israel and Judah prior to Jeroboam’s arrival, and the state of America and the Jewish state prior to Donald Trump. Under Barack Obama, the U.S. pursued a policy of alienating friends and emboldening enemies. In the Middle East, Mr. Obama’s priority was to undermine Israel and promote Iran and radical Islam.

In 2 Kings 13:4, King Jehoahaz (Jeroboam’s grandfather) prayed for help against the Syrians. Ever merciful, God relieved some of Israel’s oppression by causing Assyria to invade Syria. In 796 B.C., the Assyrian army swept into the region, instantly weakening Syria’s power over Israel and Judah. Yet as the Assyrian Tell al-Rimah Stele inscription shows, the conquering Assyrians took tribute not only from Syria’s King Benhadad (son of Hazael) but also “received tribute of Jehoash the Samaritan.” Jehoash was the father and predecessor of King Jeroboam II.

Enter Jeroboam II

Jeroboam II began to reign around 793 B.C., and Israel’s fortunes turned.

The Bible shows that territorial expansion and economic prosperity generally corresponded to the reign of a *righteous king*. God often responds to righteousness with material blessings. Jeroboam II was an exception.

In fact, God prophesied through the Prophet

Jonah that He would extend mercy to Israel *despite* Jeroboam's wickedness. Through Jeroboam, God would enlarge Israel's borders and give the nation peace and prosperity that it had not experienced since the time of David and Solomon. This is the key to understanding the reign of Jeroboam II: THE NATIONAL RESURGENCE WAS GOD'S DOING, *but it was performed through the leadership ("by the hand") of Jeroboam.*

God used this leader to cause a national resurgence, even though neither he nor his people were righteous. Why? *Because the nation was so close to its end!* The same is true of the U.S. today.

"He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah ..." (2 Kings 14:25). (This is the same Jonah whom God later tasked with warning Assyria and whose prophetic book is canonized in the Bible.)

Under Jeroboam II's reign, Israel recovered huge swaths of territory from both the Syrians and the Assyrians, including Hamath, a town at the northern boundary during Israel's golden age (1 Kings 8:65). 2 Kings 14:25 records the southern boundary of Jeroboam's territory as "the sea of the plain," which most scholars take to mean the eastern portion of the Dead Sea, perhaps even to the point of Edom at the sea's southern point. This would mean Jeroboam acquired full control of the territories of Moab, Ammon and Syria (see also verse 28 and Amos 6:14).

Both the Bible and secular sources indicate that Jeroboam's power over the Aramean kingdom, including its capital, Damascus, was total. After a campaign by Assyrian King Shalmaneser IV against Damascus in 773 B.C., the Assyrians no longer journeyed into the region until after Jeroboam's death. Jeroboam made the most of Assyria's absence by recovering Damascus for the kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 14:28). Secular history records no known ruler of Damascus from 775 B.C. to 750 B.C., the very years Jeroboam reigned. (This time frame shows that King Jeroboam's foreign

victories mainly occurred during the second half of his reign.)

Compare this to recent history in America. Under Barack Obama's administration, the nation's foreign policy was driven by hatred for America and defined by compromise and appeasement toward China, Iran, Europe, North Korea, Russia and other current and potential enemies. Then the nation suddenly pivoted to a policy of strength toward those same enemies. Why? Because of one man. Donald Trump might not be popular with world leaders, but he is feared and respected. And while his detractors will never admit it, his leadership made the world safer for America.

Alliance With Judah

Mr. Trump's presidency also made the world safer for the imperiled nation of Israel. This also happened in biblical times.

Think about the influence exerted by America and Israel in the Middle East during Mr. Trump's presidency. Israel formed milestone peace treaties, brokered by America, with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan. Most importantly, the United States and Israel stymied Iran's attempt to dominate the region. The administration of Benjamin Netanyahu can take some of the credit, but most of it belongs to Donald Trump, the end-time type of Jeroboam II.

During Jeroboam II's reign over Israel, the southern kingdom of Judah thrived. Judah was led by King Uzziah, who also presided over a stunning resurgence in the eighth century B.C. (see 2 Chronicles 26). The Bible gives few details about the relationship between the two brother kingdoms, but it is clear they were allies.

Israel's resurgence under King Jeroboam benefited Uzziah and Judah in much the same way that America's resurgence under Donald Trump for four years benefited the Jewish state. "Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" (2 Kings 14:28).

It is notable that a passage focusing on Israel's resurgence mentions the separate kingdom of *Judah*. Some believe this indicates that the two kingdoms allied and fought side by side to defeat Syria and recover territory. Citing this verse, Tel Aviv University's Nadav Na'aman wrote, "Although details of the relations are missing, we may speculate that ... Judah must have sent troops to the Israelite campaigns against Aram Damascus and enjoyed the successful results of these campaigns" (*Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University*, Vol. 46, Issue 1, 2019).

According to Na'aman, King Jeroboam II was undoubtedly the alpha in this eighth-century Israel-Judah relationship; yet "Judah must have enjoyed the status of an ally rather than that of a vassal state."

This is an exact parallel of the relationship between the United States and the State of Israel over the four-year administration of President Trump. After suffering a terrible crisis devised by the Obama administration, the relationship surged to a historic high under the leadership of Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu. Just as they did anciently, the modern descendants of Israel and Judah dominated the region.

Bitter Affliction

Studying this history, especially in the context of current events, we must remember that the sensational resurgence of the Israelites and Jews was not the result of blessings from God for obedience, even though that is exactly what many of them believed it was.

It is crucial to understand *why* God was intervening.

"For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel" (2 Kings 14:26). Israel was so afflicted that it was about to collapse! The nation's final opportunity to repent would be gone. God intervened *not* because the leaders or the people were *righteous*, but because they were so *sinful* that their nation was about to die!

The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges states, "The expression means that there was

NO ONE, *great or small, young or old*, to whom they could look for aid" (emphasis added). Israel's leaders were failing. The nation's institutions were failing. The kingdom's political, cultural and educational systems were failing. Its false religion was failing. Though many were oblivious to it, the nation was militarily, economically, culturally and spiritually *helpless*.

The writings of the Prophet Amos reveal that society was dominated by a ruling class that had greedily accumulated wealth and destroyed the patriarchal system. The poor and vulnerable suffered.

God used Jeroboam to momentarily stabilize the fragile nation. The point was not to grant it relief from oppression or give it more territory or more wealth, but to give the people the opportunity to address the root cause of their society's sickness: SIN! This is why God dispatched Amos to Samaria: to deliver His warning message and beseech Jeroboam II and his people to repent!

Amos 1:1 shows that the prophet likely delivered his warning toward the end of Jeroboam's reign. This is supported by archaeological evidence that corroborates the ominous event described in this verse only as "the earthquake."

Rich-Poor Divide

In Amos 5:11-12, the prophet writes: "Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them. For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right." While Israel's leaders and other elites grew increasingly powerful and wealthy, they also grew calloused toward the needs of the people. Israel's elites saw the common people as ignorant and insignificant, as "deplorables."

This split between rich and poor has been uncovered in archaeological excavations at the Tel-el Farah—likely ancient Tirzah, one of Israel's chief cities. "A wealthy class lived in Tirzah," writes Todd Bolen in *The Reign of Jeroboam II*:

A Historical and Archaeological Interpretation, “but of greater surprise is the tremendous disparity between these and the common people who lived in ramshackle huts next door to the affluent mansions.”

At Samaria, Israel’s capital city, a massive collection of over 500 ivories was discovered in excavations from the 1920s and 1930s. Archaeologist Nahman Avigad and others believe these were made during the reign of Jeroboam II. These luxurious inlays were used in architecture and furniture and testify to Israel’s affluence under King Jeroboam.

This is tangible evidence of what the Prophet Amos wrote in Amos 6:1, 4-6: “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria *That lie upon beds of ivory*, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David; That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.”

Compare Amos’s description of America’s ancestors to the state of America today. Under President Trump, the economy boomed: Employment increased, home prices rocketed, and stock prices hit record highs. Even the poorest in America became wealthy, especially compared to historical norms. But as America’s prosperity increased, so did the chasm between the middle class and the exceptionally rich. The elites benefited far more than regular Americans.

This extreme inequality worsened internal divisions that radicals were already actively exacerbating. More and more, America’s elites looked down on the “deplorables” and grew comfortable dictating how they should live. Americans reacted in 2016 by electing Donald Trump. The people wanted a leader willing to stand up for traditional American values, which are rooted in biblical principles. As historian Victor Davis Hanson wrote in 2019, “The middle classes are revolting against Western managerial elites. The latter group includes professional politicians, entrenched bureaucrats,

condescending academics, corporate phonies and propagandistic journalists.”

Instead of identifying sin as sin, being grieved by it and repenting (changing attitudes and actions), the leaders of the nation actively led the people in breaking God’s laws! As in ancient Israel, these modern elites are forcing extreme values and practices on the nation.

Destroying the Family

Amos also shows that ancient Israel’s ruling elites were responsible for destroying the nation’s foundational institution: the traditional family. Under the leadership of the husband and father, the family was the fundamental structure not only for daily life but also for protecting the needy and vulnerable in society. While Jeroboam II exhibited strength toward Israel’s external enemies, he was weak on social issues. Amos indicates the kingdom was dominated by radical feminists.

“Hear this word, ye kine [cows] of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink” (Amos 4:1). Bible commentaries state that this is directed at the powerful women in Israel. “The use of the modifier ‘of Bashan’ then, may be understood as a superlative that identifies these women as occupying the top tier of society,” wrote Brian Irwin of Knox College, University of Toronto, in 2012.

These powerful women of Israel held power in the mountain of Samaria, Israel’s capital city. They issued hateful decrees against the patriarchy and called for it to be removed. “The women of Samaria were attempting to overturn the prevailing social structure that in ancient Israel was the primary means by which the vulnerable were protected,” continued Irwin. Through the Prophet Amos, God was identifying a powerful feminist movement that despised the rule of fathers and husbands in society—a tradition-sustaining and *civilization*-sustaining role ordained by God!

The corollary to America today is inescapable. Americans from the bottom of society to the top are embracing increasingly radical feminist and violent views toward the

traditional biblical roles of men and women—and even the existence of male and female!

Still Religious

Ancient Israel was gluttoned on luxury and debauchery. Yet it was still religious! In fact, Jeroboam's generation was *more* religious than its predecessor! The king and his followers believed they were pious and righteous. Under Jeroboam II, who, like his namesake, exploited organized religion as a means to control the people, Israel underwent a massive revival of state-run religion. So powerful was the religious structure under Jeroboam that the representative of the king who banished Amos from the country was actually a priest of Bethel (Amos 7:10-12).

Evidence of Israel's eighth-century B.C. religious revival is profoundly evident at Tel Dan, one of the two worship locations originally set up by Jeroboam I. Avraham Biran, director of the Tel Dan excavations, said he believes this "religious" city reached its "zenith" during the reign of Jeroboam II. The remains of large public buildings dating to Jeroboam II's reign have been found across the city, including finely carved steps leading up to a massive altar.

However, what is compelling from both Amos's account of the religion of the day and the remains at Tel Dan is that the people were apparently attempting to worship God rather than Baal or other Canaanite deities. Discoveries from around the temple area in Tel Dan during the time of Jeroboam II reveal architecture and artifacts similar to those associated with Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. Inside one room associated with the Tel Dan temple, excavators uncovered a bronze bowl, a pair of identical shovels, a long-handled shovel that held incense, an ash pot and a long fork, all of which match the tools God had instructed the Israelites to use in the true religion at the tabernacle (Exodus 27:1-3) and later the temple.

Though they believed they were worshipping the true God, these Israelites were worshipping in vain. Their words were hollow, their prayers meaningless and powerless. God sent Amos to condemn their fake religion! Amos 4:5 states: "Present your bread made with yeast as an

offering of thanksgiving. Then give your extra voluntary offerings SO YOU CAN BRAG ABOUT IT EVERYWHERE! This is the kind of thing you Israelites love to do,' says the Sovereign Lord" (New Living Translation). Rather than pleasing God, the religion of Jeroboam angered Him!

Amos 5:18-20 reveal the extent of Israel's religious deception. The people yearned for the Day of the Lord, a time of terrible destruction. They believed the destruction would not affect them, since they were righteous. They made the grave mistake of assuming that Israel's prosperity and power resulted from their righteousness!

During America's recent religious resurgence, more than 80 percent of evangelical Christians voted for Donald Trump in 2016. During the 2018 U.S. midterm election, 75 percent of evangelical voters cast their ballots for the Republican Party. They have been Mr. Trump's most ardent supporters. But just as in ancient Israel, instead of using the temporary resurgence for what it is—one last opportunity to repent and change—the nation went deeper into rebellion and sin!

God's warning through Amos was powerful. "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts" (verses 21-22).

God's Mercy

The prophet's warning message to King Jeroboam II and his followers became a major source of tension. Amaziah, one of Jeroboam's false priests, accused Amos of treason and banished him to Judah (Amos 7:10-13).

When Jeroboam II died around 753 B.C., Israel's resurgence ended. The kingdom of Israel fell precipitously into suffering and destruction. The next two kings each lasted less than a year. By 745 B.C., Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III began invading Israel's borders. He demanded Israel's King Menachem pay a massive tribute.

The kingdom of Israel had passed the point of no return. God no longer sent prophets to

warn the nation. Within three decades, the Assyrians overran the land, the nation was annihilated, and Israelites were massacred and enslaved!

Israel rapidly went from stunning success under Jeroboam II to collapse and subjugation! Why? BECAUSE NEITHER JEROBOAM NOR HIS PEOPLE HEEDED GOD'S WARNING THROUGH AMOS! They didn't take advantage of God's mercy and repent. This is the powerful, urgent lesson for all of us!

Israel was facing its end. Only by an act of God did it survive for a few more precious years. Were it not for God's mercy and compassion, the nation would almost certainly have collapsed a century earlier.

THIS HISTORY IS A LESSON IN GOD'S PHENOMENAL LOVE AND HIS DESIRE TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE!

Remember, Amos 7 and much of the rest of the book is not just history, *it is prophecy!* It carries a powerful warning for America, the Jewish state and anyone willing to listen. God warns in Amos 7:8 that He is measuring Israel one final time *during the reign of an end-time Jeroboam.*

Just after President Trump was inaugurated in 2017, Mr. Flurry wrote, "This is sobering to think about. Here is a severe end-time prophecy, and GOD IS TALKING ABOUT AN INDIVIDUAL. God *names names!* WE MUST UNDERSTAND THESE NAMES AND THE ROLES THESE MEN PLAY IF WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND THESE END-TIME PROPHECIES! It is *essential* that we know who these individuals are God will not bring this warning to His people again; the Jeroboam time is going to be the LAST TIME!"

God is resurrecting the history of Jeroboam for us *right now.* God, in His mercy, is saving Israel one final time. As was the case under Jeroboam II, the resurgence of the United States under Donald Trump is ONLY TEMPORARY. The rapid radicalization of the nation under the Biden administration proves this all the more. When President Trump regains power, God's purpose in bringing that about is not merely to stabilize the nation or our bank accounts. Its purpose is to provide time—and precious little of it—to repent. And it's not just the radicals

whom God is calling to repentance—it is the religious as well!

God has revealed prophecies and named names. He wants each of us to acknowledge our own sins and to turn from them. God will temporarily save our nation in spite of ourselves, not because of our greatness but because of His righteousness. It's time for each of us to acknowledge our own sins and to turn from them. If you are one of the precious few who turns to a humble, prayerful attitude, God will show you what to do—before it is too late. ■

Worldwatch

Nord Stream 2 ready to pump gas to Germany

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on June 4 that the first line of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is complete. Completion of the second line is projected for August.

Russia has already been exporting energy directly to Germany, the European Union's largest economy, since the original Nord Stream pipeline became operational about 10 years ago. Nord Stream 2 will double Germany's import capacity to 110 billion cubic meters of gas per year. It will then export the gas to the rest of Western Europe, making Germany the energy hub of half of Europe.

This gives Russia and Germany great leverage against nations in Eastern Europe in particular. Many of Russia's major pipelines pass through countries like Ukraine and Poland to reach Western Europe. Now Russia will be able to supply Western Europe and simultaneously turn off the taps to Eastern Europe to force it to comply with Russian demands. It has used this strategy before, as well as military force, which it used in the 2008 invasion of Georgia, the 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, and the ongoing hostilities in eastern Ukraine since 2014. Meanwhile, many in Poland are terrified by the possibility of a Russian invasion.

Poland is a North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally of the United States, and the U.S. is obligated to protect Ukraine. It has done little to that end, although the Trump administration opposed the pipeline and placed sanctions on entities involved in its construction. Joe Biden initially expressed opposition to the pipeline, but he dropped key sanctions in May.

"Nord Stream 2 binds Russia and Germany together in a way that undermines NATO," wrote *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry in his 2018 article "Germany and Russia's Secret War Against America" ([theTrumpet.com/17600](https://www.thetrumpet.com/17600)). "In fact, though Russia and Germany will not say so, this pipeline project is clearly intended to wreck NATO." ■

Why is the Vatican making this politician a saint?

Pope Francis put former French Prime Minister Robert Schuman on the path to sainthood by recognizing his "heroic virtues" on June 19. The Vatican will have to recognize one miracle performed by Schuman for him to be beatified, and a second to become a saint.

Schuman is one of the "founding fathers" of the European Union. His "Schuman Plan" proposed the European Coal and Steel Community, a trading union that preceded and made possible the current political union.

Schuman was a Catholic who saw his work in Europe as part of his religious duty. In fact, all the European founders were Catholic. Several others are also in the early stages of being made Catholic saints.

Deutsche Welle noted in its article on Schuman: "Since Pius XII, the pontiff during World War II, popes have supported the principle of a European project while criticizing its secularism" (June 19). More people should be aware of the European project's religious origins. To learn what the Bible says about a union of nations led by a church, request your free copy of *The Holy Roman Empire in Prophecy*. ■

Germany mourns more terror victims

A young Somali man stabbed three women to death in downtown Würzburg, Germany, and seriously injured six others on June 25. The 24-year-old perpetrator, who has lived in Germany since 2015, had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital earlier this year after he threatened someone with a knife at a homeless shelter. Before the fatal attacks, he shouted, "Allahu Akbar."

Authorities have been slow to classify the attack as Islamic terrorism, but many Europeans are frustrated by such political correctness. Many believe politicians are partly responsible for importing terrorism through policies allowing a massive influx of refugees. The situation in Germany is so tense

that politicians fear an escalation in violence against foreigners.

Police statistics show that “Germany has a massive problem with violent foreigners,” *Bild* wrote. Of the 168,237 people who allegedly committed violent crimes in 2020, 38.2 percent were “non-German suspects,” of whom 34.5 percent were immigrants. Of 2,672 manslaughter suspects, 40.6 percent were foreigners, and 15.7 percent were immigrants. A reported 37 percent of perpetrators of sex crimes were foreigners, 14 percent of whom were immigrants.

Radical Islam is persecuting Christians in the Middle East, killing some and putting millions to flight. It considers its interactions with Europe an all-out religious war. At some point, Europe will take the same view. ■

Israel's new government founded on 'big lie'

After 12 years as head of Israel's government, Benjamin Netanyahu was ousted from the prime ministership on June 13, replaced by Naftali Bennett.

Before the March 23 election, Bennett signed a “contract” on live television promising that he and his right-wing Yamina Party would never form a coalition with center-left party Yesh Atid and that he would never join the government if it included the Islamist party. After the election, he blatantly broke both promises to join a coalition whose sole purpose was to oust Netanyahu.

Post-election polls of Yamina voters indicate that 60 percent would not have voted for Bennett had he revealed his true intentions. Many of those voters would have gone to Netanyahu's bloc, and Yamina, which won only 6 percent of the vote, would have received too few votes for Bennett to even be a Knesset member. But Bennett lied to Israel and became prime minister.

Bennett's power-sharing agreement makes him prime minister for only two years, after which Yair Lapid will take over. Lapid and his Yesh Atid party, which won 14 percent of the vote are the real power behind this government. But for now, Israel has a right-wing prime minister without the power to implement

conservative policies because he betrayed his voters and is entirely beholden to Yesh Atid.

The administration of Joe Biden couldn't be happier. After assuming America's presidency, he waited four weeks to call Netanyahu. Yet when Bennett took power, Biden called him immediately despite the dishonest way in which he gained power. To the Biden administration, Netanyahu was the roadblock slowing former President Barack Obama's vision of empowering Iran and other radical Islamist powers in the Middle East. Watch for Obama, through the Biden administration, to move fast on his Middle East agenda now that Netanyahu is out of power. ■

Putin, Xi extend landmark treaty

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping officially extended the bilateral Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation on June 28.

The treaty was first enacted in July 2001 by Putin and Chinese leader Jiang Zemin. It outlines guidelines for cooperation in economics, diplomacy and, most importantly, defense. Article 9 states, “When a situation arises in which one of the contracting parties deems that peace is being threatened and undermined or its security interests are involved or when it is confronted with the threat of aggression, the contracting parties shall immediately hold contacts and consultations in order to eliminate such threats.”

This provides a foundation on which a full military alliance could be built.

The treaty would have expired in July 2021, but the extension keeps it alive for the foreseeable future and sends a signal to other nations.

“Today's China-Russia relations are mature, stable and solid, and can withstand the test of any international storm,” Xi said during a videoconference announcing the extension. “The world is entering an era of imbalance and radical changes as the development of humanity faces many crises; close cooperation between China and Russia gives positive energy to the global community, establishing a gold standard of a new model of international relations.”

Bible prophecy foretells of a multinational Asian power bloc that will form in the modern era, referred to in Revelation 16:12 as “the kings of the east.” The Scriptures say this Asian confederation will play a key role in the third and final world war. Request *Russia and China in Prophecy*. ■

Russia leading with hypersonic weapons

Russia staged war games over the Mediterranean during the last week of June that included MiG-31K aircraft capable of carrying Kinzhal hypersonic missiles, marking the first known time a nation has deployed jets able to carry the munitions.

Lt. Gen. Sergei Kobylash, commander of long-range aviation at Russia’s Hmeymim air base in Syria, said pilots practiced targeting a “mock enemy” and completed the mission with “high quality.”

Hypersonic missiles like the Kinzhal are expected to revolutionize warfare because of their speed and maneuverability. Hypersonic missiles fly at between 5 and 15 times the speed of sound—nearly 4,000 miles per hour or more. The missiles are also maneuverable, meaning their trajectory can rapidly change midflight, even in the last few seconds before striking a target.

The combination of hypersonic speeds and intricate maneuverability means such missiles could evade even the most advanced known defense systems. In 2018, Gen. John Hyten, commander of United States Strategic Command, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that America does not “have any defense that could deny the employment of such a weapon against us.”

Meanwhile, fear of Russia is growing more intense in Europe. Fear of hypersonic and other weapons will help intensify Europe’s desire to unify, politically and militarily. ■

Record heat scorches North America

In June and July, highways were cracking, roads were buckling, and railroads were warping due to record-breaking heat searing the Pacific Northwest. Flights were canceled and

restaurants forced to close due to the extreme weather. Global temperature record-keeping data showed that the last seven years have been the warmest since record-keeping began nearly 150 years ago.

Lytton, British Columbia, broke Canada’s national heat record for three consecutive days with temperatures reaching 121 degrees Fahrenheit on June 29: A wildfire destroyed 90 percent of the town the next day. Several other towns also broke local records with temperatures well over 100 degrees, and firefighters battled dozens of wildfires, including one that burned 300,000 acres.

What is the cause of these worsening weather conditions? Scientists point to man-made climate change. But many scientists have been exposed for manipulating data on historical temperature records that disprove this theory.

The Bible gives a clear explanation of why weather disasters are worsening. Jesus Christ demonstrated control over weather when He quieted a storm (Mark 4:39-41). Leviticus 26:4-5 show that God promises to grant favorable weather, but there is a condition: “If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them” (verse 3). When we refuse to submit to God’s law, He sends storms, floods, drought, fiery heat and other disasters to correct us (Job 37:11-13; Deuteronomy 11:17; 28:22; Amos 4:7; Nahum 1:3-4). To better understand the truth of the Bible and the purpose of weather disasters, please request your free copy of *Why ‘Natural’ Disasters?* ■

China developing antisatellite weapons

China is making major advances in its abilities to disable or destroy satellites, according to remarks made in July by the director of the United States Indo-Pacific Command.

Rear Adm. Michael Studeman said the capabilities range from “dazzling to jamming, to kinetic kill-from-the-ground, from space—all that, they’re on the march.”

China’s SJ-17 satellite is believed to be able to attack other satellites in orbit. This satellite is dirigible and equipped with a robotic arm that can be controlled by operators on the ground.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies noted that in recent months it has engaged in “unusual behavior,” including navigating up to other Chinese satellites in orbit and interacting with them.

China is also developing ground-based laser systems believed to be capable of blinding satellites in orbit.

As *Nikkei* noted, “[T]he next major war could be decided in the opening minutes of the first day, as each side attempts to disable the enemy’s communication tools.”

The U.S. has far more satellites in orbit than any other nation and depends on them for military reconnaissance, communication, navigation and targeting systems, as well as numerous civilian applications.

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry has written on several occasions about the perils of American reliance on computer technology. It could indeed be America’s “Achilles’ heel.” ■

SOCIETYWATCH

American drug overdoses hit record high

A new class of synthetic drugs is killing Americans in record numbers. According to preliminary data from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, released on July 14, a record 93,331 people died from drug overdoses last year. That is a 29.4 percent increase from the year before, when 72,151 people died. Public health officials believe that the social isolation, trauma, and job losses caused by COVID-19 lockdowns contributed to this startling increase in overdose deaths by driving people to drugs as a form of escapism. Yet this record surge in overdose deaths is primarily due to the proliferation of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is 50 times more potent than heroin.

Widespread approval of drug use in America is a sign of a terminal spiritual sickness the Bible calls *pharmakeia*. It is listed as a “work of the flesh” in Galatians 5:19-20. The King James translation renders this word as “witchcraft,” but a more exact rendering is “use of drugs.” Millions of Americans use marijuana, psychedelic mushrooms, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines and other drugs for moments of hallucinatory euphoria in a vain attempt to fill a spiritual void. ■

Republican states ban police from enforcing federal gun laws

The government of Joe Biden is calling for Congress to adopt strict gun control legislation. On June 23, Biden and Attorney General Merrick Garland unveiled a series of proposed gun control laws. These policies would amplify executive actions Biden signed in April that direct the Justice Department to draft a rule deeming illegal most firearms with a stabilizing pistol brace and to publish an example of “red flag” legislation for states to follow that would allow police or family members to petition a court to bar someone from owning or even accessing a gun.

Many jurisdictions are pushing back against

these policies, saying they violate the Constitution. Legislatures in 15 states have passed laws that prohibit local law officers from enforcing gun control statutes that violate the Second Amendment, which states: “A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.” These states include Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia and Wyoming.

The threats that gun buyers are concerned about are real, and the Biden administration is overstepping its constitutional authority. Yet Bible prophecy also shows that proliferation of guns will exacerbate violence. “A third part of thee shall die with the *pestilence*, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee ...” (Ezekiel 5:12). The word translated *pestilence* means destruction or death. The proliferation of guns will not be enough to protect American citizens from their government or from their neighbors, especially when the divisions within society turn deadly. ■

Scientific American claims Genesis is racist

The *Scientific American* now claims it is racist to believe in Adam and Eve. On July 5, the popular science magazine published “Denial of Evolution Is a Form of White Supremacy.” The editorial by Allison Hopper argues that evolution cannot be doubted on scientific grounds, therefore creationists reject evolution because they are racists.

“I want to unmask the lie that evolution denial is about religion and recognize that at its core, it is a form of white supremacy that perpetuates segregation and violence against black bodies,” she wrote. “In literal interpretations of the Christian Bible, white skin was created in God’s image. Dark skin has a different, more problematic origin. As the biblical story goes, the curse or mark of Cain for killing his brother was a darkening

of his descendants' skin. Historically, many congregations in the U.S. pointed to this story of Cain as evidence that black skin was created as a punishment."

Some Protestant denominations once taught that Cain was marked with black skin, but this belief is no longer prevalent, and it never came from the Bible. In Genesis 4:15, the Hebrew word for "mark" indicates a boundary that God set up to separate Cain and his family from the rest of humanity after he murdered his brother Abel.

You can read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find anything justifying the belief that any race or ethnicity is biologically inferior to another. It is actually evolution

that teaches that some races are inferior.

The alternate title for Charles Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* was *The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. Its premise was that only the fittest races survive. This book's sequel, *The Descent of Man*, also alleged that blacks and Australian Aboriginals represented a missing link between gorillas and Caucasians that would one day be exterminated by "the civilized races of man."

Yet *Scientific American* says people who believe in creation are white supremacists because they reject Darwinism and embrace the belief that all races were created in the image and likeness of God. ■

PRINCIPLES OF LIVING **MARK JENKINS**

Beware Our Present-Tense Culture

Choose quality entertainment in a depraved world.

WHITNEY HOUSTON WANTS TO DANCE with somebody. I have heard her pleas doubtless hundreds of times over the course of my life despite never owning a Whitney Houston album or attending a Whitney Houston concert. There are many artists whose songs I am highly familiar with despite exerting more effort to *not* hear them than to hear them.

We live in a society with an aggressive "present-tense culture." That's the term Mark Steyn coined to more accurately describe "popular culture" today. As years go by, the significant history and culture of the past is quickly fading into oblivion.

"A classical education considers society as a kind of iceberg, and teaches you the seven eighths below the surface," Steyn wrote in a 30-year retrospective on Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*. "Today, we live on the top eighth bobbing around in the flotsam and jetsam of the here and now. And without the seven eighths under the water,

what's left on the surface gets thinner and thinner."

That's an amazing metaphor for the state of our culture: bobbing around in the flotsam and jetsam of the here and now, unable to see your heritage frozen beneath the icy waters.

Bloom wrote: "Classical music is now a special taste like Greek language or pre-Columbian archaeology, not a common culture of reciprocal communication and psychological shorthand."

In a Jan. 9, 2020, feature article posted on *theTrumpet.com*, author Joel Hilliker explained the basic plot of *Othello*. Instead of presuming his audience was already familiar with the plot of one of Shakespeare's most famous plays, he was forced to unveil its plot turns to the reader as surprises. Why would anyone expect instant recognition of *Othello*'s story?

Now imagine that he had compared present-day American politics to *Star Wars*. We certainly could expect instant recognition of

that story and its characters. When everyone knows the story, reciprocal communication and psychological shorthand happen naturally.

People have no strong opinions on *Richard III*, but there are entire websites devoted to people's thoughts on the *Back to the Future* trilogy. Dropping a Shakespearean quote in everyday conversation no longer works as conversational shorthand. But quoting the *Princess Bride* does. I find this ... inconceivable.

Beware our present-tense culture. It doesn't care about history, literature, art or the collective masterworks of Western music. It actively opposes historical statues and the founding of the United States of America. It has no interest in morality or religion.

Consider how deeply this trend has affected today's music. "Rock music is as unquestioned and unproblematic as the air the students breathe, and very few have any acquaintance at all with classical music. ... Nothing is more singular about this generation than its addiction to music," Bloom wrote of people in the early 1980s who had less than one 10th the access to music that we have today. Despite our tremendous access to music today, classical music accounts for less than 1 percent of total streams in the United States, according to tracking service Alpha Data.

What if we were to rewind the clock to, say, 1964? That's the year the Beatles came on the scene, and the reaction was epic: "Visually, they are a nightmare: tight, dandified Edwardian-Beatnik suits and great pudding bowls of hair. Musically they are a near disaster ..." (*Newsweek*, Feb. 24, 1964). "The Beatles' vocal quality can be described as hoarsely incoherent, with the minimal enunciation necessary to communicate the schematic texts" (*New York Times*, Feb. 10, 1964). "Just thinking about the Beatles seems to induce mental disturbance. They have a commonplace, rather dull act that hardly seems to merit mentioning, yet people hereabouts have mentioned scarcely anything else for a couple of days" (*Washington Post*, Feb. 13, 1964).

The adults in the news media at the time were appalled by these 20-somethings who, as

John Lennon would declare, thought they were more popular than Jesus Christ.

In 1980, Herbert W. Armstrong wrote that the Beatles "picked up what had been started by Frank Sinatra, when teenage girls ran screaming half out of their minds for his autograph. It was revived and intensified by Elvis Presley. Then the Beatles delivered Satan's knockout blow to any public sense of social values in the world" (*Worldwide News*, Dec. 22, 1980).

Society's morality never woke up! Our entire present-tense culture has developed in that climate—within a society whose moral center has been knocked out.

So what can you do about it? Don't make society's culture your culture. Read the wealth of great literature that is so easily available. Study history. Dabble in the tapestry of Western orchestral music instead of a constant diet of amplified electronic instruments that didn't exist 100 years ago, backing hoarsely incoherent voices crooning insipid lyrics. As you sit in your homes tonight, don't answer Whitney Houston's pleas or turn on a modern heroic spandex brigade on Netflix. Instead of floating on the minuscule flotsam and jetsam of the here and now, consider mining the depths of the rich heritage that is easily available to you—and make that your present-tense culture. ■

A Humble Request

You're free to dismiss this warning, but please: Don't forget it.

LOTS OF PEOPLE SAY THEY BELIEVE IN A GOD of love. They readily recognize His love in God sending His Son to pay for the sins of mankind. But then there's the supposedly altogether different God of the Old Testament—all plagues and punishments and prophecies.

This magazine focuses on biblical prophecy, so much of which—though it leads to the only true hope that exists—is dark and painful to think about.

Ask yourself: *Can you recognize the God of love in those prophecies?*

Biblical prophets were never popular. Their message was despised. Many of them were martyred. Their warnings are still maligned today.

Jesus Christ condemned hypocritical religious leaders who said, “If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets” (Matthew 23:30; New International Version). These were the very men who were plotting to kill Christ Himself.

Notice—it is the *God of love* who sends prophets. “Wherefore, behold, *I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify ...*” (verse 34). Christ prophesied the popular rejection of God's message would continue!

Why is prophecy so important to God?

Consider: God's way leads to *life*—abundant *life*. Any contrary way leads to misery and death (Deuteronomy 30:19; Proverbs 10:17). When people are off course and rebelling, God tries to WARN them—as any truly loving father would—of the consequences of their actions.

Prophecy is God's method of showing you the END RESULTS of the way YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE—good or bad. For every prophecy about great tribulation, there is another about great exultation! Which of them applies to you depends on your choices.

Consider the scriptures that speak of the Great Tribulation. As sure as those prophecies are, so too are others that speak of a small group of people whom God will *protect* from that ordeal (e.g. Revelation 12:13-14). These will be individuals who have *already accepted* God's correction, who have *already turned* from the way of death. God has no need to inflict the Tribulation on them. He never punishes without cause, and then only after exercising enormous patience. Respond to God's warning today, and you will be *protected*.

We must deliver this warning whether or not you respond. The message is as unpopular as it ever was. As the prophets of old learned through experience, the vast majority of those who hear do not heed. Christ Himself, though He attracted great crowds and healed countless people, had a loyal following of only 120 at the end of His ministry (Acts 1:15). Though the *Trumpet* goes to hundreds of thousands, only a handful have *chosen* and *committed* themselves to God's way of life.

But there is a prophecy that gives us in this work tremendous hope. It drives us to keep sending out free literature, publishing online and broadcasting on television—even if few respond today.

It is found in Revelation 7, just after that book's description of the Great Tribulation. “After this I beheld, and, lo, a GREAT MULTITUDE, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes These are *they which came out of great tribulation*, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (verses 9, 14). The world will have endured the horrifying time of Satan's greatest wrath. But a multitude *so great it cannot be numbered* will COME OUT of the Tribulation, having ACCEPTED God's

correction, *repented*, and been spiritually washed by Christ's shed blood. A sobering yet fantastic picture!

These undoubtedly will be people who are familiar with God's warnings—people like *you*, who study them in the Bible, who read literature from God's work. They will watch in terror the tragic and nightmarish FULFILLMENT, step by step, of everything they had read and heard about! Sadly, it will take being plunged into that shocking reality before they will *finally realize* how deadly serious God was in issuing His warnings.

Nevertheless, these people will finally recognize the *God of love* in those prophecies and will turn to Him in heartfelt repentance. When they do, God will mercifully protect them from any further hurt. They will live to see the dawn of the Kingdom of God.

Thus, much of the fruit of God's work today will not be borne until this future time.

Regular readers of the *Trumpet* receive quite a complete picture of the future of world events. If you do nothing about the warning contained in the prophecies we regularly highlight, you are described in Ezekiel 33:30-32. There God tells His prophet, "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for THEY HEAR THY WORDS, BUT THEY DO THEM NOT."

Which choice will you make? If you heed the warning of God's representative today, you can be protected. If you choose to *ignore* it, all we ask is that *you do not FORGET it*. Remember—as you watch it *come to pass before your eyes*. Remember what God says of *you* and of all who heard His message and KNEW in advance what would happen: "[W]hen this cometh to pass, (LO, IT *will* COME,) then shall they KNOW that A PROPHET HATH BEEN AMONG THEM"! (verse 33).

REMEMBER—so you can recognize the *God of love* in that terrifying punishment, and then ACT upon this precious message of love.■